

**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

**Restoration  
Center**

# Pelagic Longline Bycatch Reduction Project – Implementation Update

Deepwater Horizon Early Restoration

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# Deepwater Horizon Pelagic Longline Bycatch Reduction Project (PLL Project) – Overview

- The PLL Project is coordinated by the NOAA Restoration Center with the support of many NOAA offices and resources
- The NOAA Restoration Center is acting on behalf of the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Trustees
- First presented to the HMS AP on September 9, 2015 when the PLL Project was proposed under Early Restoration OPA/NEPA public processes
- **Final Phase IV Early Restoration Plan** released on September 23, 2015
- Over the last 6 months NOAA has worked to plan for implementation, with anticipated public project roll out in summer 2016



# Background

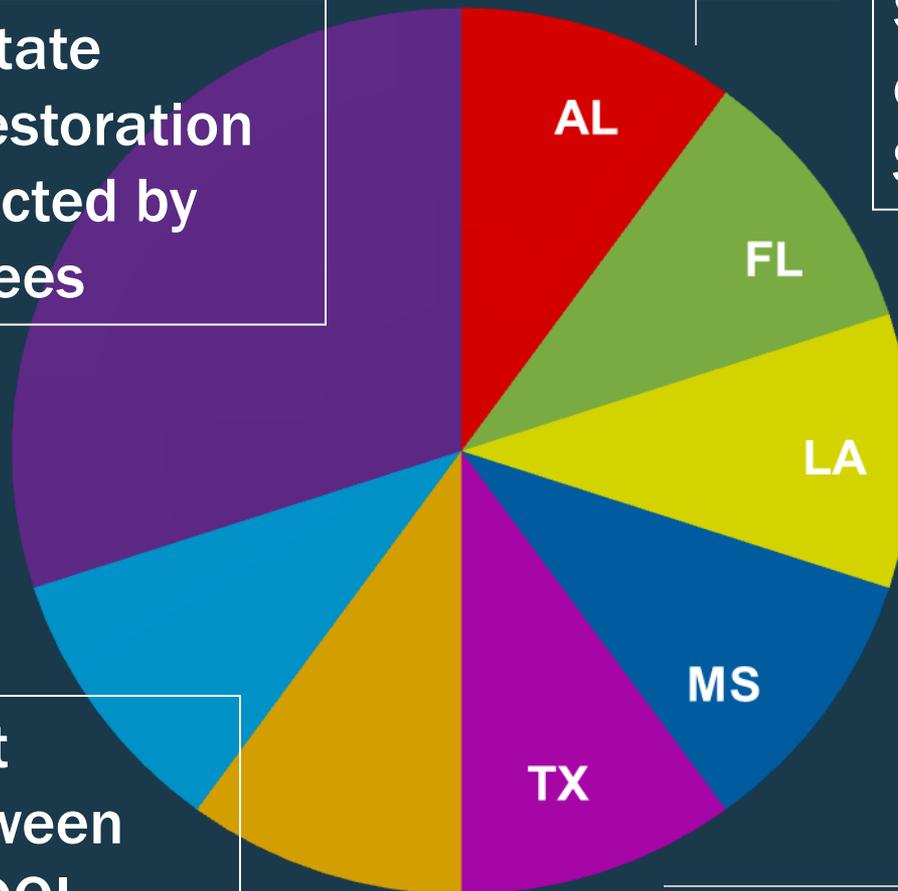
- NOAA is authorized under the Oil Pollution Act to conduct the Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) process
- Deepwater Horizon NRDA Trustees (5 Gulf States & 4 Federal agencies) conduct the 3 stages of NRDA:



# Early Restoration \$1 Billion

\$300M for state sponsored restoration projects selected by federal trustees

\$500M split equally among Gulf State Trustees



\$200M split equally between NOAA and DOI

# Purpose of Today's PLL Project Update

- Present to HMS AP members on the project as developed to address a portion of pelagic finfish injuries resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill
- To update the HMS AP from our September presentation – the PLL Project team has been building on the Final Phase IV Early Restoration Plan to develop an implementation plan to execute the project and achieve restoration goals
- Discuss participation in project

