



Title Audubon (BirdLife Partner in the US) experts across the Gulf Coast are monitoring the spread of thousands of litres of oil that threaten to turn the recent drilling platform explosion into a growing environmental disaster. For birds, the timing could not be worse because they are breeding, nesting and especially vulnerable in many of the places where the oil could come ashore. Sensitive coastal areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida are all potential targets of the growing spill. The efforts to stop the oil before it reaches shore are heroic, but may not be enough. We have to hope for the best, but prepare for the worst, including a true catastrophe for birds. In Florida, Audubon is recruiting volunteers and making its Center for Birds of Prey available for bird cleansing and rehabilitation. Elsewhere, the organisation is gearing up to help mobilise volunteers and provide other assistance in the event the oil reaches sensitive shorelines. Several ?Important Bird Areas? designated by Audubon and its partners for their essential habitat value to bird species lie within potentially-affected areas. Those under immediate threat include Chandeleur Islands IBA and Gulf Islands National Seashore IBA in Louisiana and Mississippi; and the Active Delta IBA in Louisiana, which includes Delta National Wildlife Refuge and Pass-a-Loutre Wildlife Management Area. To read the latest news about the Gulf Oil Spill, visit [Audubon?s website](#) or see the latest within the [BirdLife Community](#).