

Mr. Anthony (Tony) Amos, Director of the Animal Rehabilitation Keep (ARK), University of Texas Marine Science Institute (UTMSI) has been awarded the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Recovery Champion Award for the Southwest Region, presented December 9, 2015, in Corpus Christi, TX. The award is "given annually to a non-service employee who has aided in the recovery of threatened and endangered species."

Tony Amos has been a major contributor to the knowledge base regarding migrating and overwintering listed shorebirds including piping plovers and red knots. His contributions are not limited to birds however, as he has also been a major partner to the Service and NOAA Fisheries with recovery work related to endangered and threatened sea turtles.

Tony has compiled an incredible long-term data set of bird and sea turtle observations for two Gulf beaches on the Central Texas coast. This data set contains information on species of special interest to the Service, including the federally-listed piping plover, red knot, and five sea turtle species that strand or for which nests were found on these beaches. Tony also kept records of numbers of people, vehicles, dogs, buildings, and measurements of physical parameters such as tides, wind direction and speed, water temperature, and seaweed levels occurring at the time of his surveys; information that allows comparisons of effects of development and disturbance on these listed species. His data collection has extended over such a long period of time with such regularity that he has greatly enhanced existing knowledge of migrating and overwintering plovers, and nesting sea turtles. These intensive surveys have provided key information about winter piping plover natural history necessary to recovery planning efforts of the Service. Through these surveys numerous Kemp's ridley sea turtle nests have also been detected and protected, helping to facilitate recovery of this species.

Tony has also worked tirelessly to rescue and rehabilitate sea turtles (all are listed species) and birds (including piping plovers, red knots, brown pelicans (recently delisted), and even bald eagles (also delisted)).

In terms of public outreach and education, Tony is one of the most visible people in the Texas Coastal Bend with regard to cultivating the public's interest in coastal wildlife and explaining the need for conservation of birds, sea turtles, and other wild creatures. Tony is also one of the points of contact for the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network, and as part of this role he receives reports of manatees in central Texas bays. Due to his high public profile, he is often the first person notified when a manatee is spotted and in addition to coordinating this information with the Service's local Field Office, he often fields media question about manatee biology and conservation actions.

For all of his contributions and dedication over a several decades-long span of service, the Service is proud to recognize Tony Amos with the Recovery Champion Award.



USFWS Photo: Recovery Champion Award Recipient Mr. Tony Amos works with one of the rescued injured turtles at the Animal Rehabilitation Keep (ARK) at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute at Corpus Christi, TX. Tony has a heart for rescue and rehabilitation of injured and ill marine life including sea turtles, birds, and marine mammals. He started the Animal Rehabilitation Keep (ARK) as a rehabilitation facility in 1983 with permanent building dedicated in 1999. Since its inception, Tony has increased the physical facilities of the ARK, pursued funding that now is in part endowed, created relationships with veterinarians, developed staff and a cadre of volunteers, all the while continuing his regular

oceanographic work and personally-motivated surveys. Tony has been a reliable partner to the Service, the National Park Service, and NOAA Fisheries with regard to treating and rehabilitating injured birds, including listed plovers, red knots (recently listed), brown pelicans (recently delisted), peregrine falcons (delisted), a host of other migratory birds, and all species of injured and stranded sea turtles. This sea turtle rehabilitation effort has become a major task over the last five winters due to increasing numbers of cold-stunned green sea turtles each year.



USFWS Photo: Recovery Champion Award Recipient Mr. Tony Amos works with one of the rescued owls at the Animal Rehabilitation Keep (ARK) at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute at Corpus Christi, TX.



USFWS photo: A physical oceanographer by profession, Recovery Champion Award Recipient Mr. Tony Amos has collected data on all things animal, plant, mineral, and human-created (people, vehicles, structures, and debris) on the Gulf beach of Mustang Island since he moved to Port Aransas, Texas, in 1978. For over 35 years he has carried out an every-other-day reconnaissance of a 7.3 mile (11.7 km) stretch of Gulf beach within the Port Aransas city limits during which he intensively surveys for birds, sea turtles, people, and debris, while keeping records of physical parameters like ocean temperatures, wind speed, wind direction, etc. His long-term data set includes documented observations and photos of listed threatened piping plovers; a data set that has allowed him to create an online photo database of individually-banded plovers.