

Preferred Bird Restoration Projects

Texas Trustee Implementation Group

Draft Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment #2

The *Deepwater Horizon* (DWH) oil spill significantly injured at least 93 bird species and impacted birding habitat, including open water, islands, beaches, bays, and marshes. The DWH Trustees estimated between 51,600 and 84,500 birds died as a result of the spill, preventing the production of 4,600 to 17,900 fledglings. These estimates do not reflect the sum of all injuries to birds that occurred, for example not accounting for nonlethal injuries, such as impaired health. On behalf of the public, the Texas Trustee Implementation Group (Texas TIG) is proposing to implement four alternatives (projects) in the Texas Restoration Area to restore and partially compensate for the bird injuries. Summary descriptions of the proposed projects are provided below.

Laguna Vista Rookery Island Habitat Protection

The Laguna Vista Rookery Island Habitat Protection project would protect and restore rookery island habitat in the lower Laguna Madre, near the town of Laguna Vista in Cameron County, Texas. The project would implement shoreline protection measures to minimize erosion, including the construction of a breakwater, and elevate low-lying areas in the island's interior to protect existing nesting habitats and create up to 1.5 acres of new nesting habitat. The estimated cost for the project is \$2,100,000.

Jones Bay Oystercatcher Habitat Restoration

The Jones Bay Oystercatcher Habitat Restoration project would restore five bird nesting islands and create six adjacent intertidal reefs in Jones Bay, near Tiki Island in Galveston County. The project would provide nesting and foraging habitat for American oystercatchers and other bird species. The estimated cost for the project is \$3,700,000. The Texas TIG would provide \$2,300,000, which would support construction of five islands, six reefs, and one breakwater.

Laguna Vista Rookery Island Habitat Protection

Location: Cameron County
Funding Amount: \$2,100,000

Jones Bay Oystercatcher Habitat Restoration

Location: Galveston County
Funding Amount: \$2,300,000

San Antonio Bay Bird Island

Location: Calhoun County
Funding Amount: \$1,500,000

Texas Breeding Shorebird and Seabird Stewardship

Location: Coastwide
Funding Amount: \$3,400,000

Total Funding Proposed: \$9,300,000

San Antonio Bay Bird Island

The San Antonio Bay Bird Island project would restore a 4-acre nesting island for colonial waterbirds in San Antonio Bay in Calhoun County, Texas. The island would provide a variety of nesting habitat for waterbirds, mimicking habitats lost in the project vicinity. The estimated total project cost is \$6,000,000. The Texas TIG would contribute \$1,500,000 to other funding sources to complete the project.

Texas Breeding Shorebird and Seabird Stewardship

The Texas Breeding Shorebird and Seabird Stewardship project would implement efforts to protect breeding bird habitat and reduce human disturbance to nesting shorebirds and other bird species along the Texas coast. Through stewardship during the breeding season, the project would seek to increase survival of eggs and chicks. The estimated total cost of this alternative is \$3,400,000 and would support stewardship activities for five years.



A pair of American oystercatchers with two fledged chicks (black tipped bill) foraging on an intertidal reef (Woody Woodrow, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

For additional project information, please see the Draft Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment #2: Restoration of Wetland, Coastal and Nearshore Habitats; Nutrient Reduction; Oysters; Sea Turtles; and Birds at www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/texas.

