

Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks, Inc.

Activity Report for the Period November 10, 2011 - January 12, 2012

Activity Summary

During this period there were 2 Reef Monitoring Trips. On November 12, a dive monitoring trip was made to the Gerald Corcoran Reef in FH-13. On December 31, a dive monitoring trip was made to the Jumbo Barge in FH-7.

060624 Gerald C. Corcoran Reef 435F13

Position: **29°59.794'N / 88°29.892'W**

This 145' River Tug Boat is sitting upright in about 86' of water within FH-13 and has about 50 feet of water clearance.

Both trips were met with very poor visibility on the Structures. Some Video and observations were made above the Structures and revealed a good population of Red Snapper. In fact, the Red Snapper appear to be overtaking and dominating the reefs. It is proving difficult to catch any other species. The fish are good size mostly around 22"-26" total length and 6 to 18 pounds each. At the deeper FH-7 site the fish were leaning toward the upper end of that range. Underwater Observations for the November 12 visit included Red Snapper (100-150/2-20 lbs.), Mangrove Snapper (6-8/1-4 lbs.), and a single Cobia in the 30-40 pound class.

860701 Jumbo Barge 125F7

Position: **29°36.876'N / 88°24.593'W 29°36.841'N / 88°24.592'W**

This large Sea-Going Barge was deployed in 1986, but few details were recorded at the time. It is estimated to be around 400 feet in length (North-South orientation) with a two story wheel house. The bow was determined to be about 23.5 feet above the bottom in 1989. The Upper Wheelhouse reportedly rose to within 100 feet of the surface. Depth Readings on this visit indicated 116' at the Bow Eye and 113' on the Top Deck, pretty much the same as the October 2010 Readings. With a surrounding depth of about 132', the readings suggest a subsidence into the bottom of about 7 feet and loss of the upper wheelhouse.

Fish Observations for the December 31 trip included Red Snapper (150-200/4-25 lbs.), Gag Grouper (4-6/8-20 lbs.), Mangrove Snapper (8-12/2-6 lbs.), and Triggerfish (6-8). The reef was still completely void of Amberjack as reported on the October 9, 2010 Report. This is somewhat disturbing since the reef has always had a history of good Amberjack populations. Researching past reports shows the population was dwindling during the July 23, 2005 visit and after Hurricane Katrina, the next visit was not until July 25, 2009 and only a couple small Amberjack were observed. A visit on March 14, 2003 reported record numbers of Amberjack as well as Red Grouper which also seem to have disappeared off all our Reefs, however, the Red Grouper were a new species for our reefs that had just started showing up. Also there is noticeable soft corals growing all over the deck.

