



NEWSLETTER OF THE GULF OF MEXICO COASTAL OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM

GCOOS NEWS AND UPDATES FOR 14 JUNE 2013

GULF OF MEXICO REGIONAL NEWS

GCOOS Launches Invasive Species Tool

Working with GCOOS-RA member Dr. Jorge Brenner from The Nature Conservancy, and incorporating information from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and other regional institutions, GCOOS Geographic Information Systems specialist Dr. Shinichi Kobara has created an interactive map that allows users to track the spread of lionfish (*Pterois volitans*, Linnaeus, 1758), in the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, and western Atlantic Ocean (see <http://gcoos.org/products/maps/lionfish/>). Lionfish, a venomous invasive species native to the tropical Indo-Pacific region, are of concern to fishery scientists in the Gulf because they have no known natural enemies and may adversely affect natural fish and crustacean populations. Scientists have monitored U.S. and Caribbean waters for lionfish since 1985. To contribute data to this effort, hook-and-line or other fishing-related lionfish catches can be reported to NOAA by emailing reportlionfish@noaa.gov or calling 252.728.8714. SCUBA divers have several options for reporting exotic species sightings, including online at the REEF Program's website, exoticspecies@reef.org. Lionfish reports from the REEF Program have been included in the USGS Non-Indigenous Aquatic Species Database, which is the main source of data for this mapping tool. For more information on the GCOOS lionfish tracking tool, please contact Dr. Jorge Brenner, jbrenner@tnc.org, about the database and Dr. Shinichi Kobara, shinichi@tamu.edu, for the web map. For more information, please visit http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?page_id=4334.

New Florida State University (FSU) Website Launched for N7 Tower Data

FSU has launched a new website (<http://coaps.fsu.edu/gcoos>) for the atmospheric and oceanographic data collected at the N7 U.S. Air Force tower in the northern Gulf of Mexico, as part of the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS). The observations at N7, [located](#) ~18 nautical miles southeast of [St. Teresa, FL](#) (29.6619 °N, 84.3731 °W) in 20 m of water, are a continuation of the previous NOAA-funded Northern Gulf of Mexico Cooperative Institute program. FSU instrumentation at N7 support continuing research to quantify the onshore and offshore transport mechanisms and document the basic regional physical oceanography of the Big Bend Region of Florida. Observations at N7 result from a collaboration between the [Marine Field Group](#), the [Center for Ocean-Atmospheric Prediction Studies](#), and the [Coastal & Marine Laboratory](#) at FSU. The new website offers weather and ocean data dials that update every 10-15 minutes (depending on the parameter). The "Data" section provides dynamic time-series plots of all observations from the past 24 hours, as well as the last 24-hours' data in table format. Users can also learn more about the history of the N7, the instruments, and the benefits of the system. To read more about the N7 tower and the new website, see <http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?p=4344>.

Ocean Observing System Information Supports World Record Swim Attempt

Where does a world-record seeking swimmer go when she wants to cross the Straits of Florida, from Havana, Cuba to Key West, Florida? She goes to those who can help plan a course through swift currents, potentially threatening marine life, and tropical weather systems.

When Australian swimmer Chloe McCardel makes her attempt at the 161 km swim, anticipated to take approximately 55-65 hours if successful, she will be armed with a 32-person support team. This team includes industry and academic oceanographers and weather experts that are regional members of the GCOOS-RA and the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA). The period of 12-14

June 2013 has been determined as the most favorable weather, ocean currents, and tidal conditions in the Straits of Florida after consultation with the science team. The science-based swim strategy incorporates forecasts made from real-time satellite data and numerical models of the ocean.

During the swim, lead oceanographer Dr. Mitchell Roffer of [Roffer's Ocean Fish Forecasting Service, Inc.](#) (ROFFS™) and colleagues Dr. Jim Franks, [University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory](#), and Drs. Villy Kourafalou and Matthieu Le Henaff, University of Miami, will communicate via satellite telephone and emails to the support ship. The ROFFS™ team, which includes Dan Westhaver, Gregory Gawlikowski, Matthew Upton, and Candice Hall, is using high resolution infrared and ocean color satellite data at 1.1 km resolution from the US NOAA Earth orbiting satellites (NOAA_15, 16, 18, 19, Suomi National Polar-orbiting Partnership) and NASA satellites (Terra, Aqua) along with European Space Agency (MetOp A and MetOp_B) satellites to provide oceanographic analyses of the water masses and currents. For the models, the science team is using the HYCOM numerical ocean current models from the HYCOM data server to provide an ensemble of forecast products. The science team predicts that two small counter-clockwise eddy features along the northern boundary of the Gulf Stream and a relatively large pool of blue water observed northwest of Cuba will not present problems for McCardel during her swim.

