

# RESTORE

## THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER DELTA

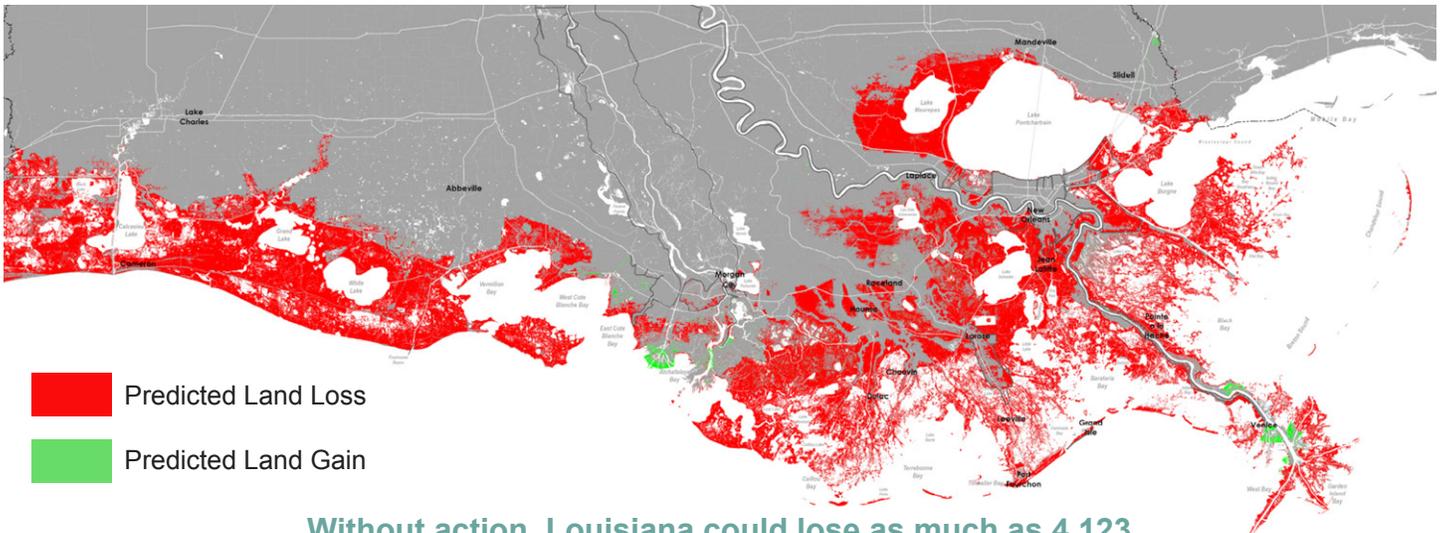


### Louisiana's Land Loss Crisis

The Mississippi River Delta formed over thousands of years as North America's mightiest river deposited sand, clay and organic material into the warm, shallow waters of the northern Gulf of Mexico.

Over the last few hundred years, human alterations to the river system have caused the delta to collapse. Since the 1930s, Louisiana has lost about 1,900 square miles of land into open water. Recent catastrophes, such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the BP oil disaster, exacerbated our coastal crisis.

As the delta disappears, so does the natural protection it provides. We have to act now to correct the damage.



**Without action, Louisiana could lose as much as 4,123 square miles of land in the next 50 years**

### Variety of Solutions

Robust, large-scale restoration projects, along with coastal protection and community resilience measures, are our best solutions for reducing land loss, protecting our communities and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.

Restoration of a healthy, productive Mississippi River Delta requires a variety of restoration solutions.

These include:

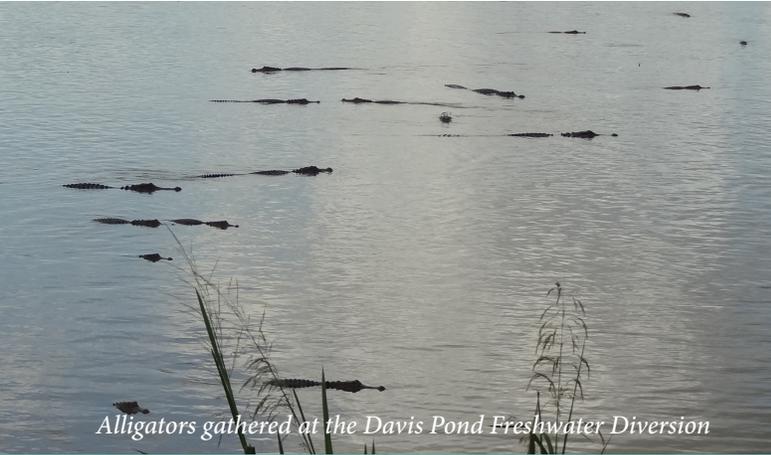
- Reconnecting the river to its delta through land-building sediment diversions
- Strategic use of dredged sediment to build and sustain wetlands and barrier islands
- Improved management of the Mississippi River
- Adopting community resilience measures, such as home elevation

**WHO WE ARE** Restore the Mississippi River Delta is working to protect people, wildlife and jobs by reconnecting the river with its wetlands. As our region faces the crisis of threatening land loss, we offer science-based solutions through a comprehensive approach to restoration. We are composed of conservation, policy, science and outreach experts from Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana and Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation.

# RESTORE THE COAST, EAT ALLIGATOR

## New Opportunities

In addition to providing a stronger, more resilient future, restoring our coast will bring new opportunities. This includes improved conditions for wild crawfish, largemouth bass, alligators, and mottled ducks. Without restoration, their habitat will be lost. Ensuring that these species continue to thrive will give future generations the opportunity to experience and enjoy the full bounty of Louisiana's coast.



Alligators gathered at the Davis Pond Freshwater Diversion



Alligator at the Caernarvon Freshwater Diversion

## Conservation Success Story

The American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) has long been a fixture of Louisiana's coastal environment and an important commercial resource. Over-hunting and habitat loss in the 1900s led to dramatic declines in the alligator population across the Gulf. By 1967 the species was classified as endangered. Thanks to strategic management programs, alligators have made a full recovery and were removed from the endangered species list in 1987. Today, the alligator industry is valued at close to \$90 million annually. Coastal restoration will protect and improve alligator habitat, allowing for a thriving industry for future generations.

Try cooking alligator at home with this recipe from James Beard-nominated Chef Isaac Toups of Toups' Meatery and Toups South:

## FRIED ALLIGATOR WITH PIMIENTO AIOLI DIPPING SAUCE

### Fried Gator

1 lb alligator tail meat, patted dry

For the wet:

1/2 cup buttermilk  
1 tbsp jalapeño Tabasco  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp black pepper

Whisk together, add alligator and mix well.

For the dry:

2 cups all purpose flour  
4 tsp popcorn salt  
2 tsp black pepper  
2 tsp granulated garlic

Combine ingredients.

Heat neutral cooking oil to 350° F in deep fryer. Remove alligator from buttermilk and dredge well in flour mix. Shake off excess. Fry for 90 seconds or until internal temperature reaches 155° F. Place hot alligator on paper towels to cool slightly.

### Pimiento Aioli

2 egg yolks  
1 tbsp creole mustard  
1/4 cup grated cheddar  
1 roasted bell pepper, deskinning and seeded  
1 jalapeño, deskinning and seeded  
2 oz cream cheese  
1 tbsp white wine vinegar  
1/2 cup canola oil

In food processor, blend first 7 ingredients for 30 seconds or until smooth. Drizzle canola oil in while running. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve alligator with the pimiento aioli as a dipping sauce and a side of your favorite coleslaw.

#SaveOurCoast