# Pelagic Longline Bycatch Reduction Project

## Background: Gulf of Mexico PLL Fishery

- Primarily targets yellowfin tuna and swordfish
- Limited access fishery
- ~ 50 Vessels operate in the Gulf
- Landed in LA, FL, TX, & AL
- Fishing practices vary regionally and by target species

# Example Bycatch in the PLL Fishery

ALBACORE TUNA

BIGEYE TUNA

BLUEFIN TUNA

BILLFISH

BLACKFIN TUNA

BONITO

BLUE

BIGEYE THRESHER

BLUE MARLIN

DOLPHIN SPP

DUSKY SHARK

SILKY SHARK

ESCOLAR

LANCETFISH SPP

LONGFIN MAKO

OCEANIC WHITETIP SHARK

OPAH

POMFRET SPP

COMMON THRESHER SHARK

ATLANTIC SAILFISH

BLACKTIP SHARK

OTHER SHARKS

SKIPJACK TUNA

SHORTFIN MAKO

NIGHT SHARK

SCALLOPED HAMMERHEAD SHARK

SANDBAR SHARK

SWORDFISH

TIGER SHARK

OTHER TUNA

WAHOO

WHITE MARLIN

HAMMERHEAD SPP

MAKO SPP

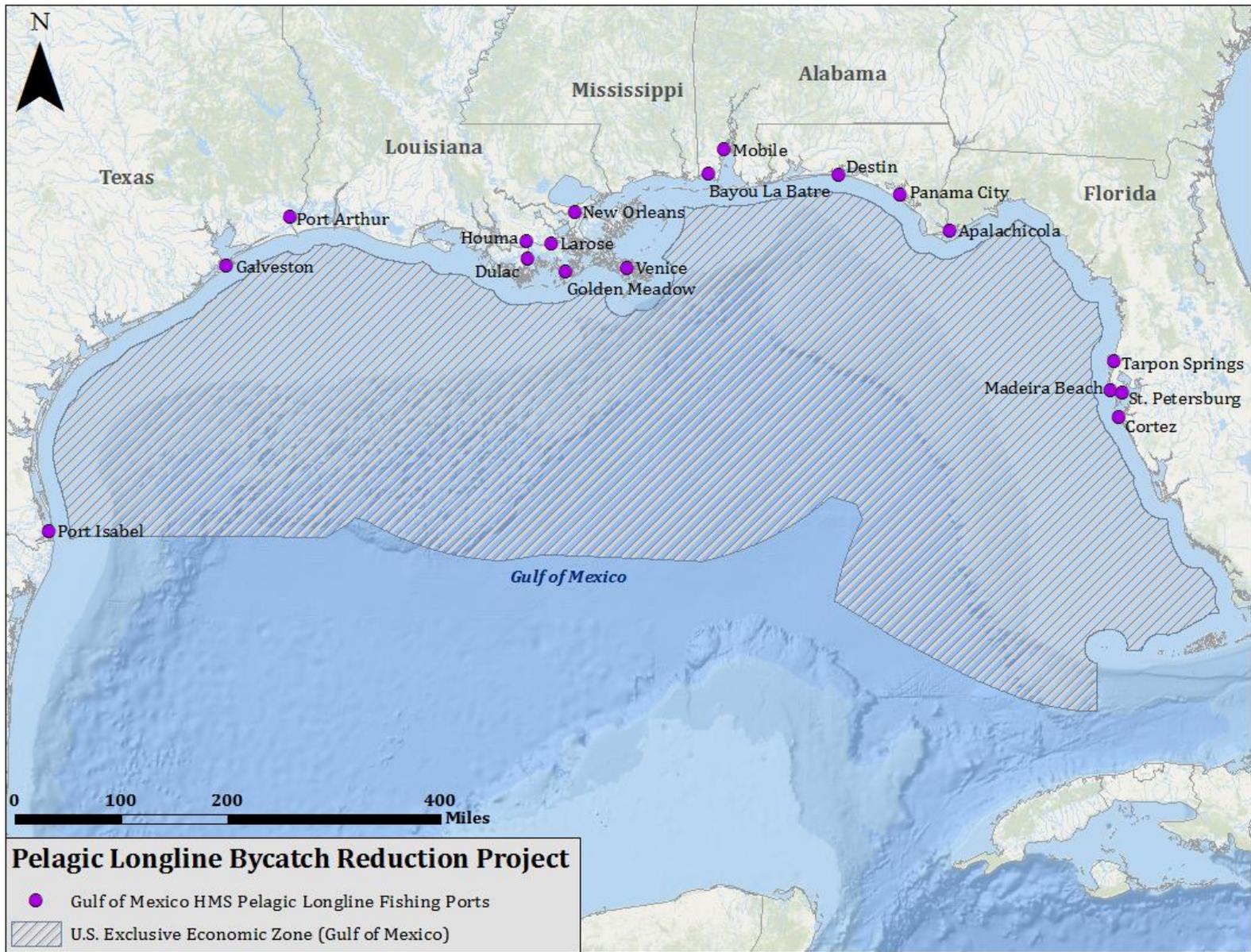
THRESHER SHARK

YELLOWFIN TUNA

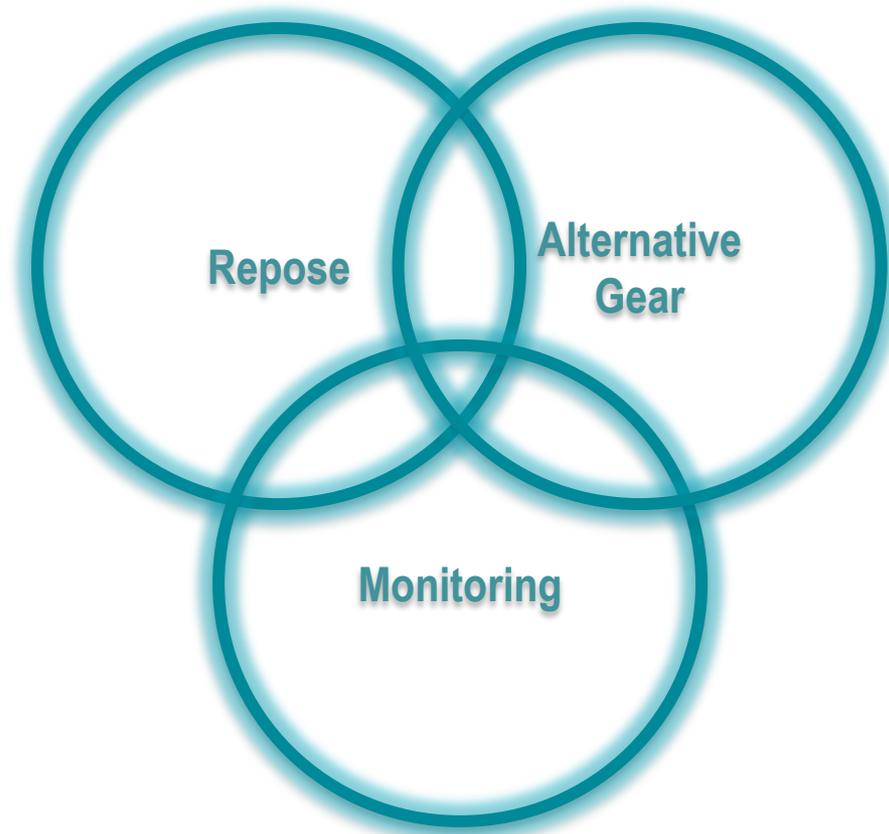
PORBEAGLE SHARK

