

Sea Turtle Early Restoration

Phase IV Early Restoration Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Sea Turtle Early Restoration Project will help restore sea turtles by addressing threats on their nesting beaches and in the marine environment. The three sea turtle species that will be addressed by this project—Kemp's ridley, green, and loggerhead—are all protected by the Endangered Species Act. This project will be implemented by the Department of the Interior (DOI), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Texas Trustees over a 10-year period.

The project is comprised of four components:

Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Nest Detection and Enhancement:

This project component will be implemented by DOI and Texas Trustees, and will enhance existing programs for the detection and protection of Kemp's ridley nests by providing additional staff, training, education activities, equipment, supplies and vehicles. Both DOI and Texas will provide funding to agencies and organizations involved in these activities in Texas. Texas Trustees will provide funding through the Gladys Porter Zoo for a joint United States/Mexico conservation program in Mexico. The project will also provide for the addition of two staff cabins and two nesting corrals on the southern end of the Padre Island National Seashore, which will reduce risk associated with transporting eggs long distances over remote and rough terrain.



TPWD - Earl Nottingham

Kemp's ridley sea turtle hatchling at Padre Island National Seashore

Enhancement of the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network and Development of an Emergency Response Program:

This project component will be implemented by NOAA, the Texas Trustees and DOI, and will improve response capabilities to recover dead and injured sea turtles. The Texas Trustees and DOI will enhance the existing Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network's capacity and rehabilitation efforts in Texas. NOAA will enhance the network's current capacity across all five states in the Gulf of Mexico. NOAA will also develop a formal Emergency Response Program within the Gulf to increase the survival of sea turtles during cold stun and other emergency stranding events.

Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Trawl Bycatch Reduction:

This project component will be implemented by NOAA, and will enhance two existing NOAA programs that work to reduce the bycatch of sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico. The existing Gear Monitoring Team program will be expanded to include additional staff, providing a greater capacity for education and

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outreach to the shrimp fishing community to improve compliance with federal Turtle Excluder Device regulations. The existing Shrimp Trawl Fisheries Observer Program will be expanded to include an additional observer days per year within the shrimp trawl fishery in the Gulf of Mexico.

Texas Enhanced Fisheries Bycatch Enforcement:

This project component will be implemented by the Texas Trustees. It will enhance Texas Parks and Wildlife Department law enforcement activities for fisheries that incidentally catch sea turtles while they operate primarily in Texas state waters (approximately 367 miles of coastline out to 9 nautical miles). These increased enforcement operations will focus on compliance with Turtle Excluder

Device regulations during the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery season (primarily February through mid-May) to reduce turtle bycatch.

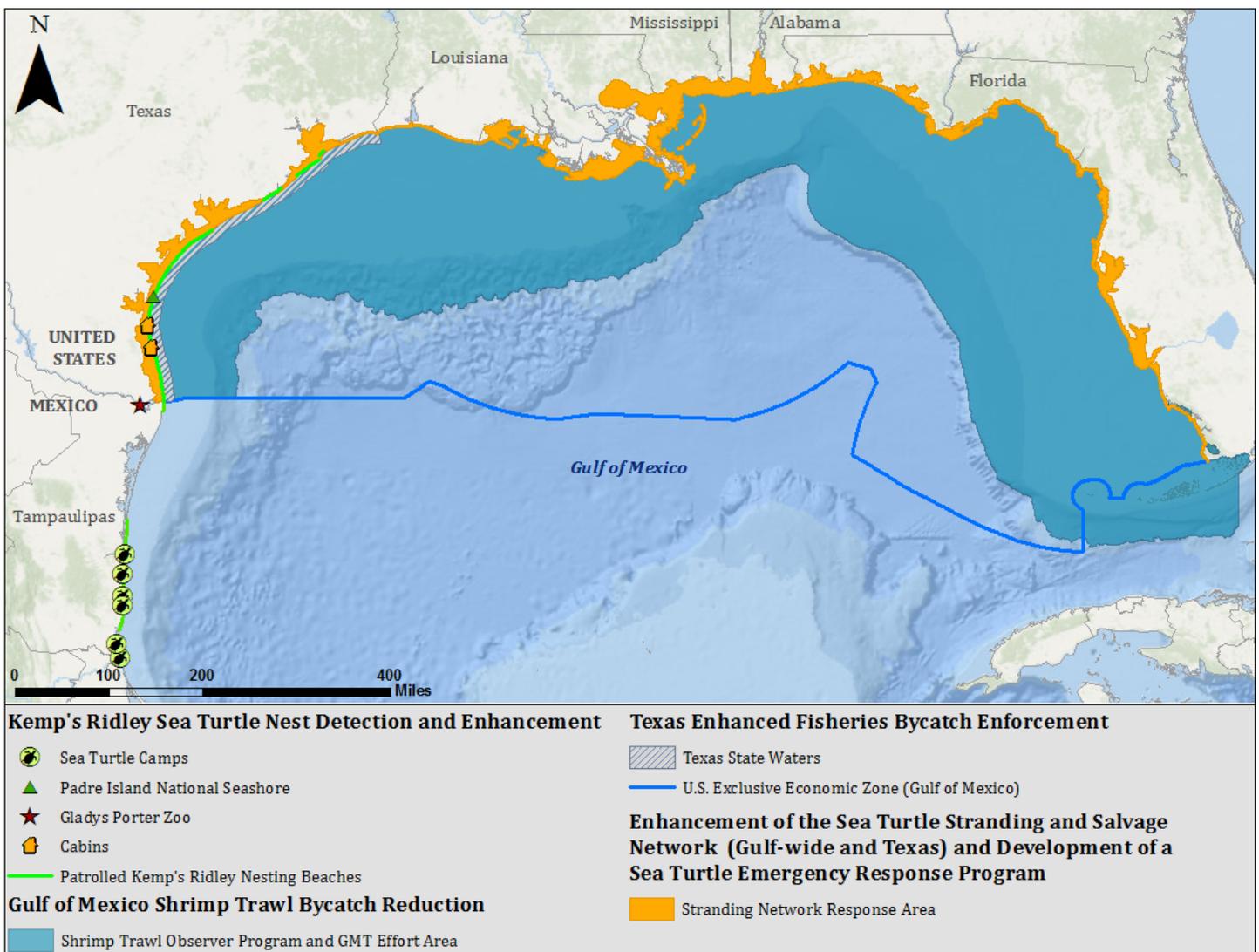
ESTIMATED COST : \$45,000,000

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