



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
**U.S. Department  
of the Interior**

[www.doi.gov](http://www.doi.gov)

# News Release

Date: September 15, 2010  
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## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces Expanded Reporting for Birds Captured and Collected During Deepwater Horizon Response**

WASHINGTON -- Based on a rigorous review by a team of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists of previously released preliminary data, the Service has compiled an expanded report of the birds rescued and collected during the response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

This report, which will be provided regularly moving forward, outlines a species-by-species breakdown and maps of where the birds were collected, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Tom Strickland announced today.

“These new detailed reports will give us a better initial picture of the effects to migratory bird populations from the Deepwater Horizon spill, help guide our efforts to restore these populations and help ensure that those responsible will be held accountable for the full impacts of the spill,” Strickland said.

The initial report released by the Fish and Wildlife Service today showed that as of September 14, 2010, a total of 3,634 dead birds and 1,042 live birds have been found in areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon spill. These numbers are subject to verification and cannot be considered final. Of the dead birds, the largest numbers are laughing gulls, followed by brown pelicans and northern gannets.

These numbers will be updated as the team of biologists continues the verification process which can take several weeks. Until the response to this environmental disaster is complete and birds are no longer being captured alive or collected dead, any numbers regarding birds must be considered preliminary.

About 1.5 percent of the current total represents birds collected live that later died. As data continues to come in, the Service will report on the number of live birds that have died.

In the meantime, the unverified preliminary numbers will continue to be updated daily to provide a glimpse into the spill impacts on birds that depend on the northern Gulf Coast.

The verified information will be updated every week. Verified species-by-species data, along with maps showing where birds were captured or collected, are posted on the Service's oil spill web page ([www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill](http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill)) and the Restore the Gulf web site ([www.restorethegulf.gov](http://www.restorethegulf.gov)).

“In the early days of the response, alive and dead visibly and not visibly oiled birds were reported on a daily basis to reflect what search teams were finding and to enable the Response Planning Group to plan the next day's collection and capture efforts,” said Acting Service Director Rowan Gould. “Because of the urgency to identify areas where large numbers of birds may be encountering oil these numbers were reported on a daily basis, but the exact locations, species type, degree of oiling were not verified. More recently, a data team has been working to fill in details and verify the accuracy of all information.”

Ensuring accurate, scientifically valid information that describes bird impacts from this incident will be an important part of the government's overall Natural Resource Damage Assessment. The assessment is designed to quantify the full magnitude of the injuries to natural resources from the spill, including lost uses of those resources. Federal and state agencies have come together as trustees under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 to perform this assessment, which will result in a publicly reviewed restoration plan and damage claim to the companies responsible for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Visit <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/collectionreports.html>

The goal under the law is to restore injured or lost natural resources to the condition they would have been in had there not been a spill and to compensate the public for lost or diminished services these resources provide to the public and the environment.

Some of the natural resource damage assessment data collected for birds include species information, degree of oiling, date and location of capture or collection. Once birds are captured alive or collected dead, a series of events follow:

- Dead birds are catalogued as evidence and kept in freezers at collection intake centers.
- Live birds are transported to one of four intake/ rehabilitation centers, which are located in Hammond, Louisiana; Gulfport, Mississippi; Theodore, Alabama; and Pensacola, Florida.
- Once the live birds arrive at rehabilitation centers veterinarians and other wildlife professionals monitor the birds closely to determine when they are sufficiently stabilized to have the oil washed off their feathers and skin.
- After several washings, feedings, and the collection of vital health information the birds are maintained in the rehabilitation centers until their natural body oils are replenished and they are sufficiently recovered for release
- Rehabilitated birds are released into suitable habitats along the coast at locations aimed at minimizing the chances they could get oiled again. Birds are banded prior to release so survival and movement may be followed.

- If a bird dies at the rehabilitation center, it is entered into evidence and placed in a storage freezer.

Birds have been collected at sea, along the coast and inland.

For more information about the Service's response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, please visit [www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/](http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/), follow the Service's conservation work in the Southeast Region on Twitter @usfwssoutheast, or text 'oil' to 45995 from your cell phone to receive occasional alerts about the oil spill response and restoration work our employees are doing on the Gulf Coast. Note that standard message rates may apply.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Visit the Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov> or <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/>

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