

Audubon Texas EcoNRG EPA Gulf of Mexico Program Galveston Bay Estuary Program
Houston Audubon Society Harris & Eliza Kempner Fund Meadows Foundation Reliant Energy
Shell Marine – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Texas Commission of Environmental Quality
Texas General Land Office Texas Parks and Wildlife Department U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Preserving a Coastal Treasure *A North Deer Island Project*

NORTH DEER ISLAND features some of the most spectacular bird watching opportunities for the endangered brown pelican and threatened Reddish Egret and White-faced Ibis.

THE MOST PRODUCTIVE bird nesting island on the Texas Coast, it is also one of the few natural islands in West Galveston Bay. The island is made up of 25 acres of upland rookery habitat and 129 acres of estuarine marsh. The island is currently threatened by shoreline erosion that has been occurring at rates measured up to 20 feet per year.

THIS ISLAND SANCTUARY provides outstanding habitat for a tremendous number and diversity birds and receives international attention during bird migrations. Owned by the Houston Audubon Society, and five other interest-owners, the island also provides critical habitat for recreationally and commercially important fish and shellfish species.

UP TO 30,000 BIRD NESTING PAIRS utilize the 144-acre island year round, especially during nesting season from May to August.

BILLIONS OF DOLLARS are generated across the U.S. from the commercial and recreational opportunities wildlife viewing provides according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Web site.

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Protected the entire 144-acre island from destruction due to erosion, in two phases.
- Employed innovative, cost saving techniques.
- Placed 24,100 tons of limestone to create 1.7 miles of durable erosion control structures.
- Protected habitats include upland nesting areas, wetlands, tidal flats and lagoons.
- 40 Volunteers planted smooth cordgrass during Marsh Mania, one of the nation's most successful volunteer wetland restoration programs.
- Project cost leveraged \$3.2 million, funded through local contributions as well as federal and state conservation grant programs
- This project is a key component to the West Bay Conservation Corridor, where project partners involved have preserved 5,000 acres of coastal habitat and restored or enhanced over 900 acres of coastal wetlands.

A PARTNERSHIP

Galveston Bay lost nearly 35,000 acres of critical wetland habitat between 1950 and 1980. Conservation partners are working diligently to restore these lost wetlands. The protection of North Deer Island is one of several nationally recognized collaborative efforts to help conserve vital remaining habitats and restore lost habitats,

Partners include: Audubon Texas, EcoNRG, EPA Gulf of Mexico Program, Houston Audubon Society, Harris & Eliza Kempner Fund, Meadows Foundation, Reliant Energy, Shell Marine – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Texas Commission of Environmental Quality - Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Texas General Land Office, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Figure 1. Project Components

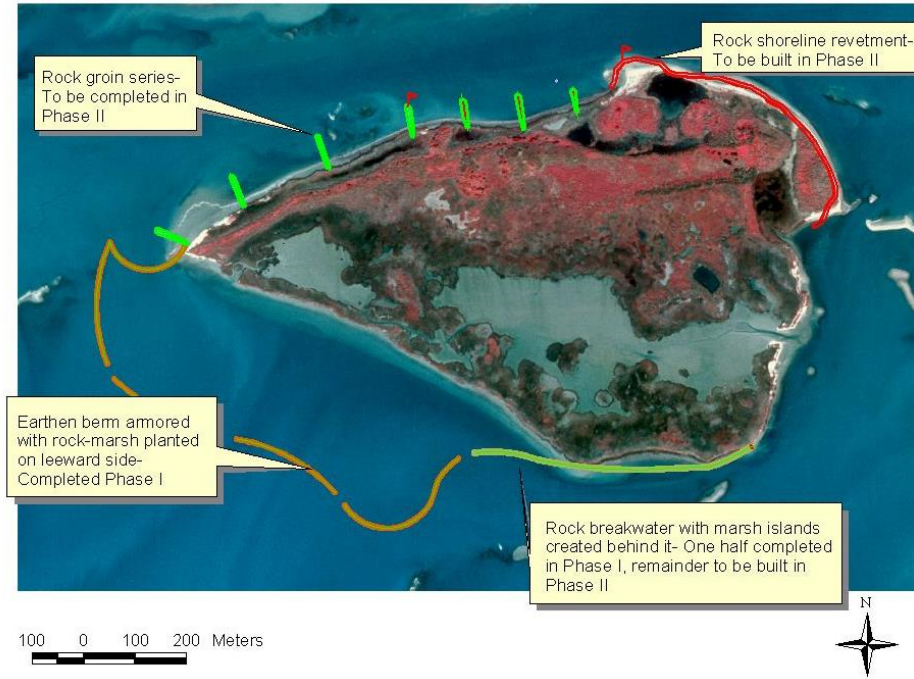


Figure 2: Newly Protected and Restored Shoreline

