

10 things

you might not know
about the



the Gulf Coast

1.

America's Gulf Coast spans five U.S. states—Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

2.

The Gulf region provides 40 percent of the annual seafood catch in the lower 48 states.

3.

The Gulf Coast is home to ten of our nation's 14 largest ports by tonnage. More than 25 percent of the nation's shipping exports pass through Louisiana ports alone.

4.

Louisiana's coast is responsible for the production of 90 percent of U.S. offshore energy. The oil and gas industry employs nearly 15 percent of Louisiana's workforce and is responsible for 9.2 million jobs nationwide.

5.

The Gulf Coast wetlands provide nesting, resting, and feeding habitat critical to more than 400 North American bird species, including a majority of the country's migratory waterfowl.

6.

The barrier islands and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast protect more than two million people residing in the coastal zone, diminishing the intensity of hurricanes and storms.

7.

Canal dredging and levee building has disrupted the 7,000 year-old balance between natural erosion and sediment deposit in the Gulf Coast's Mississippi River Delta. Since the 1930s, coastal Louisiana has lost over 2,000 square miles of wetlands (representing annual land loss equaling the landmass of Manhattan).

8.

Human activity and natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina, have caused tremendous damage to Gulf Coast ecosystems. The region has lost nearly 50 percent of its wetlands, 60 percent of its sea grass beds, 50 percent of its oyster reefs, and more than 32 percent of its mangrove forests in recent decades.

9.

On April 20, 2010, an explosion occurred on the Deepwater Horizon drilling platform and over the next 87 days nearly 5 million barrels of oil gushed into the Gulf of Mexico creating the worst spill in U.S. History. More than 9,400 birds, sea turtles, and marine mammals were found injured or dead in the six months following the spill and oil-weakened marshes accelerated the loss of coastal habitat.

10.

Audubon and its partners have authored a plan for the federal government to immediately begin fulfilling its promise of Gulf Coast renewal. With the Mississippi River's extraordinary capacity to build land in the Delta, there is real opportunity for restoring our nation's most productive and important wetland ecosystems.