

Science, Service, Stewardship



Emergency Fisheries Response to the Deepwater Horizon MC252 Oil Spill

**Atlantic HMS Advisory Panel Meeting
Sept. 21-23, 2010**

**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE**



Background

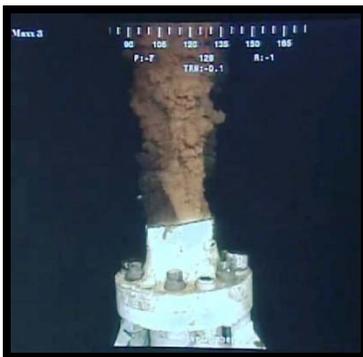


The Deepwater Horizon Mississippi Canyon 252 oil rig exploded on April 20, 2010, and sank approximately 50 miles southeast of Venice, Louisiana. Shortly after it was determined that oil had started leaking into the Gulf of Mexico, NOAA was called into action.



NOAA Fisheries Response

- Develop rules to allow for emergency response
- Dedicate staff from regular duties to ongoing emergency response teams
- Respond daily to most current information
- Balance continued response with regular duties





Rulemaking

Emergency Rule #1: Closed an area in Gulf Federal waters approximately 6,817 square miles, or 3 percent of federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico.

Emergency Rule #2: Expanded the closed area in Gulf Federal waters to approximately 10,807 square miles, or 4.5 percent of federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico.

Emergency Rule #3: Implemented a procedure to allow for timely revisions to the area closure by posting the new closed area on the SERO website.



Seafood Safety Strategy

Gulf seafood is being safeguarded by a multi-prong approach



Fishery area closures

Dockside seafood sampling

At-sea seafood sampling

Market seafood sampling



Daily Response

- Review maps
 - 24-, 48-, and 72-hour trajectories
 - Initialization files, including satellite, overflight, and on the water data
 - Loop currents, etc.
- Decide on change
- Modification announced by 12 p.m., effective at 6 p.m.

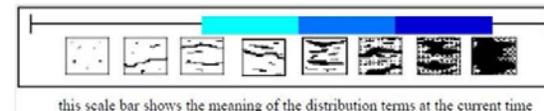
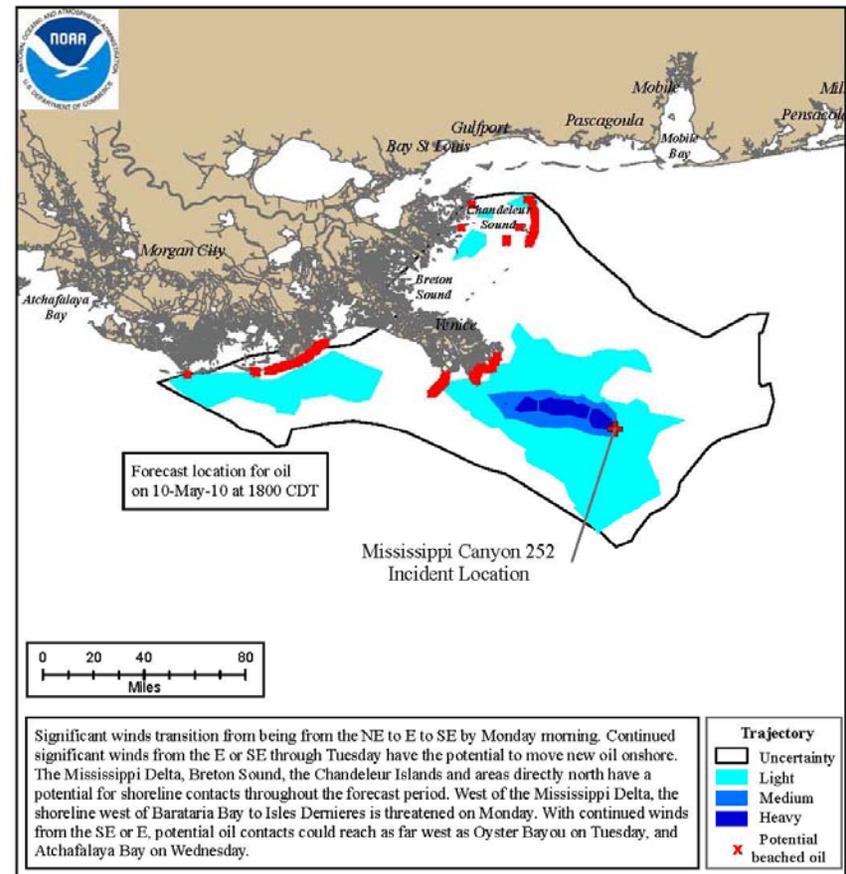
Trajectory Forecast Mississippi Canyon 252

