

U.S. Backing Fishermen in Gulf Disaster

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The tragic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico presented an array of issues and devastating circumstances for the United States as a whole and its recovering economy, but more specifically the oil spill affected the oystermen, shrimpers, and fishermen who were either put out of business temporarily or permanently as a result of the spill. These particular individuals represent a group that is quite often overlooked and who is sometimes given a lack of attention from key agencies, such as the Commerce Department, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

This article highlights the efforts of the Commerce Department, NOAA, and NMFS to recognize the value of fishermen and fishing communities, during the oil spill devastation. It discusses in detail the efforts made by the above organizations to ensure that the needs of the fishermen and their communities were not ignored and that their concerns were addressed, as well as provides a comparison between the regulation of the fishing and offshore oil and gas industries. The article also addresses what fishermen can do to ensure that they are given the most accurate information regarding their legal rights as it pertains to the oil spill and litigation.