

# NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



NFWF



The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is dedicated to sustaining, restoring and enhancing the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations.

NFWF will advance its mission through innovative public and private partnerships, and by investing financial resources and intellectual capital into science-based programs designed to address conservation priorities and achieve measurable outcomes.

In the following pages, we share a few examples of our work from 2015.



A bull elk bugles on a mountainside in Wyoming.



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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Throughout 2015, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) continued to achieve unprecedented conservation successes.

For the first time since its founding in 1984, the Foundation exceeded the \$3-billion mark in cumulative conservation impact, reaching \$3.5 billion by the end of fiscal year 2015. This new milestone speaks to the Foundation's strong growth in recent years — it took 21 years for NFWF to reach its first \$1 billion in impact (2005), six years to reach its second billion (2011), but just four years to reach its third billion (2015).

Overall, in fiscal year 2015, NFWF funded more than 800 conservation projects across the nation. The Foundation awarded \$87.6 million in federal funds, \$449,000 in other public funds and \$38 million in private contributions, leveraged by \$119.7 million in grantee match. The Foundation also awarded \$132.4 million in Impact-Directed Environmental Account funds, including those from the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund.

In total, NFWF generated more than \$378.1 million in on-the-ground conservation impact in fiscal year 2015.

The many programs launched or continued in 2015 demonstrate the strength and agility of the Foundation. The new Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund serves as a particularly good example of NFWF's role as a fast-moving, focused and effective collaborator. Launched in February, the fund provided a platform for NFWF and its conservation partners to quickly plan, build and implement a national program to address the causes of a dramatic decline in monarch butterfly numbers. Just seven months after its launch, NFWF announced an initial grant slate of \$3.3 million in investments, leveraged by matching funds into \$10 million worth of projects to support the monarch butterfly throughout the country.

Acres for America, the Foundation's pioneering conservation partnership with Walmart that began a decade ago, marked two important milestones in 2015: passing 1 million acres protected since its inception in 2005 and announcing a 10-year renewal of the program.

Ground-breaking efforts stretched across the nation in 2015, addressing an incredible array of species and habitats. NFWF's conservation investments helped protect the majestic longleaf pine forests of the Southeast, improve forest diversity in the Northeast, restore wet meadows in the Sierra Nevada, and bolster watersheds of the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay. Along the Gulf of Mexico, the Foundation continued to support large, significant and meaningful projects to address the impacts of the tragic 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The Foundation also created two new regional offices focused on the Southern and Rocky Mountain regions, giving NFWF a total of five regional offices to better support local conservation efforts.

In terms of financial and human resources brought to bear every day to solve complex conservation challenges, NFWF remains unmatched. As we look to the coming year, the Foundation has never been in a stronger position to fulfill its core mission: sustaining, restoring and enhancing the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations.



John V. Faraci, Jr.  
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, NFWF



John V. Faraci, Jr.  
Chairman, Board of Directors, NFWF



## **\$3.5** NFWF's Conservation **BILLION** Impact Since its Founding in 1984

Over the past three decades, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has grown from a small nonprofit organization to one of the country's largest conservation funders. NFWF-supported projects protect and enhance habitats across the nation, benefiting both people and wildlife.





Monarch butterflies rest on a tree branch in a winter habitat in Santa Cruz, California.



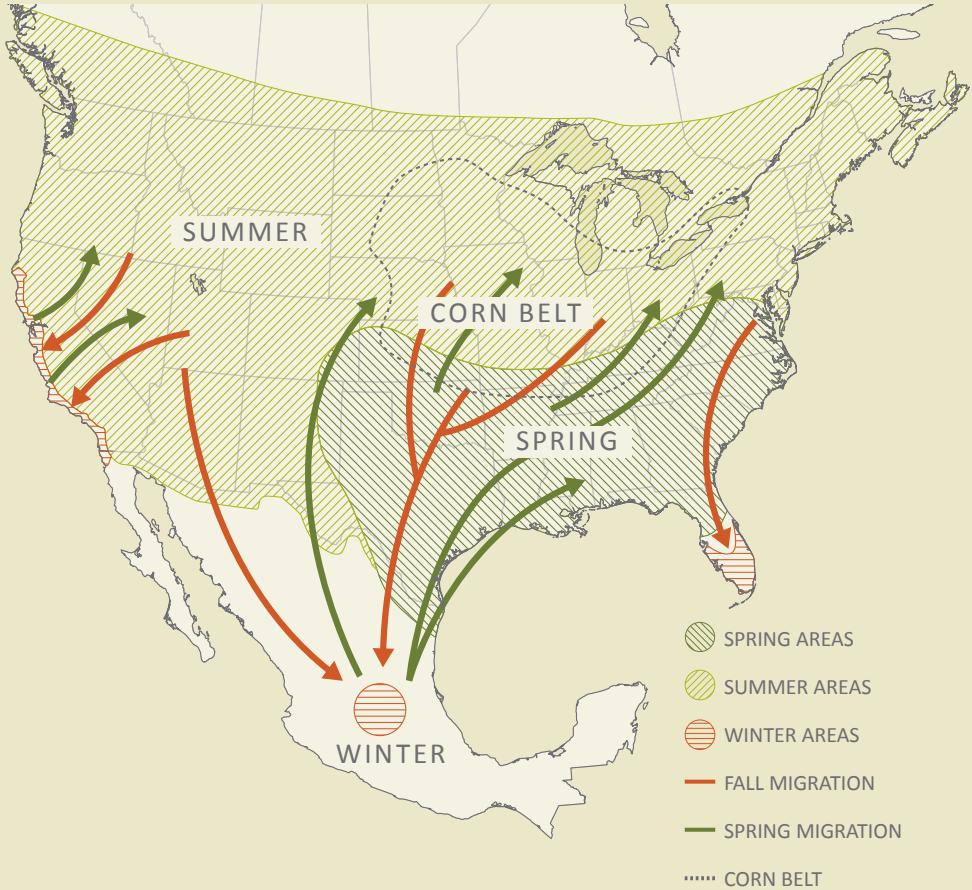
Projects Funded in 2015

In the Corn Belt, more than 30,000 acres of monarch butterfly habitat will be created, established or maintained, much of it on marginal agricultural lands. New seed banks will establish consistent supply in the region.

In Oklahoma, training will help seven Native American tribes restore monarch habitat, propagate plant material, and process and store seed.

In Texas, the first and last stop on the monarchs’ journey to and from Mexico, private rangelands and public lands will provide critical nectar and milkweed habitat.

The western population of the monarch will be supported by 4,500 acres of habitat established on public and private lands, as well as a network of government agencies, conservation groups, universities and citizen-scientists.



MOVING FAST TO SAVE

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

It’s been a whirlwind year for the monarch butterfly.

In early 2015, media outlets across the United States and Mexico delivered alarming news from scientific studies: the North American monarch population had plunged 94 percent, from 1 billion to fewer than 60 million, due primarily to loss of critical habitats containing milkweed, the food source for the monarch caterpillar.

Speculation on the iconic insect’s potential demise shocked those who every year welcome the beloved, orange-and-black visitor as a familiar and beautiful connection to the natural world.

In the spring of 2015, NFWF and one of its largest federal partners, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, developed a bold plan to quickly address the causes of the insect’s decline. The federal agency committed \$1.2 million in 2015 so that NFWF could create the Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund and begin guiding conservation investments across the insect’s U.S. range.

Through a variety of private- and public-sector partners, including Monsanto, NFWF quickly leveraged this initial commitment and more than doubled the funding immediately

available. Working with monarch experts, the Foundation then launched a competitive grant program to increase vital monarch habitat.

This insect, with its fascinating life history, connects people with nature.

— Dr. Chip Taylor, University of Kansas

By early fall — just seven months after announcing the launch of the fund — NFWF had received 115 proposals and awarded \$3.3 million in grants to 22 of the most promising projects, in the process drawing another \$6.7 million in matching contributions for a total conservation impact of \$10 million in its first year.

Many of these projects are now underway, led by a diverse group of grantees that includes universities, conservation organizations, agricultural groups and government agencies. Projects address three key strategies: habitat restoration, coordination and capacity building, and bolstering the supply and distribution of native milkweed seeds and nectar-producing plants.

Already, the program has garnered the support of wildlife agencies, conservation groups and corporate partners across the country. The conservation effort also has captured the attention of countless adults and children who want to play some part in saving the butterfly.

