

# Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grants Program

*Alabama, Louisiana, Mexico*

## **Binational Partnership Receives a \$250,000 Conservation Grant.**

On May 3, 2004, as authorized under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (Act), Steve Williams, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, acting on behalf of Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, approved \$250,000 in funding for the Migratory Stopover Habitat Protection Along the Gulf of Mexico Phase II Project, located in Alabama and Louisiana. Project partners also will be carrying out activities in the Mexican States of Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Nuevo León, and San Luis Potosí to complement and further advance the conservation goals of this binational project. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop initiatives in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean to conserve neotropical migratory birds and their habitats. Certain activities defined by the Act are eligible for funding, and partnerships must match grant requests 3:1. Contributions from U.S. federal partners do not qualify as match.

Stopover areas, or places where birds rest and refuel before continuing on to their breeding or wintering grounds, play a critical role in the journey of migration. Annually, the Gulf Coast of Mexico provides hundreds of thousands of birds with a diversity of stopover habitats. Many of the gulf's habitats, however, are in need of conservation. Project partners, building on their accomplishments in the first phase of this project, will advance a variety of habitat protection and management actions in phase two.

The Nature Conservancy-Migratory Bird Program and The Nature Conservancy of Alabama are contributing \$750,000 to the project. Other partners include The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana, Pronatura Noreste, and Pronatura Veracruz. The project area spans five ecoregions and five bird conservation regions.

## **In Alabama**

Partners will acquire fee-simple title to 360 acres of land containing longleaf pine savanna and small stream wetlands and timber rights on 425 acres of wetlands. The Nature Conservancy will hold title to the acquisitions, which are located in the forested corridor between the Perdido River and Mobile-Tensaw River Delta and are adjacent to the State's 735-acre Splinter Hill Bog Preserve. Project activities take place in Baldwin County in Congressional District 1.

## **In Louisiana**

Coastal woodlands of the Chenier Plain offer critical habitat for enormous numbers of migratory birds, but are threatened by conversion to grazing land. Partners will identify high-quality or restorable woodlands and will work with private landowners to conserve them, using a variety of conservation mechanisms. Depending on the cost per acre of sites to be acquired, partners will protect between 10 and 45 acres of habitat. Project activities take place in Vermilion and Cameron Parishes in Congressional District 7.

## **In Mexico**

Partners will carry out priority-setting exercises for conservation in three ecoregions spanning all or part of the States of Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Nuevo León, and San Luis Potosí. Working ecoregionally, partners will compile and analyze data on species, habitats, and threats; select and map priority conservation areas; and develop strategies for conservation.



*Dickcissel*

Steve Maslowski/USFWS

Additionally, in Tamaulipas project partners will expand the recently formed private landowners' network within the internationally important and vast Laguna Madre ecosystem. Partners will continue to cultivate good relations with landowners and provide them with technical and financial assistance to help manage their land for conservation.

For more information, contact David Mehlman, The Nature Conservancy, (505) 244-0535 extension 24, [dmehlman@tnc.org](mailto:dmehlman@tnc.org), or Doug Ryan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (703) 358-1784, [douglas\\_ryan@fws.gov](mailto:douglas_ryan@fws.gov).

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
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May 2004