NOAA/NOS/OR&R

Estimate for: 1800 CDT, Monday, 5/10/10

Date Prepared: 2100 CDT, Sunday, 5/09/10

This forecast is based on the NWS spot forecast from Sunday, May 9th PM. Currents were obtained from the NOAA Gulf of Mexico, West Florida Shelf/USF, Texas A&M/TGLO, and NAVO/NRL models and HFR measurements. The model was initialized from Sunday satellite imagery and analysis provided by NOAA/NESDIS, and Saturday/Sunday overflight observations. The leading edge may contain tarballs that are not readily observable from the imagery (hence not included in the model initialization). Oil near bay inlets could be brought into that bay by local tidal currents.



Next Forecast:
May 10th PM

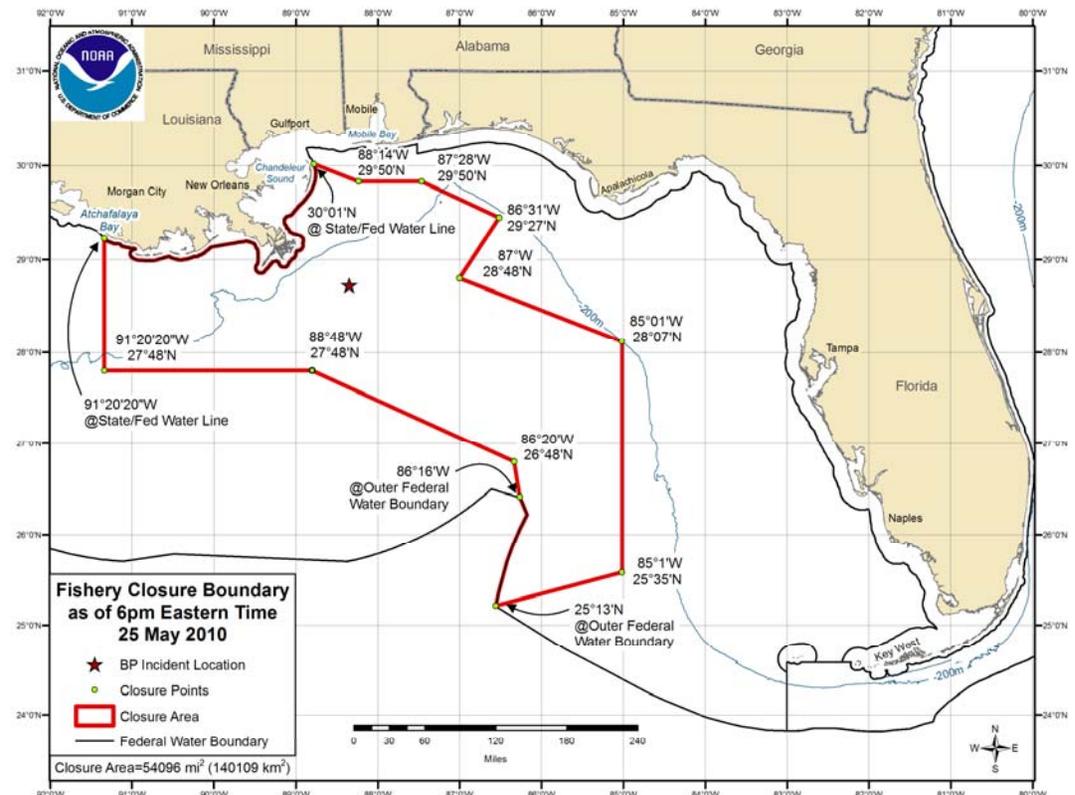


Closure Protocol

How does NMFS SERO communicate the revised closure to the public?

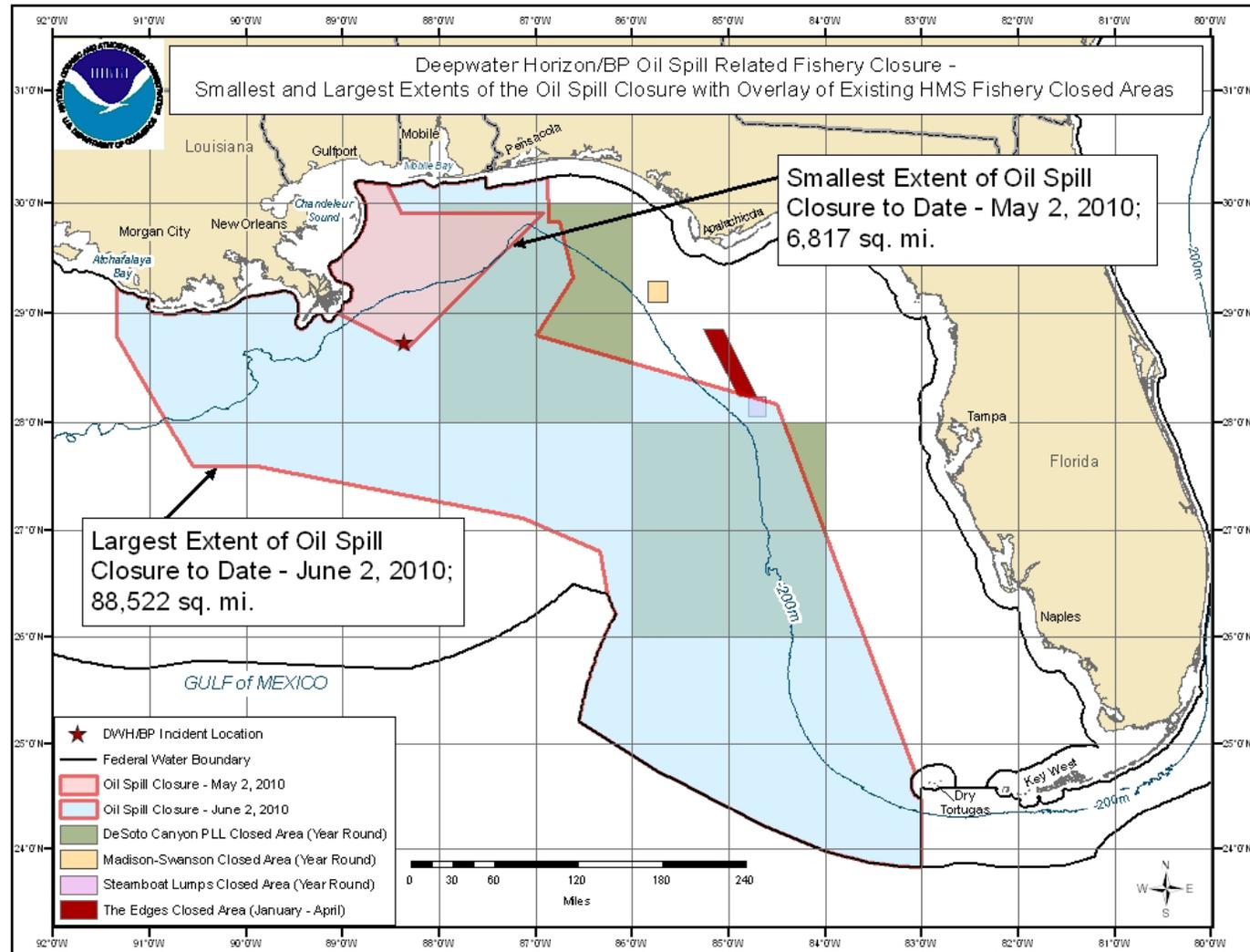
- Website
- Press Release
- Fishery Bulletins*
- NOAA Weather Radio
- Toll-free phone line*
- Text messaging
- Twitter

*In English, Spanish, and Vietnamese





Changes in Closure Size





GOM Oil Spill Related Exempted Fishing Permits

- NMFS is issuing scientific research permits, exempted fishing permits, and letters of acknowledgment to Agency and non-Agency researchers to assess impacts of the oil spill in the GOM
- HMS samples are being collected for seafood safety inspections from inside and outside areas closed due to the oil spill, including HMS closed areas in the GOM
- Sampling is critical for re-opening of areas closed by the oil spill and monitoring of re-opened areas
- Research includes tagging of HMS (e.g., billfish, YFT, & sharks) to monitor movements in relation to the oil spill
- Variety of platforms are used, including NOAA vessels, research vessels, and vessels of opportunity
- To date, 7 permits issued; additional permits are likely



