



SEA TURTLES 2027 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NFWF is committed to operating in full compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. We continuously monitor legal and regulatory developments to ensure our policies, procedures, and operations align with current federal directives. We encourage all applicants to do the same.

The ability and extent to which NFWF is able to make awards is contingent upon receipt of funds from federal agencies and/or other funding partners. Final funding decisions will be made based on the applications received and the level and timing of funding received by NFWF.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the [Sea Turtles](#) page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

Pre-Proposal Webinar ([Register here](#))

Pre-Proposal Due Date

Invitations for Full Proposals Sent

Full Proposal Due Date

Review Period

Awards Announced

July 29th, 2026, at 2:00 pm EST

August 19th, 2026, 11:59 pm EST

September 2026

October 27th, 2026, 11:59 pm EST

October 2026 – February 2027

March 2027

OVERVIEW

NFWF's Sea Turtles Program implements a multi-species [business plan](#) that guides conservation investments to measurably improve the current recovery trajectories of four sea turtle populations in the Western Hemisphere: leatherbacks and loggerheads in the Northwest Atlantic, and leatherbacks and hawksbills in the Eastern Pacific. Key priorities for the program are for the conservation and recovery of populations that depend on or migrate through U.S. waters for their life cycle. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) funds will be available for this Request for Proposals.

Key conservation strategies for this program include:

- Build capacity for sea turtle stranding response and/or rehabilitation;
- Reduce bycatch in fishing gear – support incentive-based approaches for the development and implementation of turtle-friendly fishing gear and practices;
- Increase and protect the productivity of priority nesting beaches;
- Build strong regional networks to implement conservation activities – support standardized methods, models and learning networks across the population range as well as coordinated monitoring networks to evaluate the progress of conservation efforts

GRANT AWARD INFORMATION

Most awards under this program will fall in the range of \$50,000 to \$400,000; however, upper or lower limits to award size are not specified. A minimum of a 1:1 non-Federal match of cash and/or in-kind services is required for beach and bycatch work and is accepted for stranding/rehabilitation projects but not required. Selected projects may be required to submit data funded by this program to global databases and/or present their results through NFWF-sponsored forums.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Most funded projects will take place along U.S. state or territorial beaches, facilities, or coastal waters. Other projects targeting sea turtle conservation in the Western Hemisphere will be considered but as a lower priority for funding.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The most competitive project proposals in the 2027 grant cycle of the Sea Turtles Program will directly implement projects under the following priorities.

Stranding Response and Rehabilitation Capacity - NFWF is partnering with NOAA to provide support for institutions and organizations permitted to administer sea turtle stranding response and/or rehabilitation. Eligible applicants will have the appropriate state and federal permits in place for the work that they propose, will follow procedures defined by regional stranding networks (including data collection and reporting), will meet the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Standard Conditions for Care and Maintenance of Captive Sea Turtles, and will have established infrastructure and capacity to deal with stranding and/or rehabilitation. Projects are encouraged to bolster this existing capacity and leverage and strengthen partnerships with a variety of institutions (agencies, public institutions, vet schools, volunteer networks, etc.) to increase the effectiveness of the U.S. regional and territorial networks.

Priority will be given to institutions that have been responding to a high volume of animals to ensure they have the necessary capacity. All proposal narratives should include information on the organization's response and animal volume for the last five years, including how many stranded turtles have been responded to and/or rehabbed, how large of an area the organization covers, etc. Funding is prioritized for actionable items such as new supplies and equipment needed to improve stranding response and/or rehabilitation with a focus on interim, gap, or unexpected shortfalls over on-going operations and salaries support. A limited amount of funding will be considered for targeted training to address a gap in capacity and no more than \$50,000 can be requested for general operations costs such as salaries, gas, patient food, supplies, etc. **Applicants are encouraged to provide a top-line breakdown of the budget categories they are requesting as part of their pre-proposal narrative. Applicants requesting operations funds should also ensure that the percentage of the requested amount out of annual operations budget is included in their request.**

Promoting Sustainable Fishing Communities through Reduced Sea Turtle Bycatch in Focal Fisheries - The business plan outlines a four-part strategy to understand and reduce the impacts of bycatch in known priority geographies and fisheries. Priority for this year's call includes the testing and development of alternative gear and methods that can support practical applications for commercial and artisanal fisheries in the Western Hemisphere.

Nesting Beach Habitat Restoration, Protection, and Management - Projects under this priority will identify and implement activities that will improve hatchling production in Florida, US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico locations through tangible approaches such as (but not limited to) reduction of light pollution, beach revegetation, and targeted protection of in situ nests to increase nesting success, hatching success, and hatchlings entering the sea. Proposals should identify the documented threat at the proposed location and measurable targets for hatchling production as a result of proposed activities.

Further priority for this solicitation is to address the loss of nesting beach habitat concerns due to sea level rise and erosion. Planning and design of prevention and recovery options to protect priority U.S. nesting beaches from storm surge and sea level rise are encouraged to prepare projects for implementation through other funding opportunities.

