

**Environmental Sciences Studies Program  
Information on Past Seminars, Conferences, & Workshops**



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## 2008

- **Workshop on Birds and Offshore Wind Development in the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic**, February 13-15. The workshop focused on: reviewing existing knowledge; developing research priorities; reviewing, monitoring, and mitigation approaches; and exploring partnership opportunities. For more information, please contact Dr. Sally Valdes at [Sally.Valdes@mms.gov](mailto:Sally.Valdes@mms.gov)
- **[Eleventh Information Transfer Meeting, October 28-30](#)**. Information on the ongoing environmental research in OCS Alaska was shared at the MMS ITM with twenty-five presentations being given. These included topics covering protected species, biological studies, social sciences and economics, fates and effects, physical oceanography, and multi-disciplinary topics.
- **[4th International Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals \(ISDSC\), December 1-5, 2008](#)**. This symposium was designed to bring together scientists, resource managers, students, and policy-makers from around the world who are actively involved in research and management of deep-sea corals and other deep-sea habitats as well as the animals associated with them. Dr. Thomas Ahlfeld of MMS presented on management applications of scientific data to the protection of deep-sea coral communities in the northern Gulf of Mexico and on the U.S. interagency efforts regarding the protection of deep-sea corals and other vulnerable marine ecosystems.
- **[Workshop on Environmental Research Needs to Support Potential Virginia Offshore Oil and Gas Activities, December 3-4](#)**. Hosted by Dr. Robert Diaz of the Virginia Marine Science Institute, the workshop focus was on the existing scientific knowledge base along the Virginia Coast. The workshop included presentations from local scientific experts in physical oceanography, fish and fisheries, marine mammals, socioeconomics, and other relevant science topics of concern.

## 2007

- **[Twenty-Fourth Gulf of Mexico Information Transfer Meeting, January 9](#)**. The 24th ITM had diverse topics of interest ranging from coastal ecology to deepwater. Highlights included presentations of sperm whale seismic research, deepwater *Lophelia* coral, and deepwater technology. Since the Minerals Management Service has been tasked by Congress to oversee the Coastal Impact Assistance Program which authorizes funds to be distributed to Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas producing states to mitigate the impacts of OCS oil and gas activities, a session was devoted to that program. Two sessions were devoted to socioeconomics and impacts of the oil and gas industry. One session focused solely on the socioeconomic effects of hurricanes on the Gulf region. Other sessions focused on the air quality, deepwater habitats, platform ecology, hydrates, coastal wetland and offshore ecology, and chemosynthetic research. The meeting reflected the broad areas of interest to MMS and the excellent scientists studying these topics.
- **SA-Mexico Workshop on the Deepwater Physical Oceanography of the Gulf of Mexico**, June 26-28.

- [\*\*MMS Workshop to Identify Alternative Energy Environmental Information Needs\*\*](#), June 26-28. This workshop was an important step for the MMS in communicating and developing a collaborative relationship with other Federal agencies, affected State and local groups, and industry. Members of groups with knowledge about existing offshore alternative energy development (i.e., academia or representatives from countries or states where development is already occurring,) were invited to share their expertise.

## 2006

- [\*\*First Minerals Management Service Marine Minerals Program Information Transfer Meeting, June 20-22\*\*](#). The 3-day meeting fostered coordination and communication among interested parties relative to offshore sand borrow investigations in Federal waters and the conduct of environmental studies to evaluate the effects of dredging for beach nourishment.
- [\*\*7th International Temperate Reef Symposium\*\*](#), June 26-July 1. This symposium was co-sponsored by MMS and included a session organized by MMS on the use of long-term monitoring data for assessment of specific impacts. Monitoring programs in the Pacific and Gulf of Mexico Regions were highlighted.
- [\*\*Ninth International Marine Environmental Modeling Seminar \(IMEMS 2006\), October 9-11\*\*](#). IMEMS brought together marine environmental scientists and managers from research, the oil and gas industry, and government to share information and concepts across national, disciplinary, and technical boundaries.
- [\*\*COMIDA Workshop on Chukchi Sea Offshore Monitoring in Drilling Area\*\*](#), November 1-3. This 3-day workshop was intended to review existing research, identify information gaps, recommend research monitoring concepts, and provide MMS with information to be used in preparing descriptions of the proposed COMIDA Phase II field program.
- [\*\*North Aleutian Basin Information Status and Research Planning Meeting, Section 1 and Section 2, November 28-December 1\*\*](#). This three and one-half day meeting identified information needs and priorities for future inventory, monitoring, and research related to potential leasing and oil and gas development in the North Aleutian Basin.

