



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

RECIPIENT

Sea Turtle Conservancy

AWARD AMOUNT

\$4,000,000

PARTNERS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Florida Department of Environmental Protection – Florida Park Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services

LOCATION

Priority sea turtle nesting beaches in Florida

AWARD DATE

November 2018

STATUS

Awarded

PROGRESS UPDATE

Project recently awarded. (February 2019)

The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), supports projects to remedy harm and eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to Gulf Coast natural resources affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To learn more about NFWF, go to www.nfwf.org.

FLORIDA

Improving Sea Turtle Hatchling Survivorship through Long-Term Predation Management

This project will establish a long-term sea turtle nest predation management program on Florida’s sea turtle nesting beaches with the goal of increasing nest survivorship and hatchling production by reducing predation rates on high-density nesting beaches. Nesting for nearly 90% of green and leatherback turtles in North America takes place in Florida and nest predation is one of the highest causes of sea turtle mortality on nesting beaches, contributing to the loss of tens of thousands of sea turtle eggs and hatchlings annually. Implementation of predator control plans has been shown to be a cost effective measure to significantly reduce the number of nests lost due to predation and to improve hatchling survivability. A Predation Management Working Group comprised of representatives from the Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC), FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other experts will be formed to oversee the long-term management program and will be responsible for identifying predation “hot spots” and prioritizing predation management activities.

Project activities reflect priority restoration needs for sea turtles described in the Florida GEBF Restoration Strategy. The Natural Resource Damage Strategic Framework for Sea Turtle Restoration identifies the need for predation reduction on nesting beaches as a priority activity and the federal recovery plans for loggerhead, green, and leatherback sea turtles recommend predator reduction when nest predation rates are greater than 10%. A significant number of surveyed nesting beaches in Florida have nest predation rates over 30%, up to as high as 60%. The proposed predator control program would support other state, local, and private initiatives to recover sea turtle populations in Florida.



Credit | STC



Above, raccoons wait to prey on sea turtle eggs. A NFWF-funded six-year predation management pilot program conducted by STC resulted in significant reductions in predation at treated beaches and the experiences from that pilot will guide this effort.