



SCIENCE NOTES

Applied science for informed decision making

July 27, 2015

Dear Reader,

This month we honor the work of one of our colleagues from the Gulf of Mexico, the late Rezneat (Rez) Milton Darnell, Professor Emeritus at Texas A&M University, Department of Oceanography, and his recently published book, *The American Sea: A Natural History of the Gulf of Mexico*. Present and former BOEM scientists from our Gulf of Mexico regional office helped shepherd through the completion of the book after Dr. Darnell passed away in 2009. They shared a close association with the professor and the research, which BOEM supported in numerous ways. Enjoy reading this month's *Science Note*, and please feel free to send us your feedback at boempublicaffairs@boem.gov.

Sincerely,

William Y. Brown

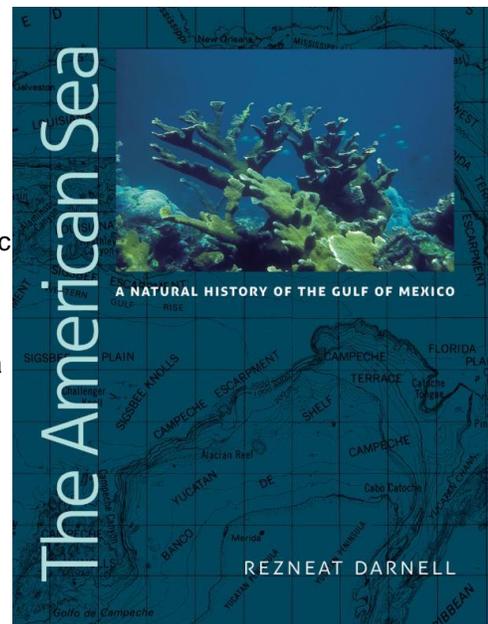
Chief Environmental Officer, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

The American Sea: A Natural History of the Gulf of Mexico

For more than a decade, Rezneat (Rez) Milton Darnell worked on this major synthesis of what is known about the Gulf of Mexico. His goal: to bring a deeper understanding of "the American Sea" to students, scientists, managers and educated citizens of the public at large. *The American Sea* builds on Darnell's own research, the research of his graduate students, government agency research reports, data synthesis reports, and literature summaries to present a holistic view of the Gulf of Mexico.

Rez trained a generation of scientists on the ecology of the continental shelf. BOEM and many others recognized him as a pioneer in that field, though he largely resisted specialization, remaining throughout his career "the writer and bringer together of things."

This magnificent book is a major landmark reference publication on the Gulf of Mexico. It embraces history, geology, geography, meteorology, chemistry, biology, ecology and human relations in one comprehensive reference.



Although it is thorough and meticulous in coverage, what comes through in these pages is the enormity, complexity and mystery of the world that lies just beyond the Texas vacation beach, the Louisiana wetland, or the Mexican fishing village.

In addition to photographs of deepwater organisms that are included in the book, the numerous illustrations provide excellent visual material, including historical and ocean floor maps and many works of original art depicting marine species, sea turtles, fish and crustaceans.

BOEM is proud to have supported a project that adds so much to our knowledge and collective understanding of the Gulf of Mexico. The bureau's support included a modest amount of funding to prepare the manuscript from Rez' handwritten text, contributing many deep sea photographs taken in the 1980s by BOEM staff, including stunning photos of coral spawning, and coordinating with general editor John W. (Wes) Tunnell, Jr., Ph.D., of Texas A&M's Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, to edit sections of the book to see it through to completion.

Current and former BOEM scientists who shepherded the endeavor are Gregory Boland, BOEM biological oceanographer; James Sinclair, a Marine Ecologist now with the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement; and Drs. Bob Rogers and Richard Defenbaugh, both retired.



Brain coral spawning egg bundles, carrying eggs and sperm in the same package, East Flower Garden Bank, Gulf of Mexico. Photo by Gregory Boland, BOEM.

The book was published by the Harte Research Institute, Texas A&M Press, TAMU Press:
<http://www.tamupress.com/product/American-Sea,8196.aspx>.

To learn more about BOEM's Environmental Studies Program, visit www.boem.gov/studies/.

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The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) promotes energy independence, environmental protection and economic development through responsible, science-based management of offshore conventional and renewable energy resources.