

Progress Report to Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Contract # 098

Report Period: 1 April – 30 April, 2025

During the first month of our grant contract, we continued to monitor our previously monitored nesting American Oystercatchers and began discussions with the incoming graduate student and volunteers for next year's breeding season. These conversations gaged the interest levels of our volunteers who will be providing local support for next year's efforts. Currently, we have volunteers lined up in most, if not all, the bay systems between Corpus Christi and Galveston Bay, with a focus on the Matagorda Bay system.

Additionally, volunteer monitoring in partnership with GCBO led to the discovery of one American Oystercatcher nest in Espiritu Santo Bay, five in San Antonio Bay, and two in Matagorda Bay. Each of these pairs will be targeted next winter/spring for transmitter placement. At these sites, there are at least an additional six pairs which will be monitored and captured next year. GCBO staff have also observed oystercatchers in Lavaca and Aransas Bays, which connect to Matagorda Bay and are therefore subjected to much of the same conservation-related issues. We are also monitoring five breeding pairs in East Matagorda Bay, 26 pairs in the Galveston Bay area, and one pair on Sargent Beach, all of which have had 26 nesting attempts that we currently know of. To date (this year), we have observed two chicks fledge, and have banded seven chicks and two adults.

Our partners have been monitoring and scouting for breeding American Oystercatchers, in preparation for next year's trapping. Partners have found multiple pairs in other areas of Matagorda Bay, as well as in southern Texas. The student who will be working with us on this research and monitoring project also began collecting samples for her additional study, and is preparing for next year's sample collection.