



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Minerals Management Service  
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

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**Gulf of Mexico Science  
on the  
Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary**

**Volume XVI No. 2, December 1998**

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) Gulf of Mexico Region recently supported the production of a dedicated special issue of the scientific journal *Gulf of Mexico Science* on the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary. The sanctuary, home of the most northern coral reefs in the Gulf, is located some 107 nautical miles off the southeastern Texas coast. The research for seven of the eleven papers published in the special journal issue was funded by MMS as part of its scientific studies program.

MMS, an agency of the Department of the Interior, has been working to safeguard the coral reefs of the Flower Garden Banks in the northwest Gulf of Mexico since 1973. MMS protects the reefs and their ecosystems through a stipulated requirement in each of the oil and gas leases awarded for tracts in the vicinity. That stipulation, known as the Topographic Features Stipulation, demands that oil and gas industry operators take certain precautionary measures and refrain from certain activities while they are working near the reefs.

MMS also conducts a long-term monitoring of the coral reefs in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Sanctuary Program. These programs, along with frequent, detailed inspections of offshore oil and gas production facilities, demonstrate MMS's commitment to protecting the Flower Garden Banks, a concern that will last well into the future.

For more information about this journal or the Environmental Studies Program in general, contact the Environmental Sciences Section (MS 5430), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, telephone (504) 736-2789.

You can obtain copies of the journal from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at no charge.

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MMS is the Federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the OCS, and collects, accounts for and disburses about \$4 billion yearly in revenues from offshore Federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and Indian lands.

**-MMS-GOM-**

MMS's Website Address: <http://www.mms.gov>

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