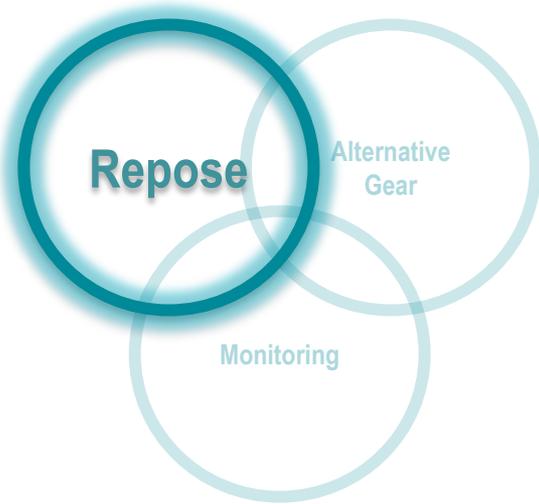
BLACKNOSE SHARK



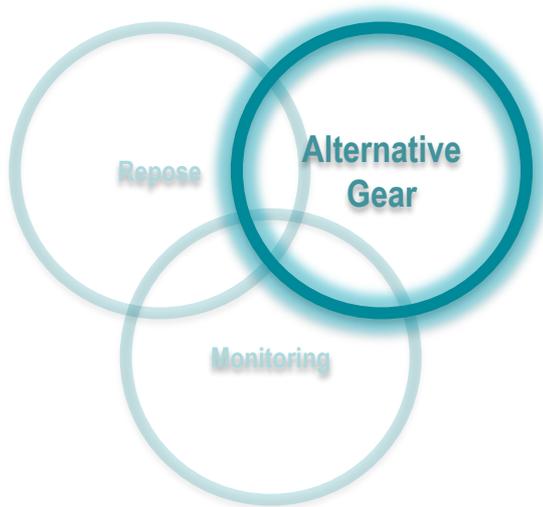


**Project Goal: To restore pelagic fish biomass through actions that are expected to reduce fish mortality from bycatch and regulatory discards in the portion of the U.S. Atlantic pelagic longline (PLL) fishery operating in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM)...**

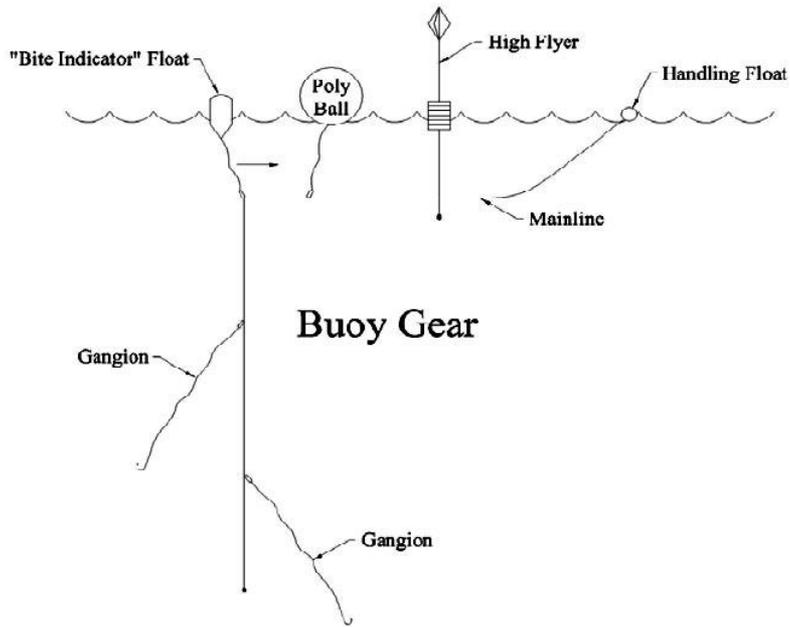
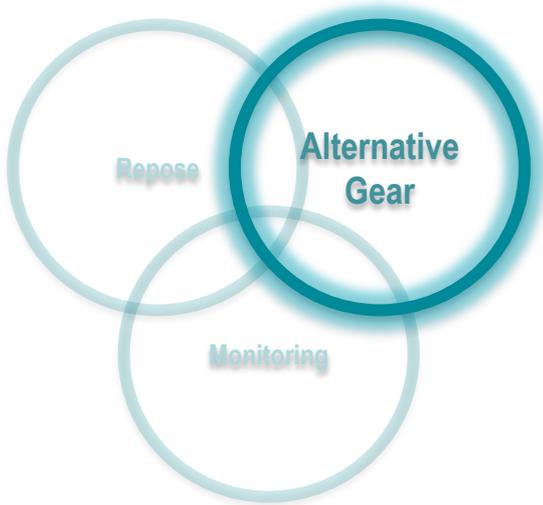




