

## **Sample Chapter Newsletter Article on Gulf Restoration Bill**

The Gulf of Mexico has gotten a lot of attention on the second anniversary of the horrendous BP Deep Horizon oil disaster that continues to pose problems for the marshes, wetlands and coastal habitats of the Gulf. A bit of good news however—recently the Senate passed legislation as part of the federal Transportation bill to dedicate billions of dollars worth of Clean Water Act penalties that BP will have to pay for Gulf coast restoration of the damaged environment and communities. The House has also voted in favor of directing BP oil spill penalty money to the Gulf. The time is ripe for concerned citizens to once again turn their attention to the Gulf and raise their voices to support action in Congress.

This is common-sense legislation with strong support from leaders on both sides of the aisle. During these deeply partisan times, this is an opportunity for Congress to show that it can still deliver important wins for the American people. Because this is such an unprecedented investment in conservation of an important area for birds and people, Audubon's policy office is prioritizing this legislation and will be inviting all elements of the Audubon network to participate. Chapters across the country have played a critical role in getting to this point, and now we really need your help to get this thing across the finish line.

Senate action paves the way for Congress to do what voters expect: hold the parties responsible for the Gulf oil disaster accountable for restoring the Gulf because our nation's economy depends on a healthy Gulf. Unless Congress acts, fines paid by BP and others responsible for the oil disaster will be spent on unrelated federal spending, instead of going to repair the area that was devastated by the spill.

Nearly 500 miles – almost half – of the coastline in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida that was contaminated by the BP oil disaster remains oiled two years later (according to the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration), including many coastal IBAs as well as other critical and sensitive bird habitats.

Restoring the communities and environment of the Gulf region is critical not only to the local economy, but also to the strength of our national economy. The Gulf currently supports a \$34 billion per year tourism industry, and its fisheries support an estimated \$22.6 billion dollars in seafood and commercial and recreational fishing-related activity. Bipartisan polling shows that 83 percent of voters nationwide support efforts to dedicate the BP oil spill penalties to restoration of the Mississippi River Delta and Gulf Coast.

Call on Congress to do the right thing and make a real investment in restoring our Gulf by supporting legislation that directs BP spill money to the region and the people that need it the most.

You can reach your Senators at 202-224-3121 or email them at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov). Contact your House Representative and encourage him or her to support the Gulf restoration, call 202-225-3121 or [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov). Thank you!

For more information on what Audubon is doing and how you can take action to help restore the Gulf go to <http://gulfoilspill.audubon.org/>

For questions or further information, please contact Sean Saville, National Field Director in the DC policy office at [ssaville@audubon.org](mailto:ssaville@audubon.org)

Thank you!