

2023 ANNUAL REPORT
40TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



NFWF





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.



Leatherback sea turtle hatchling off south Florida

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Building a Better Future

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF NFWF’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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NFWF’S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Trusted Leader in Conservation

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Founded by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has grown over the past four decades to become the nation’s largest conservation foundation.

40 SPECIES FOR 40 YEARS 56-71

Enjoy some of the nation’s best wildlife photography while learning about some of the many wildlife species supported by NFWF, its grantees and its funding partners over the past 40 years.



Conservation Efforts Will Shape Our Future

JENNIFER MULL NEUHAUS
CHAIR, NFWF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

I am truly honored to begin my service as Chair of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Board of Directors as we celebrate 40 years of dedicated work to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats.

I write to you today with great optimism and hope for the future. At NFWF, we see firsthand how conservation efforts unite people from all walks of life toward a common goal of building a better future for our nation and the world.

Conservation offers us the tremendous opportunity to recognize shared interests and work together. We all want to ensure the continued existence of spectacular natural landscapes and bountiful seas. We all want to share the world with abundant wildlife, in all its wondrous diversity. We all need clean water, clean air and secure sources of healthy food. We all want our communities shielded from the worst effects of a changing climate. We all want to leave behind a healthy planet for our children and grandchildren.

But we cannot achieve these goals without direction, collaboration and resources. At NFWF, bringing all parties to the table to provide these essential ingredients for successful conservation is what we do best.

Over the 40 years since its creation by Congress in 1984, the Foundation has leveraged its unique position to make crucial connections between conservation funders — including corporations, foundations, Congress, federal agencies and philanthropists — and the thousands of grantee organizations performing the tough boots-on-the-ground work in the field.

NFWF marks its 40th anniversary this year having surpassed historic milestones — more than 22,100 grants awarded to more than 6,800 grantees since 1984. NFWF investments and matching contributions from grantees pushed the total conservation impact of these projects to more than \$10 billion by the end of this past calendar year. What an amazing achievement!

2023 OVERVIEW: BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

I am proud to report that NFWF's conservation investments and partnerships continued to grow throughout 2023, generating immediate and long-lasting benefits for wildlife and communities in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

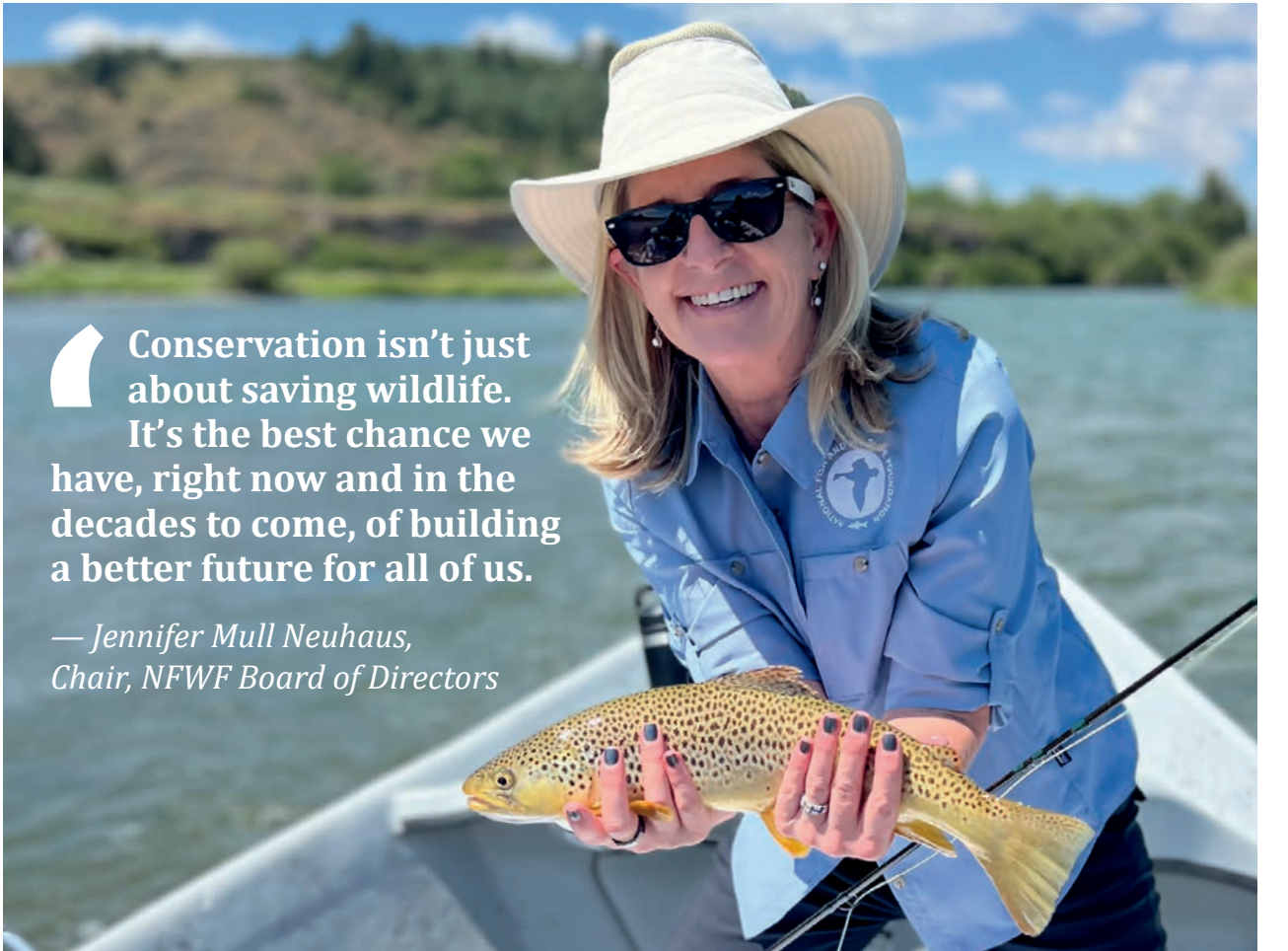
In fiscal year 2023 alone, the Foundation and its funding partners invested \$1.3 billion to support 797 conservation projects across the nation. These investments enabled conservation stakeholders to boost coastal resilience, improve the health of forests and grasslands, and provide immediate benefits to wildlife populations facing urgent challenges.

In the pages ahead, we will share conservation success stories from this remarkable year. You will learn about strategies adopted by NFWF to ensure continued growth in conservation funding and implementation. You will see examples of the great work our grantees are doing throughout the nation and learn about the generous support of our many partners in the public and private sectors.

The size and scope of the projects we funded grew dramatically in 2023, including an unprecedented award of \$660 million to support Louisiana's coastal restoration under the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund.

The Foundation also greatly expanded the ranks of our grantee organizations. NFWF funded vital projects undertaken by conservation nonprofits we've been supporting for decades, but we also built and expanded new relationships. Major new initiatives launched in 2023 brought new parties to the table for conservation, including state and local governments, Tribal authorities and stakeholders from the nation's agricultural sector.

You will find these stories, and more, in the "2023 Annual Report" section in the first half of this publication.



Conservation isn't just about saving wildlife. It's the best chance we have, right now and in the decades to come, of building a better future for all of us.

— Jennifer Mull Neuhaus,
Chair, NFWF Board of Directors

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

In the second half of this publication, we celebrate the Foundation's 40th anniversary and explore NFWF's rich history of partnership, science-based conservation and rapid growth in conservation investments.

You will learn how NFWF grew from a tiny conservation nonprofit to become a national leader in conservation whose projects have generated more than \$10 billion in on-the-ground impact.

You will also see examples of the many types of wildlife that have benefited from NFWF's grant-making, from the mighty moose to beloved monarch butterflies ... and everything in between.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT 40 YEARS

While it's gratifying and inspiring to look back on what NFWF and its many partners throughout the nation were able to accomplish in 2023 — and over the past 40 years — we recognize that we also must focus on what lies ahead.

We are proud to demonstrate growth in conservation funding, conservation outcomes, capacity and support, but we know that we cannot

become complacent. We must be bolder and aim even higher because the challenges we face are growing even faster, in scope, complexity and gravity. Rapid and widespread loss of natural habitats, declining populations of wildlife, disruptions of migratory pathways, increasingly destructive storms and wildfires, rising temperatures and sea levels — these are just a few of the challenges we face.

Conservation isn't just about saving wildlife. It's the best chance we have, right now and in the decades to come, of building a better future for all of us.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank all the grantees and private and public partners who joined with us to make such an impact over the first 40 years. Together we can — and we will — build upon these achievements to fulfill our vital mission and safeguard a bright future ahead.

Happy 40th anniversary, NFWF!



JENNIFER MULL NEUHAUS
CHAIR, NFWF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

About NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is the nation's largest conservation foundation and one of its most trusted, dependable and effective conservation leaders.

NFWF is a private, independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to sustaining, restoring and enhancing the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. The Foundation was created by Congress in 1984 — and reauthorized in 2020 by a unanimous vote of the Senate and the House — to build public-private partnerships that increase the resources available for conservation in order to advance the science and practice of conservation throughout the United States.

NFWF is governed by a 30-member Board of Directors appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. The Foundation uses public funding as a springboard to build new partnerships with major corporations, philanthropic foundations and individual donors to fund conservation projects based on sound science and designed to produce measurable results. NFWF supports projects that draw voluntary participation by landowners, community leaders and natural resource managers across the nation.

NFWF's staff provides unrivaled expertise in the implementation of competitive grant programs, maximization of conservation returns on philanthropic investments, and analysis of results on the ground. The Foundation bridges the gap between corporate and federal leaders focused on resilience and sustainability and the conservation professionals working every day to develop nature-based solutions that sequester carbon and mitigate the negative effects of climate change.

The Foundation does not fund advocacy or litigation, and does not conduct membership campaigns. Instead, NFWF remains sharply focused on building public-private partnerships that support highly vetted, on-the-ground conservation projects. In fiscal year 2023, NFWF invested 96.2 percent of its revenue into conservation programs, and 3.8 percent on management and fundraising.

Over the past 40 years, NFWF has funded more than 22,100 projects and supported more than 6,800 grantee organizations. The Foundation's investments since its founding have leveraged matching contributions from grantees and other partners to generate a total conservation impact of **\$9.8 billion** by the end of fiscal year 2023.

To learn more about the Foundation,
please visit nfwf.org



FISCAL YEAR 2023

\$1.7 BILLION

TOTAL CONSERVATION IMPACT
NFWF's investments and grantee
match in fiscal year 2023

\$1.3 BILLION INVESTED BY NFWF

The Foundation awarded \$463 million in federal funds and \$76 million in private contributions. NFWF also awarded \$765 million in Impact-Directed Environmental Accounts funds, including \$743 million from the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund.

