



U.S. Department of the Interior  
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**Technical Announcement**

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***Effect of Depth, Location, and Habitat Type on Relative Abundance and Species Composition of Fishes Associated with Petroleum Platforms and Sonnier Bank in the Northern Gulf of Mexico***

**[OCS Study MMS 2006-037](#)**

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, announces the availability of a new study report, *Effect of Depth, Location, and Habitat Type on Relative Abundance and Species Composition of Fishes Associated with Petroleum Platforms and Sonnier Bank in the Northern Gulf of Mexico*.

This report presents results from a study that sampled and compared the fish populations associated with standing oil and gas platforms located within three regions of the northern Gulf of Mexico and Sonnier Bank, a natural reef with characteristics similar to a platform. Sampling was conducted from 1998 to 2003. Platforms in the northern Gulf of Mexico form an extensive resource for fishery user groups. Regional fisheries managers and user groups have reasonable justification to believe that platforms enhance fisheries and organisms dependent on hard substrate. This research continues to support the premise that standing oil and gas platforms make useful artificial reefs because they support fish densities that can be from 10 to 1,000 times greater than the densities found over adjacent sand and mud bottom habitats. This study found from 10,000 to 30,000 fishes associated with individual platforms. Further, fish densities at standing platforms almost always exceed those found both at artificial reefs (both partially removed and toppled) and at natural habitats such as Sonnier Bank and the West Flower Garden Bank.

This report is available only in compact disc format from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at a charge of \$15.00, by referencing OCS Study MMS 2006-037. The report may be downloaded from the MMS website through the [Environmental Studies Program Information System \(ESPIS\)](#). You will be able to obtain this report also from the National Technical Information Service in the near future. Here are the addresses. You may also inspect copies at selected Federal Depository Libraries.

Minerals Management Service  
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region  
Public Information Office (MS 5034)

U.S. Department of Commerce  
National Technical Information Service  
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Telephone requests may be placed at  
(504) 736-2519, 1-800-200-GULF, or  
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Rush Orders: 1-800-336-4700

**MMS Main Website: [www.mms.gov](http://www.mms.gov)**  
**Gulf of Mexico Website: [www.gomr.mms.gov](http://www.gomr.mms.gov)**