



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

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CONTACT: Barney Congdon
(504) 736-2595
Caryl Fagot
(504) 736-2590

**Marine Debris Point Source Investigation:
Padre Island National Seashore
March 1994-September 1995**

OCS Study MMS 96-0023

A new scientific report produced for the Minerals Management Service details the problem of marine debris washed up on the beaches of the Padre Island National Seashore in south Texas. The primary focus of this report was to identify sources responsible for dumping items that wash ashore at Padre Island National Seashore. Padre Island National Seashore has conducted intensive marine debris research for the past seven years, and the current study design was based on those findings.

This 1994 debris survey project was conducted daily over a 16-mile section of shoreline. Investigators targeted two specific point sources--the shrimping industry and the offshore gas and oil industry. This research has statistically proven that point source violators can be identified.

The data obtained has established a baseline on marine debris accumulation and its composition in the Gulf of Mexico. This data can now be used to define yearly trends and to determine the effectiveness of educational and regulatory policies to reduce marine debris pollution.

Over 40,000 items were collected during the year-long study. Based on statistical results, the shrimping industry was directly responsible for generating 30 percent of the items. Through long-term data analysis, the shrimping industry is also a suspected contributor of an additional 35 percent. But the percentage of items associated with the offshore gas and oil industry was much lower--13 percent of all debris collected.

For more information about the Environmental Studies Program, contact the Environmental Studies Section (MS 5430), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, telephone (504) 736-2897.

Copies of this report can be obtained from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at a charge of \$2.00 by referencing OCS Study MMS 96-0023. This report will also be available from the National Technical Information Service in the near future. These addresses are provided below. Copies are also available for inspection at selected Federal Depository Libraries.

Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
Public Information Office (MS 5034)
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394
Telephone requests may be placed at
(504) 736-2519 or 1-800-200-GULF, or
FAX:(504) 736-2620

U.S. Department of Commerce
National Technical Information Service
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, Virginia 22161
(703) 487-4650 or FAX: (703) 321-8547
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