

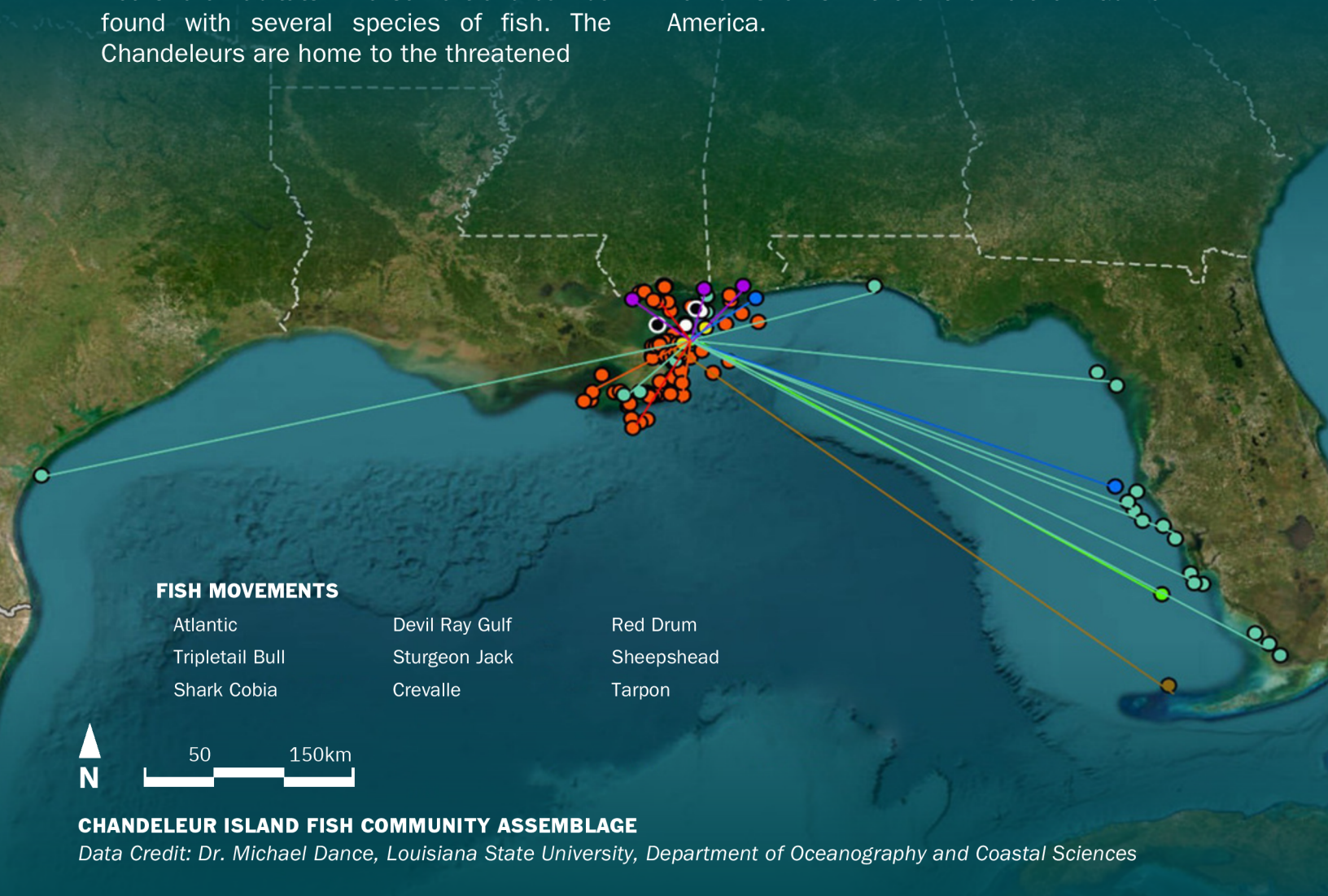
CHANDELEUR ISLAND

REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE



The Chandeleur Islands are an important regional and international resource. Not only do sea turtles nest on the islands, but they also attract sea turtles from all over the Gulf of America. Loggerhead sea turtles that nest throughout the eastern and northern Gulf of America travel to the Chandeleur Island each year to feed. The same trends are observed among Kemp's Ridley sea turtles that travel from Mexico and the Western Gulf to the Chandeurs. Both turtle species arrive each year to feed among the sea grass meadows and nearshore habitats. The same trend can be found with several species of fish. The Chandeurs are home to the threatened

Gulf Sturgeon. Adult Gulf Sturgeon from the Pearl River, Pascagoula River, and Mobile River breeding stocks winter at the Chandeleur Islands. Tarpon tagged throughout the Gulf are found each spring and summer in the waters adjacent to the Chandeleur Islands. They migrate through to Southern Florida and Southern Texas each fall and winter but return to the Chandeleur Islands each spring. The sea grass meadows are also an important nursery area for several species of snapper, speckled trout, redfish and Lemon Sharks. In fact, the Chandeurs are the only nursery ground for Lemon Sharks in the entire Northern Gulf of America.



INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANT BIRD AREA

Perhaps the best demonstration of the island's regional and international significance is its importance to birds. The National Audubon Society has designated the Chandeleurs as a "Globally Significant Bird Area." Birds that utilize the Chandeleur Islands for part of their life cycle are found throughout the Gulf of America and in 33 countries worldwide. The Chandeleur Islands were known to host the largest colonial nesting birds in the world in the 1980s and 1990s. It is still one of the largest known bird nesting areas in the Gulf of America. In total the Chandeleur islands support 80 "Species of Greatest Conservation Need", including birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, mollusks, crustaceans, and plants. This includes seven species of "Global Importance."

Interesting Bird Facts about the Chandeleur Islands:

- One of the largest wintering areas for Redhead Ducks— over 100,000 Redhead ducks annually.
- Important staging area for the threatened Red Knot that travels over 16,000 miles annually, from their breeding grounds to their wintering grounds and back.
- Largest Reddish Egret Colony in Louisiana.
- Important nesting area for Brown Pelicans that migrate to all Gulf states and countries that border the Gulf of America.
- Only nesting area in the world for the Chandeleur Gull.



CHANDELEUR ISLAND AVIAN COMMUNITY ASSEMBLAGE (BANDED BIRD SIGHTINGS)

Data Credit: Dr. Michael Dance, Louisiana State University, Department of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences