Over the last two decades, numerous barrier island restoration projects have been undertaken through the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, Restoration Program, the Coastal Impact Assessment Program, the State of Louisiana, and others. Our understanding the impacts during construction and the perceived positive impacts for birds after construction are poorly understood or documented. While the focus of this project addresses impacts during the active restoration phase, continuing this work after restoration is complete allows us to document the perceived positive implications to both nesting and wintering North American shorebirds.
In January 2013, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program worked in collaboration with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority to begin monitoring the distribution and abundance of Piping Plover during construction activities associated with the Caminada Headland Beach and Dune Restoration Project. Numerous surveys have been completed since that time and continue to this day. These surveys occur biweekly through the migratory and wintering seasons (July through May) when most of the North American population of Piping Plover is overwintering along the north gulf. Surveyors cover all available habitats from the gulf beach-front to the back-bay shoreline, including mud flats. Coordinates, number of individuals, and color band combination data are collected from each bird to help assess the influence of short-term habitat changes on Piping Plover habitat utilization.

Shoreline restoration projects have become larger, leading to increased construction duration. These increased durations mean longer possible disturbances throughout multiple nesting and wintering seasons. Results of this project will help in development of best management practices (BMP’s) available to the State and the many agencies and organizations that conduct restoration or construction activities. This research will help regulators better assess actual shorebird use and possible impacts of construction activities.

**CCMP ACTION ITEMS Addressed**

*EM = Ecological Management*

EM-15: Protection and Enhancement of Native Biological Resources