



SPiRiT of Conservation Migratory Bird Program



National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

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Thanks to ConocoPhillips, migratory birds will have an easier flight this season. They'll find newly restored bottomland hardwood forests in Louisiana, replanted cheniers along the hurricane damaged Gulf coast, and rejuvenated Texas prairies. This good news for birds-and for America's 50 million birders-is courtesy of the new ConocoPhillips SPiRiT of Conservation Migratory Bird Program.

Launched in 2005, the SPiRiT of Conservation is a focused and strategic initiative to conserve threatened birds and their habitats around the world. Priority is given to projects that take place in the vicinity of ConocoPhillips' facilities and operating areas. The SPiRiT of Conservation enhances a 15-year partnership with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (Foundation) that has funded more than 40 projects with a total value in excess of \$5 million.

Through SPiRiT of Conservation, grants will be awarded to:

- Protect, restore, and improve habitat for migratory birds through better management;
- Benefit declining, threatened or endangered birds at the state or federal level;
- Produce measurable benefits to declining species to enhance their recovery.

ConocoPhillips provided \$500,000 to launch SPiRiT of Conservation in 2005. Of this, \$100,000 supports the Foundation's bird conservation programs, and \$400,000 is made available for competitive grants. The Foundation provides an additional \$200,000 annually for grants, creating a \$600,000 annual fund for the SPiRiT of Conservation to benefit birds and their habitats. Non-profits, government agencies, and others may apply for these funds using the Foundation's electronic application process (www.nfwf.org).

2005 SPiRiT of Conservation Awards

Prairie Conservation Initiative

Prairies provide critical nesting and migration habitat for hundreds of migratory species and tens of millions of individual birds. The goal for this initiative is to restore prairie habitats to a more natural state to support a wide range of grassland-dependent species. Two awards were made in 2005 to launch this Initiative:

The Nature Conservancy, Texas, will help restore about 5,000 acres of prairie in the Refugio Triangle area. Here, ranchers will learn how to conduct prescribed burns to better manage their land on a sustainable basis. Fire restores natural prairie grasses and helps control invasive exotics that degrade habitat.

The Houston Zoo, over three years, will build a modern captive breeding facility for the endangered Attwater's Prairie-Chicken on the NASA Johnson Space Center. More than one million Attwater's Prairie-Chickens once inhabited Texas' prairies. Today, only a handful remains. This facility will have the capacity to increase the number of eggs produced in captivity by 900% (from about 30 to 300 each year), dramatically accelerating recovery efforts. Restoring the Attwater's Prairie-Chicken will help stimulate prairie restoration in the Lone Star state.





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Forest Habitat Restoration Initiative

Woodlands provide important nesting habitat for hundreds of species of Neotropical migratory songbirds and are used by a variety of other wildlife. Forests also play a critical role sequestering carbon from the atmosphere, as buffers for wetlands, and as recreation sites for people. Two awards were made in 2005 to begin this focus area:

Trust for Public Land will acquire, restore and permanently protect 612 acres as part of the Tensas National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana. Most of this land is currently in row-crop agriculture and 586 acres will be restored to natural bottomland hardwood forest. Carbon Sequestration is also an important component of this project.

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory will restore 70 acres of hurricane damaged stop-over habitat along the Louisiana coast. Many migratory birds travel thousands of miles between their nesting and wintering sites. To do so, they depend on good quality habitat where they can "stop-over" to rest and feed. Creating a "string of pearls" of stop-over habitat along migration routes is a top conservation priority. Gulf Coast Bird Observatory will restore small patches of oaks and other hardwoods, referred to locally as cheniers, which are heavily used by migratory birds as feeding and resting sites before and after their annual, 600 mile flight across the Gulf of Mexico.

Delaware Bay Migratory Bird Initiative

The Delaware Bay provides critical habitat for shorebirds during migration. Dozens of species of waterfowl winter on the Bay, and songbirds rely heavily on the habitats that ring the Bay's shores. Working through the Foundation's Delaware Estuary Grants Program, small grants are provided for habitat restoration work. Four small grants were awarded in 2005 to inaugurate this initiative:

Ducks Unlimited, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, Chester Ridley Crum Watershed Association, and the Fairmont Park Commission received grants to restore 60 acres of riparian forests and wetland habitats in New Jersey.

International Bird Conservation Initiative

Supporting bird conservation projects in countries where ConocoPhillips has a presence is a key feature of the SPIRIT of Conservation Program.

Siberian and Red-crowned Crane Conservation in Siberia and China

International Crane Foundation will undertake a three-year effort to dramatically accelerate conservation action for these two highly threatened species. This project will include a survey of Red-crowned Cranes to guide the development of a conservation plan and track Siberian Crane migration via satellite to help expand wetland conservation efforts. Education programs will be developed for both species.

For more information about ConocoPhillips' environmental programs, visit <http://www.conocophillips.com/hse/Environment/index.htm>. To apply for a SPIRIT of Conservation grant, visit www.nfwf.org.

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