

Important Bird Habitats Along Gulf Coast:

- Beaches, Barrier Islands & Spoil Islands
- Emergent Wetlands (Marshes)
- Intertidal Flats
- Seagrass Beds
- Mollusk Beds
- South Florida Mangroves
- Coastal Grasslands
- Coastal Forests





National Park Service Photo

Reddish Egret Year-Round Resident Gulf Coast



Nests on Shrubs on Barrier/Spoil Islands; Forages Along Beaches

Moderate Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Texas' Laguna Madre and Mid-Coast, South Florida Extremely Important Areas for the Species

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Heavily Impacted by Plume-Hunting Early 20th Century

Disturbance, Loss of Nesting Colonies a Potential Issue

Hydrologic Modifications May Have Reduced Foraging Habitat in Laguna Madre

Piping Plover Winter Resident Gulf Coast



Forages Intertidal Zone and Overwash Areas; Roosts Above High Tide Line in Dunes

Federally Listed Threatened (Atlantic Coast Population); Endangered (Great Lakes Population)

Highly Imperiled – U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan

Texas Coast Traditionally Supports Highest Numbers of Wintering Birds

Threats Include Reduction in Suitable Nesting Habitat, Increased Human-Related Disturbance and Predation Levels

Snowy Plover Breeds and Winters Along Gulf Coast



Forages Intertidal Zone and Overwash Areas; Nests Above High Tide Line in Largely Non-Vegetated Dunes

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Rank – Highly Imperiled

Pacific Coast Breeding
Population Federally Listed
Threatened

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Reduction in Amount of
Suitable Breeding Habitat
Primary Factor Behind
Declines, Resulting From
Residential Development,
Reduction in River Flows,
Disturbance Due to Increased
Recreation on Beaches



Mottled Duck Year-Round Resident Gulf Coast



Recently-Created Spoil Islands Can Provide Excellent Nesting Habitat

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Declining Trend Survey-wide and in Coastal Prairies Physiographic Region

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Declines Believed Linked to Wetland Drainage (FL); Degradation of Freshwater Marshes and Nesting Habitat (TX/LA)

Hybridization with Feral Mallards a Concern, Especially in Florida

Wilson's Plover

Summer Resident, Winters Locally U.S. Gulf Coast



Breeds on Sandy/Shelly Beaches, Islands, or Spoil Deposits with Sparse Vegetation; Forages Intertidal Zone and Overwash Areas

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Rank – Species of High Concern

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Loss of Beach Habitat and Disturbance Primary Threats

Black Skimmer Year-round Resident Gulf Coast



Breeds on Open Sandy/Shelly Beaches and Islands, Usually with Other Colonial Nesting Waterbirds; Forages Nearshore Waters

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Breeding Bird Survey – Non-Significant Decreasing Trend Survey-Wide

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Development of Beaches has Impacted Populations

Flooding, Storms, Predation, and Human Disturbance Major Reasons for Colony Failure

Gull-billed Tern Year-round Resident Gulf Coast



Nests on Open Sandy/Shelly Beaches and Islands; Forages Over Beaches and Nearshore Waters

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Breeding Bird Survey – Non-Significant Increasing Trend Survey-Wide

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Impacted by Past Millinery Trade

Factors Believed to Limit Population Include Habitat Availability, Flooding, Predation, Human Disturbance and Possibly Winter Food Limitations





Nests on Shelly/Sandy Barrier or Spoil Islands and Beaches

High Concern – U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan

Threats Include Habitat Loss; Increased Disturbance and Predation Levels

Sandwich Tern Summer Resident, Winters Locally U.S. Gulf Coast



Typically Nests on Sandy Barrier Islands; Also on Spoil Islands

Not Currently at Risk – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Site of Largest U.S. Mainland Colony, Chandeleur Islands, LA, (10,000 – 20,000 pairs) Severely Impacted by Hurricane Katrina

Brown Pelican Year-round Resident, Gulf Coast



Nests on Shrubby Barrier or Spoil Islands; Forages Nearshore Waters

Moderate Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Federally Listed Endangered – Gulf Coast (TX, LA, MS)

Proposed for De-Listing

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Increasing Trend Survey-wide

