



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

Technical Announcement

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**Offshore Petroleum Platforms: Functional Significance for Larval Fish
Across Longitudinal and Latitudinal Gradients**

OCS Study MMS 2002-077

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, announces the availability of a new study report, *Offshore Petroleum Platforms: Functional Significance for Larval Fish Across Longitudinal and Latitudinal Gradients*.

This report presents results of a study comparing the larval fish assemblages collected at oil and gas platforms in the north-central Gulf of Mexico. Objectives included the collection of larval and juvenile fishes across depth gradients (= latitude) and east/west of the Mississippi River (= longitude) to determine how platforms affect the local abundance and distribution of these fishes and to provide information to address whether platforms have a nursery function to these habitat-limited fishes. Ichthyoplankton and juvenile fish assemblages were sampled at two petroleum platforms and data analysis also included platforms studied in a previous report (OCS Study MMS 2001-077). Distributional differences were observed for many species within and around platforms. Higher numbers and higher variation of larval and juvenile fishes were collected inside platforms compared with the adjacent open-waters. Blennies and damselfish settlement-size larvae were most commonly collected. Other settlement-size reef fish taxa (for example, snappers and groupers) were relatively rare and, therefore, this study concluded that they probably do not use platforms as nursery/recruitment habitat.

This report is available only in compact disc format. The discs are available from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at a charge of \$15.00 by referencing OCS Study MMS 2002-077. You will be able to obtain this report also from the National Technical Information Service in the near future. Here are the addresses. You may also inspect copies at selected Federal Depository Libraries.

Minerals Management Service
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Telephone requests may be placed at
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Rush Orders: 1-800-336-4700

MMS is the Federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas, and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf in Federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian leases. These revenues totaled over \$6 billion in 2002 and nearly \$127 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and Federal park and recreation lands.

-MMS-GOM-

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

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