

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

CATALOG DOCUMENTATION  
EMAP- ESTUARIES PROVINCE LEVEL DATABASE  
LOUISIANIAN PROVINCE 1991-1994  
BENTHIC SPECIES ABUNDANCE DATA

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1. DATA SET IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Title

EMAP- Estuaries Province Level Database  
Louisianian Province  
Benthic Species Abundance Data

1.2 Compilation and Editing Catalog entry

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Tom Heitmuller, U. S. Geological Survey - BRD/GBPO

1.3 Catalog Revision Date

March 4, 1999

1.4 Data Set Name

BEN\_SPEC

1.5 Task Group

ESTUARIES

1.6 Data set identification code

00050, 00090, 00130, 00170

1.7 Version number for a data set

001

1.8 Requested acknowledgment

If you plan to publish these data in any way, EPA requires a standard statement for work it has supported:

"Although the data described in this article have been funded wholly or in part by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through its EMAP Estuaries Program, it has not been subjected to Agency review, and therefore does not necessarily reflect the views of the Agency and no official endorsement should be inferred."

2. INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

2.1 Principal Investigator

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2.2 Sample Collection Investigator

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2.4 Data Analysis Investigator

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2.5 Additional Investigators

N/A

### 3. DATA SET ABSTRACT

#### 3.1 Abstract of the Data Set

The BENTHIC SPECIES data file presents summary data on each benthic taxon identified across all acceptable grabs collected at a station. A count of organisms of the taxon identified from all grabs (generally 3) is recorded. The mean abundance and standard deviation of the mean abundance is also reported. Each taxon is identified by a unique code which can be cross-referenced to the taxon phylogeny. Physical constraints or quality assurance problems precluded the collection or analysis of all samples at a few stations.

#### 3.2 Keywords for the Data file

Benthic Species, Mean Species Abundance, Species Abundance, Species Composition, Taxon Abundance, Benthic Taxon Abundance, Mean Benthic Taxon Abundance

### 4. OBJECTIVES AND INTRODUCTION

#### 4.1 Program Objective

The Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP) was designed to periodically estimate the status and trends of the Nation's ecological resources on a regional basis. EMAP provides a strategy to identify and bound the extent, magnitude and location of environmental degradation and improvement on a regional scale based on randomly located station sites. Only the randomly located Base Sampling Sites were included in this data set.

#### 4.2 Data Set Objective

The objective of the Benthic Species data file is to provide summary data at the individual taxon level about the bottom dwelling (benthic macroinvertebrate) communities at each station sampled in the Louisiana Province in 1991-94.

#### 4.3 Data Set Background Information

Benthic invertebrates are important secondary consumers in most estuarine systems, represent the largest living reservoir of organic carbon in many estuarine systems, contain many important commercial and recreational species and are prey for critical life stages of other important commercial and recreational species.

Benthic invertebrate assemblages are sensitive to disturbance and stress from both natural and anthropogenic origins because of their taxonomic diversity, wide range of physiological tolerances to stress, and multiple feeding modes and trophic levels. The health of these communities is a reflection of local environmental conditions because members of benthic assemblages generally have limited mobility. The communities respond to both sediment and water column conditions and contain long-lived species.

Consequently, benthic community inventories have been used in many regional estuarine monitoring programs and have proven to be

effective as an indicator of the extent and magnitude of pollution impacts in estuarine ecosystems.

Benthic monitoring data describing species composition, abundance and biomass were used as indicators of the biological conditions in the estuaries of the Louisianian Province. These descriptions, along with additional measurements in other data files describing habitat indicators (depth, salinity) and pollution exposure indicators (oxygen concentrations, sediment toxicity, sediment contaminant concentrations) were used to develop a benthic index of environmental condition for the Province.

#### 4.4 Summary of Data file Parameters

Total and mean abundance of each taxa were estimated from all grabs (generally three) collected at a station. Standard deviation of the mean abundance is also reported. Each taxon is identified by a unique code which can be cross-referenced to the taxon phylogeny (see BENCOCES data).

#### 4.5 Year-Specific Information about Data

None

### 5. METHODS

#### 5.1 Data Acquisition

##### 5.1.1 Sampling Objective

Collect three sediment grab samples suitable for the analysis of benthic assemblage data.

##### 5.1.2 Sample Collection Methods Summary

Each acceptable benthic grab sample was rinsed into a plastic dishpan for transport to the sieving station for immediate, aboard processing. The sediment from an individual grab was sieved through a 500  $\mu$ m sieve to wash away sediments and leave organisms, detritus, sand and shell particles larger than 500  $\mu$ m. The contents on the sieve were rinsed with site water, into 500-ml wide-mouth polypropylene jar(s). The contents of each jar were preserved by the addition of 100 ml of formalin:seawater (50:50) containing Rose Bengal vital stain to yield a final formalin concentration of 10% by volume.