Building and Maintaining Capacity for Population - Scale Conservation - Projects within this priority would seek to expand existing networks to enhance proactive conservation coordination on specific strategies in the business plan and/or establish new networks for this purpose. Successful applications will engage multiple nesting or foraging sites under one application and present a highly collaborative project and will seek to make significant gains in conservation-relevant knowledge for focal populations.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Sea Turtles Program has a list of metrics in Easygrants for grantees to choose from for reporting.

These metrics are not formally reported at the Pre-Proposal stage; however, it is important for applicants to frame their narrative in a way that they will be able to report on relevant metrics if invited to submit a Full Proposal. At the Full Proposal stage, we ask that you select the **1-3 most relevant metrics** from this list for your project. If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Michelle Pico (pico@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Some proposal types – such as networked monitoring projects – will have additional reporting requirements.

Project Activity	NFWF Standardized Metric	Additional Guidance and Needs for Metrics Notes
Projects Under the STSSN Priority with NOAA		
Stranding response and rehabilitation capacity	Species-specific Strategies - # individuals responded	Enter the average number of stranded and incidentally captured sea turtles responded to by your organization. Please provide the historical data that led to this average in the notes.
Stranding response and rehabilitation capacity	Species-specific Strategies - # individuals treated	Enter the estimated number of sea turtles treated at the facility. Please provide a rationale for how your estimate was calculated in the notes.
Stranding response and rehabilitation capacity	Species-specific Strategies - # individuals released	Enter the estimated number of sea turtles to be released after rehabilitation. Please provide rationale for how your estimate was calculated in the notes.
Stranding response and rehabilitation capacity	Species-specific Strategies - Rehab facilities - Capacity of facility in terms of animals treated	Indicate the capacity of the facility in terms of '# of beds' or '# of diagnostic enhancements.' Please list the capacity descriptor and explain how you calculated the value in the notes.
Stranding response and rehabilitation capacity	Species-specific Strategies - # of facilities repaired or enhanced	Enter the number of facilities or structures being repaired or receiving new structural capacity. Please clearly outline the type of repairs or capacity building in the notes.
Projects Related to Business Plan Species, Locations and Activities		
Bycatch projects seeking to assess bycatch rates for a fishing community or location (port)	Planning, Research, Monitoring - Sea Turtle - Research - # sites assessed	Enter the number of sites for which bycatch rates will be assessed. In the Notes, please list the name of the port and gear type (i.e., Gillnet Lobster Fishery at Port A, Mexico) and the known level and distribution of effort serviced by this port/community (i.e., number of vessels/fishermen, miles of coastline in the fishery area)

Bycatch Reduction Tools: Develop, test, or implement a tool or technique for decision making, data collection, or another use.	Tool development for decision-making - # tools developed; Tool development for decision-making - # tools/techniques tested; Tool development for decision-making -# tools/techniques implemented	This field represents multiple metrics, based on where tools are in the process of implementation. Enter the number of tools developed, tested, or implemented, and specify the type of tool(s) in the “Notes” section. • Developing a tool would mean early conceptualization and creation. • Testing a tool would represent pilot stage deployment of a tool. • Implementing a tool would occur through at-scale deployment of the tool.
Bycatch Reduction Tools: Measure fishing boats' involvement in bycatch reduction projects.	Reduction in by-catch - # boats implementing bycatch reduction strategy	This metric should only be used to record targeted fishing boats' involvement in bycatch reduction projects. Please include the total number of fishing boats for this location/fishery in the notes.
Reduce predation through invasive animal removal or fencing of nests	Invasive animal or predator removal/Fencing nests from predators - # sites with goals met	Enter the number of sites with <10% loss from human enhanced causes.
Nesting beach projects that seek to protect or enhance nesting	Species Outcome- Reproductive success- # nests	Enter the number of nests that are anticipated to be protected as a direct reflection of the NFWF grant scope of work.
Nesting beach projects that work to increase site protection through acquisition or designation as a protected area	Habitat Conservation- Site protection - # of acres with enhanced protection	Enter the number of acres with enhanced protection from development activities.
Nesting beach restoration projects that work to increase shading, dune structure or other elements of the beach habitat to increase quality for nesting	Habitat Restoration - Sea Turtle - Beach habitat quality improvements - Miles restored	Enter the number of miles of nesting beaches restored to improve beach habitat quality for nesting. Please report only those miles where restoration is being done in the scope of work and period of performance. Please do NOT record miles that are also recorded for lighting reduction or predation/poaching.

Nesting beach projects which work to reduce light pollution	Habitat Management- Sea Turtle - Beach habitat quality improvements - Miles restored (lighting)	Enter the number of miles of nesting beaches that, as a result of a light reduction project, have been ‘restored’ to a level of lighting at which disorientation no longer occurs. In the metric’s notes, please estimate the total number of properties that will be impacted by the project.
Research to address a specific management question with an expectation to publish	Planning, Research, Monitoring – Research - # research studies completed	This value should be the number of published papers or official management reports expected as a product of this proposal within 12 months of the end date.
Engage government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholder groups in conservation implementation	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives- # of organizations contributing to goals	Enter the number of organizations participating in the project. In the “Notes” section, please briefly list the entities, the type of entity (local, state, or federal government, NGO, for-profit business, etc.) and how they are participating.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

Eligible applicants include:

- Non-profit 501(c) organizations
- State government agencies
- Local governments
- Municipal governments
- Tribal Governments and Organizations
- Educational institutions
- International organizations
- For-profit organizations
 - Eligible to apply, but for-profit organizations should reach out to Michelle Pico at pico@nfwf.org prior to applying.