“There are few organisms that are as approachable as monarch butterflies,” said Dr. Chip Taylor, a monarch expert with the University of Kansas, which was awarded a grant to help Native American tribes restore monarch habitats on tribal lands in Oklahoma. “Kids can watch these caterpillars grow out in their yards. They see this beautiful chrysalis form, and eventually, a butterfly emerges. This is a kind of access we don’t have with most other organisms. That’s part of the magic.

“This insect, with its fascinating life history, connects people with nature.”

**CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS** U.S. Department of the Interior’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management; U.S. Department of Agriculture’s U.S. Forest Service, and Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Monsanto



# \$378.1 Total Conservation Impact

MILLION in Fiscal Year 2015

In fiscal year 2015, NFWF awarded \$87.6 million in federal funds, \$449,000 in other public funds and \$38 million in private contributions, leveraged by \$119.7 million in grantee match. The Foundation also awarded \$132.4 million in Impact-Directed Environmental Account funds, including those from the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund.

A mountain goat surveys the landscape in Colorado.







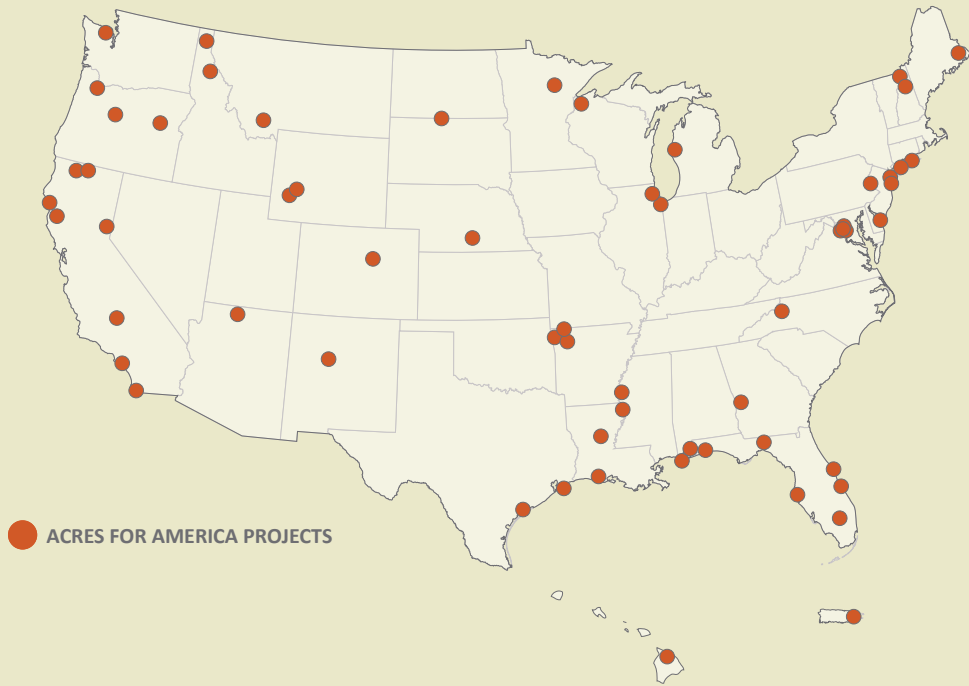
A bull moose moves through a thicket in Wyoming.

Acres for America

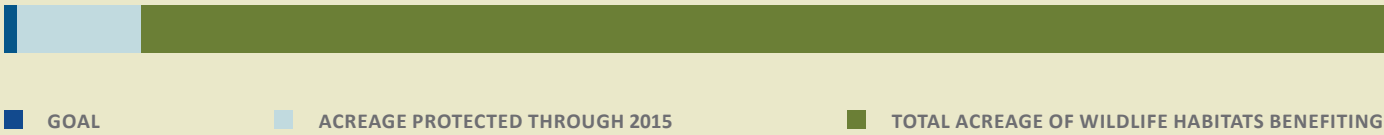
Goal: 100,000 acres over 10 years

Through 2015: More than 1 million acres protected through 61 projects across 33 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico

Total impact: More than 10 million acres, by conserving areas connecting national forests, parks and other protected lands



ACRES FOR AMERICA PROJECTS



10 YEARS, 1 MILLION ACRES PROTECTED

ACRES FOR AMERICA

The Acres for America conservation program marked two historic milestones in 2015: Surpassing 1 million acres of wildlife habitat protected and announcing a \$35-million renewal to continue the program for the next 10 years.

Acres for America has become one of the most effective public-private collaborations in the history of U.S. conservation efforts by bringing together business leaders, landowners, public agencies and conservationists to protect the nation’s natural resources at a grand scale.

“The need for effective public-private partnerships for conservation has never been greater,” said Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell. “I applaud NFWF and Walmart for their continued commitment through the successful Acres for America program to preserve and protect some of our nation’s most important lands.”

The program began in 2005, when Walmart made an initial \$35-million commitment to purchase and preserve one acre of wildlife habitat in the United States for every acre

The need for effective public-private partnerships for conservation has never been greater.

— Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior

of land developed by the company — about 100,000 acres today. The program has far surpassed that 10-year goal, protecting an area 10 times larger. In fact, by conserving private lands that connect national forests, parks and other protected lands, the program

has benefited wildlife habitats and migration corridors over an even larger area — more than 10 million acres.

In fiscal year 2015, Acres for America awarded grants that will protect more than 235,000 acres of forest, riparian and coastal habitats in Alabama, California, Florida, Texas and Washington. Including these latest projects, the program has funded 61 projects in 33 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In addition to permanently protecting some of the country’s most important wildlife habitats, these projects have provided new public access to some of America’s most pristine natural areas, all the while ensuring that ranchers, farmers and foresters can continue to work their lands.

Acres for America’s incredible growth over the past decade has been powered in large part by NFWF’s ability to leverage Walmart’s initial \$35-million investment to generate more than \$352 million in matching contributions. Altogether, Acres for America has generated a total conservation impact of more than \$387 million.

With the program renewal in 2015, Walmart and NFWF are committed to doubling this success over the next decade.

CONTRIBUTING PARTNER Walmart



A mule deer doe travels  
through the snow at night.

## 800+ Projects Funded in Fiscal Year 2015

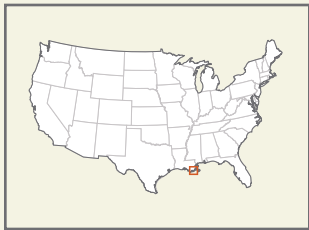
In fiscal year 2015, NFWF funded conservation projects in 50 states, plus the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. The total number of open projects under management in 2015 grew to about 2,700.







A white pelican flies along the Gulf of Mexico.



### Caminada Headlands Beach Restoration

A massive ecosystem restoration project along a barrier island on Louisiana's coast will restore about 800 acres of beach and dune habitat, including one of the most important least tern nesting sites in the state. The project also will benefit a popular state wildlife management area at the headland's eastern edge.

5 MILLION

CUBIC YARDS  
OF SAND  
IN PHASE II

13 MILES

OF BEACH AND  
DUNE RESTORATION  
TOTAL

Workers build a beach at the Caminada Headlands.



## BUILDING RESILIENCE ALONG THE

# GULF OF MEXICO

A colossal effort to rebuild and restore 13 miles of coastline along the Gulf of Mexico ranks as the largest conservation project ever undertaken by the state of Louisiana and NFWF.

This massive conservation project is unfolding on the Caminada Headlands, a beach and marsh system that serves as a barrier between the Gulf of Mexico and Port Fourchon, Louisiana's southernmost port and one of the nation's most important energy hubs.

Over the past 100 years, the Caminada Headlands has experienced extensive shoreline erosion. This loss of land has destroyed natural habitats critical not only to shorebirds, fish and crustaceans, but also to the culture of southern Louisiana.

The degradation of this barrier island system also puts Port Fourchon — and the nation's energy supply — at far greater risk from hurricanes. Port Fourchon supplies nearly 18 percent of the country's entire oil supply, and its tenants service an estimated 90 percent of the oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. A 2014 study found that a 21-day interruption of

Barrier island ecosystems such as those being rebuilt on Caminada are also integral aspects of local communities and culture in southern Louisiana.

— Chett Chiasson, executive director of the Port of Fourchon

operations at Port Fourchon would cost \$11.2 billion in lost sales at U.S. firms, \$3.2 billion in lost household earnings and 65,502 jobs throughout the country.