**\$410 MILLION IN
MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS**

Investments made by our grantees

797 PROJECTS

Across all states and U.S. territories

1984–2023

\$9.8 BILLION

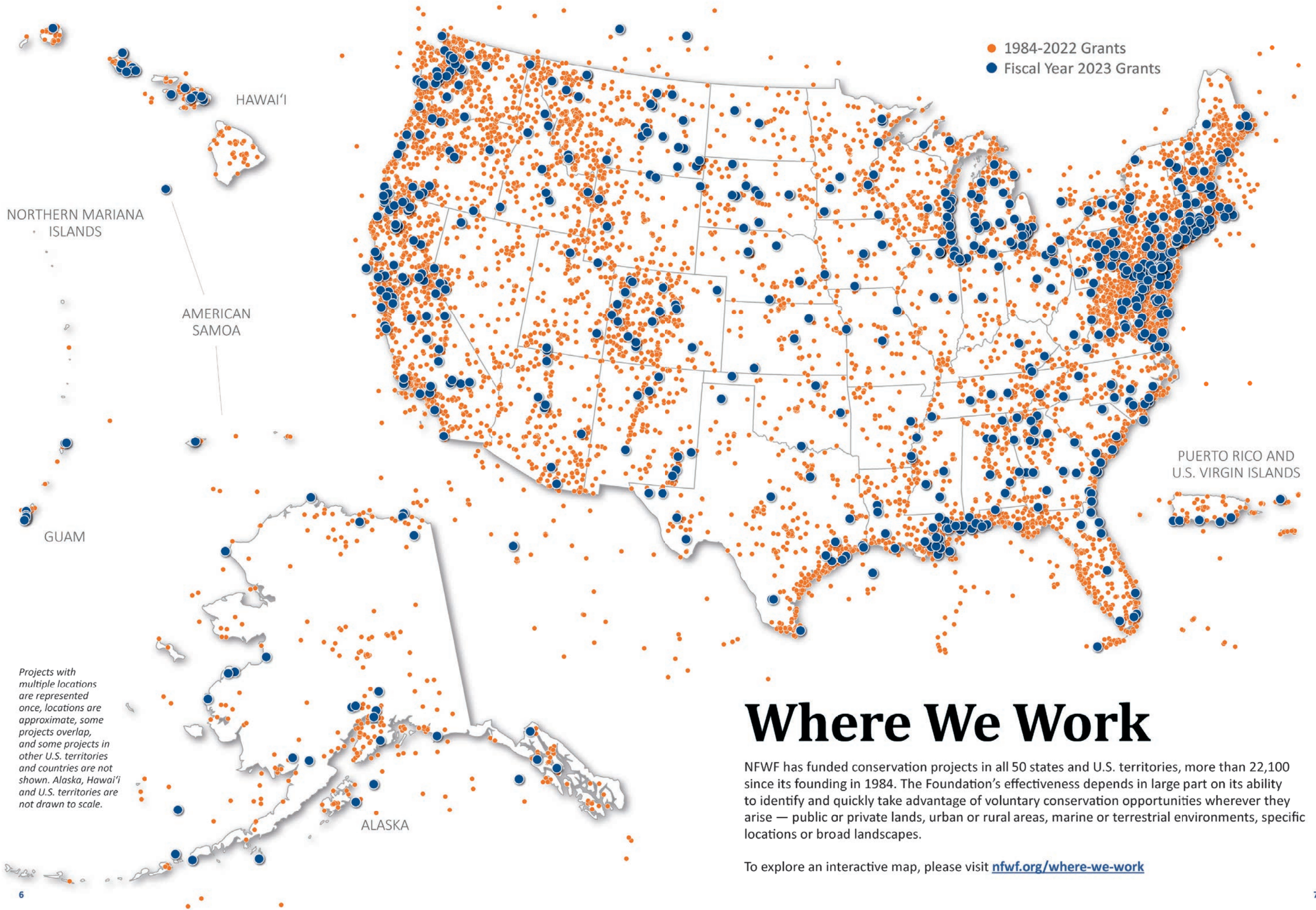
TOTAL CONSERVATION IMPACT
NFWF's investments and grantee match,
from 1984 through the end of fiscal year 2023

22,100+

Projects funded throughout
all states and U.S. territories

6,800+

Grantee organizations funded throughout
all states and U.S. territories



Where We Work

NFWF has funded conservation projects in all 50 states and U.S. territories, more than 22,100 since its founding in 1984. The Foundation's effectiveness depends in large part on its ability to identify and quickly take advantage of voluntary conservation opportunities wherever they arise — public or private lands, urban or rural areas, marine or terrestrial environments, specific locations or broad landscapes.

To explore an interactive map, please visit nfwf.org/where-we-work



NFWF

In fiscal year 2023, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awarded \$1.3 billion to 797 projects that will generate a total conservation impact of \$1.7 billion.

The benefits of these investments extend well beyond wildlife populations and natural habitats.

Conservation projects undertaken by NFWF's grantees improve quality of life for people across the nation, from major metropolitan areas to suburbs, farms and ranches, Tribal lands, family-owned timberlands and island communities.

Landscape-scale conservation efforts bolster the resilience of communities facing increasingly intense storms, wildfires, droughts and floods. Healthy grasslands, forests, wetlands and marine environments help sequester more carbon and mitigate the effects of climate change.



2023: Building a Better Future

NFWF works with funding partners and grantees to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Competitive grant processes and scientific analyses ensure that investments support the most effective conservation practices.

The day-to-day work of advancing conservation throughout the United States encompasses a complex array of funding sources, on-the-ground implementers, tools and practices, scientific analyses and efforts by stakeholders from all walks of life.

The ecosystems found across the United States and its territories are as richly diverse as the communities, cultures and individuals who share those places with native wildlife. Conservation priorities, strategies and practices are similarly varied.

In some places, the conservation of limited fresh water ranks as the top priority. In others, it's the need to mitigate flooding and prevent stormwater runoff from polluting aquatic habitats.

In some places, an urgent threat to a particular species demands quick action. In others, conservation is more of a long game — multiple-year efforts to improve enormous swaths of native grasslands or forests to benefit both wildlife and people.

In some regions and communities, natural resource managers and well-established conservation nonprofits stand ready to take on big projects. In other places, a lack of conservation capacity presents a challenge ... and an opportunity.

Throughout 2023, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation demonstrated its ability to understand, navigate and advance conservation — whatever the challenge, wherever the location. Its unparalleled network of partnerships and 40 years of experience enabled the Foundation to identify and fund the most effective conservation projects in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

In established focal landscapes, NFWF built on successes and stakeholder relationships to expand conservation efforts to unprecedented scales. In

developing focal landscapes, NFWF brought new partners to the table and helped grantees, local governments and other resource managers develop a pipeline of future conservation projects.

Trust is the key to unlocking these new conservation opportunities. The Foundation's staff and grantees understand how conservation affects daily lives, and they know the best ways to engage voluntary stakeholders. Private landowners, public land managers, Tribal authorities and community leaders trust NFWF to focus efforts and funding on what works — not just for wildlife, but also for individuals and communities.

NFWF's partners across the nation recognize that conservation investments yield benefits that extend far beyond wildlife populations and natural habitats.

Restoring coastal marshes, barrier islands and coral reefs protect biodiversity while also making communities and local economies more resilient to storms, erosion and sea-level rise.

Healthy forests don't just protect habitats for migratory songbirds and other wildlife. Trees also capture carbon, generate oxygen, and cool streams and communities.

Restoring native grasslands and implementing conservation practices on agricultural lands don't just provide vital habitats for pollinators, birds and iconic large mammals. Such efforts also help boost rural vitality and improve agricultural operations.

Improving stormwater management and restoring wetlands don't just ensure cleaner water for fish, amphibians and other aquatic organisms. These projects also protect communities from flooding, cleanse drinking water, create jobs and enhance local recreational opportunities.

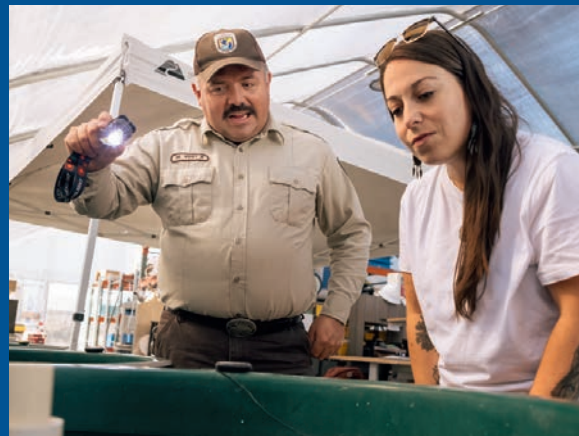
Trust is the key to unlocking new conservation opportunities. The Foundation's staff and grantees understand how conservation affects daily lives, and they know the best ways to engage voluntary stakeholders.

GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS



CONSERVATION NONPROFITS

Throughout 2023, NFWF awarded grants to many of the nation's largest and most impactful conservation nonprofits, including The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, World Wildlife Fund, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. The Foundation also supported the work of smaller but vital nonprofits, including many working in urban areas to plant trees, manage runoff and provide valuable opportunities for all people to connect with nature (above).



FEDERAL RESOURCE MANAGERS

NFWF works closely with federal agencies to identify and fund projects that advance conservation on and around public lands, support federal efforts to strengthen resilience, and build working partnerships between private landowners and federal agencies. NFWF also directly funds efforts undertaken by federal agencies, including through 2023 grant awards focused on salmon, trout, shortnose suckers (above), desert tortoises, Pacific seabirds, tundra-nesting birds and endangered freshwater mussels.

To ensure that conservation investments generate the greatest possible benefit to wildlife populations, natural habitats and local communities, NFWF uses science-based competitive grant programs focused on measurable results. Rigorous internal and external assessments continually advance the science and practice of conservation.

NFWF's conservation programs drew funding support from a wide range of partners in 2023, including some of the nation's leading corporations and philanthropic organizations. Public-sector support for NFWF's conservation programs grew, with major investments made possible by Congress and federal agencies fueling growth across dozens of new and ongoing NFWF conservation initiatives.

Some of the biggest investments of 2023 were made through the following conservation programs.

GULF ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT FUND

In March 2023, NFWF announced the award of **\$660 million** from its Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF) to the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. This award, the largest single conservation investment in the history of the Foundation, will support construction of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion project, a key component of an historic effort to reverse the loss of wetlands along the Louisiana coast.

The GEBF was established by NFWF in 2013 to receive and administer a total of \$2.544 billion paid by BP and Transocean in settlement of certain federal criminal environmental charges brought by the United States in the wake of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill. To date, the GEBF has invested more than over \$2.3 billion into 200 projects.

These awards will conserve and enhance coastal habitats, restore beach and dune habitats, protect habitat important to coastal bird species, enhance commercial and recreational fisheries, and increase the capacity of networks to respond to mass stranding events involving marine mammals and sea turtles.

NATIONAL COASTAL RESILIENCE FUND

With increased funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, NFWF's National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF) awarded **\$144 million** in competitive grants to support planning, design and implementation of nature-based resilience projects.

NCRF supports nature-based solutions that enhance the resilience of coastal communities and habitats to address increasing threats from storms, sea and lake level changes, flooding, erosion and other coastal hazards. NCRF invests in nature-based projects to protect communities from coastal hazards and enhance habitats for fish and wildlife.

By the end of fiscal year 2023, NCRF had





invested more than \$277 million into 270 projects, leveraging more than \$300 million in other funding for a total conservation impact of \$579 million.

NCRF is primarily funded by and coordinated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Department of Defense. Additional funding was contributed by Shell USA, TransRe, Oxy and Bezos Earth Fund.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL CHALLENGE

NFWF established the America the Beautiful Challenge in 2022 with a vision to streamline and centralize a nationwide grant-funding opportunity that could support a variety of voluntary conservation and restoration projects across the nation.

In fiscal year 2023, the program announced an inaugural slate of 55 grants totaling nearly **\$91 million**, leveraging \$50.7 million in matching contributions from grantees to generate a total conservation impact of about \$141.7 million.

Competitive grants are awarded to projects that showcase cumulative benefits to fish and wildlife, enhance carbon sequestration, engage with and benefit underserved communities, connect people with nature, support Tribal conservation efforts and help safeguard ecosystems and communities through resilience-focused and nature-based solutions.

Partners include the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Defense and Native Americans in Philanthropy, with additional support from Bezos Earth Fund.

IMPACT-DIRECTED ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNTS

NFWF's Impact-Directed Environmental Accounts (IDEA) department serves as a manager and trustee for funds arising from legal and regulatory actions involving natural resources and the environment. These funds originate primarily from court orders, settlements of legal cases, regulatory permits, licenses, and conservation and mitigation plans.

Under its Establishment Act, NFWF is authorized by Congress "to receive and administer restitution and community service payments, amounts for mitigation of impacts to natural resources, and other amounts arising from legal, regulatory, or administrative proceedings, subject to the condition that the amounts are received or administered for purposes that further the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources."

Throughout 2023, the IDEA department obligated nearly **\$23 million** that will benefit plant and animal species throughout the nation, from western Joshua trees, coho salmon and desert tortoises in California to sea turtles in Florida, muskellunge in New York, golden eagles in South Dakota and corals in Guam.

GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS



STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

NFWF awarded hundreds of grants to state and local governments across the nation in 2023 to protect and restore public lands, mitigate the risk of wildfire and flooding, and sustain native wildlife species. Major NFWF conservation programs awarded hundreds of millions of dollars to help cities, counties and states plan (above) and undertake once-in-a-lifetime projects to restore marshes and forests, reduce pollution flowing into waterways, and boost the long-term resilience of habitats, wildlife populations and human communities.



NATIVE AND TRIBAL NATIONS

Throughout 2023, NFWF invested in Tribally led conservation projects at an unprecedented level. The Foundation supported efforts by the Bristol Bay Native Corporation to conserve salmon in Alaska (above), the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to conserve rare and culturally significant species on their ancestral lands in North Carolina, and the Intertribal Buffalo Council to improve bison habitat in multiple western states. Other grants helped Tribal resource managers improve wildlife populations and restore culturally important lands.

GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS



FOREST RESOURCE MANAGERS

Conserving America’s forests remained a top priority for NFWF throughout 2023. The Foundation supported collaborative efforts of nonprofits, landowners and public land managers across the nation, from the vast hardwood forests of New England through the longleaf pines of the Southeast (above), aspen groves of the Rockies, pinyon-juniper woodlands of the Southwest and the legendary redwood groves of the West Coast. Activities included the planting of native trees, removal of excess fuels, controlled burns and restoration of dynamic forest structure.



AGRICULTURAL STAKEHOLDERS

NFWF continued to work closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and private-sector partners to help farmers and ranchers implement voluntary conservation practices. Grants have enabled stakeholders to improve grasslands, adopt cover cropping, conserve fresh water through efficient irrigation (above) and establish stream buffer zones. Projects unfolding across vast rural landscapes generate immediate benefits to wildlife and people while also advancing efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change.

CHESAPEAKE BAY STEWARDSHIP FUND

NFWF’s long-running Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund awarded 42 grants totaling **\$21.4 million**, leveraging an additional \$27.5 million in nonfederal match for a total conservation impact of \$48.9 million.

The investments included \$10 million of bipartisan infrastructure funding that directly contributed to 764 acres of wetlands restored, 22 miles of stream health improved and almost 14,000 acres with new conservation practices.

Partners include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Chesapeake Bay Program and Altria.

LONGLEAF LANDSCAPE STEWARDSHIP FUND

NFWF’s Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund expands, enhances and accelerates longleaf pine conservation across the ecosystem’s historical range. The fund supports projects that advance the longleaf pine ecosystem through collaborative efforts that contribute to the restoration goals of the America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative.

The fund awarded nearly **\$18 million** that leveraged more than \$14.7 million in matching contributions from the grantees, generating a total conservation impact of \$32.7 million. These projects will restore, enhance and conserve more than 350,000 acres of longleaf pine habitat.

Partners include Altria, Bezos Earth Fund, International Paper, Occidental, One Tree Planted, Orton Foundation, Southern Company, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

SUSTAIN OUR GREAT LAKES

NFWF’s Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) program announced **\$17.6 million** in grant awards that leverage \$25 million in matching contributions, generating a total conservation impact of \$42.6 million that will restore key habitats for wildlife, improve water quality and enhance urban greenspace throughout the Great Lakes basin.

The grants awarded in 2023 represented the largest single slate of grants ever awarded by the SOGL program, an achievement that is due to the continued, strong support of program partners and a historic investment from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

SOGL receives funding and other support from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Caerus Foundation, Cleveland-Cliffs, General Mills, USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service.

Pink-edged sulphur butterfly in Michigan





NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS

NFWF's Northern Great Plains Program awarded **\$15.6 million** to protect vital grassland habitat while also strengthening ranching operations and communities.

The 26 grants announced in 2023 will leverage \$30.1 million in matching contributions to generate a total conservation impact of \$45.7 million and benefit wildlife species such as pronghorn, Sprague's pipit, chestnut-collared longspur, Baird's sparrow and greater sage-grouse.

Partners include Bezos Earth Fund, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, Altria, Cargill, Marathon Oil, Nestlé and Oxy and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

DELAWARE WATERSHED CONSERVATION FUND

NFWF's Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund awarded **\$14.9 million**, leveraging \$20 million in matching contributions to generate a total conservation impact of nearly \$35 million.

The fund supports projects that conserve and restore natural areas, corridors and waterways on public and private lands. These efforts support native wildlife while also contributing to the health and economic vitality of the communities in the Delaware River watershed.

Partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, William Penn Foundation and AstraZeneca.

FARMERS FOR SOIL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

NFWF awarded more than **\$13.6 million** through its Farmers for Soil Health program, leveraging \$1.6 million in matching contributions for a total conservation impact of \$15.2 million.

These investments help agricultural producers implement voluntary adoption of cover cropping on farms across 19 states. These investments will further incentivize farmers and develop new markets through a digital marketplace that quantifies, verifies and facilitates the sale of climate-smart commodities.

Partners include the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Corn Growers Association, United Soybean Board and National Pork Board.

LONG ISLAND SOUND FUTURES FUND

NFWF awarded 41 new grants through its Long Island Sound Futures Fund totaling **\$10.3 million**, leveraging \$5.8 million in matching contributions to generate a total conservation impact of \$16.1 million.

The Long Island Sound is the second-largest estuary on the East Coast and one of North America's most biologically diverse. More than 23 million people live within 50 miles of the sound, and

GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS



MARINE RESOURCE MANAGERS

NFWF grants helped marine resource managers remove debris from sensitive marine environments, reduce bycatch of seabirds and sea turtles, and improve electronic monitoring of commercial and recreational catches. Other grants helped propagate and deploy critical reef-building species such as oysters and corals (above). Coastal resilience projects restored coastal marshes and established living shorelines that benefit countless marine species, including popular gamefish such as red drum and flounder.



WILDLIFE RESEARCHERS

NFWF's conservation grant-making is driven by science. In 2023, NFWF continued to fund scientific research that monitored wildlife populations and identified the most urgent conservation needs and most effective practices. Grants supporting research at Auburn University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Rutgers University, University of Hawai'i, University of Pittsburgh (above), Virginia Tech and many more institutions helped inform conservation of bats, bears, salmon, seabirds, songbirds (above) and many other at-risk species.



its watershed stretches 16,820 square miles across five states.

The Futures Fund supports efforts to test innovative approaches to conservation, deliver transformative projects, and engage people and communities that value the sound and take a direct role in its future.

Partners include Long Island Sound Study, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative, Zoetis Foundation, Avangrid Foundation and Covanta.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES IN 2023

NFWF awarded hundreds of more grants in 2023 through additional conservation programs.

The Acres for America conservation program, a longstanding collaboration between NFWF and Walmart, awarded another round of grants to protect pristine landscapes across the country.

Another long-running initiative, the ConocoPhillips SPIRIT of Conservation program, funded efforts to restore or enhance grasslands, sagebrush habitats, wetlands and coastal habitats for birds.

Other regionally focused programs supported the work of grantees throughout the central Appalachian Mountains, Southern Plains, Desert Southwest and Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley. In the Rocky Mountains, projects received funding from at least three NFWF programs: Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund, RESTORE Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Rangelands program.

NFWF's Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund continued to help Alaska Native groups and federal resource managers improve habitats for salmon species,

spectacled eiders and other wildlife.

The Hawai'i Conservation Program invested in much-needed efforts to address a number of urgent challenges facing the island chain's unique species of birds, corals, fish and marine mammals.

Numerous other programs focused on specific wildlife species also awarded tens of millions of dollars to crucial conservation work. The grants awarded through these initiatives in 2023 benefited everything from bats to Pacific seabirds, killer whales, corals, monarch butterflies and other pollinators.



2023

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

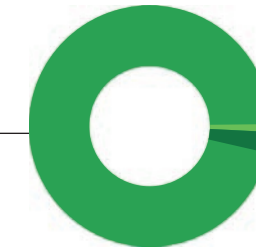
(in millions of dollars, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023)

	2023	2022
REVENUE, EXPENSES AND NET ASSETS		
Total Revenue and Support	\$432.6	\$386.3
Total Expenses	\$387.7	\$374.0
Change in Net Assets	\$44.8	\$12.3
Net Assets, beginning of year	\$286.7	\$274.4
Net Assets, end of year	\$331.5	\$286.7

USE OF FUNDS

\$387,735,062

Program/Mission **96.3%**
\$373,244,297



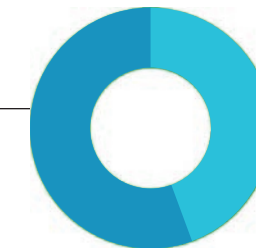
Fundraising **1.0%**
\$3,999,729

Management and General **2.7%**
\$10,491,036

TOTAL REVENUE

\$432,573,885

Nonfederal/Other **62%**
\$266,734,617



Federal **38%**
\$165,839,268

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

(in millions of dollars, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023)

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Cash and Investments	\$2,569.8	\$2,395.0
Other Assets	\$98.8	\$52.4
Total Assets	\$2,668.6	\$2,447.5
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities	\$2,337.1	\$2,160.8
Net Assets	\$331.5	\$286.7
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,668.6	\$2,447.5

CORPORATE PARTNERS

NFWF collaborates with many of America's leading corporations to implement philanthropic conservation strategies and invest in conservation projects based on sound science and measurable outcomes.



Altria supports conservation programs in the Chesapeake Bay, Columbia Basin, Cumberland Plateau, and longleaf pine ecosystems to conserve water, restore aquatic habitats, and promote more sustainable agriculture.



Bayer Crop Science is partnering with NFWF, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others to support work under the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund. Established in 2015, the Fund is catalyzing efforts to improve the quality, quantity and connectivity of habitat for monarch butterflies and other at-risk pollinators.



Cargill supports the Southern Plains Grassland Program, aiming to expand adoption of rancher-led conservation practices and accelerate the improvement of grazing lands across the region. By supporting ranching communities, NFWF and Cargill will invest in practices that enhance wildlife habitat and help tackle climate change, aligned with Cargill's BeefUp Sustainability initiative.



Aramco supports the Coral Reef Fund, which helps respond to the decline of one of the world's most valuable ecosystems in terms of ecological, economic and cultural capital.



Established in 2022, the partnership between NFWF and **Burger King** funds projects to assist ranchers and private landowners in implementing voluntary grazing lands management practices. Through this partnership, NFWF and Burger King will invest in ranching communities and work together to improve the health of grazing lands across the Southern Great Plains.



human energy

As a corporate partner of the Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative, **Chevron Corporation** is developing a new way to address conservation challenges in West Texas and Southeast New Mexico.



AstraZeneca's partnership with NFWF will plant and sustain one million trees in the United States by 2025. The tree planting effort will help to combat climate change by increasing carbon storage, while at the same time contributing to the restoration of water quality and wildlife habitats primarily within the Delaware River Watershed.



Cleveland-Cliffs supports conservation programs across the Great Lakes basin to restore critical wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and enhance the health and accessibility of the region's waterways.



VERSACE JIMMY CHOO MICHAEL KORS

Capri Holdings and NFWF are accelerating the adoption of regenerative agricultural and conservation practices by working with ranchers and local organizations to create a more sustainable future for the leather industry.



ConocoPhillips supports conservation programs spanning the Gulf of Mexico, Great Plains, Rocky Mountains and Alaska to improve important habitat and drive innovations for conserving high-priority birds and large mammals.



FedEx supports the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program, working in 18 U.S. cities to fund community-based conservation projects. With FedEx team member engagement, the projects restore watersheds, improve air quality, encourage environmental stewardship, and foster community environmental outreach and support.



General Mills supports projects that restore and enhance habitat for fish and wildlife in the Great Lakes Basin through the Sustain Our Great Lakes Program and in the Southern Great Plains through the Conservation Partners Program. The projects funded by General Mills help farmers accelerate the adoption of regenerative agriculture principles.



International Paper supports conservation programs in the coastal Carolinas, the Cumberland Plateau, the piney woods of Texas and Louisiana, and the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley. We work to restore and enhance many different forests in support of numerous terrestrial and aquatic wildlife including the red-cockaded woodpecker, the Louisiana black bear and the eastern hellbender.