##### 5.1.3 Beginning Sampling Date

09 July 1991  
08 July 1992  
06 July 1993  
06 July 1994

#### 5.1.4 Ending Sampling Date

10 September 1991  
11 September 1992  
19 August 1993  
15 September 1994

#### 5.1.5 Sampling Platform

Each team was supplied with a 25-foot SeaArk work boat equipped with a 7.5 L gas engine fitted with a Bravo outdrive, an "A" frame boom assembly and hydraulic winch. On-board electronics consist of: a Loran C unit, GPS (beginning in 1993), radar unit, 2 VHF radios, cellular phone, compass, a depth finder, a tool kit, and all required and suggested safety equipment. One completely outfitted spare boat was stored at the Field Operations Center (EPA Lab) as backup.

#### 5.1.6 Sampling Equipment

A 1/25 m<sup>2</sup>, stainless steel, Young-modified Van Veen Grab sampler was used to collect sediment grabs for benthic analyses. This grab sampled an area of 413 cm<sup>2</sup> with a maximum depth of penetration in the sediment of 10 cm.

#### 5.1.7 Manufacturer of Sampling Equipment

Young's Welding, Sandwich, MA

#### 5.1.8 Key Variables

Number of grabs collected.

#### 5.1.9 Sampling Method Calibration

The sampling gear did not require any calibration. It required inspection for deformities incurred due to mishandling or impact on rocky substrates.

#### 5.1.10 Sample Collection Quality Control

To ensure the integrity of the sediment samples collected, the interior surfaces of the grab sampler (including the underside of the hinged top) were rinsed prior to use to assure that no sediment remained from the previous station. To minimize the effects of bow wave disturbance to surficial sediments, the speed of grab through the water column was reduced as it neared the bottom. To minimize the chance of sampling the exact same location twice, after three (3) grabs were taken, the boat was moved five (5) meters downstream by letting out the appropriate length of anchor line. Sediment grabs used for benthic samples were randomly interspersed with the grabs used for sediment chemistry/toxicity samples.

A successful grab had relatively level, intact sediment over the entire area of the grab and a sediment depth at the center of between 7-10 centimeters. Unacceptable grabs included those

containing no sediments and those where were partially filled or had shelly substrates or grossly slumped surfaces. Grabs that were overfilled in which excessive amounts of sediment extruded from the hinged top were also unacceptable. The sieve was inspected immediately following the removal of the sample to ensure no organisms were left clinging to the sieve. Any organisms found were placed in the sample jar. The sieve was also thoroughly scrubbed with a stiff brush between samples.

Additionally, each crew was visited during the sampling period by the QA Coordinator or Logistics Coordinator. Part of the review included observing sample collection procedures to ensure samples were being processed properly.

#### 5.1.11 Sample Collection Method Reference

Macaulley, J. M 1991. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program-Near Coastal Louisiana Province: 1991 Monitoring Demonstration. Field Operations Manual. EPA/600/X-91/XXX. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561.

Macaulley, J. M 1992. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program Louisiana Province: 1992 Sampling: Field Operations Manual. EPA/ERL-GB No. SR-119. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561.

Macaulley, J. M 1993. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program Louisiana Province: 1993 Sampling: Field Operations Manual. EPA/ERL-GB No. SR-XXX. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561.

Macaulley, J. M 1994. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program Louisiana Province: 1993 Sampling: Field Operations Manual. EPA/ERL-GB No. SR-XXX. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561.

#### 5.1.12 Sample Collection Method Deviations

None

### 5.2 Data Preparation and Sample Processing

#### 5.2.1 Data Preparation Objective

Process sediment samples to accurately identify and enumerate all macrobenthic organisms found to the lowest practical taxonomic category.

#### 5.2.2 Data Processing Methods Summary

**BENTHIC SAMPLES:** The samples were washed through 500  $\mu$ m mesh

sieves. Benthic fauna were sorted from the sediments, identified to lowest practical taxa, and enumerated. Only benthic macrofauna were identified. Meiofauna and taxonomic groups having only planktonic forms were excluded from the identification process. Benthic fauna were identified to the lowest practical taxonomic level.

#### 5.2.3 Sampling Processing Method Calibration

N/A

#### 5.2.4 Sample Processing Quality Control

#### 5.2.5 Sample Processing Method Reference

U. S. EPA. 1995. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP): Laboratory Methods Manual - Estuaries, Volume 1: Biological and Physical Analyses. United States Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Narragansett, RI. EPA/620/R-95/008.

