

BOTTOM CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NORTHERN GULF OF MEXICO CONTINENTAL SHELF

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ABSTRACT

Photographs of the Gulf of Mexico continental shelf floor between Panama City, Florida and Galveston, Texas were examined for evidence of sediment texture, structure and biological activity. Sediment size is distinctively coarser in areas of reef growth near the continental slope. Bioturbation was recognized by the presence of burrows, mounds, furrows, tracks, and excrements. Water turbidity of varying degrees was noticed sometimes obscuring the real water-sediment interface. Current direction and inferred velocity were indicated by compass and sediment cloud. A program of extensive photography, complimented by shallow cores, grab samples and box samples, is needed in order to fully understand the different physiographic provinces of the Gulf of Mexico and their local variations.

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