Past Precipitous Declines Linked to Organochlorine Pesticide Use

Disturbance of Nesting Colonies Remains an Issue

Some Colony Sites in LA Degraded or Lost Due to Erosion and Subsidence



Whooping Crane

Winter Resident – Texas and Florida Gulf Coast



Forages Saline-Brackish Marsh; Roosts in Shallow Water

Federally Listed Endangered

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge – Wood Buffalo National Park Population Estimated at 217 Individuals, September 2005

59 Non-migratory Birds, Florida; 64 Birds in Experimental Migratory Population, Moving Between Wisconsin and Florida, September 2005

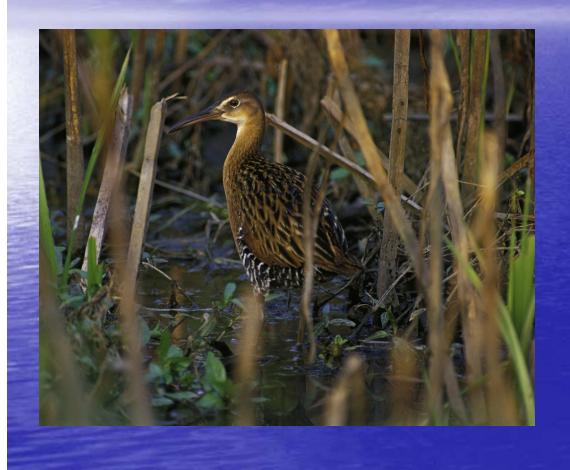
Loss and Degradation of Tallgrass Prairies Probably Primary Factor in Declines

Most Losses of Birds >1 Year Old Due to Disease or Collision

Erosion Along the Intracoastal Waterway in TX has Impacted Habitat

Possibility of Establishing Experimental Flock in Coastal Louisiana?

King Rail Year-Round Resident Gulf Coast



Uses Fresh to Brackish Marsh for Nesting, Foraging, Roosting

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Declining Trend Survey-wide and Within the Coastal Prairies Physiographic Region

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Wetland Loss, Especially in Continent Interior, Likely the Main Cause of Population Declines

Purple Gallinule Primarily Summer Resident, U.S. Gulf Coast



Uses Freshwater Marshes for Nesting, Foraging

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Breeding Bird Survey –
Non-significant Declining
Trend Survey-wide and in
Coastal Prairies
Physiographic Region

Loss of Freshwater Emergent Wetlands Probable Factor in Population Declines

Mottled Duck Year-Round Resident Gulf Coast



Nests in "High" Marsh; Forages in Fresh to Brackish Marsh

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Declining Trend Survey-wide and in Coastal Prairies Physiographic Region

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Declines Believed Linked to Wetland Drainage (FL); Degradation of Freshwater Marshes and Nesting Habitat (TX/LA)

Hybridization with Feral Mallards a Concern, Especially in Florida

Wood Stork

Summer (Year-round Florida) Resident, U.S. Gulf Coast



Forages in Fresh to Saline Marshes

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

SE U.S. Breeding Population (Florida, Georgia, Carolinas) Federally Listed Endangered

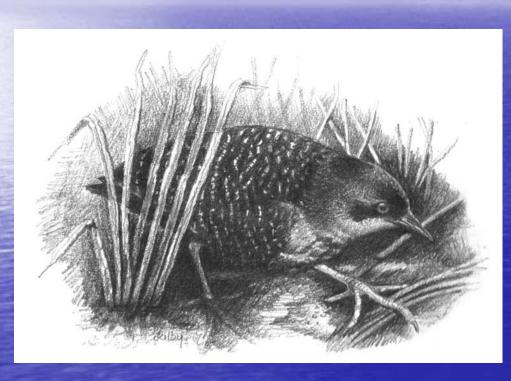
TX, LA Birds Believed to be Post-Breeding Dispersers from Mexico

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Florida Breeding Population Declined as a Result of Water Management Practices and Degradation of the Everglades

Black Rail

Winter Resident and Local Breeder, Gulf Coast



Drawing by Daniel S. Kilby

Nests in "High" Salt Marsh; Winters/Forages in Fresh to Salt Marshes

Highest Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Uses Wetland Sites with Shallower Water Than Other North American Rails

Habitat (Suitable Wetlands)
Availability Probably Principal
Factor Regulating Population

