



NOAA
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Southeast
Region

An Overview of the Gulf of Mexico Marine Mammal Stranding Network

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NMFS SER Stranding Program Administrator

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Outline

1. Overview of laws governing marine mammals and stranding response
2. Gulf of Mexico Marine Mammal Stranding Network
3. Historical funding of Gulf Network
4. Key needs for the future



U.S. Laws Governing Marine Mammals

- All marine mammals are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)
- Some marine mammals are also protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)
 - In the Southeast Region includes:
 - Blue whale
 - Fin whale
 - Humpback whale
 - North Atlantic right whale
 - Sei whale
 - Sperm whale

The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972

Title I: Conservation and Protection of Marine Mammals

Title II: Marine Mammal Commission

Title III: International Dolphin Conservation Program

Title IV: Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response

Title V: Polar Bears



Title IV: Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response

Established the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (1992)

- Collect and disseminate data on health and health trends
- Correlate health/trends data with biological, physical, and chemical environmental parameters
- Coordinate effective responses to unusual mortality (and morbidity) events



Components of the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program



Stranding Network



Rehabilitation & Release



Disentanglement Network



Disease/Unusual Mortality Event Investigations



Biomonitoring / Health Assessments

Prescott Grant Program



Tissue Bank/ Quality Assurance



WELCOME

Welcome to the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program System. We hope you find it convenient. This system is crucial to the implementation of the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program. If we can be of any assistance to you, please contact the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program at MMHRSP_National@noaa.gov or (301) 713-2322.



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Data Management

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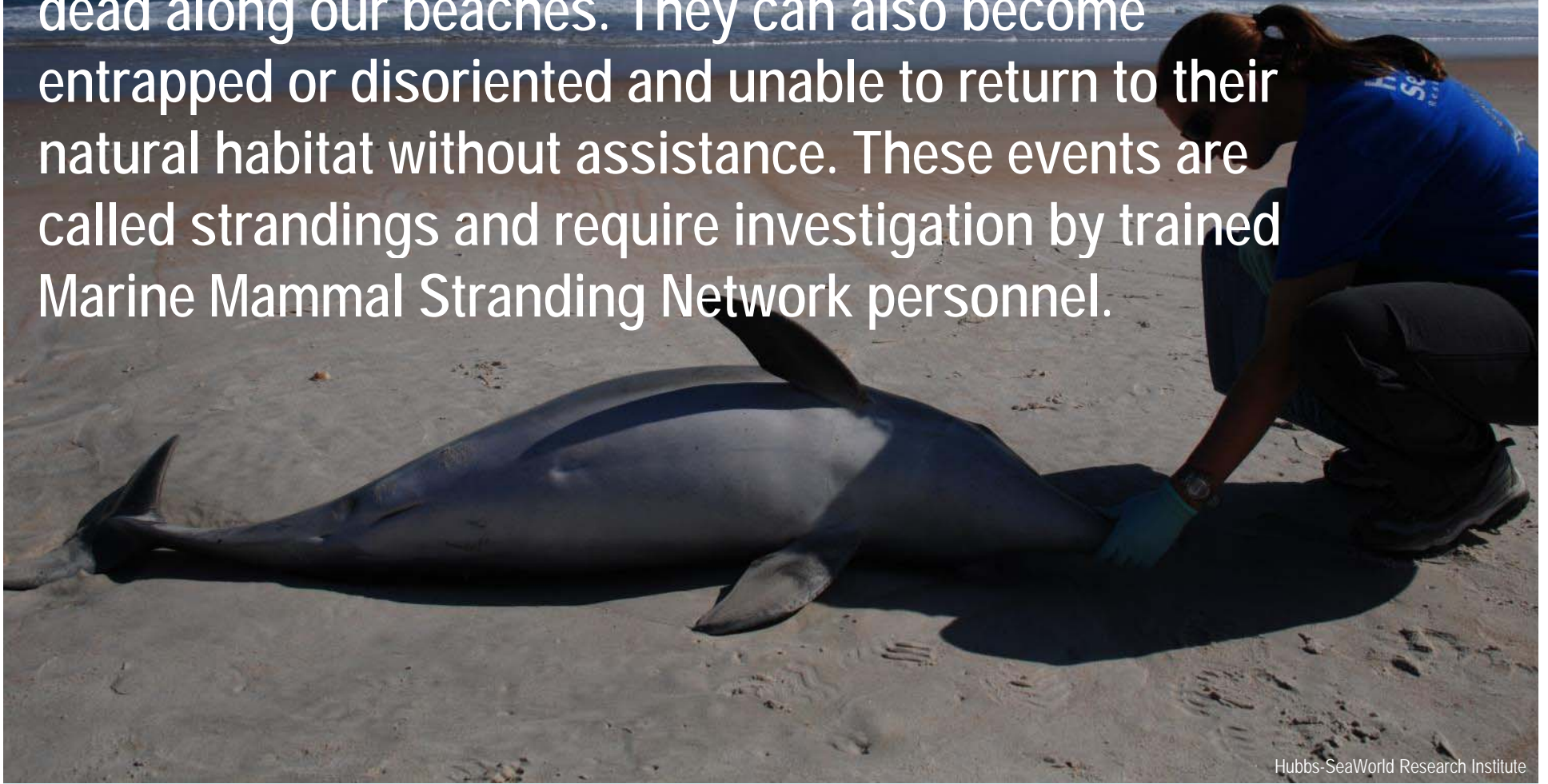
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Data Management

What is a Stranding?