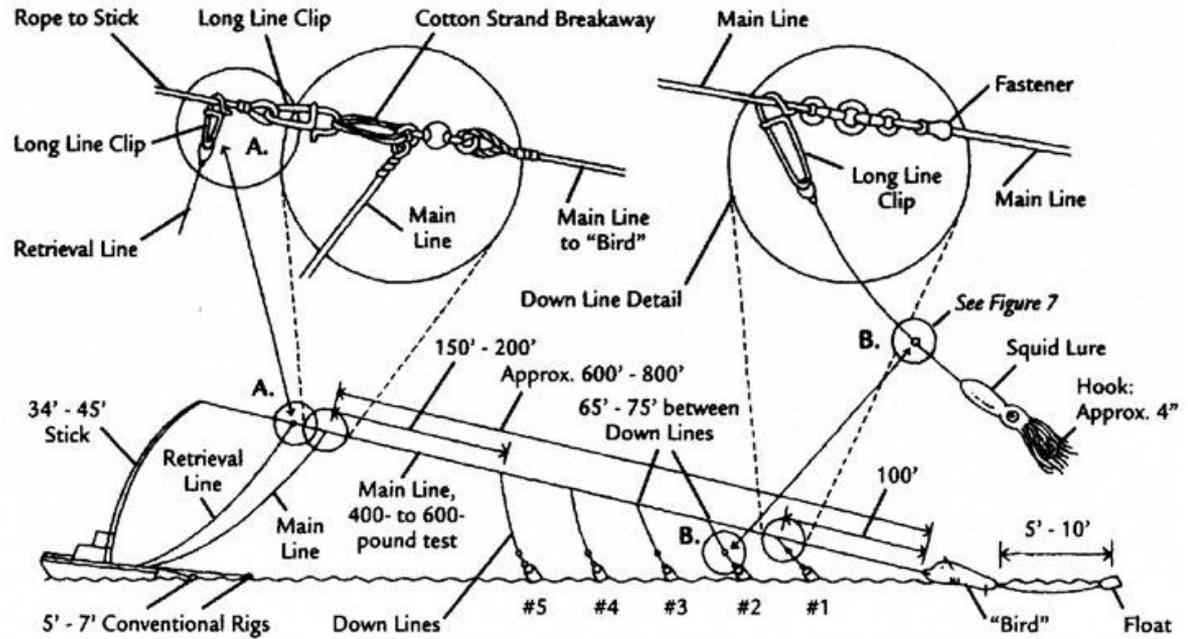
- Compensation-based voluntary annual 6-month repose from PLL fishing in the GOM
- Targeted to coincide with bluefin tuna spawning season in the GOM
- During the repose period, participating fishermen can continue to fish for yellowfin tuna and swordfish but using only the provided alternative fishing gear type(s)

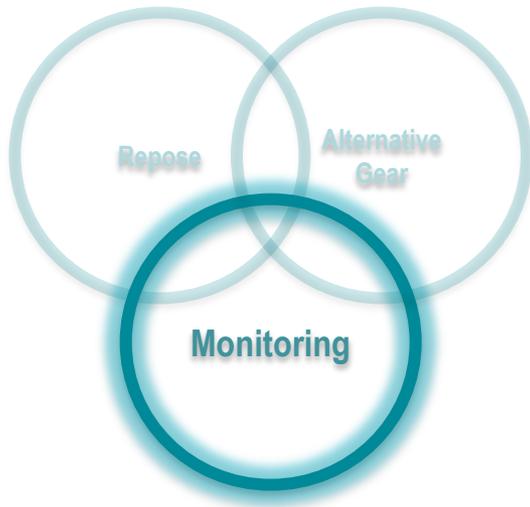


- Provisioning of two alternative gear types to PLL fishermen participating in the repose period: greenstick gear and/or buoy gear
- During the PLL repose period, fishers would be encouraged/incentivized to use the alternative gears to harvest targeted species
- Objective: to reduce adverse financial impact to fishers and help maintain local economies during the PLL repose periods
- Technical extension services (research, outreach, and training on the use of the alternative gear types) will be provided to participants to educate users and tune alternative gear to maximize effectiveness



