



Offshore Oil & Gas Drilling

June 8, 2010

Jack Clarke

Director of Public Policy & Government Relations

Mass Audubon opposes the exploration, development and production of oil and gas on the federally controlled Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) off the Massachusetts coast. We believe such activities would threaten critical ocean wildlife and habitat and would present an unacceptable risk to the fishery resources of one of the world's premier fishing grounds at Georges Bank. In addition to Georges Bank, we believe these activities should be precluded from offshore areas within 100 miles of the Bay State coast as well as the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (map attached.) Georges Bank, Stellwagen Bank and nearshore ocean waters are the most sensitive and important marine resources to the environment and economy of the Bay State and must be protected.

This position is consistent with Mass Audubon's long and active history on this critical conservation issue dating to the early 1980s when limited exploratory drilling took place on the OCS and federal plans were advanced for a more expansive drilling program.

However since that time, Congress and various Presidents have placed temporary bans on offshore drilling. Mass Audubon has supported those bans and when they expired or were revoked, we advocated for their reinstatement.

In light of the Spring 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil crises, Senator Scott Brown and Congressman Ed Markey will be filing legislation to address offshore oil and gas drilling along with spill prevention measures. Mass Audubon will work with our leaders in Washington, DC to ensure that Massachusetts ocean waters are fully protected.

For more information on Mass Audubon's positions on this and related issues see:

- **Ocean Management:** <http://www.massaudubon.org/advocacy/oceans.php>
- **Climate Change & Energy:** <http://massaudubon.org/cleanenergy/index.php>
- **Gulf Oil Spill:** <http://www.massaudubon.org/news/index.php?id=1440&type=news>