## 2005

- [\*\*Twenty-Third Gulf of Mexico Information Transfer Meeting\*\*](#), January 11. The 23rd ITM focused on several topics from benthic ecology of the deep sea to deepwater technology. One highlight was the presentation of research funded through the Louisiana Oil Spill Research and Development Program. Interesting stories about the pioneers of the oil industry were shared along with many old photos. Three sessions focused on acoustics and marine mammals, particularly the Sperm Whales in the Gulf of Mexico. Physical Oceanographers presented their most recent findings of the movement of currents in deepwater using various models. The results from the most complete evaluation of deep sea ecology were presented. Other sessions focused on air quality, operational discharges, and deepwater technology.

- [\*\*Tenth Information Transfer Meeting and Barrow Information Update Meeting\*\*](#), March 14-16. The specific goals of this meeting were to provide an exchange of the environmental studies program in Alaska in an open forum, more particularly to provide an opportunity for priority users such as the Alaska Region's Environmental Assessment analysts and the public to refresh familiarity with the progress and results of the various studies thereby enhancing the use of the information.
- [\*\*Eighth International Marine Environmental Modelling Seminar \(IMEMS 2005\)\*\*](#), August 23-25. IMEMS brings together marine environmental scientists and managers from research, industry, and government to share information and concepts across national, disciplinary, and technical boundaries. Bringing model developers and users together helps to achieve a common understanding of present and future capabilities, needs, and limitations.
- [\*\*Third International Symposium on Hydrothermal Vent and Seep Biology\*\*](#), September 12-16. Hydrothermal vents and cold seeps represent two of the great ecosystem discoveries of the 20th century. Hydrothermal vents were discovered in 1977 during observations at the Galapagos Spreading Center. Cold seep communities were identified along the Florida Escarpment in the Gulf of Mexico in 1984. These initial observations led to renewed interest in deep-sea exploration, benthic ecosystems, and the characterization of novel marine biochemical adaptations. Felbeck, H.; Bartlett, D.H. (Ed.) (2006). Third International Symposium on Hydrothermal Vent and Seep Biology, La Jolla, USA, September 12-16, 2005. *Cahiers de Biologie Marine*, 47(4). Station Biologique de Roscoff: Roscoff, France. 331-505 pp.
- [\*\*Chukchi Sea Science Update Meeting\*\*](#), October 31 and November 1. Provided MMS analysts with up-to-date information on the Chukchi Sea Planning Area in preparing potential NEPA documents and assessments of pre-sale activities, such as further seismic exploration.
- [\*\*Third International Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals: Science and Management\*\*](#), November 28-December 2. The 3rd International Symposium provided attendees from around the world with an opportunity to share their research results, identify information gaps, and discuss if deep-sea corals need special protection and if so, the statutory means available to do so. Being international and interinstitutional in nature, the Symposium also allowed scientists to develop collaborative partnerships for future projects.

## 2004

- [\*\*Research Sponsorship Meeting to Map Surface Currents in the Beaufort Sea and Cook Inlet, Alaska through the Deployment of High Frequency Doppler Radar\*\*](#), March 31-April 1. The goal for this meeting was to bring together those in government agencies, public, non-profit, and private entities who might be interested in partnering with MMS in the deployment and operation of High Frequency Doppler Radar units. The general reason MMS seeks to initiate jointly-funded research in this topic is because we hope the techniques and information yield will assist us in refining our understanding of physical oceanography and improvement of our circulation and trajectory models.
- [\*\*Workshop on Hydrological Modeling of Freshwater Discharge from Alaska's Arctic Coast\*\*](#), October 7-8. The objectives of this workshop were to: 1) review precedents in

hydrological observations, data archives and analysis, and modeling of freshwater discharge (including river runoff from numerous creeks and streams due to snow and glacier melting); 2) review the impacts of climate variability on hydrology in the North Slope and possible connections between hydrology, sea ice, and oceanography; 3) lay out strategies for hydrological observation and modeling, particularly for implementing a high-resolution DEM-based hydrological model which will incorporate the first-order hydrological processes (precipitation, energy balance, aquifer/land processes) to estimate freshwater discharge into the Arctic Ocean primarily along the Beaufort-Chukchi sea coasts; 4) make recommendations to MMS for future research, including atmospheric forcing, hydrology-related sea ice, oceanography, and biogeochemistry which would also benefit water resource management by the State of Alaska, North Slope Borough, and local communities.