Rebuilding such a critical landscape at such an immense scale — a new beach about 100 yards wide and 13 miles long — requires

monumental efforts. When the NFWF-funded portion of the project is complete, workers will have dredged more than 5 million cubic yards of sand from Ship Shoal, an 8,000-year-old submerged barrier island 27 miles away in the Gulf of Mexico. Sand fencing and planting of native vegetation will help stabilize the new dunes, providing stopover sites for migrating songbirds and nesting habitats for shorebirds.

The historic project has been divided into two stages; NFWF funded the second phase with \$144.5 million from its Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund in 2014. A significant portion of the dredging and construction work for this phase was accomplished in 2015.

“Landscape-level projects such as the Caminada Headlands restoration are incredibly challenging, but they're critical to the future of Louisiana,” said Chett Chiasson, executive director of the Port of Fourchon. “Barrier island systems such as those being rebuilt on Caminada are integral aspects of local communities and culture in southern Louisiana. These headlands also provide a natural buffer from catastrophic weather events, which is critically important to the resiliency of regional and national economies.”



This westslope cutthroat trout swims in a Montana river.

## FRESHWATER FLOWS

In fiscal year 2015, NFWF awarded more than 250 grants to projects that sought to conserve freshwater flows and boost populations of freshwater fish species. Many of NFWF's largest initiatives across the country fund efforts to improve water quality and quantity, including those focused on Sierra Nevada wet meadows, major western river basins and watersheds feeding the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay.





Red knots gather along the Delaware Bay.

GUIDING INVESTMENTS ALONG THE

ATLANTIC FLYWAY

Since 1995, one particularly well-traveled red knot has flown far enough to make it to the moon and back.

Each year, this individual bird banded with the number B95 undertakes an epic southward journey, from arctic breeding grounds through the U.S. Eastern Seaboard, then across the Caribbean Sea to South America and on to the very tip of Chile, where he winters along desolate coastal beaches.

To endure such long journeys, B95 and his fellow red knots undergo extensive physical changes. Flight muscles enlarge while leg muscles shrink. Stomachs and gizzards decrease while fat mass increases by more than 50 percent. Even with such amazing adaptations, red knots still require stopover habitats rich in easily digested foods.

Each spring, red knots and other shorebirds depend on the Delaware Bay as one such stepping-stone on their journey back north. There, they fatten up on horseshoe crab eggs before tackling the last leg of their migration over vast boreal forest to their summer breeding grounds on the tundra.

The loss or degradation of just one critical stopover site can put an entire population of migrating shorebirds at risk.

The loss or degradation of just one of these stopover sites can put an entire population of red knots or other shorebirds at risk. In fact,

more than 50 percent of the 75 species of shorebirds in North America are suffering drastic population declines.

Over the past seven years, NFWF has worked with conservation partners along the Atlantic Flyway to reverse the decline of one such shorebird: the American oystercatcher.

NFWF identified key threats to oystercatchers and developed strategies to address them. The Foundation then made strategic investments to reduce nest predation and human disturbance, increase stewardship efforts and monitor populations. In response, oystercatchers have rebounded, and in 2015 were on target to show a 35-percent increase over a 10-year period.

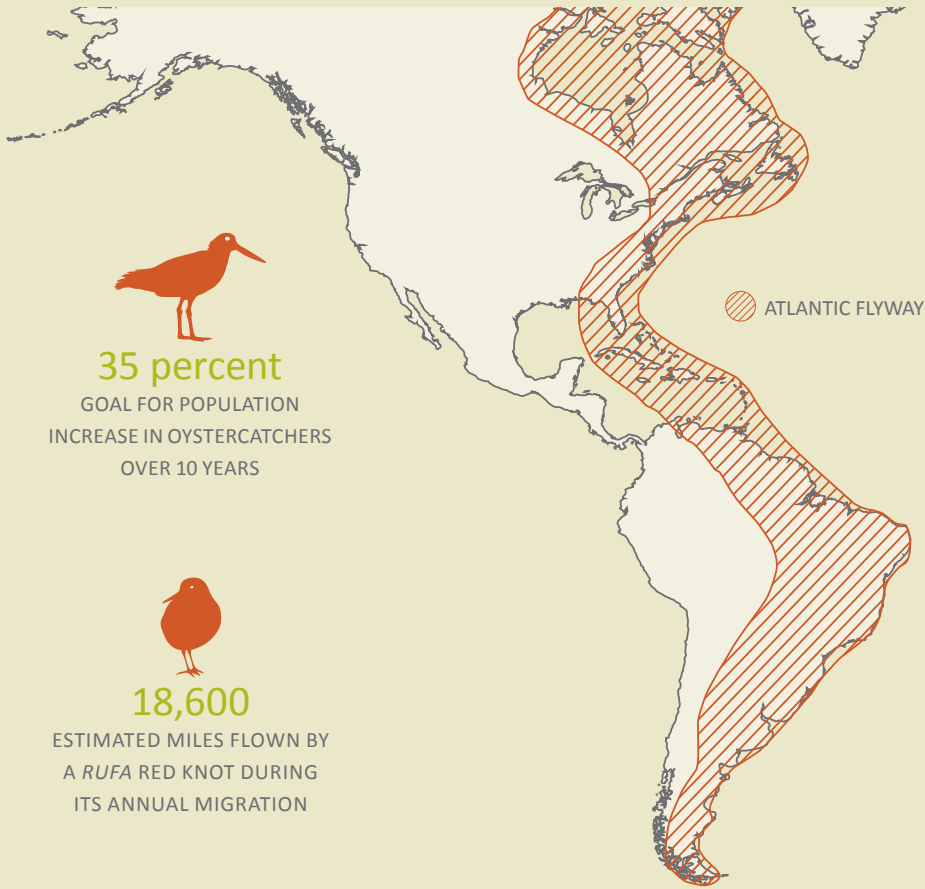
Seeking to replicate this success with other shorebird species, NFWF worked with government, conservation and academic partners in 2015 to launch the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative.

The new Flyway Initiative expands this highly collaborative model, giving scientists, biologists, refuge managers, private landowners and others a new opportunity to address threats common to 15 focal species across the Atlantic Flyway. The initiative also provides a framework to focus resources at critical stopover sites in the United States and elsewhere.

Flyway Initiative  
Launched in 2015

NFWF, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and more than 50 participating organizations launched a new initiative to:

- Address human disturbance, predation and habitat protection for American oystercatchers throughout the U.S. Atlantic coast
- Address threats in the Caribbean and northern South America
- Support planning efforts to protect critical staging areas for red knot and semipalmated sandpipers
- Fill key information gaps on populations of red knot, semipalmated sandpiper, American oystercatcher, whimbrel and Wilson’s plover





A Pacific fisher scans a forest in the Pacific Northwest.

## HEALTHY FORESTS

In 2015, NFWF supported extensive forest conservation efforts throughout the nation, on both public and private lands. In western states, NFWF partners worked to conserve critical forest landscapes and restore habitats damaged by wildfires. These efforts benefited important game species such as elk and trout, as well as rapidly declining species such as the Pacific fisher. In the Great Lakes and Northeast regions, NFWF funded efforts to reduce the decline in young forest habitats. Throughout the South, projects continued to reverse the decline of the once-dominant longleaf pine ecosystem.



One of the Hawaiian petrel chicks translocated to an area protected by NFWF-funded fencing.



## Protecting Birds in Hawaii

In 2015, NFWF awarded nearly 20 grants for conservation work across Hawaii, including projects that benefited coral reefs and engaged young people in conservation. Many of the grants focused on birds, including forest species that live nowhere else and seabirds that depend on the island chain for critical nesting habitats.

- 1 At a remote seabird breeding colony on Kaua'i, scientists deployed automated acoustic and visual sensors to study both seabirds and non-native predators.
- 2 Elsewhere on Kaua'i, biologists are working to establish a colony of rare Hawaiian petrels by translocating chicks (top) from a remote, mountaintop colony to restored habitat within a predator-proof fence built with NFWF funding.
- 3 At a refuge on O'ahu, researchers hand-raised albatross chicks that were translocated as eggs from a Navy missile range on Kaua'i .
- 4 On the island of Hawaii, state and federal wildlife officials worked with other biologists to prepare for the reintroduction of the 'Alala, or Hawaiian crow, in 2016.



MAUI  
PARROTBILL



HAWAIIAN  
PETREL



'ALALA

# PIONEERING CONSERVATION TOOLS TO SAVE BIRDS IN HAWAII

Throughout the Hawaiian Islands, NFWF and its partners are fighting on the front lines of bird conservation.

