

## Nesting Shorebird Survey of Selected Species



Surveyors collect data on nesting shore birds

**Project Year:** 2005

**Category:** Birds

**Status:** Complete

**Project #:** None

**Location:**

Statewide

### Project Partners:

EPA, LUMCON, National Audubon Society,  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and  
Fisheries

### Problem Addressed:

The purpose of the Coastal Bird Conservation Program is to: identify and prioritize threatened coastal bird species, census and map populations of priority species, monitor and protect important nesting and foraging sites, and establish protection programs for birds and sites with the express purpose of maintaining or increasing their populations.

### Problem Description:

Throughout the spring and early summer of 2005, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program worked in collaboration with the National Audubon Society and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to initiate National Audubon's Coastal Bird Conservation Program along the entire Louisiana coast. The initial phases of this program include developing a baseline of information on certain species of beach nesting birds including Wilson's and snowy plovers, American oyster catchers, and least terns. This survey represents the first time that a holistic effort to cover the entire Louisiana coast has ever been undertaken.

Teams of biologists and research assistants combed the headland and barrier island beaches across the coast from the Chandeleur Islands in the east to the Sabine River in the west locating breeding pairs of these birds and using GPS to identify their locations. Results were rather surprising. Only two pair of snowy plover were identified for the state near Cameron, LA while over 700 pair of Wilson's plover were recorded across the coast. As expected, American oystercatcher numbers were low with some 40+ nesting pair predominantly along the eastern half of the coast. Least tern numbers were surprisingly low when compared to past estimates with over 750 pair identified.

These numbers will be combined with efforts from the other states along the northern gulf and southern Atlantic. Rather than estimates, we will then have real numbers revealing much about the breeding abundance and distribution of these birds, putting us in better shape to manage these "species of concern".



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