- **Seventh International Environmental Modelling Seminar (IMEMS 2004)**, October 19-21. IMEMS brings together marine environmental scientists and managers from research, industry, and government to share information and concepts across national, disciplinary and technical boundaries. Bringing model developers and users together helps to achieve a common understanding of present and future capabilities, needs, and limitations.
- **Workshop on Deepwater Current Monitoring Program**, October 30, 2004. The workshop focused on a pioneering monitoring program to improve the nation's understanding of powerful ocean currents that have the potential to affect deepwater operations across the Gulf of Mexico. Under the program, operating companies will collect and share comprehensive current data from deepwater drilling and production sites. The data and predictive information will enable operators to curtail drilling operations before currents build to threatening levels. The monitoring program will also enhance capabilities for the design of deepwater production structures.
- **[Workshop on the Variability of Arctic Cisco \(Qaaktaq\) in the Colville River](#)**, November 18-20. It is the responsibility of MMS to manage the offshore development of oil and gas resources in an environmentally sound and safe manner. For more than 20 years, MMS investigators have studied how to protect natural resources that could be affected by offshore development. In recent years, residents of the North Slope Borough have been concerned with falling catches of Arctic cisco and the possible correlations with offshore development. MMS offered to convene a workshop bringing together local experts from Nuiqsut, Kaktovik, and Barrow, Alaska and Tuktoyaktuk, Canada, as well as scientists from the United States and Canada. The primary goals were to share knowledge of the Arctic cisco and to identify important questions and how those questions might be answered in the future.

## 2003

- **[Twenty-Second Annual Gulf of Mexico Information Transfer Meeting](#)**, January 14. The 22nd ITM focused on numerous topics from sperm whale research far offshore to studies of the coastal environment of Louisiana. Two sessions focused on air quality issues including the completion of offshore air emissions inventories. Presentations were given on the types of organisms that live on and around the numerous structures in the

Gulf of Mexico including their biotechnology potential. Physical Oceanographers presented their most recent findings of the movement of currents in deepwater using various models. Benthic organisms from the deep Gulf of Mexico provided a lively discussion on taxonomy and sample analysis issues. The continuing expansion into deepwater with new technologies and issues were discussed.

- **[Ninth Information Transfer Meeting and Barrow Information Update Meeting](#)**, March 10-12. The specific goals of this 9th Information Transfer Meeting included: 1) provide and exchange information obtained by the Environmental Studies Program in Alaska openly, particularly to provide an opportunity for Alaska Region Environmental Assessment analysts and the public to refresh familiarity with the progress and results of various studies thereby enhancing use of the information; 2) sharing and integrating information with that of other agencies, researchers, and the public, particularly that which is relevant to Outer Continental Shelf decision making; 3) obtain additional input from attendees regarding potential study topics or information exchange useful to MMS decision-making.
- **[Small-Scale Sea-Ice and Ocean Modeling in the Nearshore Beaufort and Chukchi Seas Workshop](#)**, August 7-9. One of the objectives of this workshop was to bring modelers and observers together to discuss strategies for state-of-the-art ice-ocean modeling. The workshop highlighted the approaches to small scale and regional ice-ocean modeling that could be applied to nearshore Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, including seasonal landfast ice based on satellite measurements of small-scale deformations.
- **[Beaufort Sea Polar Bear Monitoring Workshop](#)**, September 3-5. The goal of this meeting was to identify components for the development of a comprehensive, long-term polar bear monitoring program in association with the oil and gas industry in Alaska. This workshop was the initial effort to design an effective monitoring strategy that provided information to help reduce bear/human interactions and help protect polar bear habitat for the Southern Beaufort Sea polar bear population. Potential oil and gas industry impacts on polar bears which were discussed during the workshop included habitat alteration, chemical contamination, attraction and preclusion of areas, oil spills, industrial noise, and polar bear interactions with humans. Ideally, an improved management plan which identifies information necessary to monitor polar bears of the Southern Beaufort Sea stock will result from the recommendations of this workshop.

