

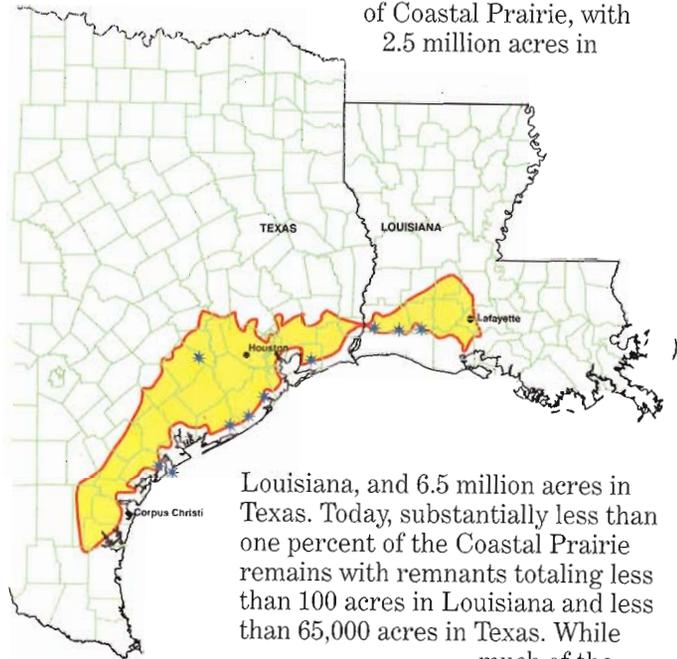
Coastal prairie is a native grassland found along the coast of Texas and Louisiana. Over nine million acres of prairie once existed as a grassland paradise for Native Americans and early settlers. Today less than 1% remains as a refuge for rare and endangered birds, mammals, reptiles, insects and plants. Is "Paradise Lost?" Private groups, conservation organizations, and government agencies are working together to protect and restore this "critically imperiled" ecosystem. They need your help and support if this effort is to succeed.

Errata for images:
p.20 Egret
p.25 Sandhill crane

History

The Coastal Prairie is located along the western gulf coast of the United States, in southwest Louisiana and southeast Texas, just inland from the coastal marsh (see map). This Coastal Prairie is a tallgrass prairie similar in many ways to the tallgrass prairie of the midwestern United States. It is estimated that, in pre-settlement times, there were nine million acres of Coastal Prairie, with 2.5 million acres in

Historical range of Coastal Prairie. Stars represent national wildlife refuges.



Louisiana, and 6.5 million acres in Texas. Today, substantially less than one percent of the Coastal Prairie remains with remnants totaling less than 100 acres in Louisiana and less than 65,000 acres in Texas. While



Coastal Prairie railroad remnant in July

much of the former prairie has been converted to pasture for cattle grazing, the majority has been altered for growing rice, sugarcane, forage, and grain crops. In Louisiana, most of the prairie's few remaining remnants are found on narrow strips of land along railroad tracks. A larger amount remains in Texas because it was used for cattle production and never plowed. Many species, however, have been lost through overgrazing.