Re-opening Protocol

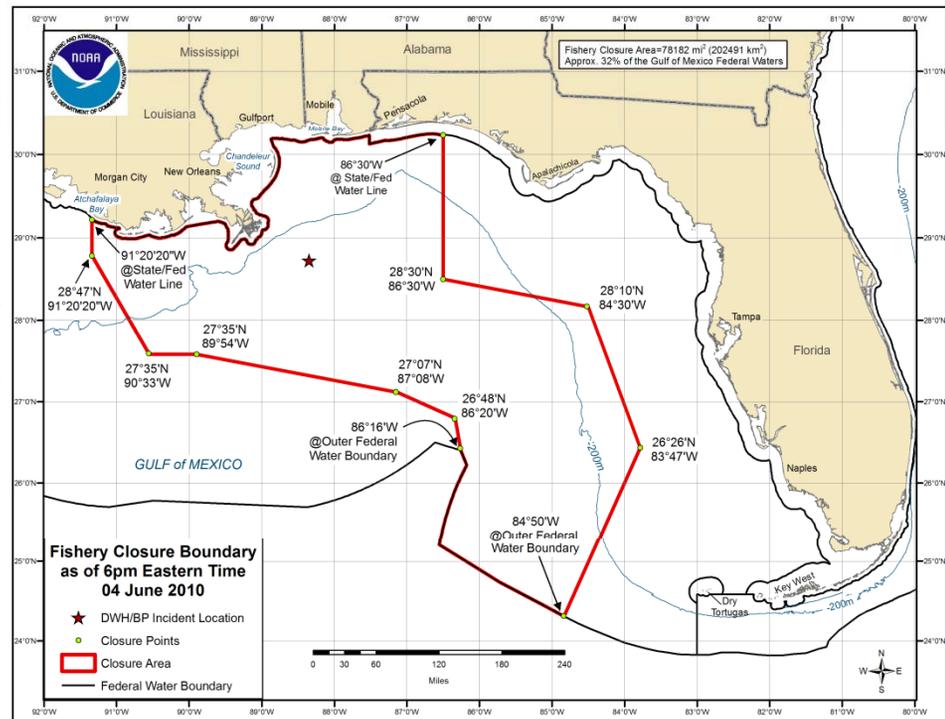
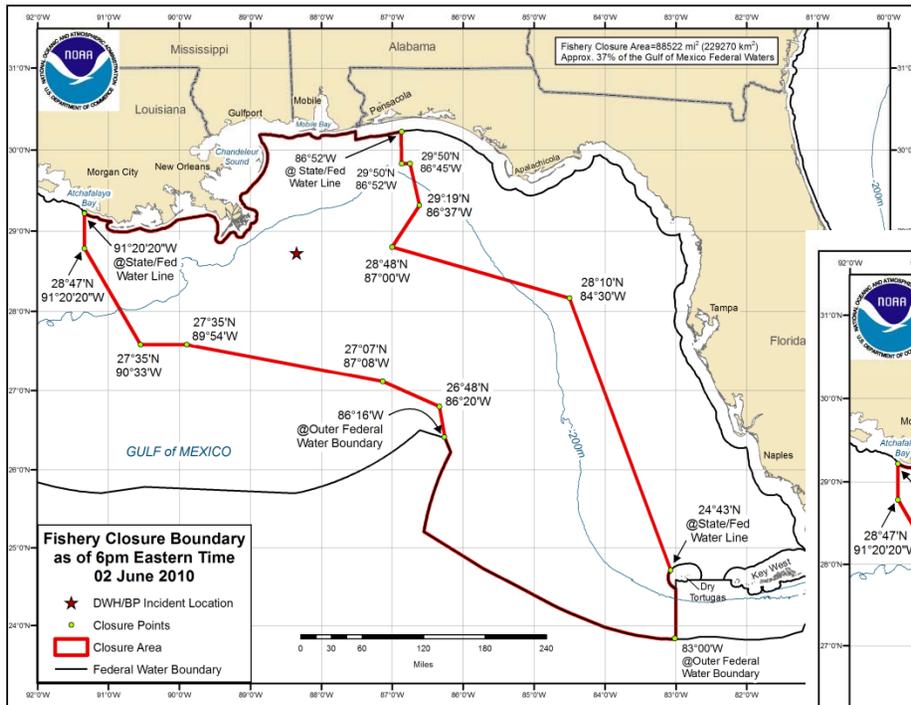
NOAA/FDA agreement - NMFS may reopen a previously closed area if:

