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Date: June 4, 2026

Re: May Progress Report

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

We continue to retrieve transmitter data as expected. The data has already revealed information that was previously unknown – extensive nighttime movements, larger than expected territories, and using areas where oystercatchers were not previously documented by our team or volunteers. The graduate student working on this project with us has begun analyzing the breeding season data, and is starting to prepare for the December symposium.

We continued our annual monitoring surveys in multiple bay systems. Currently, we have documented 34 nests, thirteen of which successfully hatched chicks. We have been able to band fourteen chicks and have seen two chicks that we were not able to band; the remaining did not survive to banding age. We have noticed an issue with chick survival this year, spread across the entire upper and mid coast; chicks are smaller than usual as they approach fledging age, and many are dying prior to fledge. This is unusual, and the cause is currently unknown. The graduate student assisting us has been collecting biological samples from the chicks, and several deceased chicks have been sent for necropsy at Texas A&M University. Volunteers continue to assist with the monitoring, and have documented at least nine additional nests and one surviving chick, which was recently banded.



One of the banded American Oystercatcher chicks that successfully fledged this year. 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.