



The Shrimp e-Advocate

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is a non-profit alliance of members of the U.S. shrimp industry in eight states committed to preventing the continued deterioration of America's shrimp industry and to ensuring the industry's future viability. SSA serves as the national voice for the shrimp fishermen and processors in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

NOAA Strategy for Future Re-openings

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NOAA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NOAA Strategy for Future Re-openings

NOAA seafood sampling and testing priorities for federal closed area

NOAA's Fisheries Service first prohibited commercial and recreational fishing in federal waters impacted by the Deepwater Horizon/BP oil spill as a seafood safety measure in early May. The closed area was 88,522 square miles or 37 percent of the Gulf of Mexico federal waters at its largest and now after six re-openings is 31,915 square miles or 13 percent of the Gulf of Mexico federal waters.

Since July 22, NOAA has reopened about 52,000 square miles of oil-impacted federal waters in accordance with the [re-opening protocol](#) agreed to by NOAA, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and Gulf states. These areas are illustrated in gray on the embedded map.

Prior to re-opening an area, the protocol requires NOAA to demonstrate the area is oil free, the area has little risk of being re-exposed to oil, and seafood tissue samples collected from within the area have passed both sensory and chemical analysis for hydrocarbons. This protocol involves sensory testing for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) components of the oil and dispersant along with chemical based

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testing for PAH as a confirmatory measure.

After areas are re-opened NOAA Fisheries Service will maintain a seafood safety monitoring program continuing the collection and testing of seafood to ensure that Gulf seafood remains safe for consumers.

"While testing confirms seafood in these reopened areas is safe to consume, NOAA understands our job is not over and additional monitoring will be done in each reopened area," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "It is critical that we continue with this process to ensure safe seafood for fishermen and consumers, especially as we approach areas closest to the well head."

NOAA's Fisheries Service's sampling strategy in general has been to work from the lesser oiled outer boundaries of the federal closure in toward the more heavily oiled areas immediately surrounding the Deepwater Horizon/BP wellhead. Area-specific sampling plans focus on species fishermen generally target in those areas, and require more samples to be collected in heavily oiled areas, compared to lightly oiled areas.

The tentative sequence of remaining sampling within the federal closed area is illustrated on the embedded map. In summary, the closed area has been divided into eight sub-areas, which are labeled in priority from 1-8.

Priority Area 1 was re-opened on September 21, and included a 7,970-square mile area located along the southern boundary of the closed area, offshore of central Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and the western edge of the Florida panhandle.

The next federal re-opening priorities include a 5,628-square mile area (Priority Area 2) and a 2,927-square mile area (Priority Area 3) located off eastern Louisiana, just west and south of the Mississippi River delta. NOAA is currently processing samples collected in these two areas, which could re-open within the next few weeks pending test results.

NOAA is actively sampling Priority Area 4, and expects to begin sampling Priority Areas 5-8 within the coming weeks.

Updates on the re-openings and sampling schedules, as well as supporting information and data on previous reopening are available at: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/deepwater_horizon_oil_spill.htm

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us at <http://www.noaa.gov> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/usnoaagov>.

Tentative Sequence of Remaining Sampling Within the Federal Closed Area as of 09/27/2010

