



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

RECIPIENT

National Audubon Society, Inc.

AMOUNT

*\$3,945,542

LEVERAGE

\$380,000

PARTNERS

- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Park Service
- National Park Service
- Department of Defense
- Santa Rosa Island Authority
- The Nature Conservancy
- State University of New York

LOCATION

Escambia, Santa Rosa, Walton, Okaloosa, Bay, Gulf, and Franklin Counties, FL

AWARD DATE

November 2013

STATUS

Active

PROGRESS UPDATE

Shorebird monitoring and habitat protection activities are complete. Construction sites for the St. George Island relic causeway restoration were resurveyed after Hurricane Michael. Construction is scheduled to begin in the near future. (February 2019)

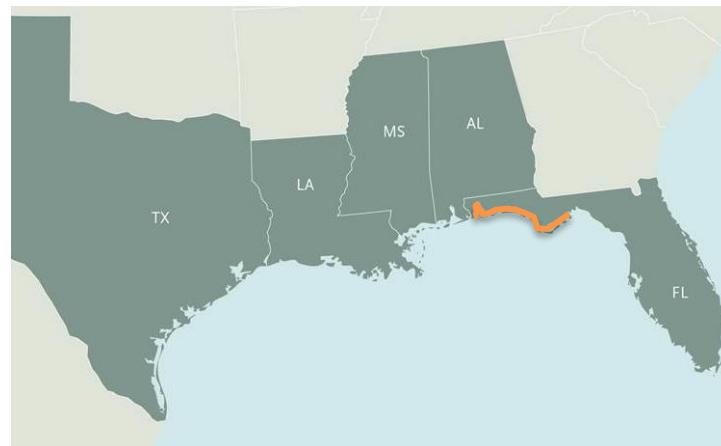
**Project was amended in March 2016 to add \$140,300 to extend key program elements in anticipation of approval of a new multi-year coastal bird stewardship program and in August 2018 to add \$600,000 to complete restoration of former St. George Island Causeway.*

FLORIDA

Comprehensive Panhandle Coastal Bird Conservation

This project will improve Panhandle beach-nesting bird habitat through nesting habitat enhancements and stewardship activities that will result in increased nesting, hatching, and rearing of chicks. Activities include the placement of signage to protect nesting sites and prevent road mortality of chicks; disturbance monitoring and abatement; mapping, monitoring, and adaptive management to support nesting; and artificial nesting support and experimental habitat creation. These efforts are intended to complement ongoing research, monitoring, and protection actions and will result in more effective and comprehensive success throughout the Florida Panhandle for important beach-nesting species such as Black Skimmer, American Oystercatcher, Least Tern, Piping Plover and Red Knot.

Natural beach habitats are dynamic environments that are stressed by ongoing human use and development. Today, coastal sensitive species are primarily located on and restricted to public lands, yet despite this seeming protection, coastal bird populations continue to decline and degradation of habitat continues. This project will increase population numbers through active management of nesting habitat and increased public awareness of these important areas. This project has been identified and informed in part from the first year of a similar effort funded through the Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA). In combination with similar NRDA early restoration work, this project will create a robust schedule of coastal bird management, research and restoration that can be implemented elsewhere in the Gulf of Mexico.



This project builds on similar work underway through NRDA Early Restoration and will result in higher breeding success for beach-nesting birds throughout the Florida Panhandle.