As a corporate partner of the Northern Great Plains program, **Marathon Oil Corporation** is supporting projects designed to conserve mixed grass prairie and associated wildlife populations of the northern prairie.



Nestlé supports NFWF programs focused on implementing voluntary, rancher-led practices to help improve water management and restore wildlife habitats across more than 15 states in the Great Plains, Mountain West, Midwest and Southeastern portions of the United States.



NextEra Energy Resources supports the Bats for the Future Fund conservation program, which awards grants to help develop and deploy field treatments, management tools and conservation strategies for bat populations that are currently impacted or are likely to be impacted by white-nose syndrome.



Oxy works with NFWF, federal, state and private partners to support conservation efforts in areas where they operate. Oxy is a founding partner of the Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative and supports the RESTORE Colorado program, the National Coastal Resilience Fund, the Northern Great Plains program and the California Forests and Headwaters business plan.



Pūlama Lānaʻi supports the Kuahiwi a Kai: Lānaʻi Watershed Conservation Program, which focuses on watershed-scale strategies to protect and enhance Lānaʻi's coral reefs, native plants and animals, endangered Hawaiian petrel habitat, and sensitive coastal cultural sites, while fostering co-management with, and engagement of, Lānaʻi's community stakeholders.



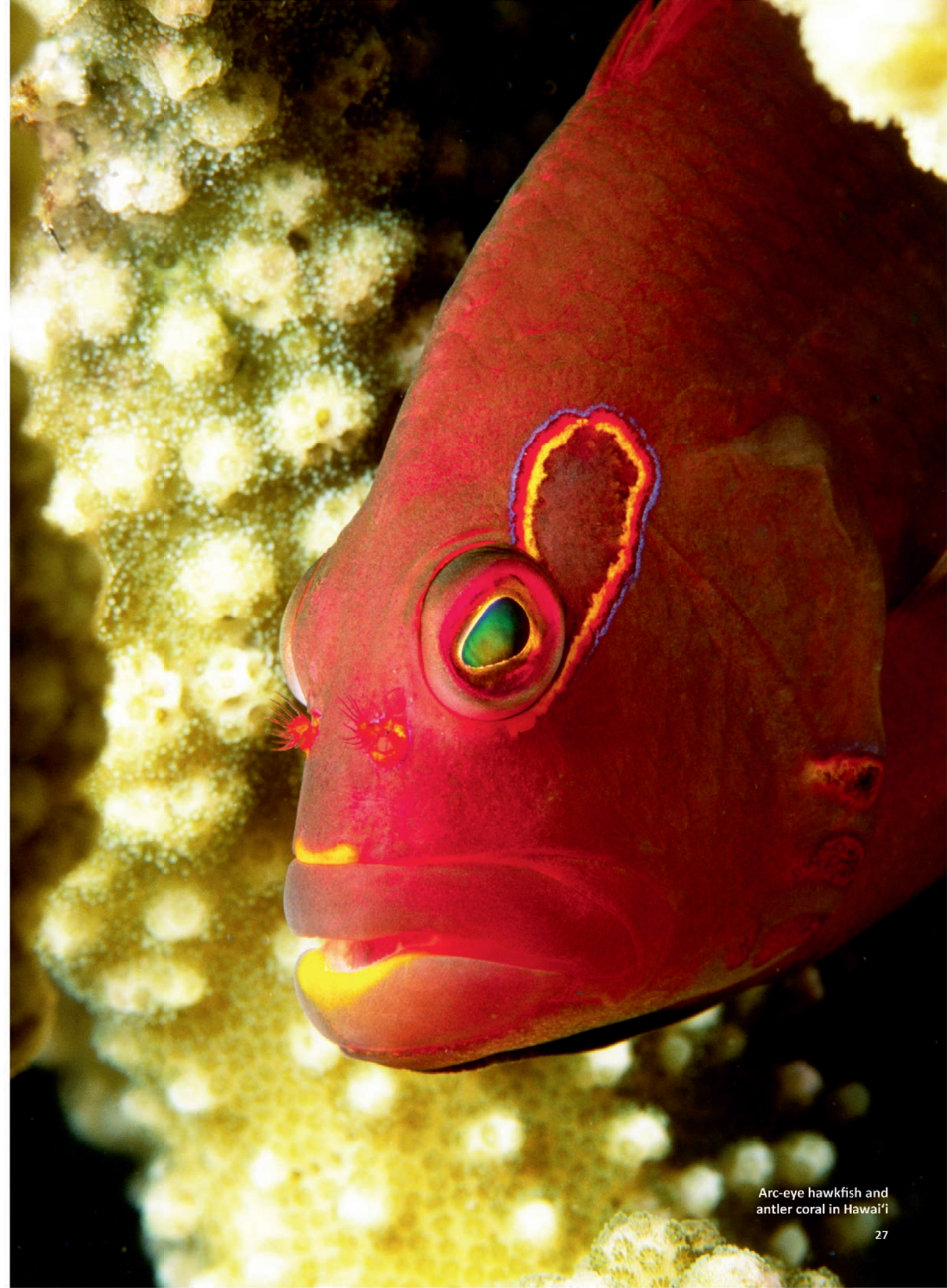
Salesforce began working with NFWF in 2022 to provide resources needed to accelerate and catalyze systemic change through on-the-ground nature-based solutions.



The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation partners with NFWF, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others to support work under the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund.



SeaWorld supports the Killer Whale Conservation Program as it works to recover the Southern Resident killer whale population in the Pacific Northwest.



Arc-eye hawkfish and antler coral in Hawaiʻi



The Shell Marine & Wildlife Habitat Program is a partnership between **Shell USA** and NFWF that supports conservation of priority habitats and species in the communities where Shell USA lives and operates. Since 1998, this partnership has funded more than 368 projects conserving key species and habitats across the nation.



Sierra Pacific Industries supports the Pacific Southwest Fuels Management Partnership conservation program to improve forest management and recovery of threatened and endangered species that depend on California's forested landscape.



Southern Company supports conservation programs primarily across the southeastern United States, but also beyond, in support of at-risk species recovery through both landscape-scale and community-based stewardship efforts.



Through the Southern Plains Grassland Program, **Sysco** and NFWF will help ranchers implement sustainable grazing practices to improve soil health, promote biodiversity and protect the environment for future generations.



Taco Bell supports NFWF programs focused on implementing voluntary, rancher-led practices to improve water management and restore wildlife habitat across the Intermountain West, a vast area stretching from the Colorado Rockies to the Great Basin.



The J.M. Smucker Co. supports the Conservation Partners Program, which invests in projects that provide farmers with technical assistance to accelerate the adoption of regenerative agriculture principles and conservation practices on private working lands.



TransRe supports the National Coastal Resilience Fund as it restores natural infrastructure to strengthen and protect coastal communities, and also enhances habitats for fish and wildlife.

UBS Optimus Foundation



The National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF) is supported by the **UBS Optimus Foundation**. The NCRF restores, increases and strengthens natural infrastructure to protect coastal communities while also enhancing habitats for fish and wildlife.



In partnership with NFWF, **Walmart's Acres for America** conservation program has helped to protect 2.1 million acres of vital wildlife habitat across the nation since its creation in 2005.



As a corporate partner of the Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative, **XTO Energy** is developing a new way to address conservation challenges in West Texas and Southeast New Mexico.



The **Zoetis Foundation** is supporting projects in the Northeast, with a specific focus in Vermont and New York, to help dairy farmers develop more sustainable businesses through tools to drive economic viability, thrive in increasingly dynamic marketplaces, and help protect family legacies.

FEDERAL AND STATE PARTNERS

NFWF was established by Congress in 1984 to conserve fish, wildlife and plant species through innovative partnerships with federal agencies, corporations, foundations, and nonprofit organizations to generate new resources for conservation.



Natural Resources Conservation Service



The **U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** provides farmers, ranchers, foresters and other private working landowners the tools they need to restore and protect the productivity of their lands. NFWF partners with NRCS to support outreach, education and conservation technical assistance on farms and ranches. The partners invest in projects that provide conservation benefits for wildlife, water quality and soil health, while at the same time strengthening local economies.

The partnership between NFWF and the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** was formalized by Congress in 1994. NOAA and NFWF work together to support marine and coastal conservation including sustainable fisheries, coral reefs, marine debris removal, sea turtles, and the restoration of living shorelines and other coastal habitats. The partnership also focuses on increasing ecosystem resilience by strengthening natural infrastructure to protect coastal communities and wildlife.



NFWF partners with the **U.S. Forest Service (USFS)** across the country, through both the national forest system and the state, private, and Tribal forestry programs. The partnership supports restoration of priority USFS landscapes, including national forests, national grasslands, and state and private forests within NFWF's priority landscapes. Partnership activities focus on forest management to improve forest health and resilience, fuels management to protect critical infrastructure and habitat, post-fire restoration, and grassland enhancement to support rural economies and sensitive wildlife species.



NFWF, in partnership with the **U.S. Department of Defense**, is working to conserve, restore and manage habitat off-base to improve military training and readiness on base. Actions include protecting installations and neighboring communities through the establishment of nature-based infrastructure, improving the status of priority species, and supporting the goals of the Sentinel Landscapes. The partnership is managed through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program.



NFWF works with the **U.S. Air Force** to support recovery of Tyndall Air Force Base from damage by Hurricane Michael. Funding supports the installation of nature-based solutions, including living shorelines, oyster reefs, and dune restoration to protect against future storms.



NFWF is implementing a 10-year conservation plan that will guide off-base activities to benefit desert tortoise in the Mojave Desert in partnership with the **U.S. Army** Fort Irwin and the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms. NFWF also partnered with USMC Air Station Camp Pendleton to support habitat conservation for federally listed species. These partnerships will improve military operations and species recovery, throughout Southern California.



NFWF and the **U.S. Navy** are implementing a five-year plan to support restoration of the limestone and ravine forest ecosystems on Guam to support resilience for the island's unique plant and animal species. The partnership builds off an existing program at the Pacific Missile Range Facility in Hawai'i where NFWF is helping to protect and enhance seabird colonies, enabling long-term recovery of the birds and improved operations at the base. NFWF also supports habitat conservation actions that benefit Chinook salmon, a key prey species for killer whales the Puget Sound in collaboration with Naval Base Kitsap.



In partnership with the **Bonneville Power Administration** and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, NFWF supports an innovative, grassroots, incentive-based program to improve stream flows for at-risk fish throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. The Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program, founded in 2002, is the first regional effort of its kind in the United States to enhance flows in tributaries through cooperative partnerships between flow restoration practitioners and farmers and ranchers. The program supports a combination of practices to restore instream flows to key Columbia Basin tributaries that support important anadromous and resident fish populations.



The **U.S. Department of the Interior** (DOI), working through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, supports a multi-Department effort to implement large-scale and cross-boundary conservation projects. These locally led, voluntary projects invest in corridors and connectivity, watershed restoration, forest and grassland conservation, community resilience, access, and workforce development. Funding from DOI goes to projects led by states, Tribal Nations and U.S. territorial governments.



The **Bureau of Land Management** (BLM) partners with NFWF to support migration corridors for big game such as elk, mule deer and pronghorn. The enhancement of these important migration routes provides outsized benefits to a suite of species, including sage-grouse, that depend on the health of these landscapes. NFWF also works with BLM to support conservation of desert tortoise habitat in the Mojave Desert of Southern California, and restoration of the Pecos River watershed in Permian Basin of New Mexico.



The **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** (FWS) has been a core partner since NFWF's founding by Congress in 1984. The partnership between FWS and NFWF benefits a wide range of landscapes and associated species nationwide including the Delaware River, Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Central Appalachia, Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley, Klamath Basin and the sagebrush ecosystem. FWS funding serves as the critical base to a broad range of NFWF conservation programs. The partnership allows NFWF to raise private-sector funds to amplify and complement the federal agency's conservation efforts across the nation, on both public and private lands.



