

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CHOCTAWHATCHEE AUDUBON SOCIETY
OPPOSING OIL DRILLING IN FLORIDA'S WATERS IN AREAS OTHER THAN
THOSE ALREADY APPROVED FOR OIL LEASING AND OIL EXPLORATION.**

WHEREAS, the Choctawhatchee Audubon Society is a conservation-based organization dedicated to the preservation of the natural environment for the benefit of wildlife and mankind and represents over 400 members from Okaloosa, Walton and Santa Rosa counties, Florida; and

WHEREAS, our beaches, nearshore Gulf of Mexico waters and adjacent estuaries are noted as world-class attractions for their scenic and natural beauty, and are critical to our region's tourism and fishing industries; and

WHEREAS, a quality natural environment is essential to the survival of our region's marine and estuarine wildlife. Especially at risk are shorebirds that include the imperiled Snowy Plover, Piping Plover, Black Skimmer and Least Tern; sea turtles including the Green, Kemp's Ridley, Hawksbill and Loggerhead; and mammals including the Choctawhatchee Beach Mouse plus species that sustain our commercial and recreational fisheries; and

WHEREAS, the area with the potential for the greatest risk of environmental damage from oil extraction, due to the prevailing sea breezes and Gulf Loop countercurrent, is the eastern part of the Gulf of Mexico, off the Florida Panhandle; and

WHEREAS, environmental specialists contend the major risk from drilling platforms is the wastewater they routinely discharge which contains drilling fluids and heavy metals including mercury; and

WHEREAS, according to Oil Industry data, an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico can dump up to 90,000 tons of drilling fluid and metal cuttings over its lifetime. These contaminants accumulate in the marine food web and may contaminate local beaches and have a negative effect on the environment and the tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, it is our belief that despite technological advances in oil drilling technology, there is no positive assurance that catastrophic damage to our coastline, beaches, plant and fish life could be avoided during normal operating conditions or during storm situations; and

WHEREAS, lifting the moratorium on mineral leasing in the Gulf of Mexico poses an intolerable threat to the beaches, natural environment, economy of Florida, and national security:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Choctawhatchee Audubon Society that we urgently request that all elected officials at the County, State and Federal levels oppose legislative attempts to allow offshore oil drilling expansion past the areas already approved for pre-leasing, leasing and oil production activities and to take immediate steps to encourage and assist in the development of alternative sources of energy.

Approved by the Board of Directors: February 25, 2010

Signed by: _____
Carole D. Goodyear, President
Choctawhatchee Audubon Society
Fort Walton Beach, Florida

Date: March 3, 2010