

**Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM47 – Shorebird habitat, late season shallow water with manipulation**



**Enhancement Description**

This enhancement is to encourage capture and retention of water, and vegetation manipulation on field units with seasonal water management capabilities, in order to provide habitat for migrating shorebirds.

**Land Use Applicability**

Cropland

**Benefits**

Suitable shorebird habitat is limited during the summer and fall as birds migrate south post-breeding (Elliott and McKnight 2000).

Providing shallow water and mud flat habitat will benefit a variety of shorebird species (Vermillion 2012). Optimal conditions are created when water levels are slowly reduced through evaporation, which allows for propagation of invertebrates (typically insect larvae) used as food by shorebirds (Elphick et. al. 2010). Manipulation of vegetation, preferably through rolling, creates open conditions required by this suite of birds as a means to detect and avoid predators, and provides nutrient inputs for invertebrate production.

**Conditions Where Enhancement Applies**

This enhancement applies to crop land use acres with leveed fields that are capable of holding 8 to 18 inches of water in early spring, can retain that water until July 31 and will have less than 25 percent woody cover.

**Criteria**

Implement the following:

1. Develop a wildlife habitat management plan for the suite of species targeted.
2. Water control structures affecting the subject land use acre are to remain closed catching and holding all available precipitation, until mid-summer.
3. Sites must contain 8 to 18 inches of water.
4. Manipulate vegetation on the site, if after late spring to early summer, the site becomes dry with emergent vegetation covering 50 percent or more, at a height of 6 inches or more. Manipulate by rolling or disking to bring the majority (75 percent or more) of the vegetation at or below the soil surface. Rolling is the preferred method of manipulation to maintain soil quality.
5. The need for vegetative manipulation will be triggered by the above stated scenario. However, multiple manipulations may be needed to achieve the desired habitat response.



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

2015 Ranking Period 1

Note: This activity should be grouped with Animal Enhancement Activity-ANM44-Close structures to capture and retain rainfall for waterfowl and wading birds during winter and Animal Enhancement Activity-ANM46-Extend retention of captured rainfall to provided late winter habitat for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds.

### **Adoption Requirements**

The enhancement is considered adopted when the water control structure affecting the land use acre remains closed thus holding 8 to 18 inches of water thru mid-summer.

### **Documentation Requirements**

1. Copy of the wildlife habitat management plan
2. Date the structures were initially closed during fall
3. Date the structures were opened
4. Date of vegetation manipulation
5. The method used to manipulate vegetation
6. The percent of field manipulated and the pattern in which it was manipulated
7. Representative digital photographs of the condition of the structures and the habitat provided

### **References**

Elliott, L. & K. McKnight. 2000. U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan: Lower Mississippi/Western Gulf Coast Shorebird Planning Region. 64pp.

Elphick, C. S., O. Taft, and P. M. Lourenco. 2010. Management of rice fields for birds during the non-growing season. *Waterbirds* 33:181:192.

Vermillion, W.G. 2012. Fall Habitat Objectives for Priority Gulf Coast Joint Venture Shorebird Species Using Managed Wetlands and Grasslands, Version 4.0. Gulf Coast Joint Venture, Lafayette, LA. 31 pp + appendices.