### Greenstick Gear





- A full monitoring plan has been drafted and was included in the Phase IV Final Early Restoration Plan
- Monitoring capitalizes on existing data collection programs and data management systems within NMFS (e.g. POP, VMS, HMS Logbooks)
- Expansion or modification of existing programs will facilitate capture of project-specific data (e.g. updating POP data management infrastructure for inclusion of alternative gear data)

# The PLL Project is:

- **Restoration-benefit based & non-regulatory:** Project aims to restore injured pelagic fish biomass and does not institute or change any regulations
- **Voluntary:** No requirement to participate
- **Compensated:** Participants are compensated to refrain from fishing with PLL gear and provided with alternative gear(s) to continue fishing for yellowfin tuna and swordfish during the annual 6 month repose
- **Temporary:** Project is slated to last 6-10 years dependent upon the level of participation to achieve restoration benefits of restored pelagic fish biomass

# Additional Project Information

- **Project Budget: \$20 million**
- **Participation levels impact how long project will last in order to achieve resource benefit goals – estimate 6-10 years**
  - Provides flexibility to meet project goals with various participations rates each repose period
  - Anticipate 6-10 vessels participating annually
- **Alternative gear types are not anticipated to fully replicate catch of target species from PLL gear**
  - Gear training and gear improvement efforts are expected to increase catch efficiency over the life of the project
  - Repose compensation in addition to alternative gear use are anticipated to jointly offset economic impacts to owners, operators, and suppliers