Yellow Rail Winter Resident Gulf Coast



Photo by Dave Patton

Forages and Roosts in Higher Portions of Fresh to Salt Marsh

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Human-caused Wetland Loss/Alteration Probably Most Serious Factor Affecting Population

Encroachment of Woody Vegetation on Emergent Wetland Breeding Habitat (Fire Suppression) Decreases Habitat Suitability

Gull-billed Tern Year-round Resident Gulf Coast



Forages Over Fresh to Salt Marshes, Especially During Non-Breeding Season

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Breeding Bird Survey – Non-Significant Increasing Trend Survey-Wide

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Impacted by Past Millinery Trade

Factors Believed to Limit
Population Include Habitat
Availability, Flooding,
Predation, Human
Disturbance and Possibly
Winter Food Limitations

Northern Pintail Transient, Winter Resident Gulf Coast



Roosts and Forages in Fresh to Brackish Marsh

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

2005 Waterfowl Population Status Report – Abundance Remains Below Long-Term Average (-38%)

Declines Linked to Wetland Drainage and Agricultural Practices on Prairie Pothole Breeding Grounds

Other Contributing Factors: Predation on Nests and Nesting Hens; Nest Destruction by Farm Implements

Lesser Scaup Winter Resident Gulf Coast



Forages in Open Water Areas Within Marshes

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

2005 Waterfowl Population Status Report – Abundance of Lesser and Greater Scaups Remains Below Long-Term Average (-35%)

Recruitment has Apparently Declined in Boreal Forest Nesting Habitat; Foods and Habitat Possibly Impacted by Changes in Fire Regime, Increased Timber Harvest, and Acid Rain

Contaminant Issues Related to Zebra Mussel Consumption?



Short-eared Owl Winter Resident Gulf Coast

Forages Over Fresh to Salt Marshes; Roosts on "High" Spots

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Decreasing Trend, Survey-Wide

Loss or Degradation of Grassland Breeding Habitat Believed to be Primarily Responsible for Declines

Increased Predation Rates May Factor Into Declines

Seaside Sparrow Year-round Resident Gulf Coast



Inhabits Brackish to Salt Marshes; Use Bare Ground Areas for Foraging

Breeding Bird Survey – Non-Significant Decreasing Trend Survey-Wide

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Little Known About Distribution and Habitat Requirements Along Northern Gulf of Mexico Coast

Marsh Alteration and Possibly Insecticides Played Role in Extirpation of Dusky Seaside Sparrow

Nest Predation Rates by Marsh Rice Rats and Fish Crows High in North Florida

Significance of Storms, Oil Spills and Fires in Population Regulation not Understood

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow Winter Resident Gulf Coast



Forages and Roosts in Salt to Brackish Marshes

Breeding Bird Survey – Nonsignificant Increasing Trend Survey-wide

Large Amounts of Marsh Breeding Habitat has Been Degraded or Lost

Photo by Bill Horn

American Bittern Winter Resident (Rare Breeder) Gulf Coast



Nests in Freshwater Marshes; Winters in Fresh to Brackish Marshes

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Decreasing Trend Survey-wide

Declines Largely Due to Loss and Degradation of Wetland Habitats, Primarily in Breeding Range

Clapper Rail Year-Round Resident U.S. Gulf Coast Uses Salt to Brackish Marshes Moderate Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan Breeding Bird Survey -Non-Significant Increasing Trend Survey-Wide **Potential Factors** Regulating Population –

Photo by Jim Zing

Nest Predation, Nest

From Hurricanes

Habitats

Flooding, Direct Mortality

Vulnerable to Loss and

Degradation of Wetland



Reddish Egret Year-Round Resident Gulf Coast



Forages Intertidal Salt Flats

Moderate Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Texas' Laguna Madre and Mid-Coast, South Florida Extremely Important Areas for the Species

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Heavily Impacted by Plume-Hunting Early 20th Century

Disturbance, Loss of Nesting Colonies a Potential Issue

Hydrologic Modifications May Have Reduced Foraging Habitat in Laguna Madre

Piping Plover Winter Resident Gulf Coast



Forages Intertidal Zone and Overwash Areas; Roosts Above High Tide Line in Dunes

Federally Listed Threatened (Atlantic Coast Population); Endangered (Great Lakes Population)