Marine mammals are sometimes found sick, injured, or dead along our beaches. They can also become entrapped or disoriented and unable to return to their natural habitat without assistance. These events are called strandings and require investigation by trained Marine Mammal Stranding Network personnel.



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Types of Strandings



SINGLE



MOM & CALF



MASS

2 or more animals that simultaneously strand and are not a mom/calf pair

Marine Mammal Stranding Network

Volunteer stranding networks exist in all coastal states. They are comprised of trained responders and veterinarians who are authorized under the MMPA to respond to and rehabilitate live stranded marine mammals and investigate dead stranded marine mammals.



Marine Mammal Stranding Network

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- (1) Section 109(h) of the MMPA

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(1) Section 109(h) of the MMPA:

Nothing ... shall prevent a Federal, State, or local government official or employee... from taking, in the course of his or her duties as an official or employee, a marine mammal in a humane manner (including euthanasia) if such taking is for:

- A. The protection or welfare of the mammal
- B. The protection of the public health and welfare, or
- C. The nonlethal removal of nuisance animals

Marine Mammal Stranding Network

The MMPA provides two ways in which marine mammal stranding response is authorized:

(1) Section 109(h) of the MMPA

(2) Section 112(c) of the MMPA (Stranding Agreements):

The Secretary may enter into such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this title or title IV and on such terms as he deems appropriate with any Federal or State agency, public or private institution, or other person.

Endangered Species Act of 1972

How does ESA listing affect stranding response?

An ESA permit is required to respond to a stranded, endangered marine mammal. In the Southeast Region, the NMFS Stranding Program Coordinator and Administrator are Co-PIs on the National MMHSRP permit and all response must be authorized through them.



Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network



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UNC Wilmington

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The GoM Marine Mammal Stranding Network

- 10 Stranding Agreement Holders
 - +1 in progress- University of Florida
- 3 Designees
 - Texas State Aquarium (TMMSN)
 - SeaWorld San Antonio (TMMSN)
 - Chicago Zoological Society (Mote)
- 109(h) Organizations
 - Florida FWC
 - LDWF
 - Assistance from many others

