

# Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks, Inc.

## **Partial Activity Report for the Period June 12 thru October 9, 2008**

### Summary

During this period there were two dive monitoring trips and one deployment. On September 28, 2008 a Dive Trip was made to the 070227E Pyramids in FH-2 and the Gerald Corcoran Reef in FH-13. On October 2, 150 Reef Balls were deployed in FH-1 and FH-2. On October 4, a Dive Trip was made to the Fireboat in FH-2 and the Joe Curtis-Mary Landry Reef in FH-13.

### **070227E Pyramids, 448F2**

**Position: 30°05.066'N / 88°34.462'W 12428.0/47043.5/29602.9**

This group of 5 Limestone Pyramids were deployed on February 2, 2007 as part of the Hurricane Katrina Reef replenishment program. These 8' tall Tetrahedron shaped units have a 12' base and weigh in at 3.5 tons each. Most previous Dive Surveys have been met with very poor visibility in the last 10 feet of the water column so few attempts have been made to these reefs. The only previous Video taken of these Pyramids was made on May 13, 2007 to 070306B in FH-13, less than 1 year following deployment. This trip was made on October 2 to 070227E in FH-2 and was also met with poor visibility at about 2 feet. However, fish were baited with a Bonito carcass and revealed a pretty nice Red Snapper population. The structures themselves are scouring into the bottom, probably due to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike which passed thru South of the area around August 31 and September 12. The Pyramids have 3 rows of windows and the bottom row is below grade, while the bottom of the second row of windows is even with grade. Depth measurements indicated 56' at the top of the Pyramid and 63' at the grade line. This indicates that better than a foot of the Pyramid is below grade and the Top of the units are even with the surrounding bottom depth, denoting scouring into the bottom. Heavy encrustation of barnacles was noted in contrast to the May visit in FH-13, but note that these units are at a shallower depth. The units were close enough together that 4 of them were observed despite the poor visibility. Only Red Snapper were seen, probably due to the poor visibility. However, there was a significant population of keeper size red snapper (50-75/1-4 lbs.). The size of the red snapper on this reef overall were smaller compared to the other wrecks surveyed nearby. Fishing topside indicated a good population of game fish on this reef as well as the other reefs in the area and is partially attributed to the aforementioned Storms.



### **060624 Gerald C. Corcoran Reef 435F13**

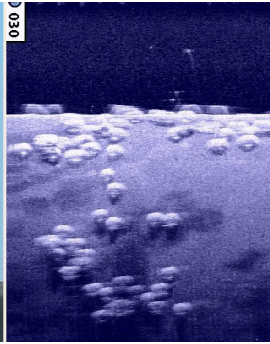
**Position: 29°59.527'N / 88°30.610'W**

This 145' River Tug Boat is sitting upright in about 86' of water with FH-13. Initially a water clearance of 49 feet was recorded at the top of the Radar Antenna, but now the Radar Antenna has come off it's mount and lies on the port stern corner of the roof of the Wheel House. The top of it's mast now reads 54', while the center front mast light reads 53' and the Stern Mast Light reads 56'. Other depth readings were taken for future comparisons. Port Stern Wheel House Mast = 55', Top of Starboard Stern Wheel House Railing = 69', Port Bow Wheel House Roof = 61', Top of Starboard Push Bar = 76', Nearby Starboard Bollard = 81', Port Side Bollard = 86', Stern Mast Planer = 72', Top of Stern Hold Hatch = 76'. Observations indicate some damage from the recent Storms such as the Radar Antenna off the Mast and lying on the Port Stern Roof Corner. Also there is evidence of abrasion to the Roof in this area. The Starboard Spot Light is missing from it's mount, but the Port Light remains. There are much fewer urchins, arrow crabs, damsels, butterflies, angels, and other tropical types of life when compared to the July 21, 2007 visit. Fish Observations included Red Snapper (1-12lbs./50-75), Gag Grouper (1-10lbs./15-20), Mangrove Snapper (1-3lbs./8-12), Trigger Fish (8-10), Sheepshead (4-6lbs./2), and spiny urchins (3). Overall the Reef is doing nicely with a good population of game fish.

## **081002a Reef Balls 488F1 & 081002b Reef Balls 489F2**

**488F1 Position: 30°03.498'N / 88°36.836'W 12404.1/47036.8/29572.6**

**489F2 Position: 30°05.216'N / 88°33.280'W 12440.2/47044.2/29615.4**



This project was funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Emergency Disaster Relief Program. Reef Innovations from Sarasota Florida was contracted to build and deploy the reef balls at a cost of \$650 per unit. Reef Innovations sub-contracted with Matthews Marine of Pass Christian to build the units and deploy them. There were 315 Goliath Reef Balls, each measuring about 5 feet tall with a 6 foot base and weighing about 4800 pounds. All units were deployed in FH-1 and FH-2. About 150 units were deployed on September 27 & 28 and are being

used for studies by the DMR. The rest were deployed on October 2 as reported here. The Barge from Matthews Marine was anchored at the locations and approximately half of the 165 Reef Balls were deposited at each Fish Haven at the coordinates listed above.. The FH-1 deployment was near the old Rubble 1 Reef with a surrounding depth measurement of 63' and a minimum depth of 56' recorded. The FH-2 deployment was just West of the Bill Walker with a surrounding depth measurement of 55' and a minimum depth of 50' recorded.

## **070308 FireBoat 468F2**

**Position: 30°05.360/88°32.957**



This 65' X 16' Fireboat was sunk on March 8, 2007 in FH-2. The Vessel landed upright with the bow pointing South. The surrounding depth is about 55 feet with the minimum depth on top of the wheel house recorded at 44 feet on May 18, 2008. This trip recorded the depth at 49'. A measurement at the bow indicated 55'. Also, the May Trip showed the Rudder under the Stern to be fully visible, whereas this trip indicated some over-sedimentation with only about 6 inches above grade. These observations indicate the Storm induced scouring since the surrounding depth is also 55'. The Game Fish population was good with several Red Snapper (2-12lbs./75-100), and Grouper (1-15lbs./50-75) as well as Trigger Fish (15-20) and Mangrove Snapper (1-4lbs./10-15).

## **060424b Joe Curtis-Mary Landry Reef 434F13**

**Position: 30°03.459/88°32.189**

Also known as "The 4Boys", this 70' Steel Hull Shrimp Boat was sunk in about 66' of water at the North end of FH-13. Since it's deployment the Stern ladder has detached from the Rigging and lies just off the Stern exposed on the bottom. The Rigging has fallen to a horizontal position with a water clearance of 52 feet measured on this visit. Other water depth measurements were taken as follows: Bow Pulpit=58', Bow=60', Gunwale=64', Top of Mast=52', Bracket in front of Mast=54', Roof Top=55', Bollard near Bow=58', Under Stern=72'. The measurements indicate some scouring is taking place, probably due to the recent Storms. Fish Observations included Red Snapper (1-15lbs./75-100), Gag Grouper (1-15lbs./20-25), Goliath Grouper (~100lbs./1), Mangrove Snapper (1-3lbs./8-12), Trigger Fish (15-20), Spadefish (75-100), Blue Runners (75-100), Sheepshead (3-6lbs./15-20), and a few white-spotted soapfish.

