

CENTER FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The (CFRD) at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs, Miss., is part of USM's School of Ocean Science and Engineering. Our scientists develop and conduct research that informs resource management. We work with state, federal and community partners to ensure that we understand scientific fishery needs and focus our research efforts on how we can promote sustainable fisheries and habitats.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Fisheries Assessment and Monitoring

The CFRD conducts resource surveys in state and federal waters throughout the year. The surveys use multiple gear types (trawl, plankton nets, seines, longlines, etc.) to monitor the diversity and population status of our marine resources. Our surveys assess species ranging from brown shrimp and blue crabs, to spotted seatrout, red snapper and sharks. Some of these surveys have been in place for over 40 years.

Shark and Large Pelagic Research Program

CFRD researchers are conducting directed studies on large, high-profile species, such as sharks, yellowfin tuna and blue marlin. Our work focuses not only on the key life history characteristics, such as age, growth, reproduction and diet, but also on movement and migratory patterns, through use of satellite tags. Over the years we have successfully tagged and monitored billfish, tarpon, cobia, whale sharks, bull sharks, tiger sharks, dusky sharks, silky sharks and hammerhead sharks.

Fisheries Habitat Studies

As habitat associations are extremely important for the success of fish in our waters, our scientists conduct many studies that are focused on particular habitats. In the nearshore waters, red drum and bull sharks are acoustically monitored at bay and island sites, and larval and juvenile tarpon are monitored in coastal estuaries. In

the offshore waters, reef fish assemblages (including red snapper) are assessed at both artificial and natural reef habitats in Mississippi-managed reef permit zones. We also conduct extensive research in offshore gulf waters on the importance of pelagic *Sargassum* as nursery habitat for many diverse species of fish and invertebrates.

Cooperative Tag and Release Program

For over 40 years, the CFRD has directed a highly successful tag and release program. Thousands of recreational anglers from throughout the southeastern U.S. have collaborated with us to conventionally tag and release cobia, tripletail and spotted seatrout. The cooperation of these citizen scientists has been invaluable in advancing our understanding of the seasonal movements of these popular sport fish species.



EOE/F/M/VETS/DISABILITY