



Kersey Sturdivant

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Duke University Marine Lab

The untold story of recovery following the Deepwater Horizon incident: A worm's eye view

The Deepwater Horizon incident was the first large deep-sea oil spill. Soft-sediment benthos provide key ecosystem services and were an ecological concern following the spill. Recent publications recorded an initial opportunistic response and predicted 50–100 years for benthic taxonomic recovery. We present new insights into the timing and mechanisms of functional benthic recovery following organic enrichment caused by the mass flux of petroleum hydrocarbons to the seafloor using data generated from sediment profile and plan view imaging surveys conducted one and four years after the spill. Our results confirm the early opportunistic response documented by others and indicate further stages of functional benthic recovery as early as one year after the incident, with additional progress at four years. As oil and gas exploration and extraction move into the deep sea, improving our understanding of ecological variability, evolutionary adaptations, and benthic recovery trajectories in these environments is critical.

Registration for this webinar is required and space is limited. [Please RSVP here.](#)