



The incredibly rapid loss of Gulf Coast habitats is one of the greatest waterfowl crises on the continent. Be part of the solution with your gift to DU's Gulf Coast Initiative today.



### THE GULF COAST NEEDS YOU NOW

Your gift to Ducks Unlimited is invaluable, and it is truly the greatest contribution you can make to secure the future of wetlands and waterfowl. Every dollar you give to Ducks Unlimited is leveraged multiple times to create a conservation impact far beyond your initial gift. In addition, we invest at least 80 cents of every dollar received in our conservation mission. Start making a difference right now for waterfowl, outdoorsmen, and future generations of wildlife and people by making your gift to DU's Gulf Coast Initiative. Join us in *Banding Together for Waterfowl*. Help us *Rescue Our Wetlands* today.

Don't wait.  
Call DU at **(601) 956-1936** today to speak with our fundraising staff for your area.



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# GULF COAST INITIATIVE



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SAVING THE MOST CRITICAL WINTERING WATERFOWL HABITAT IN NORTH AMERICA BY CONSERVING COASTAL PRAIRIES AND MARSHES ALONG THE RAPIDLY DISAPPEARING GULF COAST

The coastal prairies, marshes, and bays of the Gulf of Mexico are among North America's most productive wetland systems. Tragically, they are also among the most threatened, with more than 90 percent of coastal wetland loss in the lower 48 states occurring here. The region's ability to support migratory birds, fisheries, and other wildlife continues to decline dramatically. The invaluable energy, tourism, and shipping industries that bolster the nation's economy are at risk due to human impacts that have erased more than a million acres of coastal marshes and prairies. Other industries, such as rice agriculture, that provide critical winter habitat for waterfowl along the western Gulf Coast, have declined significantly due to demands on land and water.

In spite of these losses, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan calls for the Gulf Coast habitats of Louisiana and

Texas to winter up to 15 million waterfowl, making it North America's single-most important wintering area and one of DU's highest conservation priorities. It provides year-round habitat for 90 percent of the continent's mottled ducks, as well as wintering habitat for 95 percent of gadwall, 80 percent of green-winged teal and redheads, and 60 percent of lesser scaup.

How long can this area sustain such vast populations of waterfowl in the face of such incredible rates of habitat loss? Recent studies have shown that the Gulf Coast may already have lost nearly 40 percent of its capacity for supporting wintering waterfowl. This means the loss of Gulf Coast habitat is one of the greatest waterfowl crises on the continent. Worse yet, as habitat losses to erosion, salt-water intrusion, development, and limited water availability continue, the crisis grows.



### CROSS-BORDER CONSERVATION



Waterfowl are a continentally shared resource, and Ducks Unlimited has worked across North America since 1937 to ensure a strong future for ducks and for waterfowl hunters. By contributing to DU's Gulf Coast Initiative, you will be supporting important waterfowl habitat conservation on the Gulf Coast as well as in the breeding grounds of the Prairie Pothole Region and Western Boreal Forest of the United States and Canada, where the vast majority of birds are produced before beginning their journey to the wintering grounds.



### GIVING THE GULF COAST A VOICE IN WASHINGTON

Due to ecological and societal forces operating continentally, waterfowl habitat is disappearing faster than it can be conserved through habitat delivery alone. Such large-scale problems often require large-scale solutions that can be achieved only through public policy. Along the Gulf Coast, Ducks Unlimited works closely with a strong team of partners to help inform policy makers and forge policies that fund coastal wetlands restoration and conserve scarce water supplies for agriculture and wildlife. DU also advocates for federal, state, and local programs that restore and maintain wetland processes and functions to ensure waterfowl have habitat and people have coastal wetlands to enjoy for generations to come. These efforts and more will be at the heart of DU's Gulf Coast Initiative in the coming years.

### GULF COAST INITIATIVE AT A GLANCE

The Gulf Coast Initiative is a crucial part of Ducks Unlimited's *Rescue Our Wetlands* campaign, a seven-year, \$2-billion effort aimed at changing the face of conservation in North America. *Rescue Our Wetlands* is the largest wetlands and waterfowl conservation campaign in history.

Covering the most important and threatened wintering grounds on the continent, the Gulf Coast Initiative focuses on the restoration, enhancement and protection of wetlands that provide a winter home for millions of waterfowl each year.

#### INITIATIVE STATES

Louisiana and Texas

#### INITIATIVE GOALS:

Your contribution toward the Gulf Coast Initiative is part of the *Rescue Our Wetlands* Wintering and Migration Landscapes target of **\$484 million**. Visit [www.ducks.org/rescue](http://www.ducks.org/rescue) for details.

Supporting the Gulf Coast Initiative is pivotal in fulfilling DU's vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever.

### DU'S PLAN FOR THE GULF COAST

Conservation work under the Gulf Coast Initiative will focus on the restoration and enhancement of key public land habitats with state and federal partners, as well as the protection of high-quality waterfowl habitat on private lands, including seasonally flooded agricultural lands (mainly rice) and natural and managed freshwater and intermediate marshes. A key focus will be working with the rice producers and the rice industry to develop a sustainable agricultural program that benefits wintering

waterfowl. Public policy affecting Gulf Coast wetlands will also be a major component of DU's work in this region.

Your contribution to the Gulf Coast Initiative enables Ducks Unlimited to conduct important science, public policy, and outreach efforts, as well as conserving habitats important to waterfowl that migrate and winter on the coast. DU's research and evaluation efforts are the foundation upon which our direct conservation programs and our policy and outreach work are based.

### MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF A DOLLAR

In many instances, your conservation investment allows DU to leverage your gift with other private, public and contractual funds, sometimes matching it as many as seven or eight times.



CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREA