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Researchers Receive Grant to Study Effects of Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

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(Media-Newswire.com) - Texas Tech researchers received a \$115,000 grant from the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative in a joint research project with Tulane University to collect samples of a common bait fish a year after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

James A. Carr, a professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, serves as the lead investigator for the project. He said he and other researchers will collect the Gulf killifish, or *Fundulus grandis*, which serves as a sentinel species.

"The killifish is a species that's pretty ubiquitous throughout the Gulf coastline," Carr said. "It's important to go back one year after the Deepwater Horizon spill because the young fish hit hardest then are now reproductively mature and breeding. It's an important commercial fish in the fact it's a bait fish, but it's also kind of like the canary in the coal mine. If we see effects in this fish, there may be effects in other commercially important fish."

Carr's team will collect Gulf killifish at oil-impacted sites in southern Barataria Bay in Louisiana, as well as sites not hit by the oil spill in Southeast Texas. Though the researchers are only funded to collect the fish in this project, they will keep them frozen or preserved for future analyses.

Other investigators include Deborah Carr, research assistant professor at Texas Tech's Department of Biological Sciences; Ernest Smith, an associate professor of reproductive and developmental toxicology at The Institute of Environmental and Human Health; and Arunthavarani Thiyagarajah, a research associate professor in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at Tulane University.

The Texas Tech grant is one of 17 grants totaling \$1.5 million from the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative.



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