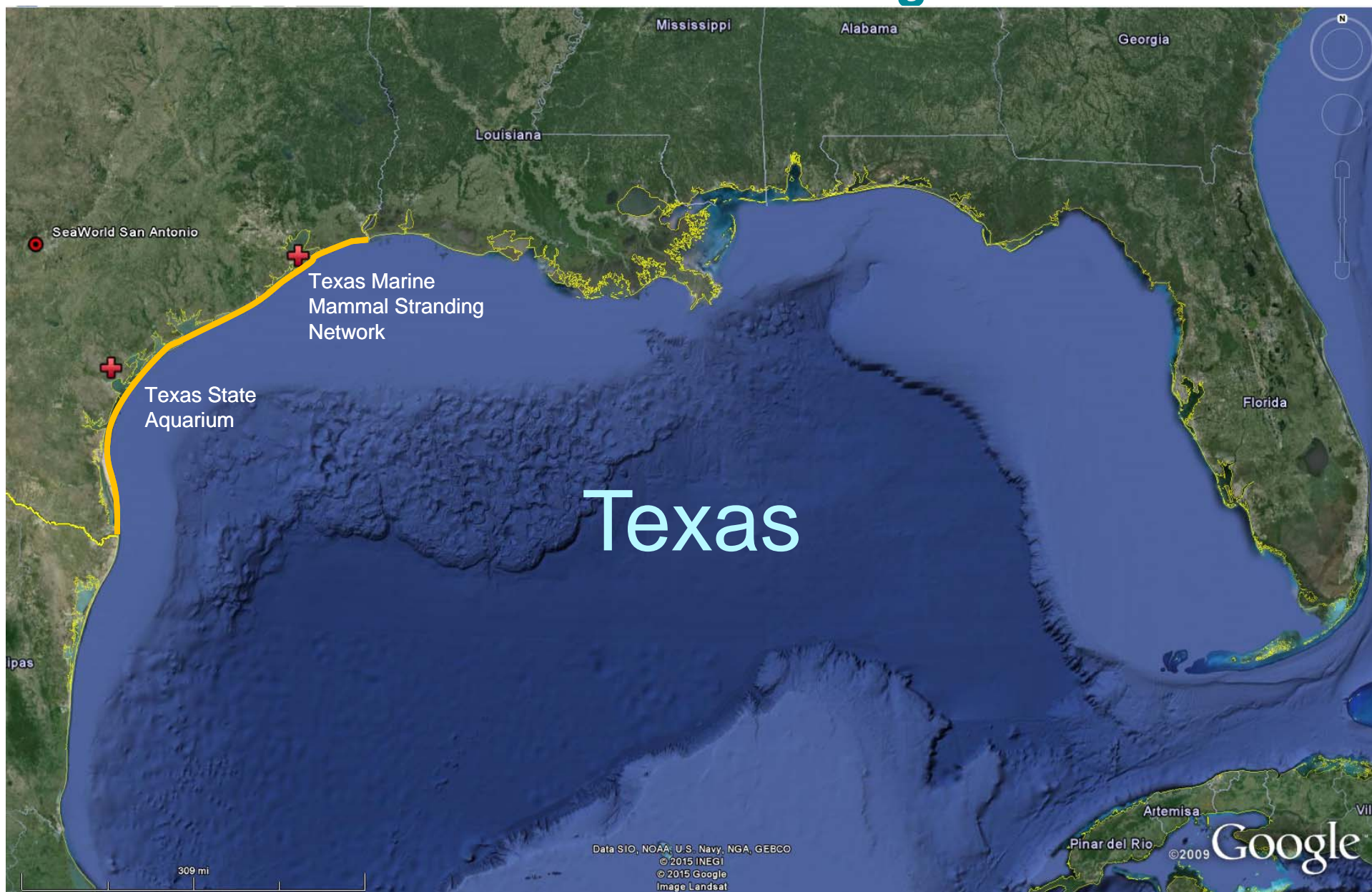


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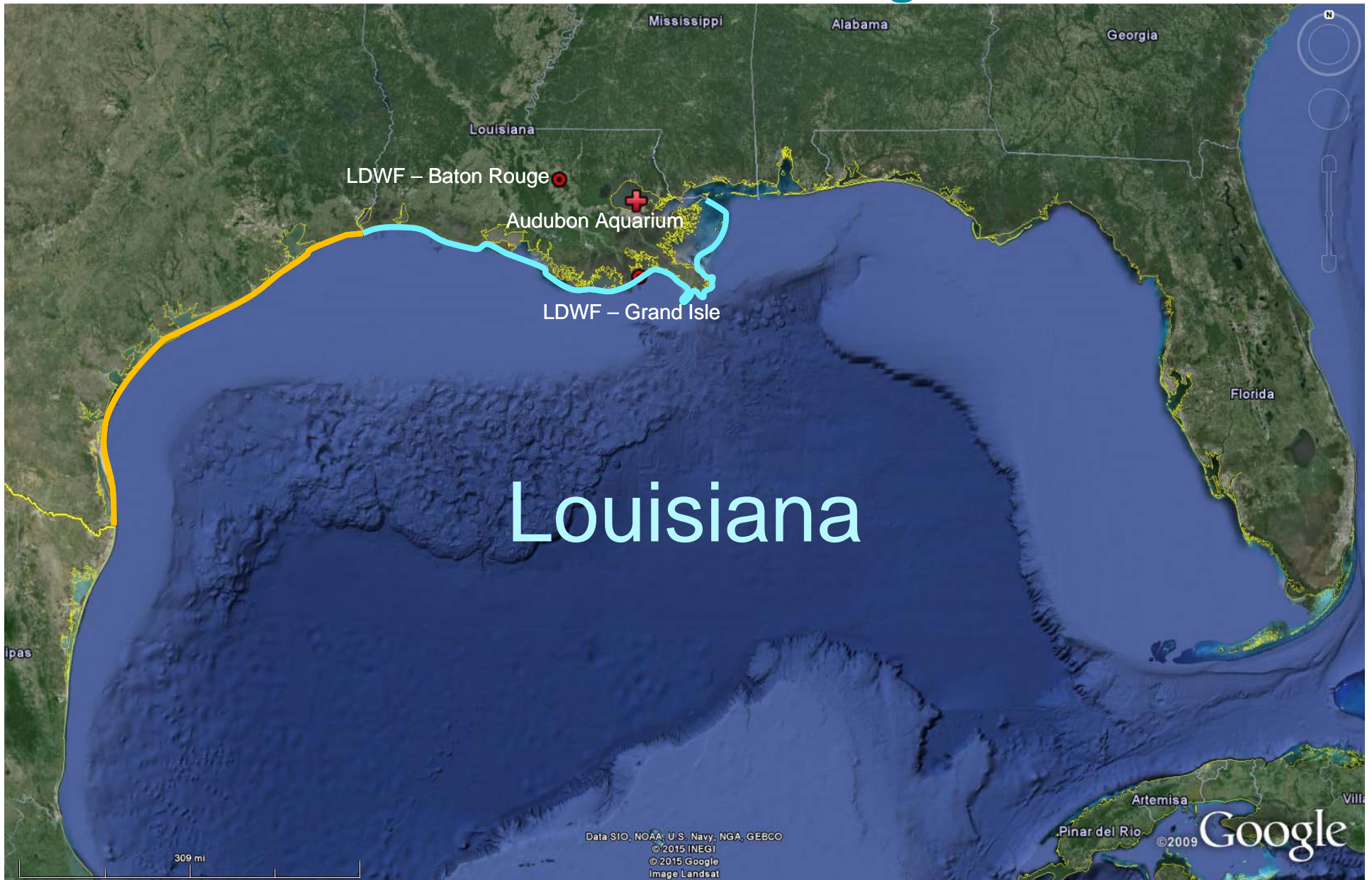
Rehabilitation Facilities



