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MMS AWARDS \$371,325 CONTRACT
TO LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY (#40040)

The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today that a \$371,325 contract has been awarded to Louisiana State University (LSU) under the Coastal Marine Institute (CMI) program. To date, MMS and LSU have each contributed approximately \$2.5 million to fund the CMI program.

"The CMI program provides an excellent means of building partnerships with states in strengthening environmental, social, and economic studies," MMS Director Tom Fry said. "These studies will provide both MMS and the state of Louisiana with the best scientific information possible upon which to base decisions about natural gas and oil activities.

"This most recent contract will provide for a 3-year study to help determine the localized effect on regional fish populations caused by the installation, operation and subsequent removal of natural gas and oil structures," said Fry.

Researchers will examine the abundance, biomass, and behavior of fish adjacent to three natural gas and oil platforms in the Northern Gulf of Mexico, Fry said. Data collection will occur in the Grand Isle area, with the bulk of the data analysis to take place at LSU's Coastal Fisheries Institute in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

MMS's funds will be matched by contributions of both funding and in-kind services from LSU and Mobil USA, Inc.

MMS administers federal offshore mineral programs and manages the federal mineral royalty program.

The MMS Environmental Studies Program has funded more than \$600 million in scientific research and marine habitat studies since 1974. More than 90 percent of these studies are performed under cooperative agreements with state and federal research organizations, academic institutions, and private industry.

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