NFWF works with the **Bureau of Reclamation** (Reclamation) within three defined watersheds. In the Middle Rio Grande of New Mexico, NFWF and Reclamation work with the local irrigation district and landowners to pilot voluntary water leasing and other conservation solutions that support the needs of the farming and ranching community while supporting fish habitat. NFWF also supports Reclamation's coho salmon recovery goals in the Lower Klamath Basin and Trinity River watershed through grant programs focused on improving flow and habitat in Northern California. In Western Nevada, NFWF works with the Walker Basin Conservancy under a Reclamation grant to restore and maintain Walker Lake while protecting agricultural interests and supporting new opportunities for public recreation in the Walker River Basin.



The **Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) and NFWF partnership began in 1999 with the Chesapeake Bay Program, where NFWF supports community restoration and large nutrient reduction grants that improve water quality through natural restoration. It soon expanded to include large-scale community-based conservation programs in the Great Lakes and Long Island Sound. NFWF also works with EPA to support community engagement and green infrastructure across the country through the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program.



NFWF partners with two state of Colorado entities on the RESTORE Colorado program that supports coordinated restoration, improvement and management of wildlife habitat within Colorado. Funding comes from **Great Outdoors Colorado**, which invests a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to help preserve and enhance the state's parks, trails, wildlife, rivers and open spaces. Additional support comes from the **Colorado Department of Natural Resources** through the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Habitat Partnership Program.

In 2023, NFWF also received funding or had active partnership agreements with the following entities:

- **Arizona Game and Fish Department**
- **CAL FIRE**
- **Los Angeles Department of Water and Power**
- **Milwaukee Metro Sewerage District**
- **New Mexico Department of Game and Fish**
- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**
- **U.S. Coast Guard**

FOUNDATION PARTNERS

NFWF works with many foundations to advance conservation across the country. These foundations actively supported NFWF conservation programs in 2023.



The **Arthur Vining Davis Foundations** support the Northern Great Plains program, which aims to conserve mixed grass prairie and associated wildlife populations of the northern prairie.



The **Crown Family Philanthropies** supports the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, which invests in the health and vitality of the communities, waterways and natural resources of Chicago and the Calumet region, and a new funder collaboration under the Sustain Our Great Lakes program, which will enhance habitat and water quality in Wisconsin's Lake Michigan watershed.



The **Gates Family Foundation** supports the RESTORE Colorado Program, which was established to fund large-scale restoration and stewardship projects across several habitat priorities in Colorado.



The **Bezos Earth Fund** is Jeff Bezos's \$10 billion commitment to fund scientists, activists, NGOs and other actors that will drive climate and nature solutions. By allocating funds creatively, wisely and boldly, the Bezos Earth Fund has the potential for transformative influence in this decisive decade. Funds will be fully allocated by 2030—the date by which the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals must be achieved.



The **Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation** supports the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, which invests in the health and vitality of the communities, waterways and natural resources of the Chicago/Calumet regions.



The **Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation** supports the Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund, which increases the resilience of communities and natural resources in Southeast Michigan by reducing the impact of stormwater, improving water quality, enhancing habitat, and increasing the accessibility and usability of public greenspace and natural areas. The foundation is particularly interested in the role of green stormwater infrastructure in reducing combined sewer overflows in the City of Detroit.



The **Hunter Family Foundation** supports the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, which aims to restore the health, vitality, climate resilience and accessibility of the waterways in Chicago and the Calumet region.



The **Center for Disaster Philanthropy** supports the RESTORE Colorado Program, which was established to fund large-scale restoration and stewardship projects across several habitat priorities in Colorado.

The Joyce Foundation

The **Joyce Foundation** supports the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, which invests in the health and vitality of the communities, waterways and natural resources of Chicago and the Calumet region.

THE
KRESGE
FOUNDATION

The **Kresge Foundation** supports the Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund, which increases the resilience of communities and natural resources in Southeast Michigan by reducing the impact of urban flooding caused by climate change and stormwater, by improving water quality, enhancing habitat, and increasing the accessibility and usability of public green space and natural areas.



Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies supports the Northern Great Plains Program, which directly maintains or improves 1 million acres of interconnected, native grasslands in focal areas within the Northern Great Plains to sustain healthy populations of grassland-obligate species while fostering sustainable livelihoods and preserving cultural identities.



Support from **Native Americans in Philanthropy** (NAP) funds the America the Beautiful Challenge (ATBC) match requirements for awarded Native Nation projects. The ATBC requires nonfederal matching funds from grantees, and the NAP contribution will cover the full match needs for these projects.



One Tree Planted supports longleaf pine plantings through the Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund.



The **Orton Foundation**, an affiliate of the Moore Charitable Foundation, founded by Louis Bacon, supports the Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund, which expands, enhances and accelerates longleaf pine ecosystem restoration across longleaf pine's historical range.



The **Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation** supports the resilience of communities and natural resources through the Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund and Sustain Our Great Lakes by reducing the impact of stormwater, improving water quality, enhancing habitat and increasing accessibility and usability of public green space and natural areas.



The **Richard King Mellon Foundation** supports NFWF's conservation efforts through the Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program, which works to improve the quality and connectivity of forest and freshwater habitat, and increase the distribution and abundance of native fish, birds and other wildlife.



The **Trinchera Blanca Foundation**, an affiliate of the Moore Charitable Foundation, founded by Louis Bacon, supports the Rio Grande Program, which improves the ecological function of the river mainstem and its headwaters by working collaboratively with stakeholders to restore aquatic and riparian habitats that directly support native fish and wildlife.



The **Walder Foundation** supports the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, which invests in the health and vitality of the communities, waterways and natural resources of Chicago and the Calumet region, and a new funder collaboration under the Sustain Our Great Lakes program, which will enhance habitat and quality in Wisconsin's Lake Michigan watershed.



The **Walton Family Foundation** supports NFWF's Fisheries Innovation Fund, Southwest Rivers Headwaters Program, RESTORE Colorado program and projects in the Lower Mississippi Watershed.



The **William Penn Foundation** funds the restoration of water quality and aquatic habitats of the Delaware River and its tributaries.



Swift fox
in Wyoming

2023 DONORS

In 2023, generous gifts from these donors furthered NFWF's actions to sustain and restore wildlife and their habitats. We greatly appreciate their support.

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CELEBRATING

40 Years of Wildlife Conservation

In the 40 years since its founding by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has grown to become the largest conservation foundation in the nation.

From its first annual grant awards of just \$184,164, NFWF has leveraged public-private partnerships to award conservation grants at unprecedented and unmatched levels — \$1.3 billion in fiscal year 2023, alone.

Through four decades of science-based and non-partisan conservation leadership, the Foundation, its grantees and its funding partners have generated a total conservation impact of \$10 billion.



NFWF

From Congressional Charter to Largest Conservation Foundation

Forty years ago, thousands of baby loggerhead sea turtles emerged from their sandy nests onto a quiet stretch of beach on Florida's coast. They clambered down the beach and charged headlong into the surf, embarking on a lifetime of ocean journeys.

The tiny hatchlings faced steep odds. Crabs, birds, sharks and other predators would take a heavy toll. But enough would survive to carry on a line of marine reptiles that stretches back to the age of dinosaurs.

Evolutionary adaptations over millions of years have given sea turtles a slight edge. By hauling themselves onto beaches and laying eggs en masse, sea turtles overwhelm predators through sheer numbers of hatchlings. Astounding navigational abilities enable them to return through open ocean to the beaches where they were born, giving their offspring the benefit of a birthplace with a proven record of success.

However, the baby turtles emerging in 1984 faced new threats, ones their ancestors had not evolved to overcome. The proliferation of homes, businesses and streetlights polluted the night sky with light that disoriented both adult females coming ashore to nest and hatchlings that would emerge months later. Fishing nets and boat traffic imperiled their migration through coastal waters.

These modern threats tipped the scales against sea turtles. By 1984, loggerheads and other species of sea turtles native to the United States faced extinction.

Fortunately, the hatchling class of 1984 ventured into the world along with a new ally, a unique conservation organization created by Congress that same year. Over the next four decades, this new force for conservation — the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) — would steadfastly support projects aimed at helping sea turtles and other wildlife survive the modern world.

And those baby sea turtles born in 1984? Many are now mature adults, coming ashore to nest

every summer along the same stretches of beach. Remarkably, and despite ongoing threats, they are doing so in record numbers.

How did things turn around for a species that once seemed destined for extinction? Public support for these charismatic creatures played a major role, as did laws requiring bycatch reduction measures and turtle-safe lighting. But so much more has been going on behind the scenes.

Since NFWF's earliest days, its grantees have been conducting critical research to better understand the challenges sea turtles face. Over the ensuing decades, NFWF grantees have helped private landowners embrace and afford turtle-safe lighting, trained fishermen in using safer gear, and built capacity to rehabilitate injured sea turtles. Landscape-scale projects to protect and enhance beaches, oyster reefs and other coastal habitats have not only helped sea turtles, but also strengthened the health and resilience of coastal communities.

The success of sea turtle conservation efforts shows that conservation works. Conservation can save wildlife while also benefiting human communities. Conservation really can make the world a better place.

1984: URGENT NEED FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

By 1984, many of the nation's fish and wildlife species were at risk. Industrial pollution had severely degraded the health of major watersheds. Habitat loss and degradation, pesticides and invasive species had decimated populations of waterfowl, bald eagles and other iconic bird species. Dams, roads and other structures cut off fish passage in streams and rivers. Urban development and resource extraction degraded vital habitats and historical migration paths for birds, mammals, reptiles and insects. Wildlife species across the United States — large and small, terrestrial and

aquatic — were suffering precipitous declines. The early 1980s also marked a time of decreased federal funding, a less-is-more approach to both government and environmental regulation. Fortunately, a bipartisan group of Congressional lawmakers recognized the urgent need to try something new. They envisioned a unique nonprofit foundation that could use public funding as a springboard to raise conservation funds from corporations, philanthropists and other sources in the private sector. This new organization would use those combined funds to support and amplify efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies to conserve wildlife and natural habitats.

The Foundation's board of directors would be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Transparency and political neutrality would be core characteristics.

In early 1984, Congress passed a bill authorizing the formation of this new organization. On March 26, 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed HR 2809, officially creating the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

NFWF started small, with just three employees administering the Foundation's first slate of grants, made in 1986. But the Foundation soon began to grow, forming new public-private partnerships to address conservation needs. NFWF's first federal partnership was formed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and its earliest corporate partners included Orvis, Bass Pro, Budweiser and Exxon.

BUILDING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

By the 1990s, NFWF had significantly expanded its conservation investments, reaching about \$25 million in awards through more than 500 grants annually. Many of the partnerships born in the late 1990s and early 2000s would prove successful, growing into major conservation efforts that continue to this day.

The Foundation expanded its partnerships with federal agencies and began administering settlement and mitigation funds to fund conservation. NFWF continued to emphasize matching contributions from grantees, which further leveraged contributions from public and private sources. Major corporate funding partners from this era included ConocoPhillips, Shell, Southern Company, and Walmart — all of whom remain funding partners to this day.

Several enduring federal partnerships also began in this era. Working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies, NFWF established what would become long-running programs focused on the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes and Long Island Sound. Another partnership with the federal Bonneville Power Administration created the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program to address chronically diminished stream flows in the Pacific Northwest.

Competitive grants would be awarded in accordance with long-term conservation business plans. Results would be measured, progress closely monitored, practices improved, successes built upon.

At the close of 2005, NFWF was awarding about \$50 million in grants annually. The Foundation also marked a major milestone: The total conservation impact of the projects supported since its founding — NFWF grants plus matching contributions — had exceeded \$1 billion.

A FOCUS ON MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

In 2006, NFWF began a remarkable transformation. Although the organization had been growing continuously, changes in strategy and organizational structure would unlock NFWF's true potential.

The Foundation implemented a new strategic plan that sharpened the competitive nature of its grant-making by prioritizing measurable results for wildlife. Metrics tied to focal species and habitats enabled robust, science-based analyses of conservation practices unfolding across all U.S. states and territories, including marine environments.

Relying on input from scientists and expert practitioners, NFWF established a business-plan approach to conservation. Science-based strategies identified priority conservation needs and specific practices to achieve measurable results to “move the needle” and bolster species recovery. Over the following years, these plans helped align and amplify conservation efforts among diverse grantees and across enormous landscapes and migratory pathways.

NFWF would stay lean, nimble and sharply focused on raising funds for wildlife and putting them to work in boots-on-the-ground projects across the nation.

Changes initiated in 2006 helped enhance NFWF's reputation among America's leading corporations as the gold standard for conservation investments. Partnering with NFWF meant a company's investments would support only the most effective conservation practices, undertaken by thoroughly vetted grantees. Funds would go to real-world conservation projects, not membership drives, marketing campaigns, political lobbying or environmental litigation. Competitive grants would be awarded in accordance with long-term conservation business plans. Results would be measured, progress closely monitored, practices improved, successes built upon.

Over this time, NFWF continued to strengthen relationships not only with funding partners, but also

Building a Resilient Future



Measurable Results for Wildlife

NFWF's conservation strategy includes a sharp focus on generating measurable results. Here are just a few examples of the real-world impacts of the Foundation's grant-making:

- **AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER:** Population increased 18 percent, from 12,453 to an estimated 14,735 individuals (2018-2023)
- **BLACK-FOOTED FERRET:** Population increased 55 percent at priority NFWF sites (2016-2022)
- **CHIRICAHUA LEOPARD FROG:** 25 new populations established by translocating tadpoles, juveniles and adults onto private lands in Arizona (2013-2016)
- **GOPHER TORTOISE:** Translocations of 6,500 gopher tortoises, helping to establish 12 new minimum viable populations (2018-2024)
- **NEW ENGLAND COTTONTAIL:** Occupancy rate in Maine increased by over 100 percent (2017-2023)
- **PELAGIC FISH:** 23,000 bluefin tuna and other open-ocean fish remained in the ocean due to voluntary repose in Gulf of Mexico pelagic longline fishery (2017-2021)
- **RED KNOT:** 81 percent increase in Delaware Bay after NFWF-supported beach habitat management and restoration (2022-2023)
- **RIVER HERRING:** Spawning populations in the Damariscotta River, Maine, increased from 500,000 to as many as 1.4 million fish (2008-2018)
- **RUSSIAN RIVER COHO SALMON:** Returning adults increased from less than 20 to 600 (2009-2021)
- **SEA TURTLES:** Over 8,000 endangered sea turtle nests protected from poaching, predation and flooding, resulting in roughly 350,000 new hatchlings (1984-2023)
- **SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHER:** Nesting pairs increased from 13 pairs to 79 pairs along the Middle Rio Grande River, New Mexico (2018-2022)

with thousands of conservation stakeholders working in all regions and landscapes of the United States. Grants supported some of the nation's largest and most well-known conservation organizations, as well as some of its smallest.

Throughout this era, NFWF also greatly expanded the ranks of its corporate funding partners. By 2009, the Foundation's coalition of 30 major private-sector funders included additional corporate heavyweights such as Altria, Bank of America, Chevron and FedEx.

Its federal partnerships had expanded to include the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Forest Service.

2010 OIL SPILL: A TURNING POINT FOR NFWF

On April 20, 2010, an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico exploded, killing 11 crew members and unleashing a torrential plume of oil from a well drilled into the seabed a mile below. By the time the well was sealed, 87 days after the explosion, approximately 134 million gallons of oil had been released into the Gulf.

Carried by currents and winds, oil from the spill fouled more than 1,300 miles of shoreline in the five Gulf States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. Oil was detected on more than 43,300 square miles of ocean, an area about the size of Virginia. The disaster inflicted a terrible toll on the Gulf's wildlife populations, habitats and human communities.

Having already spent decades funding conservation projects along the Gulf Coast, NFWF was prepared to act quickly. As emergency crews raced to contain the damage, the Foundation marshaled its conservation partners to save as much wildlife as possible. Through its Recovered Oil Fund for Wildlife, NFWF disbursed \$23 million to keep migrating birds and sea turtles out of harm's way. NFWF worked with FedEx and other partners to transfer 25,000 endangered sea turtle eggs from the Gulf Coast to the Atlantic Coast, one of the largest wildlife relocations in history.

NFWF's role expanded significantly in 2013 when the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana approved two plea agreements resolving certain spill-related criminal cases against BP and Transocean. These agreements directed more than \$2.5 billion to NFWF to support projects benefiting the natural resources affected by the spill.

NFWF launched the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF) in May 2013 and immediately began working with state and federal agencies and conservation nonprofits to guide the use of these funds.

Over the next decade, GEBF would invest more than \$2.3 billion to support 200 projects. These massive conservation projects have already protected and restored nearly 270,000 acres of coastal habitats, reversed declines in beach-nesting bird populations, improved sea turtle nesting success, bolstered fish populations and restored oyster reefs.

NFWF's role in Gulf recovery cemented its reputation as a trusted leader in national conservation efforts and as one of the fastest moving and most effective partners in times of crisis. The landscape-scale projects NFWF supported through GEBF also opened new opportunities to help strengthen coastal resilience and protect wildlife and communities along all of the nation's coasts.

By the end of 2010, NFWF had grown its annual grant-making to more than \$80 million, a record level of investment for the Foundation.

Much larger investments would soon follow.

RESILIENCE THROUGH WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

On Oct. 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy walloped the Eastern Seaboard, killing more than 70 people and causing tens of billions of dollars in damage, much of it in highly developed areas of New Jersey and New York but also in small towns throughout the Mid-Atlantic.

In the storm's wake, a number of federal, state and nongovernmental recovery efforts formed to strengthen coastal resilience along the northeastern U.S. coast. As part of that effort, the Department of the Interior teamed with NFWF to reduce communities' vulnerability by strengthening natural ecosystems that also benefit fish and wildlife. Over the coming years, NFWF would award more than \$100 million in public and private funds to restore key habitats and bolster natural systems, enabling them to withstand the impacts of future storms.

Given NFWF's proven track record of building public-private partnerships to respond with speed and scale to disasters, federal and corporate partners increasingly looked to NFWF to help identify and fund nature-based solutions that could address the intensifying threats posed by climate change.

As directed by Congress in 2018, NFWF and NOAA launched a program to help local governments, conservation nonprofits and natural resource managers strengthen coastal resilience for both people and wildlife. By the start of 2024, NFWF's National Coastal Resilience Fund had invested more than \$466 million into 400 projects.

Such resilience efforts were not limited to the nation's coastlines. A spate of increasingly destructive wildfires that plagued California and other western states from 2015 to 2020 led NFWF to expand its role in restoring fire-scarred forests and removing excess fuels from areas that faced the greatest threats.

At the same time, NFWF continued to provide critical support to conservation organizations focused on core conservation issues across the nation: habitats threatened by development, riparian buffers, invasive species, endangered species, migration routes, breeding sites, wintering grounds, marine pollution and more. The Foundation built new partnerships and programs focused on everything from grassland birds to elk, mule deer, monarch butterflies and bat populations being

Support for Grantees Across the Nation

NFWF appreciates the dedicated work of the more than 6,800 grantees that we have supported since 1984. Their conservation impact is unparalleled, and we thank them for their commitment. The list below highlights the top 40 grantees, in terms of dollars awarded, over 40 years:

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- American Bird Conservancy
- American Littoral Society
- American Rivers
- Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
- California State Coastal Conservancy
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- City of Virginia Beach
- Department of Public Works
- Conservation Resource Alliance
- Ducks Unlimited
- Escambia County
- Great Basin Land and Water
- Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas
- Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources
- Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife
- Island Conservation
- Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
- Manomet
- Mississippi State University
- National Audubon Society
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- National Wildlife Federation
- New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
- North Carolina Coastal Federation
- Pheasants Forever
- Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe
- Save the Sound
- Stroud Water Research Center
- The Conservation Fund
- The Freshwater Trust
- The Longleaf Alliance
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Trust for Public Land
- Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Trout Unlimited
- University of Nevada Reno
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- Walker Basin Conservancy
- Walker River Irrigation District
- Washington State Department of Transportation

wiped out by white-nose syndrome.

As fiscal year 2019 ended, NFWF marked its 35th anniversary with record conservation investments: More than \$507 million awarded to 930 projects in just one year. The cumulative conservation impact of all of the projects NFWF had supported since its founding — more than 18,600 — reached an astonishing \$6.1 billion. NFWF had grown to become a true powerhouse of conservation in the United States.

CONSERVATION IN THE COVID YEARS

In 2020, the nation's conservation community faced one of its greatest modern challenges — the Covid-19 pandemic. As disruption, fear and uncertainty roiled the nation and the world, U.S. conservation organizations faced existential threats to their business models, operations and ongoing conservation efforts. Covid threatened to wipe out years of hard-earned conservation gains, derail the launch of urgently needed projects and sicken many of the staffers and volunteers who do the difficult work of protecting and sustaining the nation's natural resources.

Luckily, decades of growth and careful fiduciary management enabled NFWF to step up for the nation's conservation community in this time of great need. NFWF funding kept projects alive and provided critical financial support for nonprofits struggling to weather the storm. Despite pandemic disruptions, the Foundation continued its run of rapid growth, announcing new partnerships and conservation initiatives in 2020 and 2021.

New partnerships with agricultural stakeholders enabled NFWF to greatly expand the scope of its grant-making across working lands. Landscape-scale projects in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains helped ranchers and farmers become better stewards of the wildlife habitats they own and manage, benefiting grassland birds and a host of other species. This growing conservation focus on working lands also strengthens the ability of grasslands to sequester carbon — a key consideration in modern conservation strategies.

In 2021, NFWF also announced a new partnership with the Bezos Earth Fund to support projects that advance carbon goals to address climate change, conserve wildlife biodiversity and boost the resilience of communities across the nation.

SCALING UP TO ADDRESS URGENT CHALLENGES

Like the country itself, America's conservation community emerged from the difficult years of 2020 and 2021 very much changed. Hot-button issues bubbling to the surface amid the pandemic years forced recalibrations at every level of society. Intensifying political acrimony, growing angst over climate change, economic whiplash — it's been a bumpy ride.

Throughout it all, NFWF has sought to offer an oasis of can-do optimism to its ever-increasing number of funding partners, grantees and conservation-minded friends across the nation.

Today, NFWF and its public- and private-sector partners remain focused on bringing all parties to the table to accelerate the scale and pace of conservation efforts. This diverse collection of conservation nonprofits, corporate leaders, lawmakers, philanthropists, private landowners, Tribal authorities, scientists, natural resource managers and volunteers is united in the belief that conservation funding and projects must grow, quickly and exponentially.

Done right, large-scale conservation projects generate benefits that cascade far beyond wildlife and natural habitats. Protection of forests and grasslands offers an immediate and effective method to sustain wildlife and support rural economies while sequestering carbon and mitigating climate change. Coastal resilience projects protect wildlife populations while also providing a buffer for communities threatened by more severe storms and rising sea levels. Concerted efforts to broaden the diversity of conservation stakeholders benefit underserved communities while also expanding capacity for on-the-ground implementation.

The Foundation's most recent rounds of grant-making bear this out on an unprecedented scale. NFWF worked with funding partners and on-the-ground implementers across the nation to address priority conservation needs for wildlife, enhance carbon sequestration and storage, and help safeguard ecosystems and communities through nature-based solutions.

As the Foundation enters its 40th year in 2024, it marks a milestone few would have imagined in 1984: The total conservation impact of all NFWF-funded projects — more than 22,100 — surpassed \$10 billion.

BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

What will become of baby sea turtles hatching this year? What new challenges will they face over the next 40 years? In 2064, will they be able to return to their natal beaches as full-grown adults to dig nests and lay eggs? Will rising sea levels, a hotter climate and the relentless loss of natural habitats drive them and other wildlife species to extinction?

The challenges faced by wildlife populations and human communities throughout the nation have grown beyond the capability of any one government body, nonprofit or industry to address.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, its funding partners and its grantees stand united in the firm belief that by working together, we can build a brighter future — not just for sea turtles, but for all of the wildlife, natural habitats and communities of the United States.

“The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem, it will avail us little to solve all others.”

— President Theodore Roosevelt, 1907



Snowy egret in Louisiana

NFWF TIMELINE

40 YEARS AT A GLANCE

- NFWF Grants
- Match
- Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund and other Impact-Directed Environmental Accounts



March 26, 1984: Creation of NFWF

President Ronald Reagan signed HR 2809 to create the Foundation.



1986: First grant slate
NFWF awarded a total of \$184,164 to 15 grants.

NFWF's first grant focused on the smallest sea turtle in the world, the Kemp's ridley sea turtle.

Late 1990s: Partnerships launched with ConocoPhillips and Shell USA

These corporate partnerships have resulted in more than \$44 million in funding across about 30 programs and initiatives.



Orca

1999: Chesapeake Bay Program

The EPA selected NFWF to administer grants for this watershed. To date, NFWF's Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund has awarded more than \$248 million.



Blue heron

2005: Walmart's Acres for America Program

This first-of-its-kind program has grown into a 20-year collaboration that has helped to protect 2.1 million acres across the nation.



These long-standing programs demonstrate NFWF's ability to work with federal partners to put money on the ground.

2005: Long Island Sound Futures Fund

NFWF and the EPA launched a second watershed conservation program focused on Long Island Sound, which to date has invested \$56 million into 641 projects.

2007: Science and Evaluation Department

NFWF created a science department to ensure funded projects had science-based and measurable results.

NFWF developed science-based business plans to achieve measurable species conservation goals.

2006: New strategic plan

The 2006 strategic plan marked a shift toward conservation at a national scale and a greater focus on outcomes.

2008: IDEA

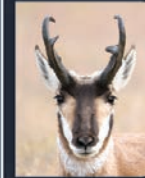
A new arm of the Foundation called Impact-Directed Environmental Accounts (IDEA) was created to administer settlement and mitigation dollars.



Marsh

2009: Path of the Pronghorn

Early NFWF business plans, such as Path of the Pronghorn, focused on species-specific strategies and outcomes.



Pronghorn

2010: Deepwater Horizon oil spill relief efforts

NFWF and partners worked to minimize damage to wildlife following the tragic oil spill.



Blue crab

2013: Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

After Deepwater Horizon, NFWF was selected to administer \$2.544 billion from BP and Transocean to benefit the natural resources of the Gulf Coast that were impacted by the spill.

2013: Relief efforts after Hurricane Sandy

The hurricane walloped the Eastern Seaboard. Working with the Department of the Interior, NFWF would award \$103 million to repair ecological damage and safeguard against future storms.



Red knot

2016: Landscape-scale conservation

NFWF expanded its focal-species approach to encompass entire landscapes and migratory pathways.

2018: National Coastal Resilience Fund

In 2018, NFWF and NOAA launched a \$30 million, congressionally directed program to promote nature-based solutions that increase coastal resilience, benefiting people and wildlife. NCRF has invested more than \$466 million to date.

Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts set the stage for future investments in coastal resilience.

2022: America the Beautiful Challenge

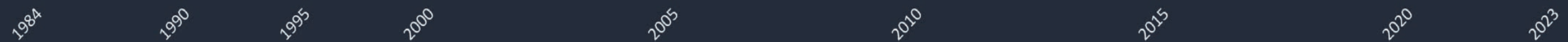
NFWF worked with federal partners to establish the America the Beautiful Challenge, to boost the resilience of wildlife populations, ecosystems and communities. In its first two years, the program has awarded \$230 million.



Golden eagle

2021: Bezos Earth Fund partnership

NFWF began a partnership with Bezos Earth Fund, which to date has granted the Foundation \$90 million to support projects that advance carbon goals to mitigate climate change, conserve wildlife biodiversity and boost community resilience.



Rocky Mountains

In addition to conserving intact natural habitats at risk of conversion, NFWF has helped lead efforts in this region to protect migration routes for big-game species such as elk, mule deer and pronghorn. Grantees have conserved crucial migration pinch-points for these iconic species, modified or replaced fencing to be more wildlife-friendly, and enhanced highway crossings for wildlife.

Western Forests

The great forests of the West, home to some of the largest and oldest trees on the planet, face increasingly severe threats. Grantees in western states have worked to improve the health and resilience of forests, including through projects focused on wildfire recovery and the management of excess fuels. Restoration of alpine wet meadows and conservation of freshwater flows continue to rank as top conservation priorities.

Desert Southwest

Conservation efforts in the nation's Southwest have focused on grassland conservation and the management of this region's most precious resource: fresh water. NFWF investments here have helped sustain populations of unique species well-adapted to arid climates, including Pecos pupfish, Apache trout, Rio Grande cutthroat trout, pronghorn and Mojave desert tortoise.



Alaska

NFWF's conservation investments in Alaska have helped Alaska Natives and other stakeholders support populations of beluga whales, Steller sea lions, spectacled eiders and a host of arctic-nesting migratory birds. Many projects have focused on stopping and reversing declines in salmon numbers that threaten local economies, communities and countless animals that depend on salmon.

Great Plains

Conservation within the nation's Great Plains has focused on grassland birds, pronghorn, bison, black-footed ferrets and migrating waterfowl. Grantees have helped manage invasive vegetation, made fencing more wildlife-friendly and supported innovative grazing practices. More recent conservation investments have highlighted the crucial role healthy grasslands play in sequestering carbon.

Working Lands

Advancing conservation practices on ranches, farms and family-owned forests represents one of the nation's most promising opportunities to enhance habitats for wildlife while making meaningful contributions toward carbon sequestration goals. Conservation projects on working lands have improved water quality for fish and protected wildlife migration routes for mammals, songbirds, waterfowl and pollinators such as monarch butterflies.

Pacific Islands

The unique wildlife of Hawai'i, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa face dire threats from invasive species, habitat loss, disease, pollution, marine debris and the intensifying effects of climate change. NFWF's investments have helped address these urgent challenges to benefit corals, marine fish, endemic forest birds, Pacific seabirds, marine mammals and more.

Conservation Strategies

Since its founding by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has supported conservation efforts across all U.S. landscapes and marine environments. Here are examples of conservation strategies guiding those investments.

FOCAL LANDSCAPES: Its "focal-landscape" strategy enables NFWF to build on successes and leverage longterm partnerships to dramatically increase the scale of conservation efforts.



Gulf of Mexico

NFWF's investments in this region protect and enhance coastal forests, salt marshes, beach and dune systems, oyster reefs and other habitats that provide natural storm buffers to coastal communities and crucial energy hubs. NFWF's Gulf Environment Benefit Fund, established in the wake of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, has supported 200 projects worth more than \$2.3 billion.

Caribbean Islands

NFWF-supported conservation projects in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands helped protect and enhance terrestrial and marine ecosystems in these island territories. Efforts include the eradication of invasive species threatening endemic seabirds and sea turtles, along with habitat restoration projects supporting endangered species such as the Puerto Rican parrot.

Major Watersheds and Resilient Coasts

Many of NFWF's longest running and largest competitive grant programs have focused on major watersheds that are home to tens of millions of people as well as varied and rich populations of wildlife. Grantees working in the mid-Atlantic region work with farmers, state and local governments and other stakeholders to manage runoff and reduce pollution in the watersheds of the Chesapeake Bay, Long Island Sound and Delaware Bay. In the Midwest, landscape-scale conservation projects employ nature-based solutions to reduce pollution and enhance habitats, benefiting wildlife and human communities along the Great Lakes. In the Pacific Northwest, grantees work with ranchers, Tribes and other stakeholders to conserve water in the Columbia River Basin to benefit salmon and other wildlife.

Eastern Forests

Since 1984, NFWF's grantees have helped restore and protect vast forested landscapes in the eastern half of the nation. Investments have supported the full range of conservation practices for forests: tree planting, prescribed burning, management of invasive species and pests, conservation easements, acquisition for public use and other measures designed to support a mosaic of mixed-age, resilient and ecologically rich forests.

Marine Environments

Four decades of NFWF investments have focused on reducing land-based pollution that damages coral reefs, removing derelict fishing gear, repairing ecological damage from storms and human activities, and supporting innovative practices to improve fisheries and reduce bycatch. Focal species include sea turtles, seabirds, pelagic fish, reef fish and a host of coral species.





NFWF

40 Species for 40 Years

Since its founding in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has awarded grants to conservation projects in all states and U.S. territories. These efforts have benefited countless wildlife species, including well-known and common animals as well as rare and secretive species few people have ever seen. In the following pages, we will share 40 examples of the amazing creatures that have benefited from the work of NFWF and its partners over the past four decades.

Eastern brook trout
in Tennessee



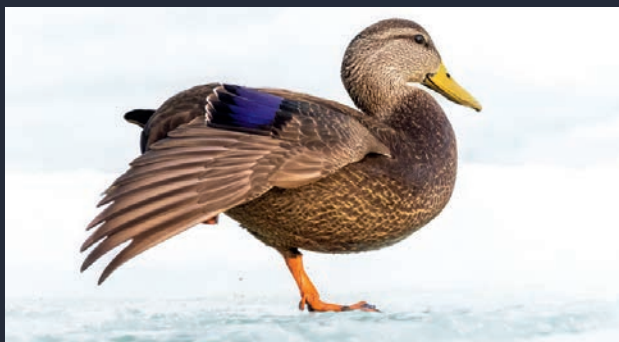
Atlantic salmon

The odds have always been stacked against Atlantic salmon. Females lay about 7,500 eggs in gravel nests, but only 9 to 20 percent survive to the fry stage. Natural predation further winnows the hatch. Survivors must migrate to the Atlantic Ocean to mature, then back again to natal streams to spawn. NFWF grants help keep streams and rivers free from pollution and open for fish migration, improving the odds of survival for Atlantic salmon.



Bighorn sheep

NFWF's connection to bighorn sheep extends to its earliest days. In 1987, the fledgling Foundation helped purchase a vehicle needed to reintroduce desert bighorn sheep to a site in Nevada. More recent and much larger grants have empowered nonprofits and natural resource managers to complete once-in-a-lifetime projects preserving and restoring vast landscapes of prime bighorn habitat throughout the Rocky Mountains and Desert Southwest.



Black duck

The plumage of both male and female black ducks appears somewhat dull, at least in comparison to many other types of ducks. But this brown-and-black color scheme serves as effective camouflage in the eastern wetlands and coastal marshes where they live and nest. NFWF invests heavily in habitat restoration and water quality improvements throughout the black duck's range, and uses this focal species as a key indicator of overall ecological health.

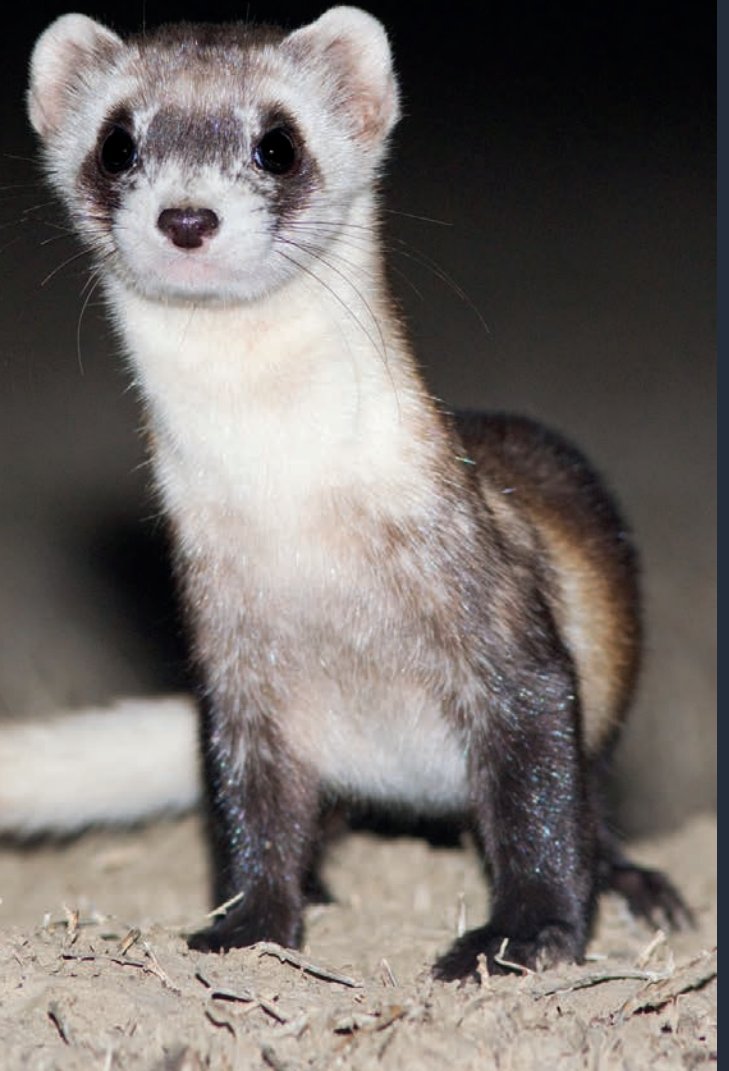
Black-footed ferret

Once thought extinct, black-footed ferrets battle for existence in the modern world. Over the past three centuries, this specialized hunter of the Great Plains declined along with the disease-ravaged populations of its primary prey, the black-tailed prairie dog. NFWF works with federal agencies, Tribes, nonprofits and landowners to protect remnant populations and reintroduce captive-bred ferrets in restored habitats.



