



Audubon website drips in oil to mark 2nd anniversary of Deepwater Horizon oil spill

Title

A gooey brown virtual oil slick will cover the National Audubon Society [website](#) in a groundbreaking Internet campaign giving people the chance to clean up the virtual oil spill by taking action to protect the environment. The campaign marks the second anniversary of Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion in the Gulf of Mexico. and **warns of threats to reckless drilling in the Arctic.**

On Day One of the campaign, the oil spill fouls the entire homepage at Audubon.org. But all is not lost. Website visitors have seven days to contribute to Internet-wide efforts to contain the spill by taking part in daily actions to protect birds and people and their habitats.

For example, people are encouraged to help Heal the Gulf by supporting the RESTORE Act which would ensure that 80 percent of the penalty money resulting from the BP oil spill goes to restoration projects on the Gulf Coast.

"Two years out from the start of the BP disaster, – even as the nation is faced with more risky drilling in the Arctic -- Audubon wanted to make it clear the oil and birds don't mix," said [David Yarnold](#), President and CEO of Audubon.

"But this is not a message of gloom and doom. It's a reminder that we need to work to make sure such a disaster doesn't happen again – and that we must make the Gulf whole."

Over the course of the week-long campaign, online supporters are urged to take action ranging from advocacy to education to at-home environmentalism.

To make a difference, supporters can write a letter to Congress, take a kid birding, or even just swap out a light bulb for something more energy-efficient. For example, on Day One, people are encouraged to help Heal the Gulf by supporting the RESTORE Act which would ensure that 80 percent of the penalty money resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill goes to restoration projects on the Gulf Coast.

As participants take action each day, the oil slick recedes from Audubon's website, revealing a healthy coastline.

“Oil & Birds Don’t Mix” is the second innovative online campaign from Audubon to expand its reach to new and more diverse audiences. Last fall, the organisation released dozens of virtual birds on over 100 websites in “Birding the Net”, an online scavenger hunt designed to bring the excitement of birds and birding to larger audiences in new and unexpected ways -- and nearly 10,000 people participated in the ambitious social media campaign.

The winners are now collecting their prizes; Jessica Harrison of Boston was the first to spot all 34 birds, and as grand prize winner enjoyed a voyage for two to the Galapagos courtesy of Lindblad Expeditions. "I didn't start playing Birding the Net because I know a lot about birds or conservation. I just thought the graphics were phenomenal and it was a cool idea," said Harrison.

She wasn't alone. Audubon's Facebook audience grew by 56 percent, and traffic to the nonprofit's website skyrocketed by 87 percent. AdWeek called Birding the Net “elegant and light, charming, addictive and fun.”

While that first social media campaign was devised by the ad agency Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, this time Audubon staff looked internally for innovative ideas for “Oil & Birds Don’t Mix. Audubon Director of Constituency Development David Kubrick suggested covering the website with oil as a reminder of the 2010 disaster, with project leads Miriam Johnson, Circulation Manager, and Elaine O’Sullivan, Director of Educational Publishing, bringing in the symbolism of the oil receding to reflect the combined actions of many people.

“While it would be easy to evoke outrage with those horrible images of birds covered in oil, Audubon wanted to focus on the future,” said VP of Engagement Jessica Green. “Our work in the Gulf is focused on restoring the ecosystem, and the final day of our campaign urges supporters to speak up against reckless drilling in the environmentally sensitive Arctic.”