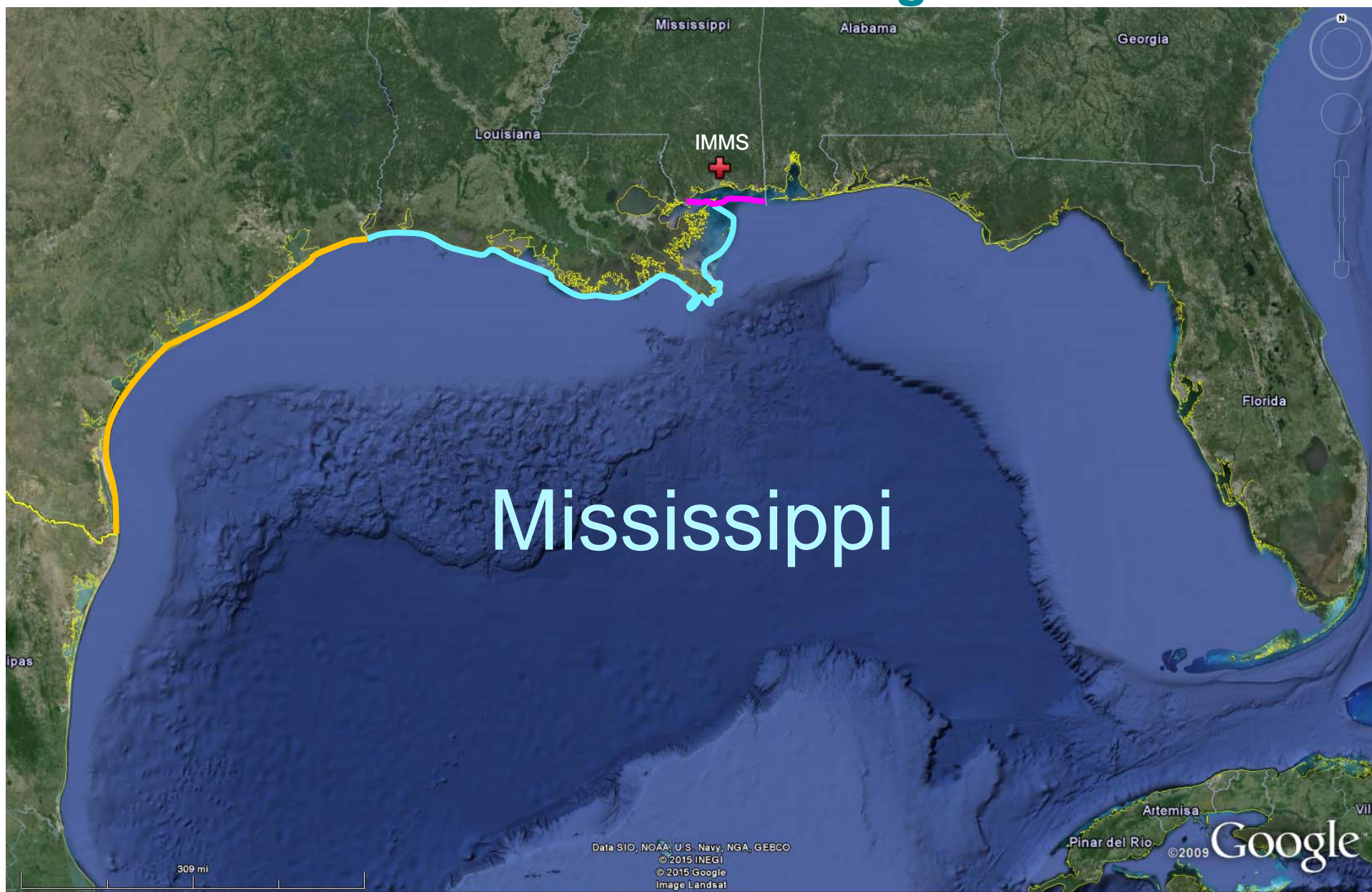
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