In a place sometimes referred to as the “extinction capital of the world,” NFWF-funded projects are helping to slow or reverse declines for rare and endemic species such as the palila, Nihoa millerbird and Maui parrotbill, along with disappearing seabird species such as the Hawaiian petrel and Laysan albatross.

To make a difference on the ground for Hawaii’s diverse collection of unique, colorful and critically imperiled birds, biologists are using the newest and most effective conservation tools. Pioneering methods supported by NFWF include the protection of ground-nesting seabirds with advanced fencing capable of deterring everything from goats to cats and even mice. At one of Hawaii’s most remote nesting colonies, new acoustic and visual sensors help scientists keep tabs on seabirds and non-native predators.

Of all the conservation tools being put to work in Hawaii, translocation and the reintroduction of species remain some of the most powerful and effective.

In 2015, biologists initiated a project to establish a colony of endangered Hawaiian petrels at a national wildlife refuge on Kaua'i by translocating chicks from a remote, mountaintop colony to newly restored habitat protected by a NFWF-funded, predator-proof fence. In addition, albatross eggs were translocated from a Navy missile test range on Kaua'i to a refuge on O'ahu, where the chicks were raised by hand.

In 2015, biologists established a colony of endangered Hawaiian petrels at a site protected by a predator-proof fence.

One new project, in particular, captured the public’s attention in 2015. Leveraging a NFWF grant, state and federal wildlife officials joined the San Diego Zoo to launch a bold plan to reintroduce the ‘Alala, or Hawaiian crow, to the island of Hawaii. The ‘Alala Restoration Working Group is supporting an intensive captive breeding and reintroduction program with the goal of releasing 11-13 birds into the Upper Ka’u Forest Reserve and Pu’u Makaala Natural Area Reserve each year for five years starting in 2016.

“The last bird disappeared in 2002, so a lot of people have never even seen an ‘Alala in the wild,” said John Vetter, a state wildlife biologist involved in the project. “This species is important ecologically, and it’s important culturally. And they’re very charismatic birds – they’re large and loud, and they make very interesting calls. I think just seeing them on the landscape again will get people really excited.”

CONTRIBUTING PARTNER U.S. Department of the Interior’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



A golden plover guards  
its nest in Alaska.

## PEOPLE & WILDLIFE

This male golden plover performs a distraction display at Alaska's Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, where in 2015 NFWF funded an effort by Manomet Bird Observatory to survey shorebird populations at critical nesting sites. The Manomet grant was one of more than 35 awarded in 2015 that benefited not only wildlife, but the many communities and cultures in Alaska that rely directly on natural resources. NFWF grants funded research on arctic ice seals and Cook Inlet beluga whales, conservation of salmon, and efforts to recruit and train young Alaska Natives to protect wildlife habitats.





A healthy wet meadow,  
one of 10,000 in California's  
Sierra Nevada.



## Meadow Restoration

**Before the meadow restoration project,** Indian Valley had a deeply eroded stream channel that directed snowmelt quickly downstream, drawing down water tables and decreasing water quality. Native vegetation suffered, and meadow-dependent species found little habitat.



MULE DEER

**After the restoration project,** water began to meander through Indian Valley, which improved water quality, boosted groundwater levels and kept the meadow wet year-round. Wetlands and newly planted willow thickets provide improved habitats for meadow-dependent species.



YOSEMITE TOAD



WILLOW FLYCATCHER



## LEADING THE EFFORT TO RESTORE

# WET MEADOWS

In 2015, intense drought conditions and contentious water-related issues dominated the news in California and many other western states.

But state leaders and federal forestry officials found new cause for optimism high in the Sierra Nevada. There, in the Eldorado National Forest's Indian Valley, NFWF's early investments in the restoration of alpine meadows were paying dividends.

Degraded by a long history of legacy mining, road building and overgrazing, this "wet meadow" had essentially turned dry. Water from rain and snowmelt no longer meandered through the valley but instead ran quickly downhill, causing erosion and worsening water quality for people and wildlife downstream. Such deterioration can be found at the majority of the 10,000 meadows in the Sierra Nevada.

"Meadows are an important part of California's water infrastructure," said Luke Hunt, director of headwaters conservation for American Rivers and the project lead for the heralded Indian Valley meadow restoration project. "Meadows save water, they provide incredible habitat for wildlife, and they do both at the same time."

Using a restoration technique designed to reroute streamflow, Hunt's group worked with the U.S. Forest Service, corporate partners and a host of volunteers to create a series of small wetlands throughout Indian Valley. The project, which began in 2012 and underwent major construction in 2013, restored the meadow's natural functions, allowing water to seep into the ground.

With 2015 funding from NFWF, Hunt's group continued to replant willows along the slowed-down stream while scientists monitored and documented the results of the restoration project. What they have found so far captured the attention of state and federal officials.

"The meadow really is working like a sponge, storing water for use late in the summer," Hunt said. "It's wet in the worst drought that any of us could imagine."

Before the project, the stream would go dry by midsummer. Now it flows year-round. As a result, improved habitats now provide forage and cover for wildlife ranging from mule deer and yellow warblers to imperiled species such as the Yosemite toad and willow flycatcher.

In 2015, California incorporated wet meadow restoration into its State Water Plan.

"NFWF helped prove that meadow restoration works," Hunt said. "They addressed the bottlenecks — prioritization, design and permitting — and set the stage for state investment in shovel-ready meadow restoration. Now meadow restoration is happening across the Sierra."

**CONTRIBUTING PARTNER** U.S. Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service,  
U.S. Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



A baby loggerhead crawls from  
its nest toward the sea.

## OCEANS & COASTS

In fiscal year 2015, NFWF funded more than 90 projects directly tied to marine conservation, including efforts in many states to improve populations of sea turtles such as this loggerhead in Florida. NFWF-supported projects also focused on fisheries along the nation's coasts, where researchers worked with fishermen to reduce bycatch, study fish populations and remove derelict fishing gear. In 2015, NFWF also launched its new Ocean Health Initiative, which encompasses a broad portfolio of marine and coastal conservation projects that generate meaningful improvements to the health of threatened marine and coastal species and habitats.





A swift fox heads back to its den.



### Projects on the Plains

Tribal leaders at the Fort Peck Reservation are surveying and assessing swift fox populations and identifying restoration sites. On other tribal lands and private ranchland, Oregon State University researchers are developing population models that will be used to develop a 20-year reintroduction strategy for swift fox.

Tribal leaders at Fort Peck and Fort Belknap reservations in Montana are working with conservation partners to enhance populations of black-footed ferrets, sage grouse and swift fox on more than 2.5 million acres of tribal and private lands.

Throughout the Northern Great Plains, the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies is helping ranchers and other private landowners understand the movement and conservation needs of at-risk bird species, including the sage grouse.

Private landowners and conservation groups are working throughout Montana and Alberta, Canada, to provide insights into which fence modifications allow for the most successful movements by pronghorn.



### COOPERATION AND INVESTMENT IN

## THE GREAT PLAINS

From the creation of NFWF’s new Rocky Mountain Regional Office to the awarding of both large-scale and locally focused grants, 2015 was a year of cooperative action and careful investment on the Northern Great Plains.

Across millions of acres stretching from Nebraska through Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas, NFWF funding helped a diverse group of stakeholders tackle complex conservation challenges affecting a suite of native species.

University researchers, conservation organizations, ranchers and government agencies worked to restore habitats for sage grouse and other at-risk grassland birds. Ranchers and other private landowners protected migration routes for pronghorn, and Native American wildlife stewards continued efforts to reintroduce rare plains species on tribal lands.

Michael Kinsey, a wildlife biologist with the Gros Ventre Tribe, has been working with NFWF and other conservation partners to study and bolster wildlife populations at the Fort Belknap reservation in Montana. With NFWF support, Kinsey and his colleagues have been developing a comprehensive wildlife management plan.

Whether it’s ferrets, prairie dogs, swift foxes or even buffalo, pronghorn and elk – if we can put something back that has been taken away, we should do that.

— Mark Azure, president of the Fort Belknap Tribal Council

“Fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals – we’re looking at all of it,” Kinsey said.

In early 2015, Kinsey began mapping prairie dog towns and conducting population density estimates of the iconic plains mammal.

In September, Kinsey’s tribe worked with

conservation groups and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to release 15 black-footed ferrets at those sites. Nearly wiped out by habitat loss and disease, black-footed ferrets number just a few hundred in the wild. These exceedingly rare animals prey on prairie dogs and depend on intact grassland habitats such as those found on Fort Belknap and other reservations.

