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For Immediate Release:

GULF OF MEXICO OIL SPILL
AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION POISED TO HELP

Colorado Springs, Colorado, May 3, 2010 – The American Birding Association will offer its voice and the resources of its large membership base to the environmental and tourism recovery efforts that will soon be underway, following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster. The salt marshes and bayous that make up the northern shore of the Gulf of Mexico have for ages been the globally important nesting grounds of many herons, spoonbills, and other wading birds, as well as a major stopover point for many of our songbirds and shorebirds. The whole coastal area has been a hotspot for birding and ecotourism, so much so that in 2007 ABA held its annual convention in Lafayette, Louisiana.

The ABA will be heading back to the coastal region later this week, but unfortunately, under much more dire circumstances—to aid in the daunting task of assessing and recovering decimated populations of nesting birds and the tourism industry built around them.

“The iconic images that we viewed in horror after the Exxon Valdez disaster will pale in comparison to what we are about to see, if fortune and the tide don’t change quickly,” says Robert G. Robinson, President and CEO of the ABA. “There is a growing concern in Louisiana that the oil is going to emerge in a ‘current zone’ that will take it around the southern tip of Florida and up the eastern seaboard,” notes Mr. Robinson. Mitch Butler of Natural Resources Results, Inc., is counsel to the ABA and reports, “As this saga evolves, we may be dealing with the biggest manmade environmental catastrophe in history.”

The ABA is prepared to offer its expertise and mobilize its grassroots member base to aid in the cleanup of decimated habitat, to provide assistance to the birding tourism industry, and to develop policy to keep a disaster like this from ever happening again. **The ABA has set up an online donation form to collect funds for the recovery effort at <https://www.aba.org/donate/gulf.php>.**

The ABA has announced that 95% of the funds will go directly to Gulf area recovery efforts, including Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research to help obtain the quantities of equipment they will need to carry out wildlife rehabilitation efforts. The remaining 5% of the funds will fund travel by ABA staff and volunteers who will soon be en route to the Gulf Coast to help Tri-State and other local conservation organizations. Stay tuned to ABA's Twitter and Facebook sites, as well as the ABA Website for updated reports: www.aba.org.

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