

Fisheries Habitat Facts

Habitat Degradation

- Human activities have destroyed 55 million acres of saltwater wetlands since colonial times.
- Salt marshes are impaired by dredging, filling, dikes and diversions, ditching, and flood control.
- Nutrient runoff has devastated 40–90% of underwater sea grass beds around the country, important habitat for juvenile fish species.
- 75,000 large dams and thousands of small dams block passage for migratory fish.
- Estuaries and coastal wetlands provide essential habitat for more than 75% of recreational and commercial fisheries, a \$56 billion industry.



Habitat Restoration Projects

- \$33 million contributed by NOAA
- \$100 million cash and in-kind contributions generated

Community Involvement

- Over 1,000 Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) projects funded
- 75,000 volunteers involved
- 450,000 volunteer hours contributed
- 22 national and regional partnership agreements

Restoration Results through 2004

- 18,000 habitat acres restored
- 619 stream miles opened for fish passage

Number of Restoration Projects Funded to Date

Northwest – 232	North Atlantic – 185
Alaska – 27	Mid-Atlantic – 76
Western Pacific – 9	South Atlantic – 66
California – 149	Gulf of Mexico – 123
Caribbean – 4	



Spotlight on Louisiana

- 40% of all wetlands in the contiguous United States are located in Louisiana.
- 80% of the Nation's coastal wetlands losses occur in Louisiana (approximately 30 square miles per year).
- Nearly one-third (by weight) of the fish harvested in the continental United States come from Louisiana's coastal zone.
- Louisiana's coastal zone:
 - 1) Provides infrastructure to five of the Nation's 15 largest ports
 - 2) Is the origin of 80% of the Nation's offshore oil and gas production
 - 3) Houses over 2 million residents.
- Wetlands losses during the past century total over 1 million acres.