- 1) The area is determined to have never been exposed to oil
- 2) The area is now free of oil and the seafood products tested meet FDA standards for public health and wholesomeness. Samples must undergo:
 - a) Sensory tests
 - b) Chemical tests



Re-opening Protocol

1) The area is determined to have never been exposed to oil





Re-opening Protocol

2) An area previously exposed to oil is now free of oil and the seafood products tested meet FDA standards for public health and wholesomeness. Samples must undergo:

a) Sensory testing

- Sniff raw product
- Sniff cooked product
- Taste cooked product

b) Chemical testing

- Analysis of PAH
- Compare to FDA Levels of Concern





Reopening: Which areas?

- Sampling proposal to FDA
 - Is area oil free?
 - How long has area been oil free?
 - How likely is the area to be re-oiled?
 - How heavily was the area oiled?
 - How far is the area from the wellhead?
- Sampling Plan (stations sampled, sample size)

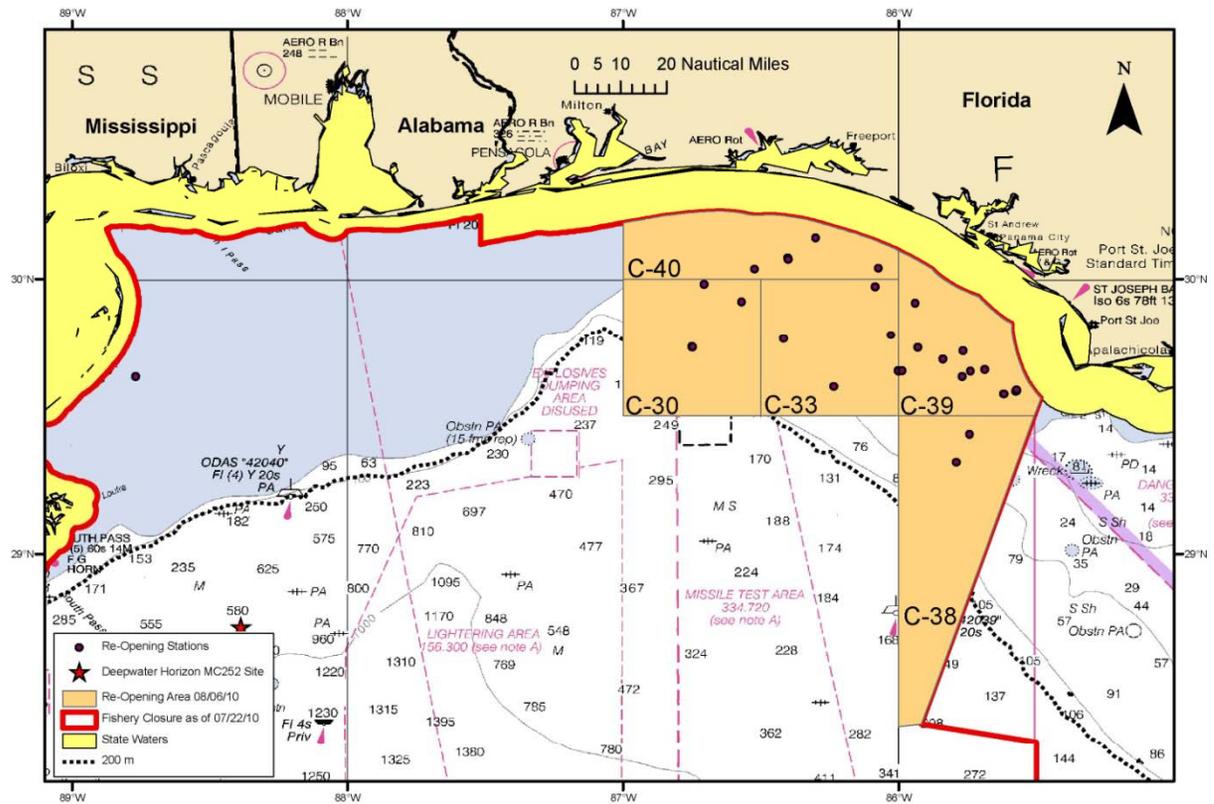




Re-opening Protocol

RE-OPENING STATIONS FOR DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL RESPONSE