#### 5.2.6 Sample Processing Method Deviations

None

### 6. DATA MANIPULATIONS

#### 6.1 Name of New or Modified Value

BSPECABN Total # Organisms of the Taxon  
 BSPEC\_MA Mean # Organisms of the Taxon  
 BSPECSTD Standard Deviation of Mean/Grab

#### 6.2 Data Manipulation Description

Measurements on a 'per grab' basis were received from taxonomic laboratories. Values in this data set were calculated by 1) Summing replicate abundance over 'n' grabs, 2) taking the mean of the abundance across 'n' replicates and 3) generating a standard deviation based on the replicate abundances for each taxon.

#### 6.3 Data Manipulation Examples

##### 6.3.1 Total abundance for a taxon:

Abundance counts for a taxon were summed for all replicates collected at a station.

##### 6.3.2 Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) values for abundance

The mean for each taxon identified at a station was calculated by summing the replicate abundances and dividing by the number of grabs collected. The SD was then calculated.

#### 6.4 Data Manipulation Computer Code File

#### 6.5 Data Manipulation Computer Code Language



6.6 Data Manipulation Computer Code

7. DESCRIPTION OF PARAMETERS

7.1 Description of Parameters

7.1.1 Parameter Name

Field Name	Data Type	Max Len	Format	Variable Field Label
STA_NAME	Char	8	8.	The Station Identifier
VST_DATE	Num	8	YYMMDD6.	The Date the Sample was Collected
SPECCODE	Char	8	8.	EMAP Taxon Code
BSPECABN	Num	8	6.	Total # Organisms of the Taxon
BSPEC_MA	Num	8	8.2	Mean # Organisms of the Taxon
BSPECSTD	Num	8	6.2	Standard Deviation of Mean/Grab

7.1.6 Precision to which values are reported

Total abundance is reported as a whole number. Means and standard deviations are reported to 2 decimal places.

7.1.7 Accuracy of the data values

7.1.8 Minimum Value in Data Set

1991  
1992  
1993  
1994

BSPECABN  
0  
0  
1  
0

BSPEC\_MA  
0.00  
0.00  
0.33  
0.00

BSPECSTD  
0.00  
0.00  
0.00  
0.00

7.1.9 Maximum Value in Data Set

1991  
 1992  
 1993  
 1994

BSPECABN  
 2524  
 4128  
 5274  
 1204

BSPEC\_MA  
 841.33  
 1376  
 1758.33  
 401.33

BSPECSTD  
 447.45  
 631.56  
 1970.09  
 283.02

7.2 Data Record Example

7.2.1 Column Names for Example Records

STA\_NAME VST\_DATE SPECCODE BSPECABN BSPEC\_MA BSPECSTD

7.2.2 Example Data Records

OBS	STA_NAME	VST_DATE	SPECCODE	BSPECABN	BSPEC_MA	BSPECSTD
1	LA91LR01	910721	AMPEHOLM	1	0.33	0.58
2	LA91LR01	910721	AMPEVADO	2	0.67	1.15
3	LA91LR01	910721	AMPI LONG	1	0.33	0.58
4	LA91LR01	910721	AMYGPAPY	8	2.67	2.89
5	LA91LR01	910721	ARICLOPE	6	2.00	1.73

7.3 Related Data Sets

7.3.1 Related Data Set Name

7.3.2 Related Data Set Identification Code

8. GEOGRAPHIC AND SPATIAL INFORMATION

8.1 Minimum Longitude

-97 Degrees 27 Minutes 13.20 Decimal Seconds

8.2 Maximum Longitude

-82 Degrees 39 Minutes 28.20 Decimal Seconds

**8.3 Maximum Latitude**

30 Degrees 48 Minutes 30.00 Decimal Seconds

**8.4 Minimum Latitude**

26 Degrees 02 Minutes 55.80 Decimal Seconds

**8.5 Name of the area or region**

Louisianian Province - Coastal distribution of sampling is along the Gulf of Mexico from the Rio Grande, TX to Anclote Key, FL. States represented: Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida

**8.6 Direct Spatial Reference Method**

Point

**8.7 Horizontal Coordinate System Used**

Universal Transverse Mercator

**8.8 Resolution of Horizontal Coordinates**

0.5

**8.9 Units for Horizontal Coordinates**

Meters

**8.10 Vertical Coordinate System**

N/A

**8.11 Resolution of Vertical Coordinates**

N/A

**8.12 Units for Vertical Coordinates**

N/A

**9. QUALITY CONTROL/QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**9.1 Measurement Quality Objectives**

Measurement Quality Objectives were outlined in the Quality Assurance Project Plan. Accuracy and precision goals are outlined below:

Benthic Species Composition	Accuracy Goal	Completeness Goal
Sorting	10%	100%
Counting	10%	100%
Taxonomy	10%	100%

## 9.2 Quality Assurance/Control Methods

Quality control for processing grab samples involves both sorting and counting check systems. A check on the efficiency of the sorting process was required to document the accuracy of the organism extraction process. Checks on the accuracy of sample counting were conducted in conjunction with taxonomic identification and used the same criteria.