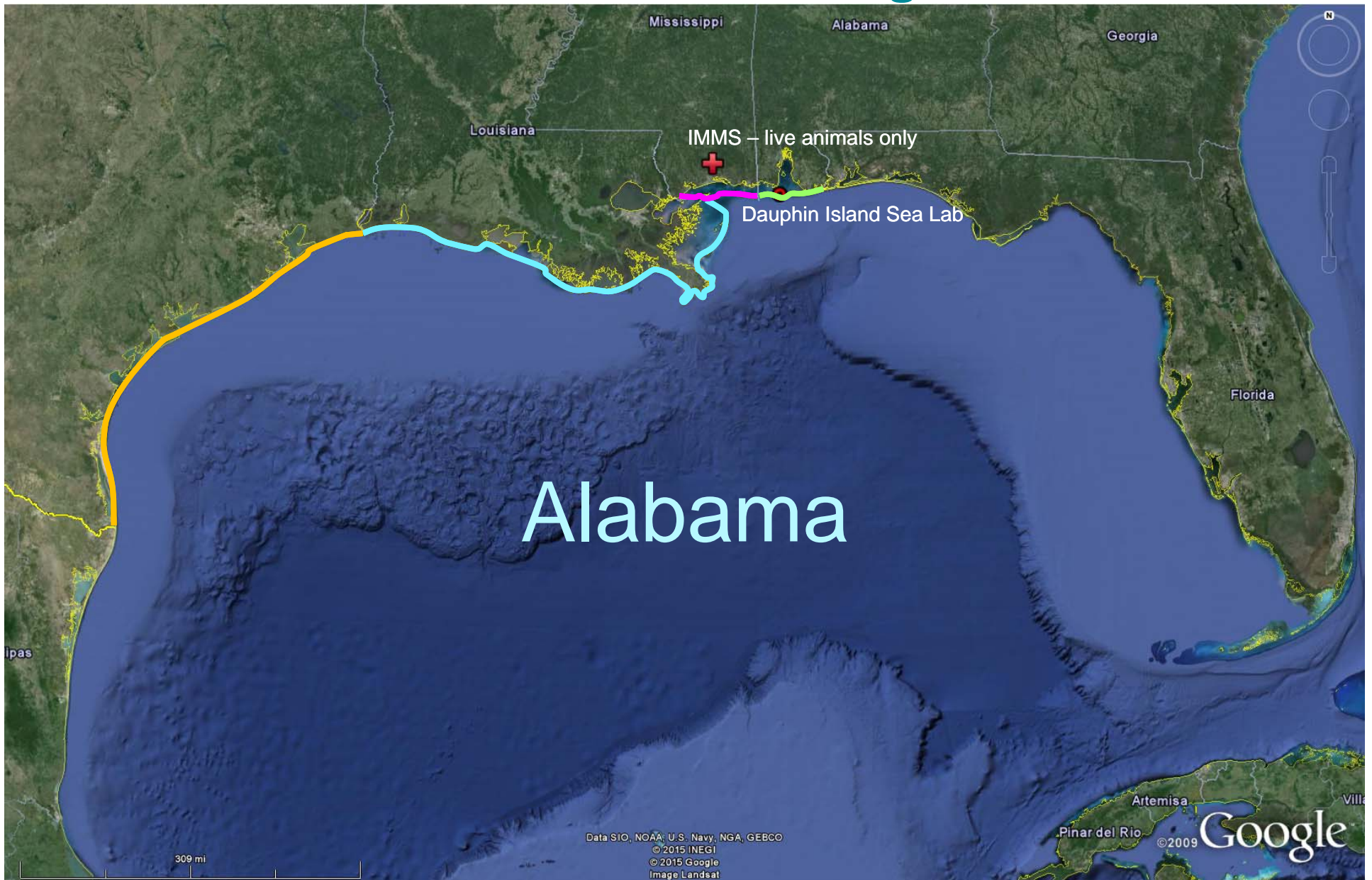
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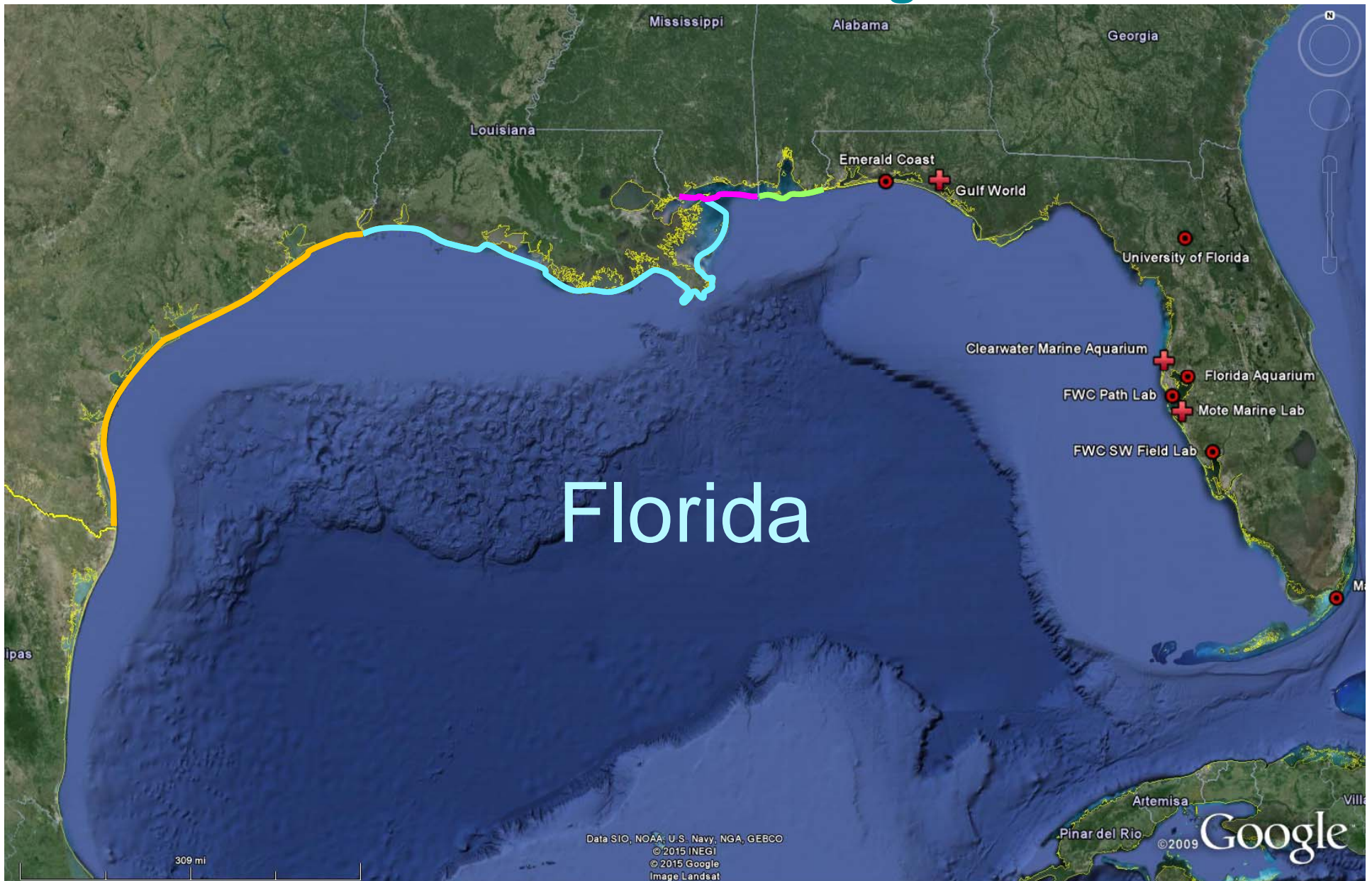
