



5615 Corporate Blvd., suite 600B
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Dear Louisiana Trustee Implication Group,

We at Audubon Louisiana appreciate the opportunity to comment on the *Notice for Initiation of Restoration Planning* announced by the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group (TIG) on 12 July 2016. Although we are generally supportive of the five Restoration Types and geographic areas identified by the TIG, we would like to focus these comments on the last category, “(5) Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources—Birds.”

Louisiana supports disproportionately large populations of many species of coastal birds relative to the rest of the eastern United States, playing an invaluable role in stabilizing range-wide population dynamics. Because many species of birds were impacted by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, we encourage the Louisiana TIG to consider targeted restoration opportunities that take into account this abundance and species diversity when selecting projects for bird recovery.

Coastal seabirds and waterbirds were impacted in 2010 at the height of nesting season, thus restoring and improving existing nesting areas of state and regional importance would be of tremendous value to these populations. Additionally, it is our suggestion that sites known to historically support large nesting aggregations, high diversity, and/or key species should be prioritized in the short-term over creation of new islands.

In addition to being more cost effective, the benefits of restoring existing nesting areas are realized more quickly than waiting—and hoping—for new islands to be colonized. In the long-term, creation of some new islands may be an effective tool for expanding nesting opportunities by colonial seabirds and waterbirds.

We also support projects that clearly demonstrate habitat restoration benefits to other species during the non-breeding season, particularly Endangered species like Piping Plovers and Red Knots. Shoreline restoration or hydrological restoration projects that improve connectivity among foraging and roosting areas, improve the quality of foraging habitat, and reduce the risk of exposure to pollution and human disturbance, would be project components that could benefit one or more groups of migratory shorebirds, waterbirds, marshbirds, and seabirds.

Restoration projects that explicitly target Species of Greatest Conservation Need by the Louisiana’s 2015 Wildlife Action Plan are of utmost importance. These species include, but are not limited to, Reddish Egret, Sandwich Tern, Royal Tern, Least Tern, Black Skimmer, American Oystercatcher, Red Knot, Piping Plover, and Wilson’s Plover. These species exist in relatively low state, regional, and global population sizes and are specialized to coastal areas, thus experienced a disproportional impact by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Finally, we would support restoration actions that benefit the entire coast of Louisiana. Maintaining and ensuring that Louisiana’s habitats and bird populations provide opportunities for genetic connectivity between the eastern and western Gulf of Mexico is important for ensuring that bird populations are resilient against future impacts, such as oil spills, erosion and land loss, and climate change. In addition, because of potential long-lasting impacts of oil pollution on the food web in southeastern Louisiana,



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restoration projects in southwest Louisiana may help buffer state-wide populations against such long-term, and potentially unforeseen, effects. Rabbit Island, for example, southwestern Louisiana's only significant island nesting rookery, is regionally important to several waterbird species of conservation concern, like the Reddish Egret. We thank you for the opportunity to comment at this juncture in the process, and we look forward to working with the Louisiana TIG, and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries staff in the coming years of the NRDA program to assist in a creation of a long-term vision for birds across the region. We hope these comments serve as a helpful basis on which the TIG begins to address bird recovery. We look forward to many more opportunities to provide comments and feedback in the future.

Sincerely,

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Restoration Project Submittal Review

CONTACT INFORMATION

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PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name: (5) Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources—Birds.
Project Sponsor:
Project Location: coastwide
Latitude (dd): **Longitude (dd):**
Parish: Coastwide **Region:** RRP Region 1, RRP Region 2, RRP Region 3, RRP Region 4
Project Size: **Servitudes / easements?**
Public or private land? **Total Funding Requested (\$):**
Estimated Project Cost (\$):

Attachment Type	File Name
Project Description	LA TIG Comment Letter August 2016 FINAL.pdf
Photos	No information provided
GIS Files	No information provided
Permits	No information provided
Design Documents	No information provided
Miscellaneous	No information provided