The Quality control check on each technician's efficiency at sorting (i.e., separating organisms from sediment and debris) consists of a independent re-sort by a second, experienced sorter. To pass QC, the sorter's efficiency must be at least 90%, meaning no more than 10% of the organisms in the sample were missed. A minimum of 10 percent of samples processed by a given sorter should be subjected to a QC sort at regular intervals during sample processing. If a sorter fails QC sorts, then all samples processed from the last successful QC check were resorted and any additional organisms found were added to each sample. If QC sorting passes, but some organisms were found, these animals WERE NOT added to the original sample sort.

## 9.3 Actual Measurement Quality

The field sample collection and laboratory processing (i.e., sorting, identifying, and enumeration) of the benthic community assemblages for 1991-1993 EMAP-Estuaries Monitoring in the Louisianian Province fully met the prescribed QA/QC guidelines and all macrobenthic community data were acceptable without further qualification for EMAP assessments.

## 9.4 Sources of Error

## 9.5 Known Problems with the Data

## 9.6 Confidence Level/Accuracy Judgement

## 9.7 Allowable Minimum Values

## 9.8 Allowable Maximum Values

## 9.9 QA Reference Data

Heitmuller, P.T. and R. Valente. 1991. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program: EMAP-Estuaries Louisianian Province: 1991 quality assurance project plan. EPA/ERL-GB No. SR-120. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561.

# 10. DATA ACCESS

## 10.1 Data Access Procedures

A Data Request Package can be requested from a contact under Section 7.3. Data can be downloaded from the WWW site.

## 10.2 Data Access Restrictions

Data can only be accessed from the WWW site.

## 10.3 Data Access Contact Persons

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## 10.4 Data Set Format

Data can be transmitted in a variety of formats derived from SAS data files when a Data Request Form is submitted.

## 10.5 Information Concerning Anonymous FTP

Not accessible

## 10.6 Information Concerning World Wide Web

Data can be downloaded from the WWW

## 10.7 EMAP CD-ROM Containing the Data file

Data not available on CD-ROM

## 11. REFERENCES

### 11.1 EMAP References

Heitmuller, P. T. and R. Valente. 1991. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program: EMAP-Estuaries Louisiana Province: 1991 quality assurance project plan. EPA/ERL-GB No. SR-120. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561.

Macauley, J. M. 1991. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program-Near Coastal Louisiana Province: 1991 Monitoring Demonstration. Field Operations Manual. EPA/600/X-91/XXX. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561.

Macauley, J. M. and J. K. Summers. 1991. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program, Near Coastal - Louisiana Province: 1991 Field Reconnaissance Report - East Region. EPA/600/04-91/XXX. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561.

Macauley, J. M. and J. K. Summers. 1991. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program, Near Coastal - Louisiana Province: Field Training Manual - Crew Chiefs. EPA/600/05-91/XXX. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561.

Macauley, J. M. and J. K. Summers. 1991. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program, Near Coastal - Louisiana Province: Field Training Manual - Crews. EPA/600/05-91/XXX. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561.

Summers, J. K., J. M. Macauley and P. T. Heitmuller. 1991. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program. Implementation Plan for Monitoring the Estuarine Waters of the Louisiana Province - 1991 Demonstration. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561. EPA/600/5-91/228.

Summers, J. K., J. M. Macauley, J. M., P. T. Heitmuller, V. D. Engle, A. M. Adams and G. T. Brooks. 1992. Annual Statistical Summary: EMAP-Estuaries Louisiana Province - 1991. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze, FL 32561. EPA/600/R-93/001.

U. S. EPA. 1995. Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP): Laboratory Methods Manual - Estuaries, Volume 1: Biological and Physical Analyses. United States Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Narragansett, RI. EPA/620/R-95/008.

## 11.2 Background References

Engle, V. D., J. K. Summers, G. R. Gaston. 1994. A Benthic Index of Environmental Condition of Gulf of Mexico Estuaries. Estuaries. 17: 372-384.

Summers, J. Kevin, John F. Paul, Andrew Robertson. 1995.  
Monitoring The Ecological Condition Of Estuaries In The United  
States. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research  
and Development, Environmental Research Laboratory, Gulf Breeze,  
FL 32651.

12. GLOSSARY AND TABLE OF ACRONYMS

12.1 Acronym used in the Detailed Documentation

12.2 Definition of Acronym

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