Highly Imperiled – U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan

Texas Coast Traditionally Supports Highest Numbers of Wintering Birds

Threats Include Reduction in Suitable Nesting Habitat, Increased Human-Related Disturbance and Predation Levels

Long-billed Curlew

Transient & Wintering Species, Gulf Coast

(Very Rare Breeder, South Texas)



Photo courtesy of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

Forages on Shallowly Inundated Coastal Mudflats; Also Less Frequently Flooded Flats

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Rank – Highly Imperiled

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Decreasing Trend Survey-Wide

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Still Recovering From Over-harvest During Commercial Hunting Era

Loss of Grassland Breeding Habitat Thought to be Greatest Threat to Population Stability





Forages on Coastal Mudflats

High Concern – U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan

Threats Include
Destruction/Alteration of
Coastal Wetlands, Increased
Disturbance at Nest and
Roost Sites, Possibly
Contaminants on Wintering
Areas?

Hudsonian Godwit Transient Through Gulf Coast



Forages Tidal Mudflats; Roosts on Sand Spits

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Rank – Species of High Concern

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Texas Mid-Coast Important Spring Staging Area

Believed to Have Been Heavily Impacted by Market Hunting

Breeding Habitat in Some Areas Over-grazed by Geese

Population Thought to be Stable, but Vulnerable Due to Small Size (~ 50K Individuals?) and Limited Breeding Distribution

Marbled Godwit Transient and Winter Resident, Gulf Coast



Forages Intertidal Mud or Sand Flats

High Concern – North American Shorebird Conservation Plan

Breeding Bird Survey – Non-significant Decreasing Trend Survey-wide

Impacted by Past Market Hunting

Conversion of Prairie Grasslands to Row Crop Agriculture Has Impacted Species





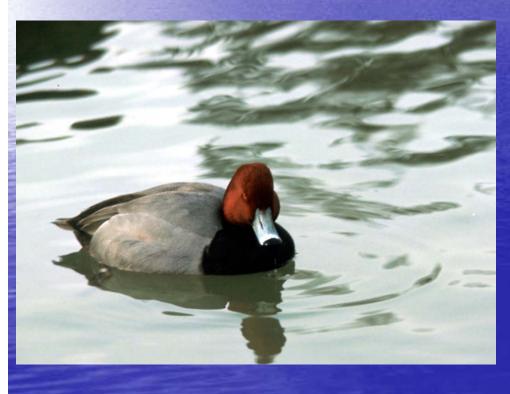
Forages on Intertidal Mud or Sand Flats

High Concern – U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan

Threats Include Habitat Loss; Increased Disturbance and Predation Levels



Redhead Winter Resident Gulf Coast



Forages Almost Exclusively Over Seagrass Beds

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Population Primarily Regulated by Availability of Suitable Nesting Habitat; Possibly Limited by Availability of Food Resources (Seagrasses) in Winter

Shoalgrass in the Laguna Madre has Declined due to Long-Term Stabilization of Salinities, Increased Nutrient Inputs, and Increased Turbidity From Dredging Operations (also Increased Recreational Boating?)

75% of Continental Population Winters in Laguna Madre, Dependent Upon Shoalgrass, Therefore Vulnerable to Catastrophic Events

2005 Waterfowl Population Status Report – Abundance Similar to Long-Term Average

Northern Pintail Transient, Winter Resident Gulf Coast



Forages Over Seagrass Beds, Laguna Madre

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

2005 Waterfowl Population Status Report – Abundance Remains Below Long-Term Average (-38%)

Declines Linked to Wetland Drainage and Agricultural Practices on Prairie Pothole Breeding Grounds

Other Contributing Factors: Predation on Nests and Nesting Hens; Nest Destruction by Farm Implements



Lesser Scaup Winter Resident Gulf Coast



Forages on Rangia Clams, Surf Clams and Other Mollusks

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

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Recruitment has Apparently Declined in Boreal Forest Nesting Habitat; Foods and Habitat Possibly Impacted by Changes in Fire Regime, Increased Timber Harvest, and Acid Rain