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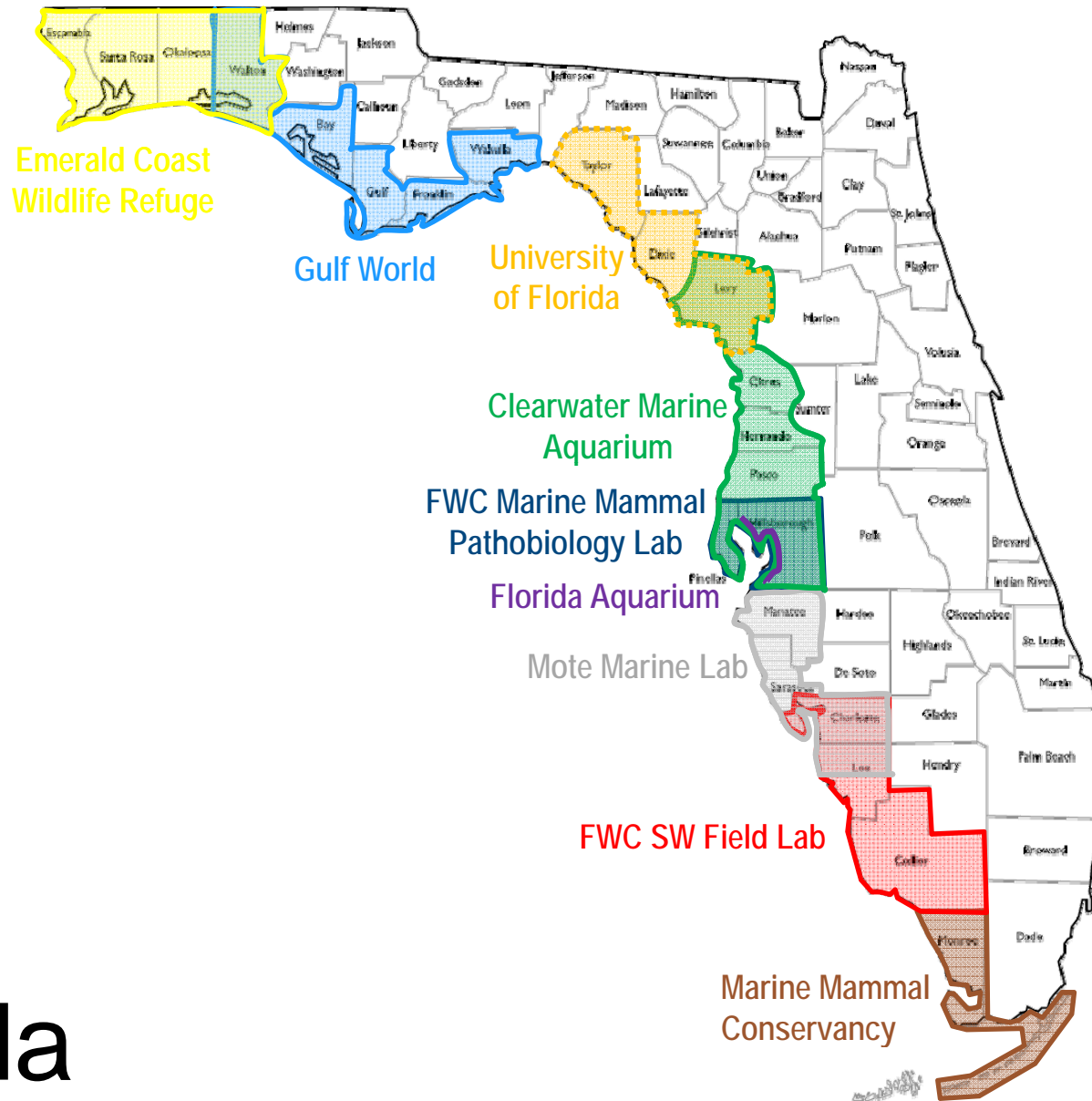
