



## Enhanced wetland creates additional habitat at Nueces Delta Preserve

Rains have finally filled up a 30-acre wetland at the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program's Nueces Delta Preserve, a project partnership with Texas Prairie Wetland Project.

Constructed in the summer of 2011 with the Texas Prairie Wetland Project, the area carved out a freshwater wetland habitat from the low lying grasslands.

Jake Herring, CBBEP's property manager, said the area was perfect for wetland enhancement because it follows a drainage path that is located in the Nueces River floodplain. Adding new culverts with flashboard risers under the existing road allowed for runoff to be temporarily pooled into a constructed wetland that will dry out much slower.

"The hardest part was waiting on the rain," Herring said.

The wetland is designed to hold rainwater that slowly depletes from September through April.



*This Fulvous Whistling duck is one of many birds found at the wetlands at CBBEP's Nueces Delta Preserve.*

This timeline provides habitat to waterfowl and shorebirds during winter and spring migration.

And as the water recedes, it allows for re-vegetation and continues to provide valuable wetland habitat for nesting mottled ducks and whistling



*The enhanced 30-acre wetland provides habitat for wildlife and water fowl.*

Photos: CBBEP, Charlie Spiekerman

ducks, encourages plant diversity and reduces management expenses for the transitioning wetland.

The Texas Prairie Wetland Project began in 1991 as a partnership of Ducks Unlimited, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide habitat for wintering waterfowl and ensure that they survive and return to the breeding grounds in good condition.

Texas Prairie Wetland Project teams with private landowners, like the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program, offering financial cost-share assistance for habitat enhancement, levee construction, and the installation of water control structures and delivery systems. This program also provides technical assistance (biological and engineering) and a detailed management plan to private landowners.

This is the second Texas Prairie Wetland at the Nueces Delta Preserve. A 50-acre wetland was created in 2004, one of CBBEP's first restoration projects after purchasing this Delta land.



*Baird's Sandpiper*

USFW and CBBEP saw this wetland restoration as a way to bring back needed freshwater habitat that would serve as foraging and breeding habitat for several species of sensitive birds such as mottled ducks, reddish egrets and black rails. In addition, this project will provide quality habitat for dozens of species of migratory waterfowl, reptiles, amphibians and mammals.



*American Coot*

Wetlands within coastal zones of the United States have dramatically decreased as a result of urban expansion and population growth.

“We have a lot of saltwater marshes and wetlands, but freshwater wetlands are really limited,” Herring said. “It’s important that when we have the opportunity, we help create more of that habitat.”



*Wilson's Phalarope*

Herring encourages other landowners to consider Texas Prairie Wetlands Projects as a way to help with conservation efforts.



*Sora*

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*The enhanced freshwater wetland at the Nueces Delta Preserve spans 30 acres along a natural drainage corridor.*



*The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring bays and estuaries in the 12-county region of the Texas Coastal Bend. CBBEP is partially funded by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.*

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