

BOEM ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: ONGOING STUDIES

BOEM OCS Region: [Gulf of Mexico](#)

Title: Literature Search and Data Synthesis of Biological Information for use in Management Decisions Concerning Decommissioning (GM-04-04)

Total Cost: \$323,373

Period of Performance: FY 2005 – 2009

Conducting Organization: Versar, Inc.

BOEM Contact: [Dr. Arie Kaller](#)

Description:

Background: Over the 50 years of offshore oil and gas activities, there has been a steady increase in the number of structures in the offshore environment. Presently, there are approximately 4,000 structures, not all of these large production facilities. About 100 new structures are installed each year, which is balanced by the removal of about 100. The oil fields on the shelf are relatively old, and very soon, the number of structure removals will exceed the installations. The structures have provided a hard substrate for the growth of biological communities in an otherwise barren, muddy landscape. Some structures remain in place or are toppled to form artificial reefs. While the Minerals Management Service has funded numerous small studies to examine the ecological role of these structures in the Gulf, there is no broad overview of the impacts of these structures and the effects on the environment should a large number be removed.

Objectives: With emphasis on the continental shelf, this study will (1) review the literature for studies of the ecology of platform structures, artificial reefs and natural reefs; (2) evaluate the overall biological impact of the structures; (3) evaluate the potential impacts from removing the structures; and (4) identify information gaps for future study plans.

Methods: The contractor will conduct a standard literature search of all publicly available documents on the subject. The information will be synthesized and estimates of the biological impact will be made by methods recommended by the contractor.

Products: A final report.

Importance to BOEM: This information will be used to make management decisions about the removal of structures. The impacts to the environment have not been assessed as a whole and this study will compile all the available information.

Current Status: The final report is being submitted for BOEM review September 2012

Final Report Due: June 2009

Publications: 2009 ITM

Affiliated WWW Sites: None

Revised date: September 2012

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