

## PREFACE

The Galveston Bay National Estuary Program Data Inventory is not, and hopefully will never be, a finished product. Rather, this represents the first installment of Work-in-Progress. As the system is routinely used, other refinements and capabilities should be added to enhance its function and utility to researchers. As new data is acquired from Galveston Bay, and older historical data sets are (hopefully) discovered, the data base itself should increase.

This report documents the philosophy and initial effort in creating the Data Inventory. The deliverables for the project include this report and its companion documents, the Galveston Bay Data Inventory System software, and the data base itself. One companion report, the GBDIS User's Manual, describes the structure and operation of the Data Inventory System in much more detail than is appropriate here. While the data resource is summarized in this volume, individual data sets are described in the Data Set Report series in the Appendix (bound separately).

The Principal Investigators wish to acknowledge the efforts and energies of the many individuals, both private citizens and the employees of agencies and companies, who offered their assistance in this compilation. These persons generally share our perception of the historical and scientific value of raw observations and our concern for preservation of such data sets, and generously contributed their time to help search for the information compiled here.

Finally, with the reader's indulgence, we must anticipate and respond to a criticism of this report which will occur to fully half the readership. Please be assured that we realize that the Latin word *data* is plural for *datum*, and therefore should take a plural verb. On the other hand, *data* as an English word has acquired some currency as a collective noun, with a singular or plural construction according to whether it refers to the entities taken together or taken separately. These Principal Investigators are themselves divided on this point, but we have followed this latter usage rather than the strict Latin syntax. If the reader is offended by the occasional singular verb, as is one of the Principal Investigators, we would invite him/her to pencil in "data set" for "data" and all will be well. For the reader whose mind remains open, unlike one of the Principal Investigators, we suggest consulting the Second College Edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.)