Kinsey also worked with researchers from Oregon State University on a NFWF-supported effort to study and eventually reintroduce another at-risk species: the swift fox. About the size of a house cat, these small canids have suffered steep population declines across their range in the northern plains of the United States and Canada.

Mark Azure, president of the Fort Belknap Tribal Council, said the reintroduction of such animals to tribal lands reinforces a deep cultural connection to land and wildlife.

“Throughout our history, everything was respected, every species had a place. Whether it’s ferrets, prairie dogs, swift foxes or even buffalo, pronghorn and elk – if we can put something back that has been taken away, we should do that. It’s a type of healing, really, and a way that we have control of our own destiny. I think that’s huge. I really do, and I hope it continues.”

**CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS** Margaret A. Cargill Foundation; U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture’s U.S. Forest Service; and BNSF Railway





Sockeye salmon prepare to spawn in Alaska.

## SPECIES & HABITATS

Efforts to protect native species often must address particularly complex issues. So it is with salmon conservation across the major landscapes of the western United States, where projects often must touch on water flows, water quality, habitat restoration and fisheries management. In 2015, NFWF funded more than 45 projects directly tied to salmon conservation. Work included restoration of flows and streamside habitats in California, Oregon and Washington, extensive conservation efforts in Alaska, and a study of salmon and southern resident killer whales off the coast of the Pacific Northwest.

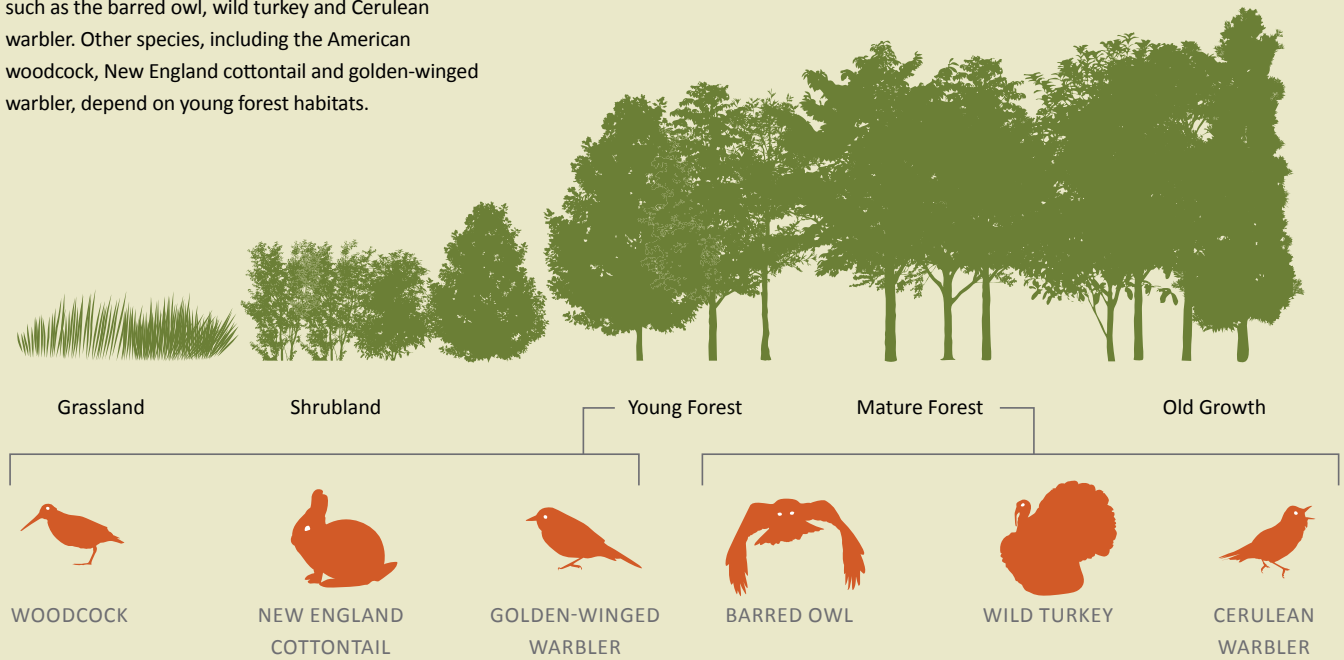




The golden-winged warbler is one of many imperiled species that depend on early successional forest.

Species in a Mixed-Age Forest Mosaic

Northeastern forests were largely logged during the latter half of the 19th century. Since that time, trees have grown back and been managed primarily as mature stands. These areas provide habitat for species such as the barred owl, wild turkey and Cerulean warbler. Other species, including the American woodcock, New England cottontail and golden-winged warbler, depend on young forest habitats.



RESTORING AND MANAGING

DIVERSE EASTERN FORESTS

Aerial images of the Northeast and Great Lakes regions sometimes paint a simple view of forest health.

Such photographs often show rolling hills and mountains covered in a carpet of green canopy. To the untrained eye, this appears to be a healthy forest ecosystem. But to biologists fighting to reverse a staggering decline in the abundance of key species, such uniformity can signal trouble.

“Healthy forest systems include a mosaic of habitats, including grasslands, wetlands, thick patches of young forest and open stands of old growth,” said Tony Ferguson, the U.S. Forest Service’s director of the northeastern area state and private forestry. “Species often depend on different forest habitats at different stages in their life cycles, and some species are primarily found only in a particular age-class of forest.

“When large expanses of forested landscape aren’t managed with biodiversity as a goal, we start to see a dramatic decline in many species. We like to help landowners understand the benefits of managing forested habitats for a suite of game and non-game species.”

Healthy forest systems include a mosaic of habitats, including grasslands, wetlands, thick patches of young forest and open stands of old growth.

— Tony Ferguson, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service

In the Great Lakes and Northeast regions, some conservation efforts focus on creating and managing for early successional forest areas — tangles of shrubs and young trees and patches of annuals and perennials that would naturally spring up following wildfires, storms and other disturbances. These young forest patches serve as critical breeding and nesting habitats for a number of declining bird species, including the golden-winged warbler and American woodcock. Other imperiled species, including the New England cottontail, depend on such habitats throughout their life cycles.

Despite their importance to forest health and biodiversity, young forests have in many places been replaced by stands of uniformly aged trees.

For nearly a decade, NFWF’s Early Successional Forest Initiative has provided critical support to organizations working with large and small landowners to create and manage young forests.

In 2015, the U.S. Department of the Interior recognized NFWF for its role in helping landowners in the Northeast reverse a dramatic decline in the population of the New England cottontail, which had been considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Building on this conservation success, NFWF launched the New England Forest and Rivers Fund in 2015. This new competitive grant program focuses on diverse healthy forest systems and rivers, along with the species and human communities that depend on them.

**CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS** U.S. Department of the Interior’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture’s U.S. Forest Service, and Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Eversource

