



NFWF

# Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

## MISSISSIPPI

### Coastal Bird Stewardship Program - Phase I

This project improved Mississippi beach-nesting bird habitat that was negatively affected during the Deepwater Horizon oil spill through nesting habitat enhancements and stewardship activities that resulted in successful nesting, hatching, and rearing of chicks. The project focused on expanding the Audubon Coastal Bird Survey program, a year-round volunteer-driven monitoring program for shorebirds that began in the wake of the oil spill. The stewardship program focused on 22 sites in coastal Mississippi and carried out standardized monitoring; implemented best management practices to secure nesting sites and reduced negative human and invasive species interactions; and educated diverse audiences to increase understanding of the needs and value of coastal birds.

Natural beach habitats are dynamic environments that are stressed by ongoing human use and development. Today, coastal sensitive species are primarily located on and restricted to public lands, yet despite this seeming protection, shorebird populations continue to decline and degradation of habitat continues. This project restored and protected coastal bird populations by reducing disturbance and restoring habitat to allow greater nesting success, and higher rates of survival. Specific target species that include migratory, breeding and resident species were strategically selected and represent different nesting and foraging strategies. Implementing restoration and protection strategies for a specific suite of birds ensured benefits to other waterbirds and shorebirds affected by the spill and associated cleanup efforts.



Over the course of the project 115 volunteers were recruited and trained and contributed more than 2,500 hours, pictured in the above left. Three Audubon Coastal Bird Survey trainings were held and eight colonies of shorebirds, like black skimmers pictured in the above right, were protected by signage and roping.

## AT A GLANCE

**RECIPIENT:**  
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

**AWARD AMOUNT:**  
\*\$1,700,104

**PARTNERS:**  
Audubon Mississippi

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

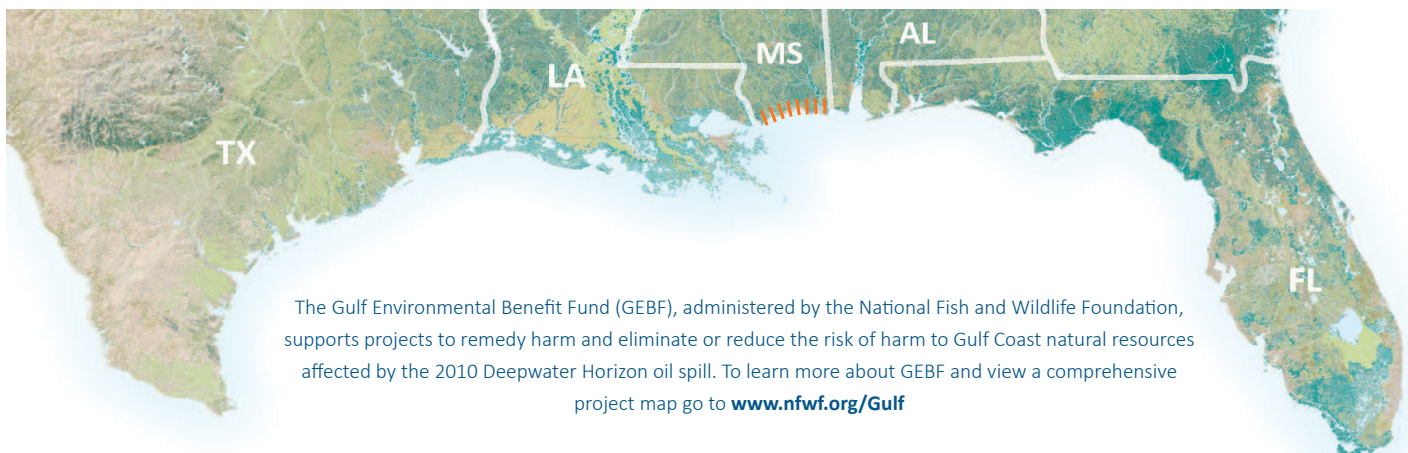
**LOCATION:**  
Jackson, Harrison, and Hancock Counties, Mississippi

**AWARD DATE:**  
November 2013

**STATUS:**  
Closed

**PROGRESS UPDATE:**  
Final reports submitted and project is now closed. (February 2019)

*\*Project was amended in August 2016 to add \$262,100 to continue and expand stewardship and monitoring of priority bird species.*



The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF), administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, supports projects to remedy harm and eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to Gulf Coast natural resources affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To learn more about GEBF and view a comprehensive project map go to [www.nfwf.org/Gulf](http://www.nfwf.org/Gulf)