



Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees

December 2012

# Enhanced Management of Avian Breeding Habitat Injured by Response in the Florida Panhandle, Alabama, and Mississippi

### General Project Description

This project will reduce disturbance to nesting habitat for beach-nesting birds on approximately 1,800-2,300 acres of state beaches in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, and Franklin counties in Florida; federal beaches on St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge in Franklin County, Florida; on Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge in Baldwin and Mobile counties in Alabama; and on Gulf Island National Seashore– Mississippi District in Mississippi.

This project involves three components:

- Marking sensitive nesting sites for beach-nesting birds, thus indicating the site is off-limits to people, pets, and other sources of disturbance;
- Increasing predator control thus reducing disturbance and loss of eggs, chicks, and adult beach-nesting birds at nesting sites; and
- Increasing surveillance and monitoring of posted nesting sites thus minimizing disturbance.

Timely implementation of this project prior to the 2013 nesting season will enhance important nesting habitats used by birds.

### Resource Benefits and Relationship to Injury

Gulf beaches provide critical nesting habitat to beach-nesting birds, many of which are imperiled. Undisturbed stretches of coast are key components required for their life cycles. Continuous disturbance by response activities to the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill negatively affected habitat necessary for beach-nesting birds. To compensate for the disturbance caused by response, the goal of this project is to reduce known causes of disturbance to beach nesting habitat.

### Methods and Results of Offsets Estimation

For the purposes of negotiations of Offsets with BP in accordance with the Framework Agreement, the Trustees used widely accepted methodologies. Habitat Equivalency Analysis (HEA) was used to



Symbolic fencing protecting beach nesting bird habitat. Photo: Chris Burney, Florida FWC

estimate Offsets provided by this project. Offsets reflect units of discounted service acre years (DSAYs) of nesting habitat for beach nesting birds, and will be applied against response injury for beach-nesting bird habitat along the Florida coast and DOI lands in Alabama and Mississippi.

In determining the DSAYs provided by the project, the Trustees considered a number of factors, including, but not limited to, the relative nesting habitat improvements provided by posting nesting sites and conducting predator control at various sites, the time period that posting and predator control would occur, and the anticipated acreage on which these activities would occur.

### Total estimated offset is 1679 DSAYs

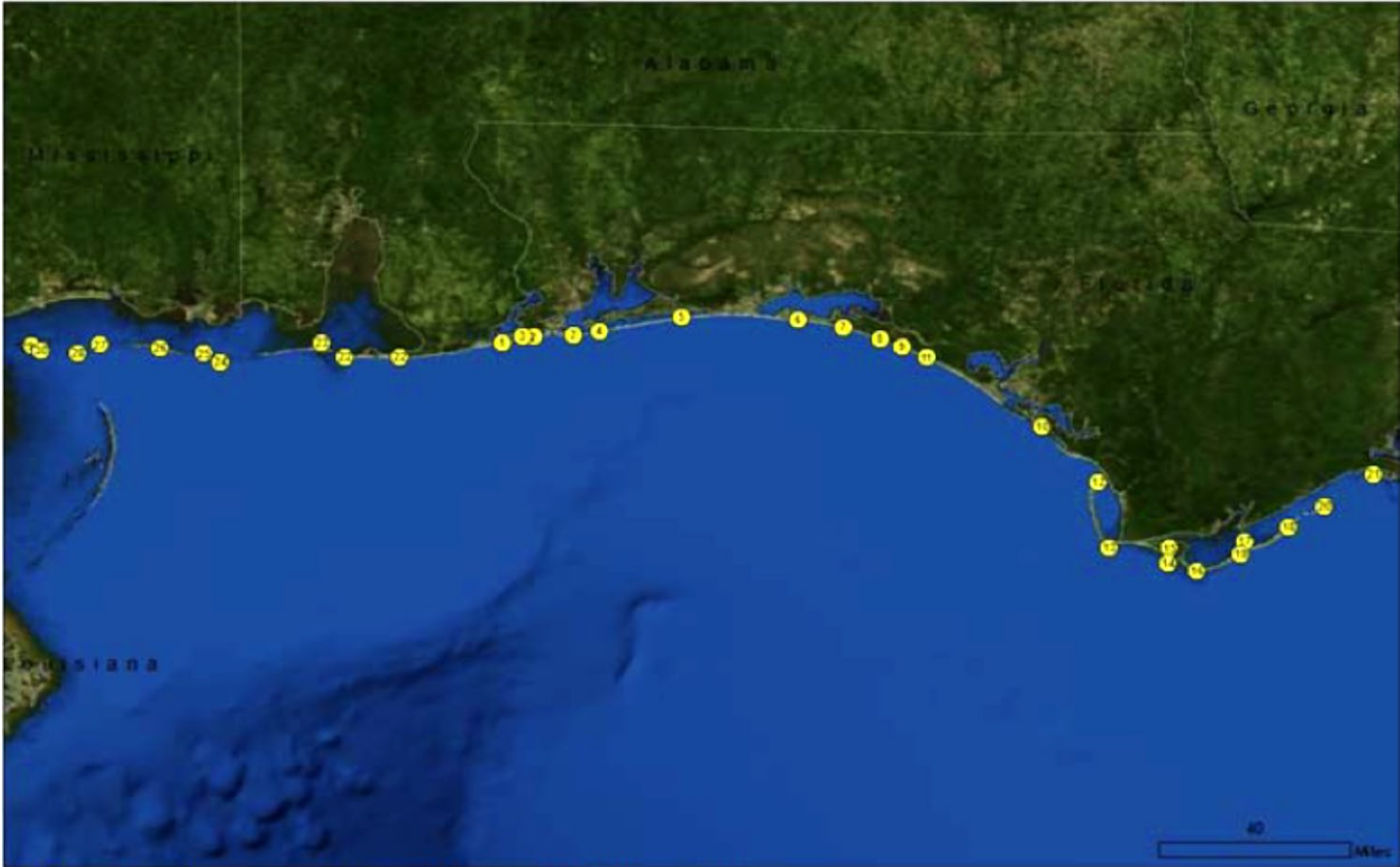
- 1352 DSAYs of nesting habitat in Florida
- 54 DSAYs of nesting habitat on DOI lands in Alabama
- 272 DSAYs of nesting habitat on DOI lands in Mississippi

### Estimated Cost

The total estimated cost of this five-year project is \$4,658,118.



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The Enhanced Management of Avian Breeding Habitat Injured by Response project locations.



**For more information, contact:**

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