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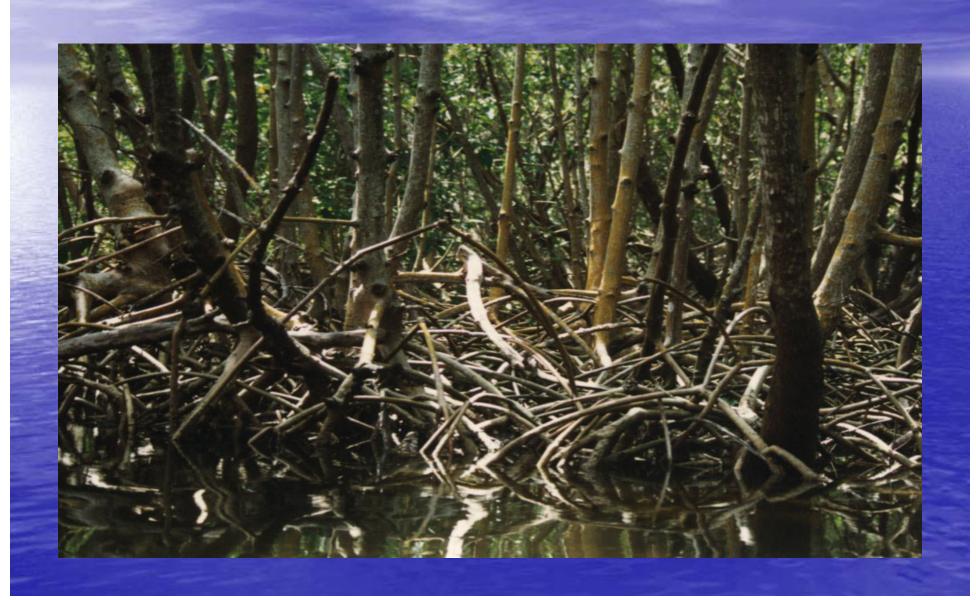


Forages on Ribbed Mussels, Oysters and Other Bivalves

High Concern – U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan

Threats Include Habitat Loss; Increased Disturbance and Predation Levels

South Florida Mangroves



Reddish Egret Year-Round Resident Gulf Coast



Nests in Mangroves

Moderate Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

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Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Heavily Impacted by Plume-Hunting Early 20th Century

Disturbance, Loss of Nesting Colonies a Potential Issue

Hydrologic Modifications May Have Reduced Foraging Habitat in Laguna Madre

Mangrove Cuckoo Year-round Resident, South Florida Gulf Coast



Nests and Forages in Mangroves

Limited Breeding Bird Survey Data Suggests Significant Decreasing Trend

Impacted by Coastal Development in Florida; Possibly by Changes in Mangrove Distribution Caused by Alteration of Hydrologic Regimes

Black-whiskered Vireo Summer Resident South Florida Gulf Coast



Nests and Forages in Mangroves

Recent Declines in South Florida Possibly Related to Cowbird Parasitism

Potentially Impacted by Changes in Mangrove Distribution/Abundance Caused by Hydrologic Alterations

Apparently Sensitive to Urbanization

Prairie Warbler Year-round Resident South Florida Gulf Coast



Subspecies *paludicola* - Found in Mangrove Swamps

Potentially Impacted by Changes in Mangrove Distribution/Abundance Caused by Hydrologic Alterations

Wood Stork

Summer (Year-round Florida) Resident, U.S. Gulf Coast



Forages (Nests?) in Black Mangrove Swamps

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

SE U.S. Breeding Population (Florida, Georgia, Carolinas) Federally Listed Endangered

TX, LA Birds Believed to be Post-Breeding Dispersers from Mexico

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Florida Breeding Population Declined as a Result of Water Management Practices and Degradation of the Everglades

Brown Pelican

Year-round Resident, Gulf Coast



Nests in Mangroves

Moderate Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Federally Listed Endangered – Gulf Coast (TX, LA, MS)

Proposed for De-Listing

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Increasing Trend Survey-wide

Past Precipitous Declines Linked to Organochlorine Pesticide Use

Disturbance of Nesting Colonies Remains an Issue

Some Colony Sites in LA Degraded or Lost Due to Erosion and Subsidence



Whooping Crane

Winter Resident – Texas and Florida Gulf Coast



Forages Coastal Grasslands, Especially Flooded or Burned

Federally Listed Endangered

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge – Wood Buffalo National Park Population Estimated at 217 Individuals, September 2005

59 Non-migratory Birds, Florida; 64 Birds in Experimental Migratory Population, Moving Between Wisconsin and Florida, September 2005

Loss and Degradation of Tallgrass Prairies Probably Primary Factor in Declines

Most Losses of Birds >1 Year Old Due to Disease or Collision

Erosion Along the Intracoastal Waterway in TX has Impacted Habitat

Possibility of Establishing Experimental Flock in Coastal Louisiana?

Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Transient, Gulf Coast



Forages Short Grass Areas

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Rank – Species of High Concern

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Heavily Impacted by Past Market Hunting

Conversion of Grasslands to Row-Crop Agriculture Has Impacted Species on Breeding and Wintering Grounds

Overgrazing has Degraded Grassland Habitat in Some Areas

Attwater's Greater Prairie-Chicken Year-Round Resident, TX Gulf Coast



Nests and Forages in Tallgrass Prairie; Males Require Slightly Elevated, Sparsely Vegetated Display Areas

Federally Listed Endangered

Declines Largely due to Grassland Conversion/Degradation

Predation Now a Significant Factor Because of Low Population Size

Texas Population Largely Maintained Through Introduction of Captive-Raised Birds

The Nature Conservancy Maintains Preserve for this Species on Galveston Bay, TX

Long-billed Curlew Transient & Wintering Species, Gulf Coast

(Very Rare Breeder, South Texas)



Photo courtesy of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

Forages (Nests South Texas?) in Relatively Sparsely Vegetated Short Grass Areas

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Rank – Highly Imperiled

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Decreasing Trend Survey-Wide

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Still Recovering From Overharvest During Commercial Hunting Era

Loss of Grassland Breeding Habitat Thought to be Greatest Threat to Population Stability





Forages and Roosts in Short, Sparsely Vegetated Grasslands

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Decreasing Trend Survey-Wide

Conversion/Degradation of Grassland Habitat Believed to be Primary Factor Causing Declines

Loggerhead Shrike Year-Round Resident Gulf Coast



Uses Relatively Short Grass Areas with Scattered Trees or Shrubs for Nest Placement; Winters Similar Areas

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Decreasing Trend Survey-Wide

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Habitat Change in Portions of Range Has Impacted Populations

Contaminants an Issue?

Increased Competition for Diminished Resources on Non-Breeding Areas an Issue?

Mottled Duck Year-Round Resident Gulf Coast



Photo by Scott Durham

Nests in Coastal Grasslands Adjacent to Emergent Wetlands or Prairie Ponds

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Declining Trend Survey-wide and in Coastal Prairies Physiographic Region

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Declines Believed Linked to Wetland Drainage (FL); Degradation of Freshwater Marshes and Nesting Habitat (TX/LA)

Hybridization with Feral Mallards a Concern, Especially in Florida



Short-eared Owl Winter Resident Gulf Coast

Forages and Roosts in Coastal Grasslands

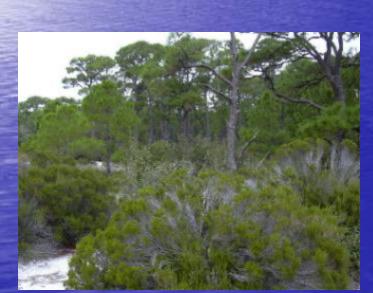
Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Decreasing Trend, Survey-Wide

Loss or Degradation of Grassland Breeding Habitat Believed to be Primarily Responsible for Declines

Increased Predation Rates May Factor Into Declines

Coastal Forests









Wood Stork

Summer (Year-round Florida) Resident, U.S. Gulf Coast



Nests and Roosts in Coastal Cypress-Tupelo Swamps

High Concern – North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

SE U.S. Breeding Population (Florida, Georgia, Carolinas) Federally Listed Endangered

TX, LA Birds Believed to be Post-Breeding Dispersers from Mexico

Priority Species – Gulf Coast Joint Venture

Florida Breeding Population
Declined as a Result of Water
Management Practices and
Degradation of the Everglades

Bald Eagle Winter Resident, Local Breeder Gulf Coast



Nests in Coastal Cypress Forests

Federally Listed Threatened

Proposed for De-Listing

Breeding Bird Survey – Significant Increasing Trend Survey-wide

Earlier Declines Linked to Human Persecution; Reproductive Failure Caused by Contaminants

Transient Migratory Landbirds

Coastal Engineering Projects That Affect Wooded Habitat Potentially Impact Populations









