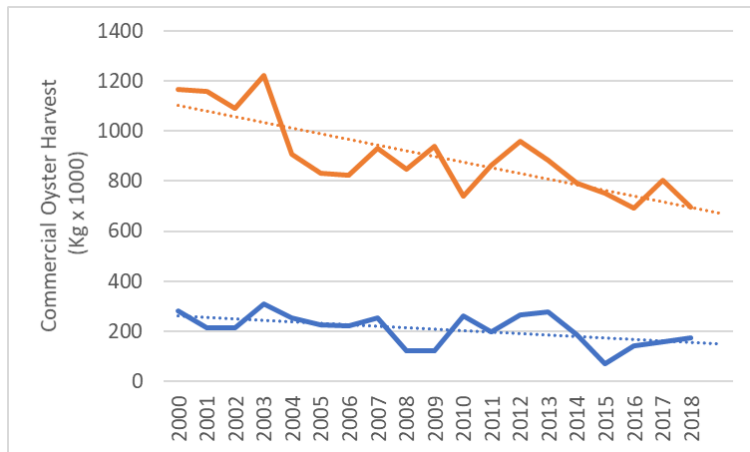


# Protecting restored oyster reefs

## Restored oyster reefs benefit the economy and the environment



Declining oyster harvests in Texas (orange) and Gulf of Mexico (blue) from 2000. NOAA data.

## Potential Solutions

Protecting reefs from harvest can be accomplished by:

- Restoring reefs using boulder-sized reef material to discourage dredging
- Passing legislation prohibiting harvest of restored oyster reefs
- Creating a restoration-specific permit that excludes harvest
- Designating restoration zones where harvest is not allowed

## Issue

- Oyster habitat and harvests are undergoing a critical decline
- Harvest activities can diminish oyster habitat and compromise survival
- Restoration can rebuild degraded reefs, but restored reefs are often not protected

## Impacts

Unfished oyster reefs provide ecological and economic benefits by:

- Providing nursery grounds and increasing fish production
- Stabilizing shorelines by reducing waves
- Improving water quality via filter feeding
- Increasing oyster production by providing larvae to fished reefs



When protected from harvest, restored oysters will grow rapidly, spawn, and provide larvae to nearby harvested reefs.