The GCOOS-RA wishes the entire McCardel Team calm winds and following seas. Check back with GCOOS ([gcoos.org](#)) to read about the conclusion of this record-breaking swim!

<http://www.roffs.com>

<http://www.usm.edu/gcrl/>

Center for Gulf Studies Presents Summer Speaker Series at INFINITY

The INFINITY Science Center invites the public -- both young and old -- to come out this summer and meet with some of the leading researchers in the world studying the Gulf of Mexico. INFINITY is hosting the First Annual Center for Gulf Studies (CGS) Summer Speaker Series every Monday at 11am this summer beginning June 10th. Researchers associated with the CGS, the MS Research Center of Excellence per the RESTORE Act led by the University of Southern Mississippi, will present on what they are learning and discovering about the Gulf and its importance to our living, playing, and working in and around its waters. The talks will include discussions about the BP Oil Spill and its impacts, giant bluefin tuna, the strange and fascinating deep sea environment, whale sharks, monitoring the Gulf from space, advanced autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), and much more. For more information about the Center for Gulf Studies, please visit <http://www.usm.edu/gulf-studies>. For the seminar schedule, and more about other events at INFINITY, please see <http://www.visitinfinity.com/news-events/1958/>.

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Invites the Public to Learn About Partnerships and Progress in Gulf Restoration

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance will hold its 8th Annual Meeting at the Grand Hyatt in Tampa, FL, on 25-27 June 2013. The overall theme for the three-day meeting is "Collaboration is the Key to Successful Gulf Restoration." The meeting will focus on how the Alliance is working to expand and maintain partnerships to enhance the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico. While Gulf restoration will be the primary focus of the meeting, updates on the RESTORE Comprehensive Plan and how Alliance partners are addressing these opportunities will be discussed. Links to registration and a full schedule of events are available at <http://www.GulfofMexicoAlliance.org>.

U.S. Coast Guard Ends Active Deepwater Horizon Accident Cleanup

Following their three-year cleanup effort, the U.S. Coast Guard is ending active cleanup operations in Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, and announced that the three states are expected to complete the transition back to the National Response Center (NRC) reporting system by mid-June 2013. The announcement is the result of the extraordinary progress made cleaning the Gulf of Mexico shoreline.

IOOS/NATIONAL/LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Update on IOOS Activities in Washington, D.C.

The Senate held a hearing this week on [Deep Sea Challenge: Innovative Partnerships in Ocean Observation](#) that included reauthorization of the ICOOS Act. Two representatives, Ed Page, Chair of the Board of AOOS and Executive Director of the Alaska Marine Exchange, and Dr. Jan Newton, NANOOS Executive Director, testified at the hearing. Senator Wicker (R-Mississippi) spoke about the importance of ocean

exploration and observing. The House held a hearing on five NOAA-related bills including the reauthorization of the ICOOS Act. Ed Kelly, MARACOOS Board Vice Chair and Executive Director of the Maritime Association of the Port of New York and New Jersey, discussed the importance of observing to the maritime industry, and Dr Lynne Talley, Distinguished Professor at the University of California, San Diego, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, discussed the importance of ocean observing to understand ocean acidification and other critical issues. Josie Quintrell, Executive Director, IOOS Association, will be on the Hill next week with Debra Hernandez, Executive Director of the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association, and Newton to continue discussions on the reauthorization of the ICOOS Act. Senate Commerce Committee staff believe that Senator Wicker is a strong co-sponsor of the ICOOS act. Senator Cantwell (D-WA) is the lead for the majority side.

http://www.commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=Hearings&ContentRecord_id=29496bc2-fdb7-47c7-93ef-0def99cf9d6c&ContentType_id=14f995b9-dfa5-407a-9d35-56cc7152a7ed&Group_id=b06c39af-e033-4cba-9221-de668ca1978a

Search and Rescue Enhancement Capabilities Featured in *Signal Magazine*

Search and rescue enhancement capabilities provided by the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) are featured in a recent issue of [Signal Magazine](#), an online publication of news in the communications and information technology realms of defense, intelligence, and global security communities. The article, co-authored by NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), highlights the USCG's nationwide adoption of IOOS data collected with High-Frequency (HF) radar systems. HF radars measure surface current speed and direction over the coastal ocean—from a few kilometers offshore up to 200 kilometers—and can operate in hurricane conditions to better predict where people lost at sea might be found. Combing less area reduces search time and increases the chance of reaching a victim sooner.

