



NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
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Gering teacher returns from ground fish survey

Heather Haberman, a science teacher at Scotsbluff High School, returned Saturday after assisting researchers for eleven days as they conducted ground fish surveys in the Gulf of Mexico.

"I feel honored to have been selected to participate in NOAA's Teacher at Sea program," said Haberman. "This opportunity allowed me to work on a fisheries population study that will give a better understanding of the current ecological conditions in the Gulf waters. My students were able to learn about and witness exciting research projects taking place at the end of our very own watershed, and making learning relevant through my own hands-on experiences is vital to getting my students excited about science. No matter how far we live from the ocean, it affects all of our lives."

Haberman boarded the NOAA ship *Oregon II*, on July 6th in Galveston, Texas. She assisted the researchers on board as they conducted surveys of the groundfish in the Gulf of Mexico, including the commercially- and recreationally-important red snapper. On board, Haberman helped trawl for the fish and then sort and measure them for sampling. Ground fish surveys establish population trends, which is important for sustainable commercial and recreational fishing. Haberman also kept a blog of her experience, accessible at <http://teacheratsea.wordpress.com/category/teachers-at-sea/heather-haberman/>. Photos from her blog are free and available for use by media with proper credit.

"NOAA's Teacher at Sea program immerses teachers in hands-on research experiences that give them clearer insight into our ocean planet, a greater understanding of maritime work and studies, and increased knowledge of environmental literacy," said Jennifer Hammond, the program's director. "Participating in real-world research allows teachers to gain experience actually doing science, which makes a significant impact when they bring back their knowledge to their classrooms, teaching students how the oceans affect their lives."

Now in its 21st year, the program has provided over 600 teachers the opportunity to gain first-hand experience participating in science at sea. This year, NOAA received applications from more than 250 teachers, and chose 33 to participate in research cruises. The educators chosen are able to enrich their curricula with the depth of understanding they gain by living and working side-by-side, day and night, with scientists studying the marine environment.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Find us on [Facebook](#).