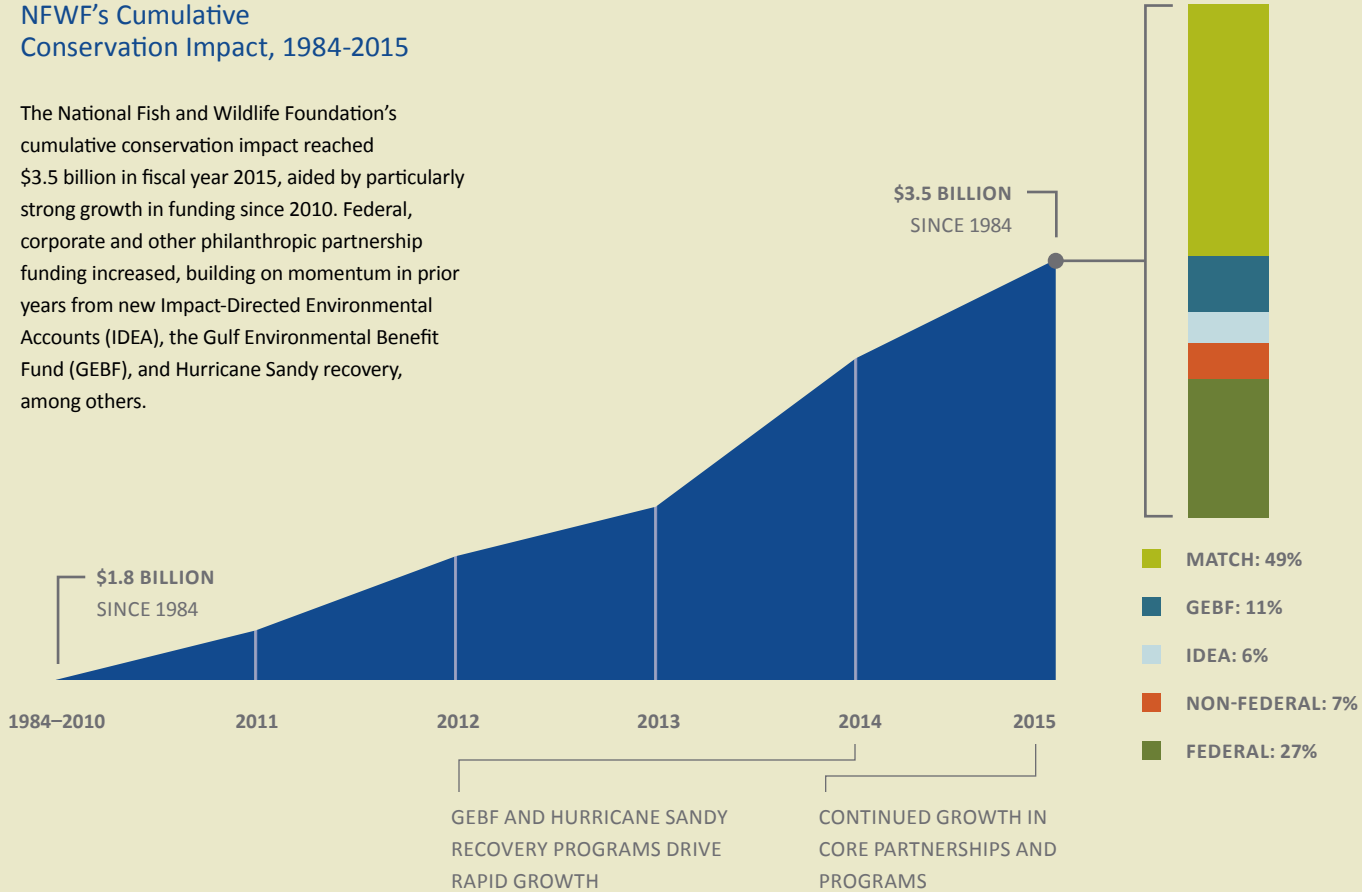




A NFWF grant awarded in 2015 focused on conservation and stock enhancement for bonefish, like this one, and tarpon in south Florida.

NFWF’s Cumulative Conservation Impact, 1984-2015

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s cumulative conservation impact reached \$3.5 billion in fiscal year 2015, aided by particularly strong growth in funding since 2010. Federal, corporate and other philanthropic partnership funding increased, building on momentum in prior years from new Impact-Directed Environmental Accounts (IDEA), the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF), and Hurricane Sandy recovery, among others.



2015

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

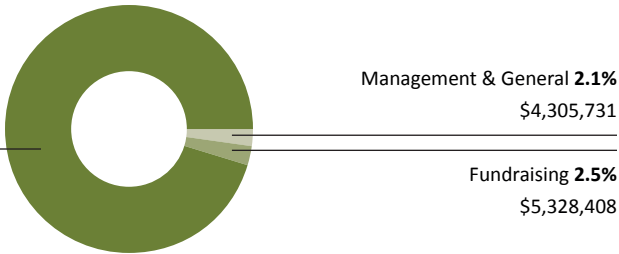
CONDENSED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

(in millions of dollars, for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2015)

	2015	2014
<b>REVENUE, EXPENSES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Total Revenue and Support	\$219.4	\$190.3
Total Expenses	\$209.3	\$159.9
Change in Net Assets	\$10.1	\$30.4
Net Assets, beginning of year	\$178.4	\$148.0
Net Assets, end of year	\$188.5	\$178.4

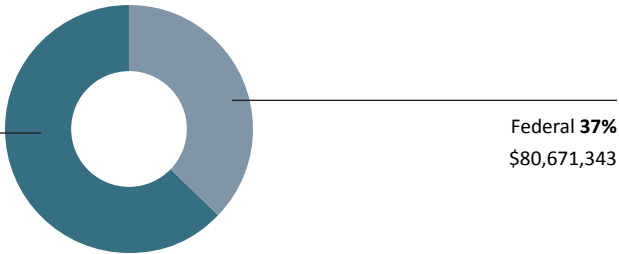
TOTAL EXPENSES  
\$209,296,017

Program/Mission 95.4%  
\$199,661,878



TOTAL REVENUE  
\$219,412,505

Non-Federal/ Other 63%  
\$138,741,162



CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

(in millions of dollars, as of September 30, 2015)

	2015	2014
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and Investments	\$1,317.2	\$1,006.1
Other Assets	\$28.4	\$23.7
Total Assets	\$1,345.6	\$1,029.8
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Liabilities	\$1,157.1	\$851.4
Net Assets	\$188.5	\$178.4
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$1,345.6	\$1,029.8



Researchers with NOAA and the Vancouver Aquarium used drones to study endangered southern resident killer whales off the Pacific Northwest in 2015. The drones captured never-before-seen images of the rare whales — only about 80 remain in the wild — including this mother and calf.



# CORPORATE PARTNERS

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The **Alcoa Foundation**/NFWF Biodiversity Initiative, launched in 2013, is dedicated to strengthening communities by improving the health of rivers and protecting biodiversity in landscapes of mutual importance to Alcoa and NFWF. The program funds on-the-ground restoration projects that benefit fish and wildlife habitat and water quality, while contributing to broader community-based goals.



Through its Restoring America’s Resources partnership with NFWF, **Altria** is helping to protect and restore some of the most important ecosystems in the nation, including the Chesapeake Bay, Cumberland Plateau and Columbia River. Altria supports improved water quality by investing in effective conservation and restoration practices on agricultural lands, and in urban centers, and by accelerating implementation of the most innovative, sustainable and cost-effective strategies.



**American Eagle Outfitters** supports the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) program, a highly collaborative public-private

partnership of federal agencies, corporations and non-profit groups dedicated to providing service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low-income and disadvantaged youth. This partnership protects, restores and enhances public and tribal lands and waters, as well as natural, cultural and historic resources. Most importantly, 21CSC helps develop the next generation of skilled workers, conservation professionals and engaged citizens.



**ArcelorMittal** supports both the Sustain Our Great Lakes program and the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund. Sustain Our Great Lakes is improving the ecological health of the Great Lakes basin by providing funding for the restoration of streams, wetlands and shoreline habitats. The Chi-Cal Rivers Fund is restoring the health, vitality and accessibility of the waterways in the Chicago/Calumet region by awarding grants for green stormwater infrastructure, habitat enhancement, and public-use improvements.



**Bank of America** joined with NFWF in 2013 to support the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program, which focuses on the stewardship and restoration of coastal,

wetland and riparian ecosystems across the country. The program’s goal is to meet the conservation needs of important species and habitats, providing measurable and meaningful conservation and educational outcomes.



Through its partnership with NFWF, **Bass Pro Shops** and the Johnny Morris Foundation invest in conservation activities that restore, protect and enhance native populations of sensitive or endangered fish species and their habitats across the United States, especially in areas on or adjacent to federal agency lands.



In the Great North from North Dakota to Washington State, **BNSF Railway** supports two of NFWF’s wildlife programs: Northern Great Plains and Great Migrations and Crucial Corridors. The programs strive to maintain the relatively intact nature of the region by linking human communities with the benefits of stewardship activities. Funding directly supports community-based conservation projects that provide the ability for community leaders to protect and restore wildlife and their habitats, promote job creation, and contribute to the achievement of local tribes’ cultural and economic goals.



**CamelBak** participates in the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) program, a highly collaborative partnership of federal agencies and non-profit groups dedicated to providing service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low-income and disadvantaged youth. This partnership protects, restores and enhances public and tribal lands and waters, as well as natural, cultural and historic resources. Most importantly, 21CSC helps develop the next generation of skilled workers, conservation professionals and engaged citizens.



The **Coca-Cola Foundation** supports the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) program, a highly collaborative partnership of federal agencies and non-profit groups dedicated to providing service, training, education, and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low-income and disadvantaged youth. This partnership protects, restores and enhances public and tribal lands and waters, as well as natural, cultural and historic resources. Most importantly, 21CSC helps develop the next generation of skilled workers, conservation professionals and engaged citizens.



