



# Coral Reef Stewardship Fund

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## PARTNERS

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Aramco

## 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](http://www.nfwf.org)

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Out-planted sea urchins help maintain low competition from algae for newly restored coral reef | Photo credit: The Florida Aquarium

## BACKGROUND

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Coral Reef Stewardship Fund is the principal public-private partnership established in the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000. The fund supports reef resiliency by reducing negative impacts from unsustainable fishing and land-based pollution and provides catalytic funding for innovation and capacity for reef restoration and management.

Since 2000, the program has awarded \$27.4 million across 437 projects, leveraging more than \$35.2 million in conservation resources. Grants have assisted broad-scale coral reef management by establishing new techniques for assessing and monitoring reef health and new fishery management models. Site-specific initiatives have developed and implemented watershed management plans, reduced sediment erosion through stream bank stabilization, provided incentives or best management practices on agricultural lands, and supported capacity building of management and conservation organizations to sustain outcomes.

Looking forward to the next 20 years, NFWF has updated its investment strategy, in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to incorporate new thinking and breakthroughs in resilience and restoration science, and to increase the scale of projects to magnify its collective impact. The Coral Reef Stewardship Fund is NFWF's primary funding arm under the broader Coral Reefs program, and the funding opportunity that exclusively funds coral reefs. NFWF manages the Coral Reef Stewardship Fund in partnership with NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, with additional support from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and Aramco. In addition to providing a common framework for coral reef conservation strategies and monitoring for NFWF, the Coral Reef Stewardship Fund is an incubator for innovation, development and dissemination of best practices for coral management and threat reduction.

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Grant to FI Aquarium explores ways to raise larger number of urchins for out-planting. | Photo credit: The Florida Aquarium

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Coral Reefs program is to foster resilient coral reef ecosystems that provide structurally complex habitat characterized by high fish biomass, low macroalgal cover, high coral recruitment and the provision of key ecosystem services. Where appropriate, NFWF will work to combine threat-reduction investments with coral restoration — where nursery-grown corals are outplanted to natural reefs — to help move priority reef tracks into a more stable, coral-dominated state that is resilient to withstand or recover from large-scale disturbances. The following initial milestones will guide investments through the Coral Reef Stewardship Fund and other NFWF programs and partnerships that address coral reef conservation needs.

- Increase the resilience and recovery outlook for 10 priority coral reefs in the United States
- Outplant 3 million corals to restore damaged or degraded reefs
- Increase the uptake of management resources and tools in all seven U.S. coral jurisdictions

The cornerstone of this approach is a place-based model that builds partner coalitions around priority reef strongholds and establishes the framework for their stabilization and recovery. These concentrated investments mobilize resources, expertise and community support for local impact and provide a network of practitioners and capacity that can be applied to neighboring reefs. These reefs will be the footholds of biodiversity and brood stock that will help replenish and recover nearby reefs after episodic events.

NFWF will expand its impact by testing groundbreaking research and innovation to build foundational capacity throughout the coral management community. The Coral Reef Stewardship Fund invests a portion of the funding each year in projects that pilot new innovations and seek to answer tough management questions that can be barriers to coral conservation globally. While research and development of many of these efforts takes place in the lab, NFWF's objective is to get practical, field-tested tools into the hands of reef managers working on the ground.