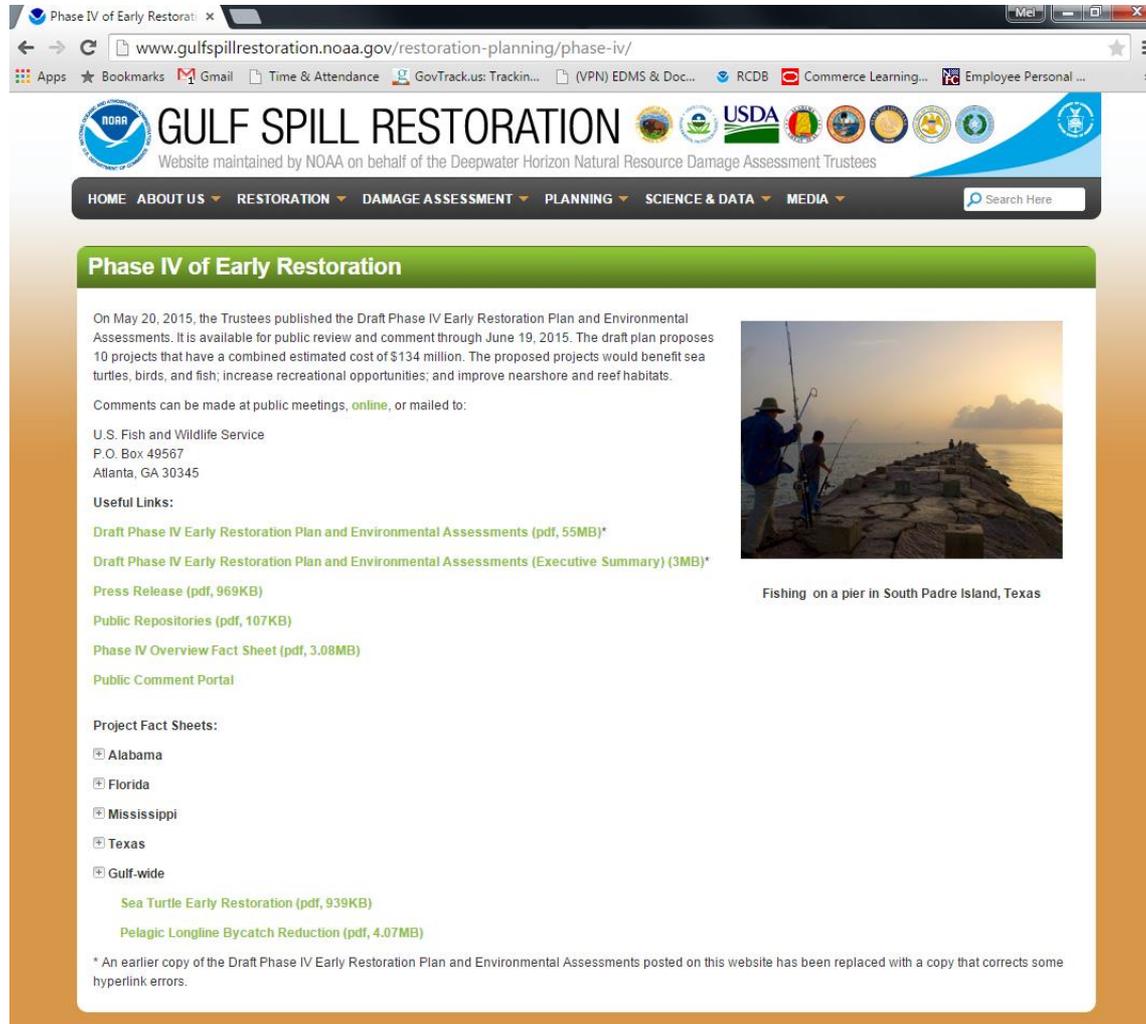
# PLL Project Participation

- **Eligibility examples**
  - Applicable permits
  - GOM IBQ
  - Recent history of PLL fishing in the GOM
  - Additional prioritization criteria
- **Timing**
  - Expect solicitation for participants to go out this summer
  - Applications evaluated and selected participants determined fall 2016
- **Participant Agreements**
  - Would include details of project requirements (e.g. repose, alternative gear, monitoring)

# Draft Timeline: Project Implementation

- Complete: Phase IV Early Restoration Plan development, public review, and finalization
- Draft Final: Project Implementation Plan
- 2016 Spring/Summer/Fall: Institute monitoring framework, solicit and select project participants, and develop and finalize implementation contracts/agreements
- 2017 January: Implement repose / alternative gear / monitoring

# GulfSpillRestoration.NOAA.gov



Phase IV of Early Restorati: x

www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-planning/phase-iv/

Apps Bookmarks Gmail Time & Attendance GovTrack.us: Trackin... (VPN) EDMS & Doc... RCDB Commerce Learning... Employee Personal ...

**GULF SPILL RESTORATION**  
Website maintained by NOAA on behalf of the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees

HOME ABOUT US RESTORATION DAMAGE ASSESSMENT PLANNING SCIENCE & DATA MEDIA Search Here

## Phase IV of Early Restoration

On May 20, 2015, the Trustees published the Draft Phase IV Early Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessments. It is available for public review and comment through June 19, 2015. The draft plan proposes 10 projects that have a combined estimated cost of \$134 million. The proposed projects would benefit sea turtles, birds, and fish; increase recreational opportunities; and improve nearshore and reef habitats.

Comments can be made at public meetings, [online](#), or mailed to:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
P.O. Box 49567  
Atlanta, GA 30345

**Useful Links:**

- [Draft Phase IV Early Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessments \(pdf, 55MB\)\\*](#)
- [Draft Phase IV Early Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessments \(Executive Summary\) \(3MB\)\\*](#)
- [Press Release \(pdf, 969KB\)](#)
- [Public Repositories \(pdf, 107KB\)](#)
- [Phase IV Overview Fact Sheet \(pdf, 3.08MB\)](#)
- [Public Comment Portal](#)

**Project Fact Sheets:**

- Alabama
- Florida
- Mississippi
- Texas
- Gulf-wide
  - [Sea Turtle Early Restoration \(pdf, 939KB\)](#)
  - [Pelagic Longline Bycatch Reduction \(pdf, 4.07MB\)](#)

\* An earlier copy of the Draft Phase IV Early Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessments posted on this website has been replaced with a copy that corrects some hyperlink errors.



Fishing on a pier in South Padre Island, Texas

# Discussion

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