

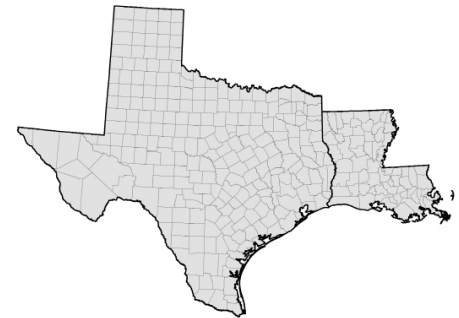


Gulf Coast Initiative

2024 Annual Report

The coastal prairies, marshes, and bays of the Gulf of Mexico are North America's shining gems, bursting with life and productivity. Yet, these vital ecosystems are under grave threat—more than 90% of coastal wetland loss in the lower 48 states has happened here. As their ability to sustain both wildlife and people diminishes, the call for action grows louder.

Through the Gulf Coast Initiative (GCI), we are fighting to protect and restore these landscapes. By partnering with federal and state agencies, and working hand-in-hand with private landowners, we're creating a future where both nature and people can thrive. A cornerstone of this effort is our Rice Stewardship Partnership with rice farmers, an innovative model of sustainable agriculture that benefits not only the land but also wildlife.



Ducks Unlimited's collaborative, science-driven work is making a difference—delivering lasting economic, ecological, and societal benefits that ripple far beyond the coast. Our wetland conservation projects support industries from navigation to tourism, seafood to energy, while also fortifying communities against the forces of nature. Beyond that, they offer something priceless: a deeper connection to the natural world, and an enhanced quality of life for us all. Together, we are nurturing the future of these wetlands for the people and wildlife who depend on them.

FY24 Conservation Highlight

Located in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, Delta National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Pass-A-Loutre Wildlife Management Area (WMA) comprise approximately 163,800 acres of active and dynamic wetlands in the Bird's Foot Delta. Delta NWR is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, while Pass-A-Loutre WMA is managed by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. These areas provide crucial wetland habitat to migrating waterfowl and other bird species while also providing excellent habitat for fresh and saltwater fish. The highly productive wetlands rely on annual spring flooding to supplement the habitat with fresh and sediment-laden water to persist as healthy systems. The main objective of this project is to construct approximately 12 crevasses which are channels dug through natural levees on the riverbanks to allow the introduction of freshwater and sediments to marshes in the outfall areas.



As federal and state lands, both project areas allow limited public access for fishing, crabbing, and trapping, with hunting opportunities allowed seasonally. Other recreational activities open to the public include boating, wildlife viewing and bird watching. Partners on this project include DU, LDWF, USFWS, Texas Petroleum Investment Company, James M. Cox Foundation, Southwestern Energy, NAWCA and DU Gulf Coast Initiative supporters.

Initiative at a Glance:

Initiative States:
Louisiana and Texas

FY24 By the Numbers: Acres Conserved*: 39,140 | Acres Impacted**: 110,154

DU and Partners Recognized

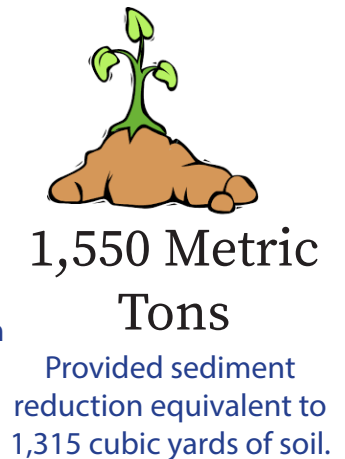
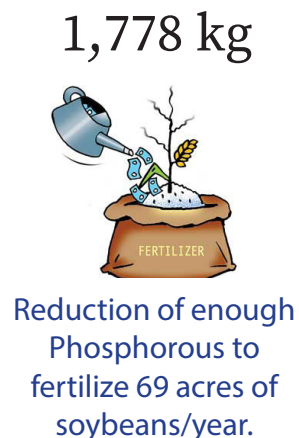
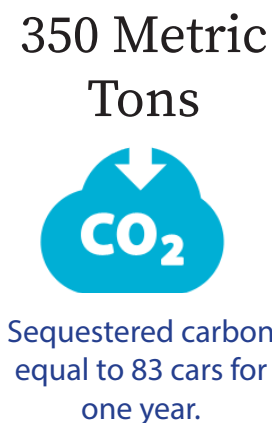
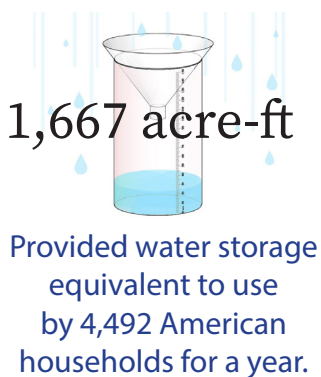
DU has been working with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas General Land Office, and more than 40 other partners to protect and enhance Chenier Plain wetlands for over 20 years. In 2023, this partnership effort was recognized as a Texan by Nature Conservation Wrangler.



Stretching more than 200 miles along the Gulf Coast from Galveston, Texas, to Vermilion Bay, Louisiana, and extending inland as far as 70 miles, the Chenier Plain encompasses more than 6.5 million acres of former coastal tallgrass prairie and marsh. The area serves as the first line of defense for coastal communities against storm surges; as a nursery for recreationally and commercially important fisheries; and as crucial habitat for millions of migrating birds, among a suite of wildlife species. Unfortunately, human-induced and natural changes have degraded and altered the Chenier Plain.

DU and partners are working across the Chenier Plain to restore and enhance these vital coastal prairies and wetlands. One piece of this puzzle is addressing habitat restoration needs on J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area near Port Arthur. Working with TPWD, we have developed a three-phase approach to enhancing management capacity and habitat on the WMA's impoundments. Support from Energy Transfer, Sempra Infrastructure, Shell, Tubal-Cain Industries, the Meadows Foundation, TPWD and USFWS enabled us to leverage public funding to address infrastructure needs on Compartments 1-4, which is underway. The second project will address similar issues on Compartments 5, 6 and 11, with partial funding already provided by H-E-B, Howard Energ, Kodiak Cares Foundation, TPWD and USFWS. The final phase will restore Compartments 7-10 with partial funding support from NAWCA. Once completed, this effort will improve more than 4,000 acres of wetlands in Texas.

Gulf Coast Initiative Ecological Outcomes - FY24



* Conserved acres are the "conservation footprint" of Ducks Unlimited's conservation activities that protect, restore or enhance wetlands and associated habitats. Because DU performs more than one activity on the same piece of land over time, only new acres that have not been previously touched are added every year to the existing acreage footprint.

** Impacted acres is the sum of all Ducks Unlimited conservation activities in a given year and include conserved acres as well as those acres that are "retouched" over time or any conservation efforts that DU is involved with that may enhance habitats even over a short time frame.