

Progress Report to Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Contract # 098

Report Period: 1 September – 30 September, 2025

GCBO team members began our non-breeding shorebird surveys, targeted at documenting the location of multiple shorebird species on concern. This year, in addition to our normal surveys, we are focusing on finding American Oystercatchers (AMOY) and identifying wintering locations that are consistently used. Using eBird data as a starting place for identifying locations to survey beyond our traditional survey routes, our avian biologist and intern began to search for AMOY around the Matagorda Bay area. The team has been able to visit 41 different eBird locations, finding AMOY at only five of those locations, plus two locations on our yearly survey routes. In total, they have found 12 AMOY across those seven sites, of which only two were color banded. Several target sites were not accessible due to road access issues; we will be contacting local authorities to see if we can get access. Other target areas are only accessible via boat (i.e., barrier islands), which will not be able to be surveyed at this time due to scheduling. These initial findings possibly indicate that birds are out on the islands and barrier beaches not easily accessible during the winter, and discussions will be had by our team and partners about whether to add winter boat surveys.

We also finalized the purchase order for the transmitters for the spring season. Transmitters were ordered through PathTrack, with a tentative delivery before the end of the year. Transmitters will be attached via leg loop harness; harness material still needs to be acquired. We also communicated, via email and in person conversations, with project partners to confirm locations they are comfortable taking us next year for trapping. All partners except for one have confirmed.