As this program will award grants of Federal financial assistance funds, applicants must be able to comply with the OMB guidance in subparts A through F of 2 CFR 200 ([OMB Uniform Guidance](#)).

Ineligible applicants include:

- U.S. Federal government agencies
- Unincorporated individuals.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

Conservation Outcomes	Budget	Technical
• Alignment with program goals and priorities • Quantifiable performance metrics • Appropriate monitoring of activities and outcomes • Partnership & community engagement • Project long-term sustainability	• Allowable and reasonable costs • Matching contributions • Cost effective	• Technically sound and feasible • Logical and achievable work plan and timeline • Engages technical experts • Accurate spatial data • Sound compliance approach (permits, NEPA, QAQC) • Past grantee success • Transferable

Program Goals and Priorities – Project contributes to the Program’s overall habitat and species conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities.

Technical Merit – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are technically sound and feasible.

Spatial Data – Project spatial data submitted to NFWF’s online mapping tool accurately represent the location(s) of conservation activity(ies) at the time of proposal submission. Successful projects will be required to submit improved spatial data for each conservation activity within the period of performance as necessary.

Partnership and Community Impact – The applicant organization partners and engages collaboratively with local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the proposed project. This ensures long-term sustainability and success of the project, integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed restoration actions. Partners or communities are enlisted to broaden the sustained impact from the project. Describe the community characteristics of the project area, identify any communities impacted, describe outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored and measured. Use data to support descriptions and submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed.

Cost-Effectiveness – Cost-effectiveness analysis identifies the economically most efficient way to meet project objectives. Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of effective direct/indirect costs across all categories in the proposed budget according to the type, size and duration of the project and project objectives. Project budgets will be compared to similar

projects to ensure proposed costs across all budget categories are reasonable for the activities being performed and the outcomes proposed.

Transferability – Project demonstrates the potential and plans to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

Communication – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

Funding Need – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested.

Conservation Plan and Context – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

Monitoring – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Long-term Sustainability – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

Past Success – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

Partnership – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated subawards to third-party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.)

OTHER

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- **Equipment:** Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment or capacity building through the purchase of equipment. If this applies to your project, please contact Michelle Pico at pico@nfwf.org to discuss options.
- Pursuant to the American Security Drone Act (ASDA), effective December 22, 2025, applicants proposing activities funded in whole or in part with federal funds may not use, operate, or purchase any drone or uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) included on the Covered Foreign Entities (CFE) List. This prohibition applies to both new purchases and continued use of existing UAS, including certain widely used commercial platforms, such as DJI and

Autel. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all proposed and existing UAS used in connection with federally funded activities comply with applicable federal law and are not included on the CFE List. Noncompliance may affect eligibility for funding.

- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering into or renewing a contract) that uses telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.
- NFWF funds and matching contributions are strictly prohibited from being used for a number of reasons to include, for example, political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities, or in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. See [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) for additional information.
- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

Budget – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally funded projects must be in compliance with [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) as applicable.

Environmental Services – NFWF funds projects in pursuit of its mission to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF recognizes that some benefits from projects may be of value with regards to credits on an environmental services market (such as a carbon credit market). NFWF does not participate in, facilitate, or manage an environmental services market nor does NFWF assert any claim on such credits.

Intellectual Property – Intellectual property created using NFWF awards may be copyrighted or otherwise legally protected by award recipients. NFWF may reserve the right to use, publish, and copy materials created under awards, including posting such material on NFWF’s website and featuring it in publications. NFWF may use project metrics and spatial data from awards to estimate societal benefits that result and to report these results to funding partners. These may include but are not limited to: habitat and species response, species connectivity, water quality, water quantity, risk of detrimental events (e.g., wildfire, floods), and carbon accounting (e.g., sequestration, avoided emissions).

Matching Contributions – Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised, spent, and acquired for the Project during the Period of Performance. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review.

Procurement – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not constitute NFWF’s express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and

services, NFWF award recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF’s financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

Receiving Award Funds – Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds. Requests for monthly advances will not be considered.

Compliance Requirements – Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

Federal Funding – The availability of federal funds estimated in this solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process. Funding decisions will be made based on the level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
2. Once on your homepage, click the “Apply for Funding” button and select this RFP’s “Funding Opportunity” from the list of options.
3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A Tip Sheet is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded [here](#).

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website’s [Applicant Information](#) page.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:

Michelle Pico
Senior Program Director, Marine Conservation
Pico@NFWF.org

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.

Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue