



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Katie Smith  
Office 504-378-2693  
Cell 504-278-0542

[ksmith@auduboninstitute.org](mailto:ksmith@auduboninstitute.org)

**Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries (G.U.L.F.) -  
An Audubon Nature Institute Sustainable Seafood Project  
Partners with Gulf State Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC)  
to Create Advancement Plans**

(New Orleans, La.) - In an effort to ensure that Gulf seafood remains a valuable resource for generations to come, Audubon Nature Institute's sustainable seafood program, [Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries \(G.U.L.F.\)](#) announces its newest partnership with the [Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission \(GSMFC\)](#) as part of an effort to create a blueprint to advance seafood sustainability in the region. With the Gulf supplying nearly a third of the domestic seafood consumed in the contiguous United States, this partnership aims to create a plan to ensure fisheries in the region are able to thrive for the benefit of future generations.

The historically robust Gulf fisheries are part of a unique ecosystem. G.U.L.F. and GSMFC agree that any management strategy must take into account all aspects of the industry, from economics to ecosystem to getting the product on the plate and have proactively partnered to create advancement plans for the region.

Advancement plans represent a new approach crafted to encourage positive change and are considered an important part of the future of sustainability in fisheries throughout the world. Advancement plans are designed to map out an action plan for the region's fisheries to go above the bar and ensure long-term sustainability. Fisheries benefit from advancement plans by satisfying retailers' increasing demands for greater environmental stewardship.

“Efforts by the Audubon Nature Institute, to work directly with the Gulf Coast’s fishery stakeholders (harvesters, processors and regulators) to overcome and better understand challenges in their fishery are a constructive, progressive effort,” said Secretary Robert Barham of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. “By engaging stakeholders in the development and implementation of Advancement Plans, they are helping move the industry forward – a useful and welcomed approach by a local Non-Government Organization.”

Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida are part of the GSMFC, which is dedicated to the conservation, development, and full utilization of the fishery resources of the Gulf of Mexico, and to provide food, employment, income, and recreation to the residents of these Gulf states. GSMFC also supports a number of other projects, including the Gulf Seafood Marketing Coalition, which is dedicated to raising consumer awareness about the quality of seafood products, and with whom G.U.L.F. has eagerly partnered.

G.U.L.F. acts as a neutral body and an arm of Audubon Nature Institute, working with government agencies, certification bodies, fishers and processors, buyers, restaurateurs, and consumers to ensure that fisheries in the region thrive for the benefit of future generations. Through education and outreach, advancement plans, and third-party assessment and certification of Gulf fisheries, G.U.L.F. highlights what makes the region’s seafood so special and encourages fisheries to go above and beyond to meet the highest standards for responsible fisheries management.

At Audubon Nature Institute, it is our mission to celebrate the wonders of nature. This new collaboration with GSMFC is a wonderful opportunity to support our Gulf fisheries,” said President and CEO Ron Forman. “A healthy Gulf of Mexico is essential to a healthy economy. Our Gulf of Mexico ecosystem is a valuable resource for many reasons: it protects our coast, provides energy for the entire nation, invites recreation and tourism, and, of course, gives us our delicious seafood. We all need to work together to protect it for the future.”

Advancement plans are an important tool to keep Gulf seafood on the shelves of national retailers, who often ask for proof that the seafood they buy is sustainable, or involved with a project to help them become more sustainable. A G.U.L.F. facilitated advancement plan offers a roadmap to greater sustainability, and communicates to the world the region’s dedication to preserving natural resources.

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“I am very pleased to be working with Audubon Nature Institute and the other Gulf States on this vital project,” said Chris Blankenship, Director of the Alabama Marine Resources Division. “It is imperative that the management measures that are being used by the states to sustainably manage the fisheries are validated by an independent group. The fishermen who observe the laws and regulations that are in place to protect the fishery and the environment should be recognized as having a sustainable fishery. The project will also shed light on areas in each of the states that can be improved to ensure the future viability of resources. I look forward to working together on this project and other initiatives to recognize the value of positive fisheries management in the Gulf states”

For more information, please visit: [www.AudubonGULF.org](http://www.AudubonGULF.org).

To learn more about Gulf seafood, please visit: <http://eatgulfseafood.com>

**Audubon Nature Institute** operates a family of museums, parks and research facilities dedicated to celebrating the wonders of nature. Through innovative live animal exhibits, education programs, and scientific discovery, Audubon makes a meaningful contribution to preserving wildlife for the future. Audubon Nature Institute flagships include Audubon Park, Audubon Zoo, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, Entergy IMAX® Theatre, Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium, Audubon Center for the Research of Endangered Species, Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Special Survival Center, Woldenberg Riverfront Park and Audubon Wilderness Park. Ron Forman is the President and CEO of Audubon Nature Institute.

**The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC)** is an organization of the five states (Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida), whose coastal waters are the Gulf of Mexico. This compact, authorized under Public Law 81-66, was signed by the representatives of the governors of the five Gulf States on July 16, 1949. It has as its principal objective the conservation, development, and full utilization of the fishery resources of the Gulf of Mexico, to provide food, employment, income, and recreation to the people of these United States.

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**G.U.L.F.**

—Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries—