

# Gulf oil spill waterfowl restoration project by AWA

The Alabama Waterfowl Association (AWA) has been working with other wetland conservation groups, Alabama Senators Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions and Alabama Governor Bob Riley voicing concern over the Deep Horizon Oil Spill.

"This disaster is of Biblical proportion and has the potential of doing great harm to North America's largest overwintering habitat for migrating waterfowl, other neo-tropical migrates such as song birds and even the monarch butterfly," said Jerry Davis, AWA's CEO.

Due to the possibility of doing great harm to waterfowl numbers AWA is upping the number of mallard to be re-

lease this year. Hopefully this will help offset any effect the Gulf Oil Spill has in reducing the mallard duck population. AWA has doubled the amount of mallards to be released in Alabama from 2,000 to over 3,800 mallards due to the crisis in the Gulf and coastal marshes. A total of 2,300 were raised, banded and released near Scottsboro last Saturday and 1,500 were raised and banded to be released near Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge in South Alabama.

On June 23, 2010 Davis traveled to the Gulf Coast to check out the oil spill for himself. "I was amazed at the low morale in this area; I have been through IVAN (the worst in this area),



The banding and release of over 3,700 mallards was held Saturday at the Alabama Mallard Rearing Facility near Scottsboro.

Katrina and several other hurricanes that have hit the Gulf Coast. I was so surprised to see the low morale of the people of this region and the lack of coordination, hap-hazard

planning going on down there on the handling of the clean-up efforts. The most oil came in at Perdido Pass at Orange Beach, Alabama and Pensacola, Florida. Also, while I

was there last Friday June 25th the oil came in Mobile Bay 10 miles west of my complex and the Alabama Dept. of Conservation closed all of Mobile Bay to commercial fishing. This is very critical to all the migrating birds, ducks, and monarch butterflies that travel from North to South for their overwintering habitat. This is of great concern to all in the waterfowl conservation community, such as the Alabama Waterfowl Association. All the ramifications of this disaster have not even been brought to our attention yet; just wait until fall when all of North America's birds start coming to the coastal region on their migration south," Davis said.

This is AWA's 21st annual release since 1989, with over 100,000 mallards being banded and released by AWA. AWA has had band reports from 22 states in the U.S. and 3 provinces in Canada. The banding program also allows the youth to get involved with hands-on conservation by helping band and release the mallards. AWA has also proven with this Mallard Restoration Project; that if you increase the population, the bird watching and harvest opportunity inspires the private landowners and hunting clubs to develop and enhance more habitat for all wildlife species. You can see to band reports on AWA's website at [www.alabamawaterfowl.org](http://www.alabamawaterfowl.org).