The **ConocoPhillips** SPIRIT of Conservation and Innovation Program has conserved critical species and habitats and water resources across the United States and internationally. Since 2005, it has provided funding for 75 projects in 14 states and six countries, protecting or enhancing more than 198,000 acres of priority habitat. The current program is focused on advancing water, biodiversity and innovative conservation projects. ConocoPhillips in Alaska also has partnered with NFWF since 2003 to support polar bear research and Cook Inlet beluga whale conservation projects.



**Covanta**, working with NFWF, NOAA and Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc., provides a no-cost option for fishermen to dispose of old, derelict or unusable fishing gear through the

Fishing for Energy program. The program also works with state and local agencies, community and industry groups, and local ports to foster solutions to prevent gear loss and impact of derelict gear to marine habitats and wildlife. Collected gear is either recycled or converted into clean, renewable electricity for local communities at Covanta’s Energy-from-Waste facilities. Since 2008, nearly 3 million pounds of marine debris have been collected.



**CSX** works with NFWF to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, supporting projects to restore fish and wildlife habitat, reduce water pollution and engage the public in environmental stewardship activities. In 2013, CSX joined NFWF and the state of Maryland to implement the largest natural oyster reef restoration project ever undertaken in the Chesapeake Bay.



**Darden Restaurants** works with NFWF, the Walton Family Foundation, NOAA and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. to support the Fishery Improvement Partnership Fund, which invests in the sustainability of fisheries that contribute to the U.S. seafood supply. In 2013, Darden joined NFWF to improve the environmental and socio-economic performance of the Honduras spiny lobster fishery.



Through its partnership with NFWF, **Donlin Gold LLC** supports the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund in conserving Alaska’s unique fish and wildlife heritage by building capacity for natural resources conservation in the Arctic, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and Cook Inlet and its watershed. The program works with local partners to improve information, mitigate threats, and conserve habitats for salmon, migratory birds, polar bear, walrus, beluga whale and caribou.



In partnership with NFWF, **Enbridge** supports the National Wildlife Refuge Friends Program, with a focus on the Midwest region near Enbridge operations. The National Wildlife Refuge Friends Program funds projects that assist local organizations in being effective

co-stewards of important natural resources within the National Wildlife Refuge System. Since 1998, the program has provided over 440 awards totaling more than \$1.8 million in federal funds.



**Eversource’s** Partners for New Hampshire’s Fish and Wildlife is dedicated to restoring and sustaining healthy forests and rivers in New Hampshire. Eversource, through its subsidiary Northern Pass Transmission LLC, has committed \$3 million between 2015 and 2016 to work with a variety of stakeholders — private landowners, government agencies, academic institutions and conservation groups — to cultivate science-based conservation strategies, and cost-effective on-the-ground projects that restore forest and freshwater habitat for New Hampshire’s fish and wildlife.



Through EarthSmart Outreach, **FedEx** works with NFWF in 18 U.S. cities to fund urban conservation projects. With FedEx team member engagement, the projects restore watersheds, improve air quality, encourage environmental stewardship, and foster community environmental education.



**INTERNATIONAL PAPER**

**International Paper** and NFWF formed the Forestland Stewards Initiative in 2013 to identify, restore and protect landscapes in three priority regions in the United States: the Carolina Low Country Forests, the Cumberland Plateau of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee, and the Piney Woods of Texas and Louisiana. The goal is to protect and restore more than 200,000 acres of forests, to strengthen populations of important fish and wildlife, and to improve water quality. The initiative also highlights the critical role working forests play, especially for the areas where Forestland Stewards projects are unfolding, of which 75 percent are working forests.

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Through its partnership with NFWF, **Mitsubishi Corporation Foundation for the Americas** (MCFA) is helping to recover endangered sea turtle populations along the Pacific coasts of Central and South America. MCFA supports conservation at the community level in cooperation with regional managers to bolster sustainable fishing markets, reduce sea turtle bycatch and foster collaboration for recovery planning.



**Monsanto** supports the Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund, established in 2015 by NFWF and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to protect, conserve and increase habitat for these iconic insects and other pollinators.



**The North Face** and My Morning Jacket have partnered to participate in the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) program, a highly collaborative partnership of federal agencies and non-profit groups dedicated to providing service, training, education and employment opportunities for thousands of young Americans and veterans, including low-income and disadvantaged youth. This partnership protects, restores and enhances public and tribal lands and waters, as well as natural, cultural and historic resources. Most importantly, 21CSC helps develop the next generation of skilled workers, conservation professionals and engaged citizens.



Through its partnership with NFWF, **NOVAGOLD RESOURCES INC.** supports the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund in conserving Alaska's unique fish and wildlife heritage by building capacity for natural resources conservation in the Arctic, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and Cook Inlet and its watershed. The program works with local partners to improve information, mitigate threats, and conserve habitats for salmon, migratory birds, polar bear, walrus, beluga whale and caribou.



**Orvis** has supported the BBN/More Fish grant program which conserves fish habitats and improves passage for native fish populations in freshwater and coastal ecosystems. Orvis has also supported wildlife projects in the intermountain western states to connect crucial migratory corridors and wildlife crossings for bears and antelope.



Since 1999, the **Pacific Gas and Electric Company** (PG&E) has partnered with NFWF on PG&E's Nature Restoration Trust program, to support riparian, coastal and wetland habitat restoration throughout PG&E's service territory in Northern California. This PG&E and NFWF collaborative partnership program empowers local communities to care for native habitats and species and engage youth in hands-on enhancement, restoration and stewardship projects.



Through its Destination Conservation partnership with NFWF, **Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.** supports conservation of tropical marine systems throughout the Wider Caribbean. Royal Caribbean is promoting ground-breaking research and management approaches that protect coral reef systems and secure sustainable fisheries for Caribbean nations.



**SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.,** supports two initiatives at the Foundation that focus on coastal and marine resources: the Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program and the Ocean Health Initiative. The Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program funds efforts to advance the knowledge and conservation of wild populations of killer whales with a primary focus on activities that aid in the recovery of the southern resident killer whale Distinct Population Segment and the Northern Pacific Resident population. The Ocean Health Initiative works through other Foundation programs to support a portfolio of projects that bolster the health of threatened marine and coastal species and habitats while engaging communities in marine and coastal conservation efforts.



The **Shell** Marine Habitat Program supports conservation projects that benefit marine and coastal habitats and species in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska. Since 1998, the partnership has funded over 260 projects, supporting the protection, restoration, and management of over 154,000 acres of habitat, as well as the improved monitoring and management of key species in coastal ecosystems.



Since 2003, **Southern Company** has partnered with NFWF to support critical, long-term longleaf pine, riparian, coastal and wetland habitat restoration and the conservation and recovery of bird species characteristic of the South. In partnership with Southern Company's four operating companies, grants are awarded to non-profits, government agencies and academic institutions, which target both large-scale and community-based efforts within Southern Company's operating area of Georgia, Alabama, the Florida Panhandle and Southeast Mississippi.



**TradeWind Energy** and Enel Green Power North America partnered with NFWF to fund conservation easements on 12,656 acres in the Flint Hills: America's largest remaining area of high quality tallgrass prairie. NFWF is working with TradeWind, Enel, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, and the Kansas Land Trust to protect an additional 4,703 acres of this irreplaceable and ecologically critical land in 2016, and to facilitate important restoration of thousands of acres and research work to benefit the ecosystem.



**Walmart** and NFWF created Acres for America in 2005 to conserve lands of national significance, protect critical fish and wildlife habitat and benefit communities and local economies. In its first decade, the Acres for America program protected more than 1 million acres by funding 61 projects in 33 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In 2015, Walmart renewed its commitment to Acres for America by contributing an additional \$35 million over 10 years to extend the program to 2025, with a goal of protecting an additional 1 million acres across the nation.



The **Wells Fargo** Environmental Solutions for Communities grant program launched in 2012 as part of Wells Fargo's commitment to provide \$100 million to environmentally focused nonprofits and universities by 2020. The grant program is designed to support projects that link economic development and community well-being to the stewardship and health of the environment. Funding priorities focus on sustainable agriculture and forestry, land and water conservation and urban ecosystem restoration. This program also supports green infrastructure projects related to energy efficiency and renewable energy, while encouraging volunteerism in local communities.



The Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, supported by **Wrigley Company Foundation**, works to restore the health, vitality and accessibility of the waterways in the Chicago/Calumet region, including the Chicago River, by awarding grants for green stormwater infrastructure, habitat enhancement, and public-use improvements.



