

## **BOEMRE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: ONGOING STUDIES**

**Region:** National

**Planning Area(s):** All

**Title:** Archiving of Outer Continental Shelf Invertebrates by the Smithsonian Institution

**Total Cost:** \$1,048,966.00

**Period of Performance:** FY 2009-2013

**Conducting Organization:** Smithsonian Institution

**BOEMRE Contact:** [Greg Boland](#)

### **Description:**

**Background:** The MMS conducts many biological projects in support of decision-making related to the development of offshore energy and mineral resources. These projects frequently result in large collections of invertebrate specimens. Taxonomy is a critical component to the ecological interpretation of biological data. Archiving of the collections provides for taxonomic verification and for the future use of the collections. The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) is the Nation's most reliable and respected repository for biological collections. Since 1979 invertebrate specimens collected through the MMS Environmental Studies Program have been carefully maintained through the NMNH's archiving standards and made available to taxonomists around the world. During the period 2004-2008, this project was supported by USGS funds that are available for MMS information needs. In 2007 MMS and USGS agreed that MMS would continue support of this project beginning in FY 2009 and the USGS funds previously used to support NMNH would be directed to other MMS information needs that could be addressed by in-house USGS scientists.

**Objectives:** An objective of this study is to provide quality assurance for biological data generated through the MMS Environmental Studies Program. Meeting this objective serves to enhance the credibility of offshore energy and mineral resources decision-making.

**Methods:** To accomplish the objectives of this project, specifications for the handling, storage, and shipping of invertebrate specimens collected through MMS environmental studies are included in applicable contracts. These specifications were developed in coordination with the Smithsonian Institution to provide contractors with information required to ensure that the collected specimens are delivered to the NMNH in the best possible condition. The Smithsonian accepts the specimens, checks the condition of the samples and taxonomic identification, and makes them part of the national collections. The collections are then maintained according to the strict guidelines of the NMNH and are made available to other researchers. Semi-annual reports to MMS provide updates on

the numbers of specimens accessioned into the NMNH collections, those remaining to be accessioned, and those on loan to taxonomists around the world. To date, over 260 species new to science have been identified in the MMS collections.

**MMS Information Need(s) to be Addressed:** Continued archiving and long-term reliable curating of the vast collections of invertebrate specimens acquired through MMS-sponsored projects are essential elements of biological quality assurance. This effort provides MMS with the scientific credibility important to stakeholders' acceptance of decision-making in the Offshore Energy and Minerals Program.

Current Status:

Final Report Due:

Publications:

Affiliated WWW Sites:

Revised Date: July 28, 2010

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