- Decision memo
 - Rationale for the area
 - Sampling strategy
 - Test results
- Clearance
 - NOAA
 - FDA
 - DOC





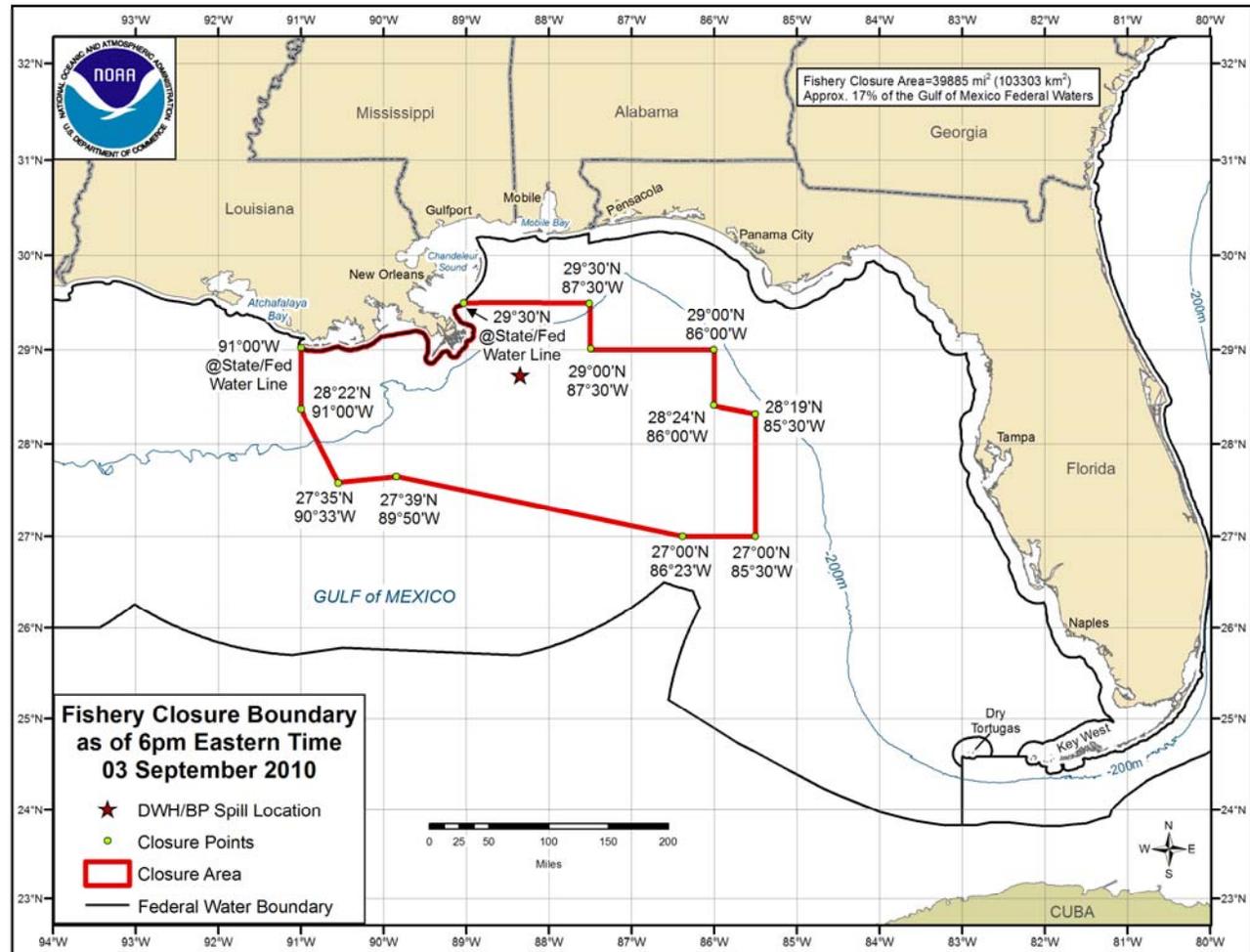
Current Closure

What's next?

- Priority areas
 - Least impacted by oil
 - Farthest from the wellhead
 - High fishing areas

More information:

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>



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Thank you