A great blue heron eats a shad in the James River in Virginia.



A gopher tortoise emerges from its burrow in a longleaf pine forest.



## FEDERAL PARTNERS

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NFWF was established by Congress in 1984 to support the mission of the U.S. Department of the Interior's **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** (FWS) to conserve fish, wildlife and plant species. Since that time, NFWF and FWS have worked together to foster innovative partnerships with corporations, foundations, other federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations to generate new resources for conservation. From 1986 to 2015, NFWF leveraged \$204.5 million in FWS appropriated funds into more than \$832 million to support nearly 4,675 grants to nearly 2,000 conservation partners in all 50 states, the U.S. territories, and targeted international locations.

In fiscal year 2015, NFWF awarded \$7 million in FWS appropriated funds. Our partners are leveraging these funds into \$33 million to finance 110 projects benefiting our nation's fish and wildlife resources. The FWS funds support strategic conservation efforts focusing on at-risk species, habitat enhancement, and community-based stewardship. The partnership seeks to increase populations of targeted species by promoting the restoration of landscape-level habitat. Focal areas include early successional forests, Southeast aquatic ecosystems, Atlantic shorebird habitat, Alaska's Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Northern Great Plains, and the Klamath Basin in the Pacific Northwest. In 2015, NFWF and FWS created

a new Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund program and continued to support efforts towards Mexican Wolf recovery and New England cottontail conservation.



In 1994, Congress formalized the partnership between NFWF and U.S. Department of Commerce's **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** (NOAA). Since that time, NFWF has rapidly expanded its focus on the restoration and enhancement of marine and coastal habitats. Nearly half of NFWF's investments support conservation activities benefiting imperiled marine and coastal species and the critical ecosystems in which they reside. In total, NFWF leveraged more than \$76.2 million in NOAA funding to produce more than \$207.5 million for on-the-ground and in-the-water conservation.

In FY 2015, NFWF awarded \$4.4 million in NOAA funds to 67 projects focused on coral reefs, sea turtles, marine debris removal, sustainable fisheries, and coastal habitat restoration. While some of these projects did not require matching funds, NFWF's partners leveraged the NOAA funds to produce more than \$8.8 million for marine and coastal conservation. New partnerships in fiscal year 2015 created the Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Implementation program, which awarded \$2 million in NOAA funds and leveraged \$4.6 million to support projects in

both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. NFWF and NOAA also partnered on a new coastal resiliency program across the entire Southeast Atlantic seaboard, with a focus in the Cape Fear watershed in North Carolina. Furthermore, NFWF and NOAA began discussions of a new memorandum of agreement to establish a formal framework to further cooperation and coordination with the mutual goals of engaging people in conservation, stewardship, resilience, and the management of fish, wildlife, plants and other natural resources.



NFWF and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's **U.S. Forest Service** (USFS) partnership reached new heights in fiscal year 2015 with implementation of the first forest-specific agreement, a fire restoration program with the Los Padres National Forest. This work complements efforts supported through the annual USFS-NFWF partnership where NFWF awarded \$3 million in USFS appropriated funds, and another \$15.9 million in other agreement funds, to support 50 projects resulting in a total investment of more than \$18.9 million. NFWF has leveraged \$48.5 million in USFS directly appropriated funds into over \$283 million to benefit forest species and ecosystems. These projects focused on the conservation and restoration of wet meadows in California, watersheds of the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay, Western

grasslands, early successional forest habitat, Northern Rockies migratory corridors, and salmon habitat in Southeast Alaska. NFWF and USFS also partnered to support conservation employment opportunities for youth on public lands, monarch butterfly conservation, urban watershed restoration, eastern brook trout recovery, fuels management, and longleaf pine ecosystem enhancement.



NFWF and U.S. Department of Interior's **Bureau of Land Management** (BLM) partner on conservation efforts benefiting the nation's critical public-land ecosystems. The partnership has leveraged \$54.2 million in BLM appropriated funds into more than \$233 million to support habitat restoration and species recovery activities. In fiscal year 2015, NFWF leveraged \$2.4 million in BLM appropriated funds into \$12.8 million to support more than 40 conservation projects benefiting native fish and plant habitat restoration on BLM lands. BLM funds were used for a youth conservation employment initiative in partnership with USFS and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to provide public land conservation and employment opportunities to more than 600 young people. During fiscal year 2015, NFWF and BLM partnered to support monarch butterfly conservation efforts in the Western states and engaged in a new Pacific seabird monitoring program at the California Coastal National Monument. Other focal areas and species include the North Slope of Alaska, Northern Great Plains, Northern Rockies wildlife corridors, and Lahontan cutthroat trout. New partnerships are being developed for 2016.



NFWF's partnership with the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) supports innovative, large-scale nutrient and sediment reduction efforts, as well as community-based watershed restoration. Since 1998, NFWF's grant programs sponsored by the agency have awarded over 1,870 grants leveraging \$131 million in EPA funds into more than \$383 million for restoration projects benefiting our nation's water quality. In fiscal year 2015, NFWF awarded \$15.7 million in EPA funds to 116 projects resulting in more than \$45.8 million through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, the Sustain Our Great Lakes program (in partnership with FWS), the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, and the Five-Star and Urban Waters Restoration grant program.



In fiscal year 2015, NFWF continued to work under a grant with the **U.S. Bureau of Reclamation** (Reclamation) to develop and implement the Walker Basin Restoration Program in Nevada and California. The Program's primary objective is to restore and maintain Walker Lake, with a secondary objective of protecting agriculture, environmental and habitat interests. In fiscal year 2015, the program spent \$8.1 million on acquisitions and an additional \$8.9 million on stewardship grants that support overall conservation efforts within all Desert Terminal Lake basins, which includes the Walker, Truckee, Carson and Summit lake basins. Reclamation also provided a third year of support for a multi-agency conservation youth employment program. The year ended with the signing of a multi-year partnership to support restoration and water flows in the Lower Klamath Basin.



In partnership with the **Bonneville Power Administration** and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, NFWF supports an innovative, grassroots, incentive-based program to improve river and stream flows for imperiled fish throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. The Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (CBWTP), founded in 2002, is the first regional effort of its kind in the United States to enhance flows in tributaries through cooperative partnerships with farmers and ranchers. In fiscal year 2015, the CBWTP spent \$2.62 million on a combination of permanent and temporary water purchases to restore more than 32,000 acre-feet of instream flow to rivers and streams of the Columbia Basin. These flow enhancements boost high-priority, fish-bearing habitats across the region.



NFWF continued to expand its relationship with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's **Natural Resources Conservation Service** (NRCS) through the development of a Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund and the receipt of two Regional Conservation Partnership Program awards, one for the Chesapeake Bay and the other for the Delaware River watershed. These new programs build on the continuing partnerships that support longleaf pine restoration in the Southeast, Great Lakes,

and the Upper Mississippi River. In total, NFWF has leveraged more than \$66 million in NRCS funds into over \$255 million in on-the-ground conservation. In fiscal year 2015, NFWF supported 52 projects leveraging \$4.9 million in NRCS funds into \$27 million to support conservation on private working lands.



The Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency partnership was expanding in fiscal year 2015 to include a stronger focus on metrics and evaluation. The **Department of the Interior** (DOI) provided \$18 million to support efforts to develop and implement socioeconomic metrics, evaluate program outcomes, and develop lesson learned material associated with the 54 grants approved in 2014. NFWF continued to work with DOI to manage its 21st Century Conservation Service Corps program. Additional support was received from American Eagle Outfitters, Coca-Cola Foundation, and American Express to support employment opportunities for youth and veterans that benefit our nation's public lands.



NFWF, in partnership with the **U.S. Department of the Navy** and **U.S. Marine Corps** Installations East-Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, is working to conserve, restore and manage habitat for the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) in Coastal North Carolina. The objective of the partnership is to enhance the biological function of RCW populations off-base to ensure the military mission of Camp Lejeune is sustained and preserved over time. In fiscal year 2015, \$5 million was provided to NFWF to support activities associated with the first off-base restoration site.

**In 2015, NFWF also worked with the following agencies:**

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Department of Defense  
International Boundary and Water Commission  
Marine Mammal Commission  
U.S. Coast Guard

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A scarlet tanager sings in the woods of Virginia.

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In 2015, generous gifts from these donors furthered NFWF’s actions to protect and restore wildlife and their habitats. We greatly appreciate their support.

\$500,000+

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