## 2002

- **[Twenty-first Annual Gulf of Mexico, Information Transfer Meeting](#)**, January 8. The 21st ITM focused on several topics from sperm whale research to the history of the oil and gas industry in Southern Louisiana. New information about the movements of sperm whales was shared with an overflow capacity crowd. Interesting stories about the pioneers of the oil industry were shared along with many old photos. Presentations were given on the types of organisms that live on and around the numerous structures in the Gulf of Mexico. Physical oceanographers presented their most recent findings of the movement of currents in deepwater using various models. Two sessions addressed the socioeconomic impacts from the oil and gas industry to Gulf Coast states. The removal of offshore structures was the topic of a full day of presentations that brought together

government agencies and industry. The continuing expansion into deepwater with new technologies and issues were discussed. Speakers came from as far away as Mexico and England.

- **Sixth International Marine Environmental Modelling Seminar (IMEMS 2002)**, September 2-4. IMEMS brings together marine environmental scientists and managers from research, industry, and government to share information and concepts across national, disciplinary, and technical boundaries. Bringing model developers and users together helps to achieve a common understanding of present and future capabilities, needs, and limitations.

## 2001

- **Eighth Information Transfer Meeting**, April 3-5. The objectives of this workshop were: 1) obtain information for environmental impact assessment; 2) enhance decision processes and information transfer; and 3) in the event of offshore development, to conduct monitoring of any potential environmental changes.
- **Fifth International Marine Environmental Modelling Seminar (IMEMS 2001)**, October 9-11. IMEMS brings together marine environmental scientists and managers from research, industry, and government to share information and concepts across national, disciplinary, and technical boundaries. Bringing model developers and users together helps to achieve a common understanding of present and future capabilities, needs, and limitations.

## 2000

- **Beaufort Sea Information Update Meeting**, March 28-29. The purpose of this meeting was to pass information regarding the various studies and research that is being done in the area.
- **Fourth International Marine Environmental Modelling Seminar (IMEMS 2001)**, October 4-6. IMEMS brings together marine environmental scientists and managers from research, industry, and government to share information and concepts across national, disciplinary, and technical boundaries. Bringing model developers and users together helps to achieve a common understanding of present and future capabilities, needs, and limitations.
- **Twentieth Annual Gulf of Mexico Information Transfer Meeting**, December 5. The primary purposes of the ITM were to: 1) provide a forum for interchange on topics of current interest relative to environmental assessments in support of offshore oil and gas activities in the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region; 2) present the accomplishments of the MMS Environmental Studies Program for the Gulf of Mexico and of other research programs or study projects; and 3) foster an exchange of information of regional interest among scientists, staff members, and decisionmakers from MMS, other Federal or State governmental agencies, regionally important industries, and academia and to encourage opportunities for these attendees to meet and nurture professional acquaintances and peer contacts.

1999

- [Cook Inlet Oceanography Workshop](#), November 9. The goal of this workshop was to assess the state of knowledge of the physical oceanography in Cook Inlet and to examine the results of numerical models used to predict oil-spill trajectories. Information was exchanged during presentations by more than a dozen experts who presented their views on Cook Inlet circulation, use and validation of oil-spill trajectory models, use of satellite imagery for understanding the temporal and spatial variance of tidal rips, and use of free-drifting surface buoys and acoustic Doppler profilers for direct estimates of Cook Inlet currents.
- **Decommissioning and Removal of Oil and Gas Facilities Offshore California: Recent Experiences and Future Deepwater Challenges**, March 29-April 1.
- **Fifth California Islands Symposium**, March 29-April 1. Available on CD-ROM. Contact [Janice Hall, Technical Information Specialist](#).
- [Nineteenth Annual Gulf of Mexico Information Transfer Meeting](#), November 30-December 2. The primary purposes of the ITM were to: 1) provide a forum for interchange on topics of current interest relative to environmental assessments in support of offshore oil and gas activities in the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region; 2) present the accomplishments of the MMS Environmental Studies Program for the Gulf of Mexico and of other research programs or study projects; and 3) foster an exchange of information of regional interest among scientists, staff members, and decisionmakers from MMS, other Federal or State governmental agencies, regionally important industries, and academia, and to encourage opportunities for these attendees to meet and nurture professional acquaintances and peer contacts.