

# DEEPWATER HORIZON RESPONSE

## Frequently Asked Questions for People Interested in Volunteering to Help with Wildlife Oil Spill Response Activities

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

June 2010

### **Q1: What types of activities are volunteers currently needed for?**

A.1. At present, qualified volunteers are needed in various efforts from beach clean-up to wildlife rehabilitation to assist in the oil spill response efforts. Volunteer opportunities may change at a later time depending upon the damage from the spill and its location. We encourage you to monitor the Unified Command web page frequently to get updates about the types of assistance that are needed. (<http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/go/site/2931/>)

### **Q2. What type of specialized volunteer can assist directly with the impacted wildlife at the Oiled Wildlife Centers?**

A.2. Only Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research is authorized to conduct any wildlife care for this event. The most pressing need now is to identify potential volunteers that qualify as ‘paraprofessionals’ with at least 6 months wildlife experience, a minimum of 4 hours HAZMAT training and rabies pre-exposure shots that could assist Tri-State at the Oiled Wildlife Centers. A paraprofessional is defined as individuals who:

1. Either possesses, or works directly under a person possessing, an active permit or authorization related to the species to be worked on;
2. Are affiliated with a wildlife organization working within the Wildlife Branch of the Incident Command Structure (ICS), or are a staff member of a wildlife Trustee agency;
3. Agree to work under, and abide by, appropriate planning documents prepared by the Unified Command (such as Site Safety Plan, Incident Action Plan, public affairs requirement, etc.) and
4. Have a working knowledge and experience (at least 3 months) with the general protocol, procedures and safety hazards associated with working on the species of question.

In addition, registered nurses with the BP training are also a preferred wildlife center volunteer.

### **Q3. Who should I contact if I am available and have needed skills?**

A3. Please direct inquires or any calls about your interest in providing wildlife assistance to **fw4ppc@fws.gov** or to 404/679-7049. Your message must include your name; address including city and state, phone number (prefer cell phone and alternate numbers); email address; how far you are willing to travel; when and for how long you are available to assist; and if you have any specialized experience with certain species, i.e. wading birds, raptors, pelagic seabirds, waterfowl, etc. It would also be beneficial to know if you are a veterinarian or an avian veterinarian, a veterinary technician, or a well-seasoned rehabilitator.

**Q4. Is there any special training required in order to volunteer in the oil spill response efforts for beach clean-up, bird surveys or if I am a qualified wildlife paraprofessional?**

A4. Yes, BP is requiring all oil spill response and paraprofessional volunteers to complete Safety Training at a live training class location offered throughout the Gulf Coast Region. Please call the Training Hotline at 1-866-647-2338 for information about class schedules or to enroll.

Or, if you prefer, you may also attend this BP Safety Training online by visiting <https://www2.virtualtrainingassistant.com/BPPublic/wc.dll?learner~cmenu>. There is a test at the end of the course, and you must pass with an 80% (you will have three attempts). Please print the certificate to bring with you if you are scheduled to assist at an Oiled Wildlife Recovery Center or other location. If you have any IT difficulty, you can also call the Training Hotline listed above for assistance.

**Q5: I would like to volunteer to assist with oil spill response efforts, but currently do not have specialized training. How can I register to be a volunteer?**

A5. The Louisiana Serve Commission is helping mobilize and train volunteers in response to the oil spill. An aggressive cleanup operation is under way to secure the source of the spill, recover the spilled oil, and protect environmentally sensitive sites. Oil is a toxic substance and dangerous if handled improperly. Only specially trained responders may clean it up or dispose of it. You must be at least 18 years old, able to follow both written and oral directions, and meet both the training and physical requirements for the role you would fill.

If you are interested in receiving specialized training to help with the cleanup, please register at [www.volunteerlouisiana.gov](http://www.volunteerlouisiana.gov) or call 1-866-448-5816 for information on any volunteer opportunities as they are identified.

Please also note that only the Unified Command has the legal authority to decide upon the use of volunteers in an area impacted by the spill. Current information about the oil spill clean-up efforts and volunteer opportunities are posted at:

<http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/go/site/2931/>. The Unified Commands' decisions to recruit, train and deploy volunteers are contingent upon the location and size of the spill, the appropriate clean-up strategies, and safety considerations.

You can also register online if you are a resident of one of the Gulf Coast states through their websites:

- Alabama: <http://www.servealabama.gov/2010/default.aspx>
- Florida: <http://www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org/>
- Louisiana: <http://www.volunteerlouisiana.gov/>
- Mississippi: <http://www.volunteermississippi.org/1800Vol/OpenIndexAction.do>

In addition, the National Audubon Society is also signing up volunteers to assist. The signup information is at

[http://www.audubonaction.org/site/Survey?ACTION\\_REQUIRED=URI\\_ACTION\\_USER\\_REQUESTS&SURVEY\\_ID=3400](http://www.audubonaction.org/site/Survey?ACTION_REQUIRED=URI_ACTION_USER_REQUESTS&SURVEY_ID=3400).

**Q6: I live near a National Wildlife Refuge in the Gulf Coast area and would like to support the oil spill response efforts. How can I volunteer?**

A6. Many national wildlife refuges along the Gulf Coast in Louisiana, Alabama and Florida have active volunteer and Friends group programs. If you have interested in volunteering to help refuge staff and Friend groups, please contact your nearby refuge for more information about what opportunities currently exist. You can find your closest refuge by going to <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/refuges/refuges-by-state.html#choose>

**Q7. I am a member of a Friends Group or serve as a volunteer for a National Wildlife Refuge that is not located along the Gulf Coast. How can I help with the FWS oil spill response efforts?**

A7. The FWS deeply appreciates the support that our Friends groups and volunteers have provided for many years. One suggestion would be to speak with your refuge manager and staff about ways you can assist if FWS employees are temporarily reassigned to work on the oil spill response. You may also wish to contact refuges along the Gulf Coast and discuss needs with their volunteer coordinator.