[National Science Foundation Grant to Tulane Will Benefit Oil Spill Research](#)

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The National Science Foundation has awarded Tulane University a nearly $200,000 grant to enhance an important online resource marine scientists use to study the impact of the BP oil spill.

The federal funding will expand access to the Fishnet2 database, which is managed by the Tulane University Museum of Natural History. Over many years, scientists have collected data on marine life in the Gulf of Mexico, compiling numerous specimens of fish and other marine life that are now in various museums, where they have been identified, studied and archived. The Fishnet2 network provides a means for scientists to access fish data online.

Researchers generally search the Fishnet2 portal using scientific or common names of fishes, but there are many other ways they would like to search the portal, particularly for research related to the oil spill, including depth and/or some aspect of surface geography.

"We aim to use this current grant to enhance the Fishnet2 search interface so that researchers can search by these parameters," says Hank Bart, professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and director and curator of fishes at Tulane University"s Museum of Natural History. "Once researchers have data on which species occur where in the Gulf, they can ask all kinds of other questions about the potential effects of the oil spill."