

Mississippi Gulf Fishing Banks, Inc.

Activity Report for the Period August 8 - September 12, 2013

Activity Summary

During this period there was one reef monitoring trip conducted on September 1, 2013. In response to a letter by NOAA cartographer Lance Roddy, visits were made to the Gulf States Barge in FH-4 (262F4-020324F4) <http://youtu.be/bC69aLDsA3w>, Rubble 10 in FH-12 (172F12-960909F12), and the Southern Star Shrimp Boat in FH-13 (526F13-100331A) <http://youtu.be/RkgGQsBru18>. Water clearances and material identifications were obtained to compare with reported violations of authorized clearances.

020324 Gulf States Barge 262F4

Position: 30°10.406'N/88°53.932'W 29'Depth

This 250' X 50' X 10' Deck Barge was deployed in the northwest corner of FH-4 on March 24, 2002 by Gulf Stream Marine (<http://www.primofish.com/reports/02April11/>). Original plans were to place it in FH-12, but the barge was taking on water too fast and it was feared that the vessel would not float the distance. At the time of it's sinking, the surrounding depth was reported at 28 feet and the minimum depth was 17 feet. On March 14, 2003 (<http://www.primofish.com/reports/03April10/>) it was determined that the barge had moved about 600 feet to the northwest presumably by Storm surges. The new end coordinates were reported at 30°10.468'N/88°54.047' and 30°10.448'N/88°54.019'W and were verified on this visit.

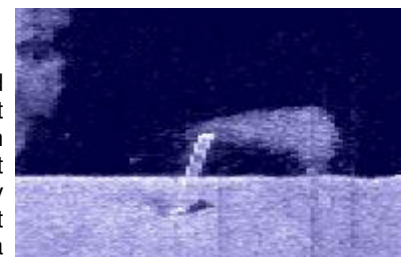
Lance Roddy of NOAA reported a 22' obstruction in FH-4 at 30° 10' 27.0" N, 088° 54' 00.9" W (30 10.450/88 54.015). This visit showed most of the Barge at a depth of 28 feet but rises to 26' at the Port Stern Corner and 23 feet at the Winch located at mid-Stern. The time was recorded at 12:30PM, 9-1-2013, with a predicted tide level at the time of 1.5' above MLW with minimum wind influence. Therefore the reported discrepancy appears accurate, however only due to the Winch that protrudes up on the Stern (see deployment photo). A maximum depth of 34 feet was recorded and a surrounding depth of 30.5 feet. Fish Observations were hampered by visibility but included moderate schools of Menhaden, Spadefish, and Mangrove Snapper along with a few Sheepshead. No redfish were sighted on the dive, but two were quickly caught hook and line estimated at about 31 inches long. See the Dive Video at <http://youtu.be/bC69aLDsA3w>



960909 Chandeleur Rubble 10 172F12

Position: 30°01.863'N/88°46.032'W 43'Depth

Lance Roddy of NOAA reported a 30' obstruction in FH-12 at 30°01' 53.6" N, 088° 45' 57.9" W. This is located about 400 feet at 61° from Rubble 10 in FH-12 which was deployed on September 9, 1996. This deployment was supervised by Toni King and I could not locate a deployment report for details. The described obstruction was not able to be located but an image was seen on sidescan that appears to be a concrete column that landed vertically and is protruding up at an angle. Three dives were made to locate it, but very poor visibility hampered efforts and it was never found. Soundings were also taken of the Matthews Barge which showed it had sunk heavily into the soft bottom. The minimum depth recorded there was 40 feet and was confined to a small area. This is surprising since the Barge had a 12 foot gunwale.



100331A Southern Star 526F13

Position: 30°02.082'N / 88°30.916'W 76' Depth

This 80' Shrimp Boat was deployed in about 76' of water within FH-13. It's deployment was featured on the TV show Reef Wranglers and it had some tall masts that extended up to a reported water depth of 45 feet at it's deployment. Lance Roddy of NOAA reported a 43' obstruction in FH-13 at 30° 02' 04.9" N, 088° 30' 55.3" W. It was previously reported that the DMR had been alerted to this height issue since the permitted clearance was 50 feet and that they had contracted to have the masts cut down to an acceptable height. However, no completion reports were available so a visit was made to document the changes. The new water clearance was measured at 56 feet taken at about 5PM with a predicted tide level of 0.4 feet and minimal wind influence. While initial concerns were that the change would be detrimental to the reef, that does not appear to be the case. The protruding open masts currently appear to do a better job attracting small bait fish, however, future visits will be needed to confirm this hypothesis. The abundant fish populations included Red Snapper (75-100/1-20lbs), Mangrove Snapper (25-30/2-8lbs), Triggerfish (6-10/1-4lbs), Gag Grouper (3-5/4-8lbs), Flounder (1/4 lbs), Spadefish (100-150), Cigar Minnows (thousands), Cocoa Damsels (8-12), Soapfish, and Spanish Mackerel (50-75). There was also a Queen Angel on the Wheel House which is the first time one has been sighted this close in. There were no Lionfish observed. Water Clearance measurements were as follows: Top of Masts=56', Wheel House Roof = 59', Bow Pulpit = 64', Gunwhales = 74', Stern = 80', Bow Max Depth = 83'. <http://youtu.be/RkgGQsBru18>

