



## WORKING TO RESTORE COASTAL LOUISIANA

# Restore Louisiana's First Line of Defense Against Hurricanes

Wetlands are our first line of defense against hurricane force winds and flooding from storm surge. Wetlands can protect levees by inhibiting the formation and propagation of waves, and scientists have estimated that every mile of wetlands can trim three to nine inches off of a storm surge.

However, coastal wetland loss has been particularly dramatic in Louisiana, where coastal marshes are subsiding and disappearing. Coastal communities are exposed to tidal and storm surges, and wildlife habitat is shrinking. Generations of people have worked in fishing, crabbing, and shrimping, but if our coastal wetlands continue to disappear, these family-supporting jobs will be at risk.

Wetlands and coastal areas can be restored, but they require urgent attention. Scientists now tell us that to restore and sustain Louisiana's coastal wetlands, we must rapidly move forward on bold restoration projects that **restore the land-building power of the Mississippi River in a controlled way within the next ten years.**

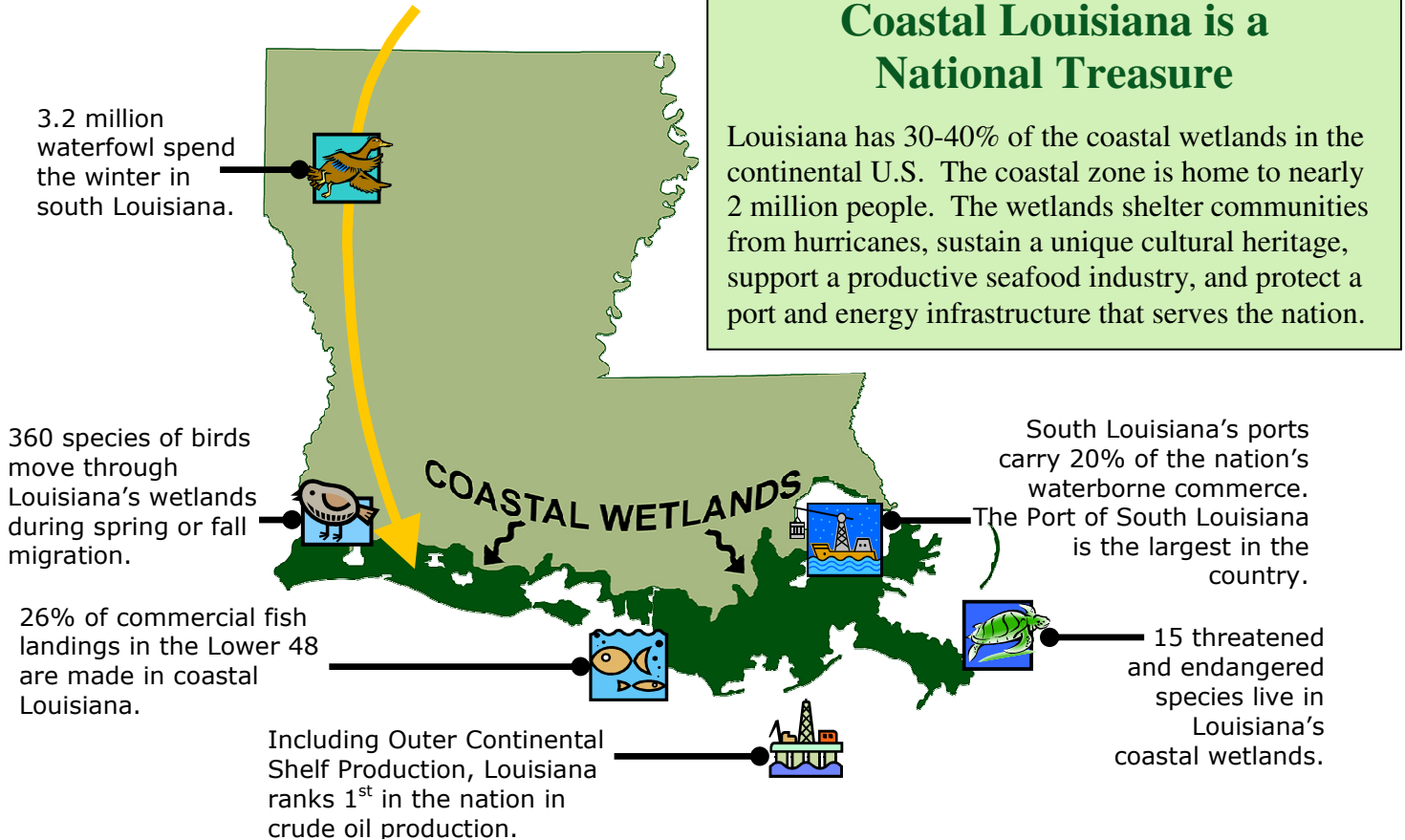


**National Wildlife Federation, Environmental Defense Fund, and the National Audubon Society** are partnering to advocate for a bold approach to restoring the wetlands and coastal areas that protect people and wildlife. We are urging the State of Louisiana and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to expedite three large projects:

- Restore the wetlands damaged or destroyed by the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO).
- Use fresh water and sediment in the Lower Mississippi River to replace rapidly subsiding coastal wetlands to the east and west of the main channel.
- Manage water and sediment from the Atchafalaya River to enhance inland swamps and coastal marshes.

## Coastal Louisiana is a National Treasure

Louisiana has 30-40% of the coastal wetlands in the continental U.S. The coastal zone is home to nearly 2 million people. The wetlands shelter communities from hurricanes, sustain a unique cultural heritage, support a productive seafood industry, and protect a port and energy infrastructure that serves the nation.



## Coastal Land Loss and Global Warming

Louisiana has the **highest rates of land loss in the nation**. Every day, Louisiana loses an area of coastal wetlands equivalent to 32 football fields. The eighty miles of wetlands that act as a "horizontal levee" between the Gulf of Mexico and New Orleans is shrinking every day.

There are many causes of wetland loss, including dams and levees, navigation channels, and oil and gas activities. Predicted sea level rise as a result of global warming threatens even more rapid inundation.

**The good news is that** aggressive action to restore coastal wetlands is also a solution to the impacts of global warming. Providing freshwater and sediment allows coastal wetlands to build up vertically in response to global sea level rise.

## What You Can Do to Help

- **Tell the Corps to restore the wetlands devastated by the MRGO.** Get a free yard sign or bumper sticker, and write a letter to decision-makers at [www.mrgomustgo.org](http://www.mrgomustgo.org).
- **Contact your elected officials.** Congress and the Louisiana Legislature ultimately control the funding for coastal restoration. Tell your elected representatives that restoring wetlands and coastal areas is critical to the safety of New Orleans and other coastal communities.
- **Stay informed.** Learn about events and other opportunities to take action by signing up for our listserv at [www.nwf.org/louisiana](http://www.nwf.org/louisiana) and joining our fanpages on Facebook ("MRGO Must Go" and "Our Coast, Our Future: Restore Louisiana's Wetlands Now")
- **Tell a Friend!** This is a national effort to save a national resource. Please ask your friends and families to take part.

For more information, call 225-767-3609  
or visit [nwf.org/louisiana](http://nwf.org/louisiana)