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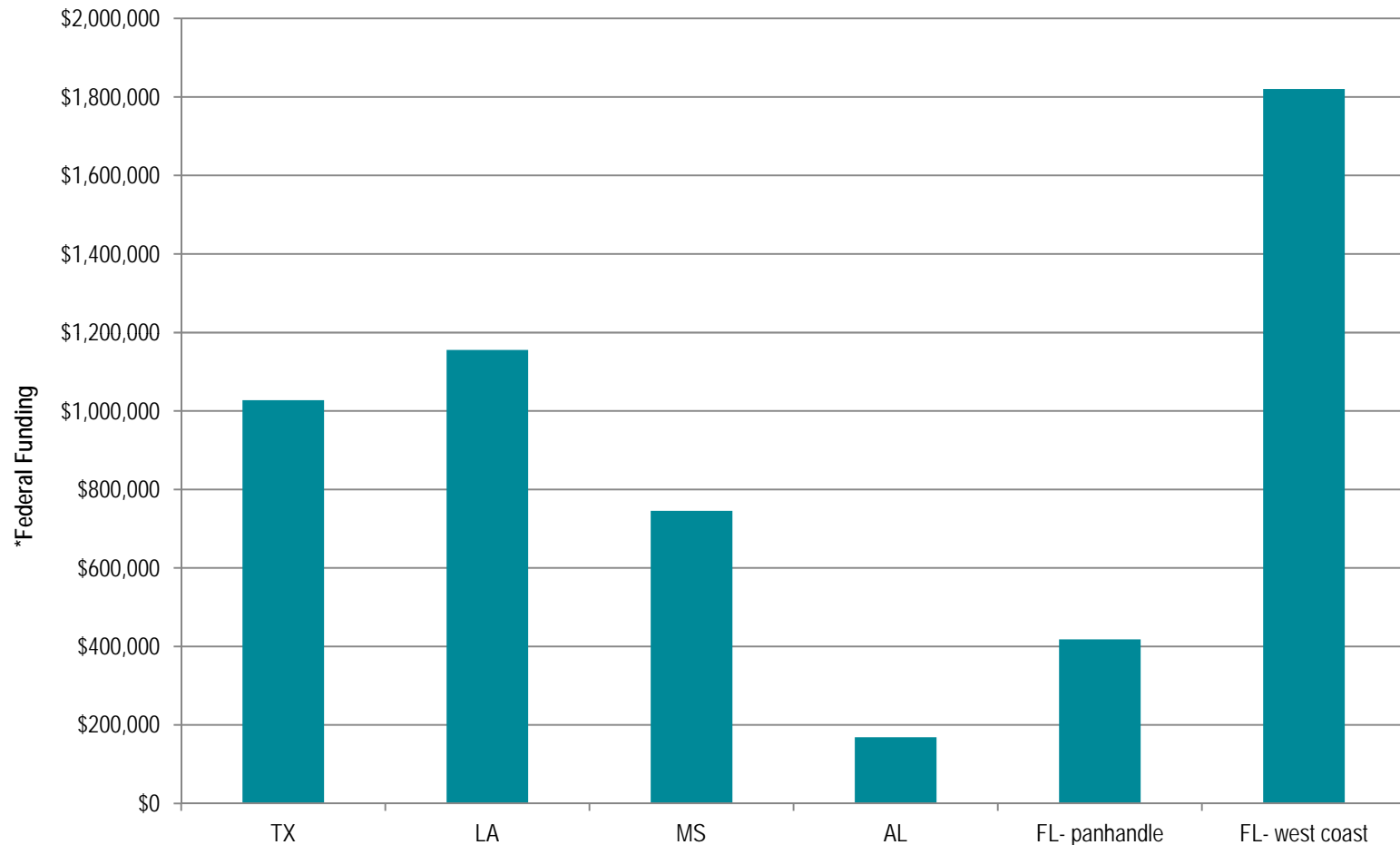
Florida