<http://www.afcea.org/content/?q=node/10992>

Review of National Scientific Ocean Vessels Released

On 28 May, the Obama Administration released the [Federal Oceanographic Fleet Status Report](#), a comprehensive Federal review of the Nation's fleet of oceanographic survey and research vessels. These 47 ships are part of our Nation's critical infrastructure, collecting vital information to help protect lives and property from marine hazards; measure and project global climate change and ocean acidification; enhance safety and security; and more. For more details, see Deerin Babb-Brott's blog at

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oceans/whats-new>
http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/federal_oceanographic_fleet_status_report.pdf

Wayne Higgins Selected as New Climate Director at NOAA

NOAA announced that Wayne Higgins, Ph.D., has been selected as director of NOAA's Climate Program Office. Since February, Higgins has served as acting director of NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) in College Park, MD. Dr. Higgins' research interests span climate variability and change and weather - climate linkages (including extreme events), with emphasis on diagnostic evaluation of observations and models to improve climate prediction. Dr. Higgins conceived and led the 2004 North American Monsoon Experiment (NAME), a multi-agency field campaign focused on improving warm season precipitation forecasts in the monsoon region of southwestern North America.

COMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

June

"2013 Rising Seas Summit", 18-20 June 2013, Fort Lauderdale, FL
<http://www.sealevelrisesummit.org>

"World Conference on Disaster Management (WCDM)", 23-26 June 2013, Toronto, Canada.
<http://www.wcdm.org/>

"Gulf of Mexico Alliance All-Hands Meeting", 25-27 June 2013, Tampa Bay, FL
<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e6w82a9z0205fc34&llr=thgzaleab>

“AGU Science Policy Conference”, 24-26 June 2013, Washington, DC. Registration deadline 31 May 2013
<http://spc.agu.org/2013/>

July

“2013 Gulf Coast Restoration Summit” 1 July 2013, New Orleans, LA.
<http://www.gulfcoastrestorationsummit.org/about-the-summit/>

“National Marine Educators Association”, 22-26 July 2013, Mobile, AL.
<http://nmea.disl.org/>

September

“OCEANS’13 MTS/IEEE” San Diego”, 23 – 26 September, San Diego, CA
<http://www.oceans13mtsieeesandiego.org/>

“GCOOS-RA Board of Directors Meeting” 25-26 September 2013, University of Alabama at Huntsville, Huntsville, AL.

“[ADCs in Action Conference](http://www.rdinstruments.com/AIA_abstract_submission.aspx)”, 29 September – 2 October 2013, San Diego, CA
http://www.rdinstruments.com/AIA_abstract_submission.aspx

November

“Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Conference” 3-7 November 2013, Hotel Mission Valley San Diego & Country Convention Center, San Diego, CA.
<http://www.sgmeet.com/cerf2013/>

“IOOS/RA Fall Meeting” 6-8 November 2013.

December

“AGU 2013 Fall Meeting”, 9-13 December 2013, San Francisco, CA.
<http://fallmeeting.agu.org/2013/>

2014

January

“Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference”, 27-29 January 2014, Mobile, AL
<http://gulfofmexicoconference.org/>



GCOOS is the Gulf of Mexico regional component of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). Our mission is to provide timely, reliable, and accurate information on the open and coastal ocean waters of the Gulf of Mexico to ensure a healthy, clean, productive ocean and resilient coastal

zone. Your input, guidance, support, and membership are important to the development of the data, products and services that you need.

Contact GCOOS Executive Director, Ann Jochens (ajochens@tamu.edu), to become a GCOOS member and for more information.

We welcome your feedback. If you have an item that you would like to share with others, please email that item to Laura Caldwell (lcaldwell@geos.tamu.edu).