



NFWF

Sea Turtles Program

NFWF CONTACTS

Michelle Pico

Senior Program Director,
Marine Conservation
pico@nfwf.org
202-481-8394

Nora Ong

Coordinator,
Regional Programs
nora.ong@nfwf.org
202-595-2608

PARTNERS

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) works with partners to foster sustainable and impactful conservation solutions so that people and nature thrive together. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest conservation foundation. Since its founding, NFWF has funded more than 23,300 projects that have generated a total conservation impact of \$11.3 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

1625 Eye Street, NW
Suite 300
Washington, D.C., 20006
202-857-0166



Hawksbill sea turtle

OVERVIEW

The Sea Turtles Program is one of the longest running programs at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), with investments dating back more than 30 years to stabilize and increase the recovery trajectories of sea turtle populations in the Western Hemisphere. Several business plans have guided the program over the years, with the most recent focusing on leatherback, loggerhead and hawksbill populations.

The Sea Turtles program awards competitive grants for bycatch reduction, nest protection and capacity for response and rehabilitation. Since the inception of the 2019-2029 business plan priorities, NFWF has invested \$3.9 million through the Sea Turtles Program.

The Sea Turtles Program is supported with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Nine grants totaling \$664,800 were awarded in 2025, which leveraged \$640,300 in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of more than \$1.1 million.

(continued)



Sea turtle at a rehab facility

2025 GRANTS

Advance Communications Capacity for Improved Coordination During Emergency Sea Turtle Strandings

Grantee: Texas State Aquarium Institute for Wildlife Conservation
Grant Amount:.....\$46,500
Matching Funds:..... \$0
Total Project Amount:.....\$46,500
Acquire advanced communications equipment to enhance coordination during mass sea turtle stranding and cold-stunning events in Texas. Project will improve response times and coordination among federal, state and local agencies and organizations, leading to higher survival rates during sea turtle stranding emergencies, especially during cold-stunning events.

Airlift Rescue Operations to Sustain Rapid Stranding Response for Endangered Sea Turtle Species

Grantee: Turtles Fly Too
Grant Amount:.....\$25,400
Matching Funds:..... \$0
Total Project Amount:.....\$25,400
Coordinate volunteer pilot network to aid in the rapid transportation of sea turtles in need of rehabilitation following cold-stunning and stranding events. Project will sustain the operations of airlift missions to transport triaged sea turtles from stranding locations to treatment centers across the United States when local rehabilitation centers have reached capacity.

Assist Counties to Reduce Lighting Pollution to Restore Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches in Florida

Grantee: Sea Turtle Conservancy
Grant Amount:..... \$110,000
Matching Funds:..... \$110,000
Total Project Amount:..... \$220,000
Restore 52 linear miles of sea turtle nesting habitat by assisting counties with their lighting ordinances. Project will provide technical expertise and training to representatives from at least 12 local governments on lighting ordinance language and implementation in order to protect sea turtles from disorientation impacts of light pollution.

Constructing a Rehabilitation Pool to Increase Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Capacity in Florida

Grantee: The Florida Aquarium
Grant Amount:.....\$50,000
Matching Funds:.....\$86,000
Total Project Amount:..... \$136,000
Construct a new sea turtle rehabilitation pool at an existing facility in Hillsborough County, Florida. Project will increase the capacity to rehabilitate sea turtles by providing space for an additional 10 patients.

Improving Capacity for Sea Turtle Rehabilitation in the Florida Panhandle

Grantee: Gulf World Marine Institute

Grant Amount:.....\$51,200

Matching Funds:.....\$231,400

Total Project Amount:.....\$282,600

Enhance veterinary capabilities of the Gulf World Marine Institute's sea turtle rehabilitation program through the purchase of upgraded on-site radiograph equipment, which will replace the current failing model. New equipment will allow for continued medical assessment and treatment of approximately 70 Kemp's ridley and loggerhead sea turtle patients annually from the Florida Panhandle.

Increase Capacity for New York State's Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Program

Grantee: Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation

Grant Amount:.....\$39,700

Matching Funds:.....\$41,000

Total Project Amount:.....\$80,700

Enhance response, rescue and rehabilitation efforts for New York's sea turtle population and provide additional space for sea turtles from network partners. Project will bolster the Citizen Science Cold Stun patrolling team volunteers by 50 percent in order to decrease response time and increase survival rate following strandings and purchase a new fiberglass sea turtle tank to increase in-house capacity for rehabilitation by 20 percent.

Increased Capacity to Transport Sea Turtles Across Rehabilitation Network on the East Coast

Grantee: National Aquarium

Grant Amount:.....\$70,000

Matching Funds:.....\$38,000

Total Project Amount:.....\$108,000

Increase transportation capacity throughout the Greater Atlantic Region for recovered sea turtles from rehabilitation to appropriate release habitats when water temperatures in the region are too cold for local release. Project will work to replace the current aging vehicle so that transportation services for an average of 80 turtles per year can continue without interruption for the broader network.

Response, Rescue and Rehabilitation Capacity for Sea Turtles in Hawai'i

Grantee: Maui Ocean Center Marine Institute

Grant Amount:.....\$70,000

Matching Funds:.....\$0

Total Project Amount:.....\$70,000

Maintain a stranding hotline and conduct in-field response, rescue and rehabilitation of sick and injured sea turtles. Project will enhance capacity for existing response and rehabilitation program on Maui, which responds to more than 200 stranded sea turtles from fishhook interactions annually.

Threat Reduction to Priority Hawksbill Sea Turtle Nesting Habitat in Puerto Rico

Grantee: WIDECAST: Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network

Grant Amount:.....\$202,000

Matching Funds:.....\$133,900

Total Project Amount:.....\$335,900

Reduce threats such as light pollution, obstacles and unnatural predation across priority sea turtle nesting beaches. Project will improve the quality of 14 miles of nesting beaches along mainland Puerto Rico, which supports 300 to 800 annual endangered hawksbill sea turtle nests.



Loggerhead sea turtle hatchling in Florida