



RESTORING THE GULF

The Gulf of Mexico is a national treasure and a sportsman's paradise—it must be restored.

In April 2010, the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded, ultimately spewing more than 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf, with disastrous consequences to fish, wildlife, and people.

Thanks to the efforts of the National Wildlife Federation and other advocates for the Gulf, much of the money from fines and penalties resulting from the disaster—**potentially billions of dollars**—will be available for restoring estuaries, oyster reefs, coastal wetlands and other important habitats.

NWF and our allied sportsmen and members fought to pass the RESTORE Act in 2012, which invests 80 percent of Clean Water Act fines directly in areas affected by the disaster. There will also be funds available for ecosystem restoration through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Natural Resources Damages Assessment process.

Restoring the Gulf was one of the National Wildlife Federation's top priorities before the Gulf oil disaster and it continues to be a major focus of our work even as the disaster fades from the headlines.

Our experts in Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Washington D.C., work with our state partners, scientists, business leaders, and local volunteers to advocate for this money to be used for effective restoration of the Gulf of Mexico. This may be our best and only chance to fix the major environmental damage to the Gulf from a century of over-exploitation.

THE GULF BY THE NUMBERS

\$8 billion

Annual economic impact of recreational saltwater fishing

13 million

Average number of waterfowl wintering on the Gulf Coast annually

2.6 million

Jobs dependent on hunting and fishing in the five Gulf states

20,000

Acres of Gulf Coast wetlands lost every year

97

Percent of the Gulf's commercial fish and shellfish that rely on coastal wetlands

4+ million

Estimated barrels spilled during the Gulf oil disaster

Restoring the Gulf of Mexico should be a national priority.

We can make a real difference for the health of the Gulf of Mexico by funding projects that do the following:

“Get the water right” for fish, wildlife, and people

Estuaries—places where freshwater from rivers and streams mix with saltier waters of the Gulf of Mexico—are incredibly important for the entire food web in the Gulf of Mexico. But in many places our rivers have been drained, dammed, and diverted for use upstream or polluted by sewage, fertilizers and toxic runoff. We can use funds from the oil spill to improve the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water flowing into our coastal bays and estuaries. Maintaining water quality on our beaches is essential to sustaining tourism and our quality of life.

Improve fishing by restoring habitat

We call it the “supply side of fishery management.” Regulatory agencies put a lot of effort trying to control fishing *demand* by imposing quotas, bag and size limits, catch shares and closed fishing seasons. But for many species, there’s another solution: We can increase the *supply* of healthy fish stocks by restoring their habitats, breeding grounds, and natural supplies of food.

Shore up our natural defenses

Healthy reefs, wetlands and barrier islands are our first line of defense to slow down storm surges and blunt the force of high winds during storms and hurricanes.

Restore our economy by restoring the Gulf

In the coastal regions, restoring the environment will create a lasting impact on the economy. The Gulf’s 53 coastal counties and parishes in five states have over 25,000 tourism-related businesses and nearly 500,000 associated jobs.

Funding from the RESTORE Act could allow us to leave our children and grandchildren a lasting legacy of healthy fish, wildlife, seafood and resilient coastal communities—but only if we make wise investments today.



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