



OPEN OCEAN RESTORATION AREA

# Gulf-Wide Sea Turtle Stranding Network and Emergency Response Enhancements (*preferred*)



Stranded juvenile sea turtle rescue  
Photo by Escambia County Marine Resources Division

**RESTORATION TYPE:** Sea Turtles

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project would reduce the risk of sea turtle mortality from stranding events by continuing and expanding Gulf of Mexico Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (STSSN) activities. The STSSN responds to stranded sea turtles, rehabilitates and releases live-stranded sea turtles, and conducts necropsies to understand mortality of dead, stranded sea turtles. Project activities would include STSSN coordination, emergency response, and data collection and management. This project would build upon existing efforts from Early Restoration Phase IV ([Sea Turtle Early Restoration Project, Enhancement of the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network and Development of an Emergency Response Program component](#)).

This project, estimated to cost \$11 million, would be implemented over approximately 8 years. Approximately \$5.7 million of the project cost would be funded from the Open Ocean's Monitoring and Adaptive Management allocation.



## PROJECT BENEFITS

- Increase sea turtle survival during emergency events through improved response
- Improves understanding of sea turtle mortality through enhanced data collection and management





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The STSSN activities implemented by this project would benefit all five species of sea turtle found in the Gulf of Mexico, especially loggerhead, green, and Kemp's ridley sea turtles, which are the most frequently stranded species.

The STSSN activities proposed in this project would enhance network coordination, response capacity and emergency preparedness, mortality investigations, and data analysis and sharing. Coordination activities would include training response staff and enhancing reporting protocols. Emergency response activities would include assisting local partners by bridging gaps in funding during an emergency event. Data management activities (funded from the Open Ocean Monitoring and Adaptive Management allocation) would include enhancing data analysis and sharing across the Gulf of Mexico for use in planning, implementation, evaluation, and prioritization of restoration needs.

By funding the continuation and expansion of STSSN activities, this project would continue the high level of surveillance and data sharing across the Gulf that is necessary for restoration and adaptive management targeting critical threats to sea turtles. Data collected by the STSSN, including from mortality investigations, is vital to managers, who use these data to identify threats and target current and future restoration efforts.



The STSSN works with partners across the Gulf of Mexico, allowing for response and coordination along the full coastline.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/open-ocean](http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/open-ocean)

