

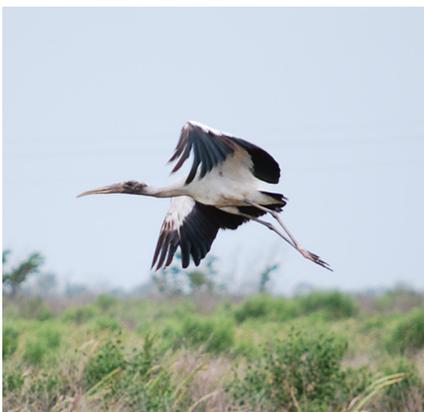
# Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative

Helping People Help the Land

Signup Deadline:  
August 1, 2010

Farmers and ranchers now have the ability to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop and enhance habitat for birds making their annual migration south.

For more information or to sign-up for the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative, please check with your local USDA Service Center, or visit our website at:  
[www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov)



*This Wood Stork is a shorebird that occurs in this region during migration. This bird requires shallow water habitat found in swamps, marshes, and ponds in the southern United States, and as far south as Argentina in South America.  
Photo: Beverly Moseley  
USDA-NRCS, Texas*

## Opportunity to Expand Habitat for Migrating Birds

In the coming months more than 50 million migrating birds will instinctively head for marshes and coastlands of the northern Gulf of Mexico. The oil spill is adversely affecting marshes and coastlands used by shorebirds, waterfowl and other migrating birds.

Under the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative, NRCS will work with producers to manage portions of their land to provide these birds with additional food and habitat.

### Priority Areas

Priority areas in Texas are in Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Hardin, Jackson, Jefferson, Liberty, Matagorda, Orange, Waller, and Wharton counties with secondary priority given to the adjacent counties that include Aransas, Austin, Fayette, Grimes, Jasper, Lavaca, Montgomery, Newton, Polk, Refugio, San Jacinto, Tyler, Victoria and Washington counties.

Eligible Lands include wetlands farmed under natural conditions, existing farmed wetlands and prior converted croplands. Rice fields are particularly suited for this initiative, as are aquaculture farms no longer in production. Shallow water, ranging from mudflats to less than one foot, is key to creating suitable habitat.

### NRCS Program Assistance

NRCS will use technical expertise and financial resources from existing Farm Bill programs to provide resources to agricultural producers to install practices. Essential practices will control water levels and enhance habitat to attract migratory birds.

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP): Producers have the opportunity to sign-up for EQIP or WHIP to enhance available habitat.