

Cooperative Habitat Protection Partnerships

EQUIPPING LOCAL COMMUNITIES WITH THE TOOLS AND INFORMATION NEEDED TO PROTECT COASTAL AND MARINE FISH HABITAT

Shoreline Habitat Protection In Galveston Bay

NOAA Fisheries Service's Cooperative Habitat Protection Partnerships (CHPPs) is working with multiple partners in Galveston Bay to protect valuable shoreline habitats such as wetlands, riparian corridors, and seagrass beds. Over 30,000 acres of wetlands and 2,500 acres of seagrasses have been lost in the Galveston Bay system since the 1950s. About 10 percent of the bay shoreline has been converted to bulkheads, revetments or docks. Highly productive shoreline habitats have eroded at an average rate of 2.4 feet per year with some eroding at an alarming rate of over 20 feet per year. Increased coastal development and population growth, erosion, historic subsidence, and ongoing relative sea level rise continue to threaten shorelines where these coastal habitats currently support commercially, recreationally, and ecologically important fish stocks. Shoreline habitat loss also impacts bay water quality, lessens protection against storm and flood events, and impacts the local economies that depend on healthy bay side habitats

CHPPs is providing technical advice, resources and leadership to implement innovative projects with partners that protect fish habitat. While past projects have focused on public lands, CHPPs is now working with private landowners to provide fish friendly alternatives to bulkheading and armoring by strategic placement of wetland plants and natural materials to control erosion while protecting and creating new marsh or oyster reef habitat. Three demonstration projects led by the Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) have already created over 13,000 square feet of intertidal marsh and protect private property. CHPPs will work with the GBF and other partners to develop a guidebook to inform local landowners about the value of protecting bayside habitats through Living Shoreline projects and will expand efforts to surrounding communities.

CHPPs is also working with GBF, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department on large scale projects at Sportman's Road, Starvation Cove, and Snake Island Cove in West Galveston Bay. These projects will install breakwaters to protect 580 acres of existing coastal wetlands and shallow water habitat and encourage the re-establishment of seagrass beds. CHPPs is providing technical assistance as part of the project advisory team to increase benefits to fish and local communities.



Shoreline change between 1995 and 2002

Project Outcomes:

1. Protection of shoreline fish habitat from erosion
2. Increased public knowledge of Living Shorelines options and benefits
3. Increased local stewardship of habitat resources

For more information, please visit:

www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/CHPP

or contact:

Heather Young, Southeast Region
NOAA Fisheries Service
Habitat Conservation Division,
4700 Avenue U
Galveston, TX 77551-5997
409-766-3699
heather.young@noaa.gov

David Dale
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Ave. South
St Petersburg, FL 33701
david.dale@noaa.gov
(727) 824-5317

