

Technical Announcement

MMS

U. S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

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Investigations of Chemosynthetic Communities on the Lower Continental Slope of the Gulf of Mexico, Interim Report 2

OCS Study MMS 2009-046

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, announces the availability of a new study report, *Investigations of Chemosynthetic Communities on the Lower Continental Slope of the Gulf of Mexico, Interim Report 2*.

This document represents the second interim report for a large multidisciplinary study to investigate chemosynthetic communities and deepwater hard bottom communities including deepwater corals below a depth of 1,000 m (3,281 ft) in the northern Gulf of Mexico. This project is a collaboration between MMS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Ocean Exploration and Research sponsored by the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP). This project was awarded in September 2005 and will continue through September 2009 with the completion of a separate final report. The information in this report is a compilation of four cruises; the first two were also presented in the earlier Interim Report I (<http://www.gomr.mms.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/4320.pdf>).

A reconnaissance cruise was conducted on the TDI-Brooks research vessel R/V *GYRE* from March 11-25, 2006, and was the initial cruise conducted for this contract. The cruise was completed in two week-long legs with an interim port call in Venice, Louisiana. Leg I (March 11-18, 2006) was dedicated to drift camera work to survey the seabed at selected sites. Leg II (March 19-25, 2006) involved both drift camera and trawling/box core work efforts. The objective was to provide timely input for the site selection process for the subsequent *ALVIN* expedition (May 2006). This expedition, the Deep Chemosynthetic Community Characterization I Cruise was conducted on the Wood's Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI) research vessel R/V *ATLANTIS* and the *ALVIN* deep submergence vehicle (DSV) from May 7 – June 2, 2006. In February 2007, sampling sites were mapped in great detail using the C&C Technologies autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) in preparation for intensive sampling planned for the 2007 field season. The AUV is equipped with instrumentation for collecting high-resolution multibeam bathymetry, chirp sonar subbottom profiles, and sidescan-sonar swaths. The Deep Chemosynthetic Reconnaissance II Cruise was conducted on the NOAA research vessel R/V *RONALD H. BROWN* and the ROV *JASON* from June 4 - July 6, 2007. This report is a preliminary product of the contract.

This report is available only in compact disc format from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at a charge of \$15.00, by referencing OCS Study MMS 2009-046. The report may be downloaded from the MMS website through the [Environmental Studies Program Information System \(ESPIS\)](#). You will be able to obtain this report also from the National Technical Information Service in the near future. Here are the addresses. You may also inspect copies at selected Federal Depository Libraries.

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