Outline

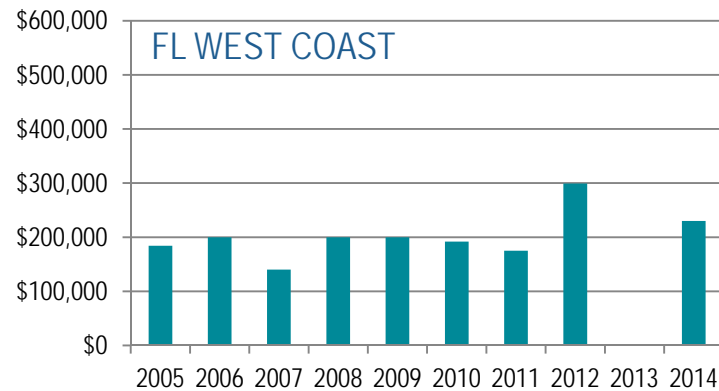
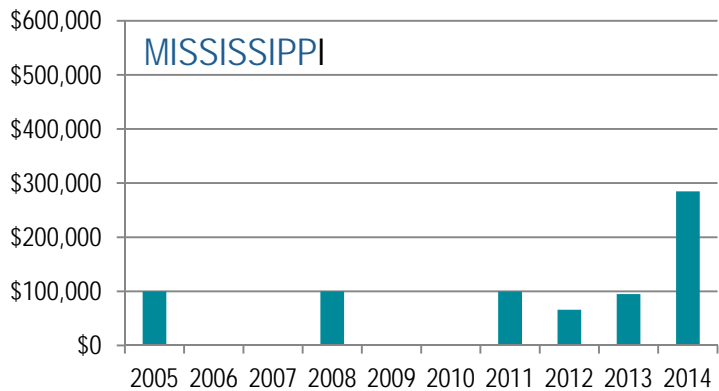
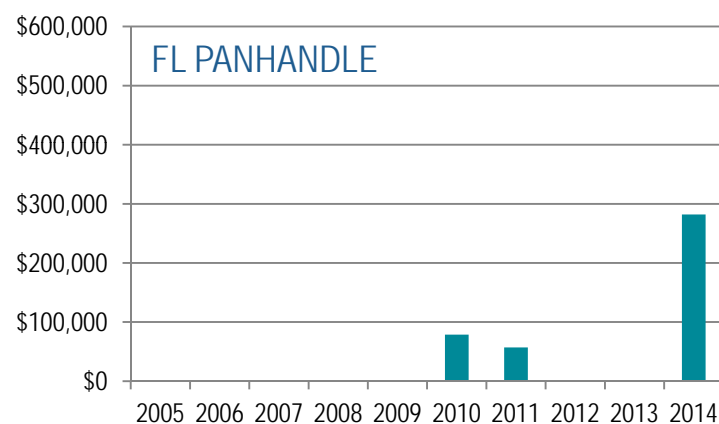
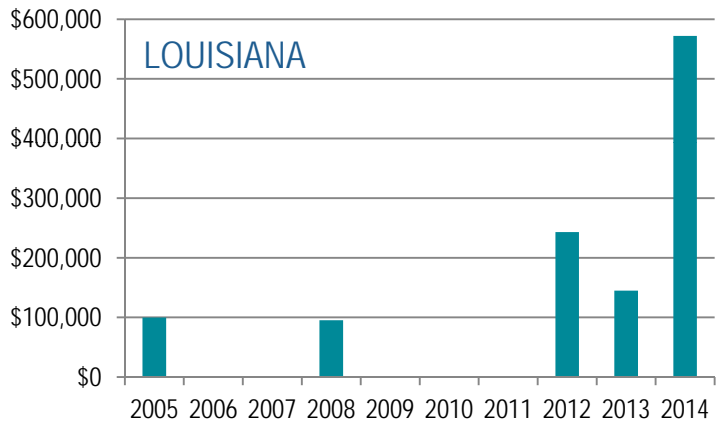
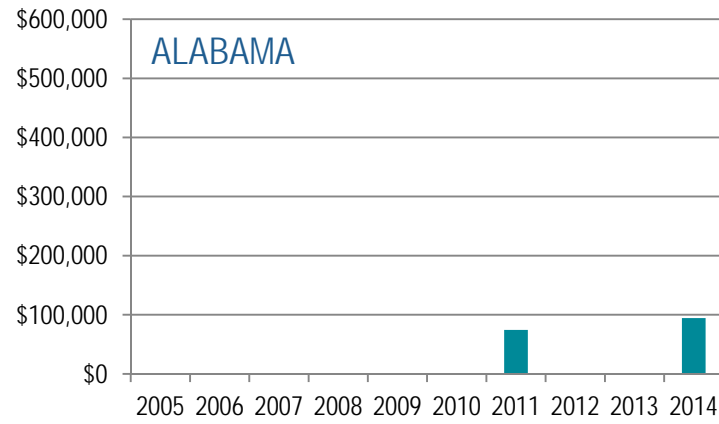
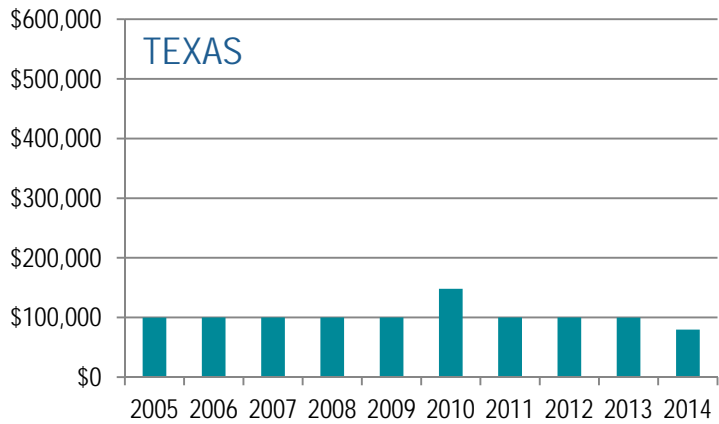
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Stranding Network Funding 2005-2014



*Funding sources: Prescott grants, NRDA. Note: does not include DWH Response funding in 2010/2011



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- Increase capacity to respond to mass strandings, large whales, Unusual Mortality Events, and natural/anthropogenic disasters

Questions?

