

Proposed Restoration Projects for Birds

The DWH oil spill injured resident and migratory species of birds in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida throughout a range of northern Gulf of Mexico habitats, including open water, barrier islands, beaches, bays, and marshes. To help restore and partially compensate for the loss of DWH-injured birds, the Regionwide TIG is proposing to implement a suite of restoration projects that span across multiple jurisdictions and coastal and nearshore habitats in the Regionwide TIG's Draft RP/EA 1. These proposed bird restoration projects are described in more detail below.



Photos. Piping plover and black skimmers. Credit: USFWS and FWC.

PROPOSED RESTORATION PROJECTS

In 2019, the Regionwide TIG compiled 5,149 project ideas submitted to the Trustee project portals and identified 632 that were specific to DWH-injured bird species. Following an extensive screening process, the Regionwide TIG identified four bird alternatives, of which three are preferred (i.e., proposed for funding in the Draft RP/EA 1); see table below.

PROPOSED REGIONWIDE RESTORATION

Preferred Bird Restoration Projects in the Regionwide TIG Draft RP/EA 1

Restoration Project	Project Description	Estimated Cost
Reducing Marine Debris Impacts on Birds and Sea Turtles (<i>joint project with the Sea Turtles Restoration Type</i>)	This regionwide project would reduce the threat and impacts of marine debris to DWH-injured bird and sea turtle species. This project would entail a coordinated effort among Trustees, non-governmental organizations, and other partners to compile data on marine debris to identify hotspots, conduct marine debris removal, and engage in debris prevention through public outreach.	\$3.5 million (\$7.0 million total project cost, split between Birds and Sea Turtles Restoration Types)
Conservation and Enhancement of Nesting and Foraging Habitat for Birds	This project would involve restoration activities across five sites to help meet regionwide bird habitat restoration goals: (1) Chandeleur Islands, LA; (2) Pilot Town/Little Dauphin Island, AL; (3) San Antonio Bay Bird Island, TX; (4) Matagorda Bay Bird Island (Chester Island), TX; and (5) Round Island, MS. The objective for this project is to conduct nesting and foraging habitat conservation through planning and implementation (e.g., acquisition, creation, restoration, and enhancement) activities, for the benefit of multiple bird species across a range of habitats.	\$22.5 million
Bird Nesting and Foraging Area Stewardship	This project would conserve and enhance bird nesting and foraging habitats in coastal Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The activities proposed would directly address anthropogenic stressors, protect and restore habitat, and reduce other stressors that impact birds that use beaches for nesting, rearing, foraging, resting and refueling during migratory stopovers and overwintering. It would also increase public awareness of bird conservation issues.	\$8.5 million



PROPOSED REGIONWIDE RESTORATION

PUBLIC INPUT

The Regionwide TIG's Draft RP/EA 1 is available for public review from March 22 through May 6, 2021. We encourage you to submit comments on the proposed bird projects described above, or any other proposed projects described in the Draft RP/EA 1, during the 45-day comment period. Comments may be submitted during the comment period in three ways:

1. During the virtual public meeting on April 15, 2021
2. Online: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/RWTIGRP1>
3. By mail: Hard copy addressed to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 29649, Atlanta, GA 30345

To be considered, mailed comments ***must be postmarked on or before the comment deadline*** specified in the *Federal Register* and on the DWH Trustee website.

For additional details, please see the DWH Trustee website:
www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/regionwide

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