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Date: March 2, 2026

Re: February Progress Report

Contract #098 – Managing for Gulf American Oystercatchers: Monitoring the Gulf Coast Populations and Investigating Wintering and Foraging Behaviors

GCBO team members continued our non-breeding shorebird surveys, targeted at documenting the location of multiple shorebird species of concern. We continued to use eBird data to identify locations to survey beyond our traditional survey routes. Our team visited approximately 60 eBird locations, most of which were points that were previously visited during the fall during different weather and tidal conditions. Twelve oystercatchers were documented, including three previously banded oystercatchers. One of the banded oystercatchers was hatched last summer in the Galveston area, but was resighted in Port Lavaca. No oystercatchers were found during our standard non-breeding shorebird surveys.

With our research team, volunteers, and our colleagues at Galveston Bay Foundation and Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program, we were able to deploy an additional six transmitters. Three of the captured individuals were females, two were males, and one remains unconfirmed. Three were captured and banded previously - one was a female captured as a breeding adult in 2014; a second was a breeding male captured as a breeding adult in 2018; and the third was a banded as a chick in 2014 and was now confirmed to be female. All of the birds were adults, and several were already found to be incubating eggs. We have a tentative schedule arranged with the remaining project partners and are on track to deploy the remaining tags by early April.

We continued our annual monitoring surveys in multiple bay systems. Currently, we are monitoring ten active nests, two of which now have recently hatched chicks. Several other pairs appear close to laying eggs. Volunteers are preparing to assist with the monitoring as well, and volunteers including staff from American Bird Conservancy and Audubon Texas have already assisted with the surveys.



All birds captured, handled, and banded under a federally authorized Bird Banding Permit issued by the USGS and a Scientific Research Permit issued by TPWD.

STEWARDSHIP ✦ PARTNERING ✦ SHARING