Black-tailed prairie dog

Surely one of the cutest rodents of North America, prairie dogs have come to symbolize the vast landscapes of the Great Plains and American West. Disease and habitat loss have devastated their numbers in many regions, and NFWF and its grantees are working hard to reverse those trends. Prairie dogs are creators of unique habitat that is essential for species including the black-footed ferret, thick-billed longspur, burrowing owl, mountain plover and ferruginous hawk.



Blue crab

These tasty crustaceans hold special meaning to millions of Americans, especially along the Chesapeake Bay, where NFWF has invested tens of millions of dollars over the past 40 years to reduce pollution and stop worrisome declines of blue crab and other coastal species. NFWF has also dramatically increased funding for coastal resilience projects along the Southeast and Gulf coasts that protect and restore marshes where blue crabs thrive.





California condor

The California condor has spent the past four decades in the conservation spotlight. Once prolific along the West Coast, this enormous scavenging raptor was nearly wiped out by habitat loss, poaching and exposure to DDT and lead shot. By 1981, only 22 individuals remained. Captive breeding, reintroduction and other conservation efforts — many funded by NFWF — have re-established wild populations of this still-endangered species.



Coho salmon

Commonly called silver salmon, coho hatch in freshwater streams from Alaska to California. Juvenile fish spend a year developing before migrating to the Pacific Ocean to feed and grow. After a few years, adult fish complete an epic migration back to their natal streams, where they spawn and die. NFWF works with fisheries managers, hydroelectric stakeholders, ranchers and native peoples to halt population declines and protect these salmon runs.



Corals

The global decline of coral species and the ecologically rich reefs they build represents one of the world's most urgent conservation challenges. NFWF-funded projects in Florida, Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and elsewhere target land-based pollution that degrades coral reefs. NFWF also funds the propagation and outplanting of coral species that have proven to be more resilient to bleaching events and changing marine conditions.



Cutthroat trout

For avid fly-fishing anglers, few sights rival the rise of a cutthroat trout. When an insect (or tied fly) floats past a nice cutthroat, it will often rocket up through the current and strike, catching the sun in a riot of glittering color and splash. NFWF leverages this fish's angling appeal to focus investments on the restoration of stream side forests, removal of invasive species, and conservation of fresh water throughout much of the West.

Eastern hellbender

North America's largest salamander, hellbenders live an aquatic existence in mountain streams of Appalachia. Like the proverbial canary in a coal mine, this ancient line of amphibians serves as a key indicator of ecosystem health. They can only survive where fresh water flows cold and clean. NFWF works with farmers, resource managers and conservation nonprofits to restore stream-side forests, reduce siltation and restore aquatic connectivity for hellbenders and other organisms.



Eastern brook trout

This ornately colored fish once thrived in mountain streams from eastern Canada through the southern Appalachians. Though still fairly common and doing well in pristine mountain strongholds, "brookies" face a host of challenges. Roads and dams have isolated local populations. Human disturbance sends torrents of silt and chemical pollution into streams. Through decades of grant-making, NFWF has built a deep network of stakeholders working in multiple regions to protect and restore forests and freshwater flows crucial to brook trout.



Elk

Plentiful in many parts of the West, this iconic big-game species still struggles in parts of its historical range. NFWF has helped grantees protect and restore vast tracts of elk habitat, modify fencing to protect elk from injury, and build wildlife overpasses where migration routes cross highways. NFWF also helped reintroduce elk in some areas, including through a project that brought resident elk herds back to West Virginia for the first time in more than 100 years.



Freshwater mussel

Though often overlooked, these fascinating animals employ complex strategies during their life cycles, including the use of specialized “lures” to trick host fish into dispersing their young. Mussels also play vital ecological roles by filtering impurities out of streams and preventing erosion. NFWF works with grantees across much of the nation to sustain local populations of heelsplitters, pimplebacks, pigtoes, hornshells and other colorfully named freshwater mussels.



Gopher tortoise

Gopher tortoises can't outrun the flames that regularly sweep through the longleaf pine forests of the Southeast. Thankfully, they don't need to — these long-lived reptiles simply retreat into one of the fire-proof burrows they've already dug into the sandy forest floor. They might have company, too. Gopher tortoise burrows provide refuge to a range of wildlife species living in fire-dependent longleaf forests. NFWF grants enable a variety of partners to protect and enhance the open forests on which gopher tortoises depend.

Greater sage-grouse

The largest of all North American grouse species, this sagebrush-dependent upland game bird conducts theatrical courtship displays on “leks,” or breeding grounds, throughout the intermountain West. The steady loss of natural habitat has led to population declines for greater sage-grouse, along with a host of other grassland-dependent birds. NFWF works with ranchers, Tribes, federal resource managers, nonprofits and other stakeholders to enhance grasslands for declining populations of birds and other sage-dependent wildlife.



Grizzly bear

Once common throughout much of North America, grizzlies can still be found in remote areas of Idaho, Montana, Washington and Wyoming. These bears vary in shades of blonde and brown, with longer outer guard hairs often tipped with silver, giving them a “grizzled” look. Over the past four decades, NFWF has supported efforts to reduce human-bear conflicts and preserve wilderness areas these iconic creatures need to survive.



Killer whale

Few animals are as smart, strong, fast and deadly as killer whales. Yet even these supreme predators face an uncertain future. Recent declines in salmon numbers off Alaska and the Pacific Northwest have pushed some populations of killer whales into starvation. NFWF works with Tribes, ranchers and others to improve habitats and water quality to help salmon stocks rebound — and with them, killer whales.





Laysan albatross

The overlap of seabirds and humans on oceanic islands and in the marine environment has driven many species to the brink of extinction. Over its 40-year history, NFWF has funded translocations, predator control, bycatch reduction, habitat restoration and other practices to conserve seabirds. Impact assessments have shown these efforts have increased reproductive success and overall populations of Laysan albatross and other seabirds.



Least tern

Though still a common sight along marine coastlines, least terns have suffered dramatic declines over the past half-century. These small, elegant birds serve as a focal species in a number of NFWF programs, including those focused on coastal resilience and repairing ecological damage from the 2010 Gulf oil spill. Strategies for least tern conservation include reducing human disturbance, enhancing coastal habitats and reducing predation at nesting sites.



Little brown bat

Little brown bats and related species play critical roles in controlling insect pests throughout most of the nation. The pesticide services of bats are thought to be worth more than \$3.7 billion annually to all U.S. agricultural production. Millions of bats have died over the past decade from white-nose syndrome disease. NFWF works with scientists and conservation nonprofits to stop the spread of this catastrophic disease.



Louisiana black bear

One of 16 subspecies of the American black bear, the Louisiana black bear was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1992. Conservation efforts have helped the subspecies recover, and it was removed from the list in 2016. NFWF has long invested in habitat restoration throughout the bear's range and currently works with grantees to monitor and bolster its population, efforts that can forestall future listings under the ESA.

Loggerhead sea turtle

As one of the nation's most iconic and beloved wildlife species, loggerhead sea turtles serve as vital conservation ambassadors. The potential extinction of other sea turtles has galvanized communities across the Southeast and Gulf states as few other species could. NFWF has invested in sea turtle conservation throughout its history, funding efforts to restore dune and beach habitats, reduce bycatch in local fisheries, eliminate light pollution at nesting beaches and even relocating sea turtle eggs following the 2010 Gulf oil spill.





Manatee

These gentle giants munch on seagrasses in coastal waters of the Southeast, Gulf Coast and Puerto Rico. Slow-moving and vulnerable to motorboat strikes, manatees have struggled to adjust to the modern world. Pollution, temperature spikes, algal blooms and related declines in aquatic vegetation threaten their survival. NFWF funds efforts to address stormwater runoff, improve coastal water quality and rescue and rehabilitate distressed manatees.



Monarch butterfly

Monarch butterflies undertake a wondrous, multigenerational migration. A "super generation" migrates south every fall to overwinter in Mexico and begins the northward trek the next spring. The next three generations push north, fanning out across the United States. Caterpillars hatched along the way eat milkweed. NFWF funds efforts to protect intact pollinator habitats and plant milkweed along the monarchs' migration route.



Moose

The largest member of the deer family, moose can grow to more than 1,600 pounds and 7 feet tall at the shoulder. Moose can swim quite well and are the only deer species capable of feeding underwater. NFWF awards landscape-level grants to protect and restore the northern woodlands and wetlands where these majestic animals thrive, from Alaska and the Rocky Mountains to the Great Lakes and New England.



Oyster

Eastern oysters figure prominently in the cultures, economies and resilience of coastal communities along the nation's Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Oysters clean coastal waters through filter feeding, and the reefs they build host countless aquatic organisms. These reefs also control coastal erosion and protect coastal communities from storms. NFWF funds direct efforts to restore oyster reefs and combat pollution and habitat degradation.



Oystercatcher

NFWF's long history of support for these striking shorebirds shows how science-based grant-making can unite and empower stakeholders across migratory pathways to generate measurable results for wildlife. NFWF's focused approach to oystercatchers also sets the stage for broader, landscape-scale investments in coastal resilience that generate cascading benefits for a variety of habitats, wildlife species and communities.



Piping plover

This small, migratory shorebird nests and feeds along coastal sand and gravel beaches in North America. They are federally listed as a threatened species along the East Coast and an endangered species along the Great Lakes and in the Northern Great Plains. NFWF has invested hundreds of millions of dollars into coastal resilience projects that help this beautiful bird survive and thrive. Grantees have rebuilt and restored dune systems, constructed living shorelines, and reduced predation and human disturbance at key nesting sites.



Puerto Rican parrot

This smart, gregarious, bright-green parrot once flourished throughout much of Puerto Rico. Habitat loss, predation and captures for the pet trade have, over time, whittled down once-vast flocks. Today, few wild birds remain. For more than 20 years, NFWF has supported efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore habitats, protect the remaining wild birds and bolster remnant populations with parrots raised in specially designed aviaries.

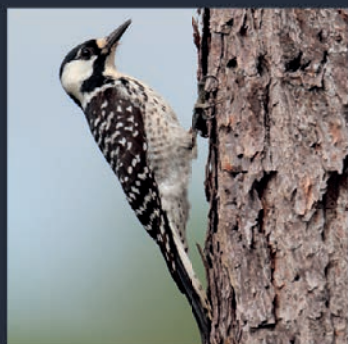


Red drum

Red drum, also known as redfish or spot-tail bass, rank as one of the nation's most popular and economically important game fish. Coastal anglers pursue them from Mid-Atlantic states through Florida and along the Gulf Coast. NFWF's investments in nature-based coastal resilience have protected and enhanced vast coastal marsh systems supporting red drum and a host of other economically important marine species.

Pronghorn

Affectionately called "speed goats" in some parts of their range, pronghorn evolved in an ancient era when cheetahs still roamed western North America. Neither goats nor deer nor true antelope, pronghorn are the sole-surviving member of their taxonomic family. With an evolutionary history rooted in open grasslands, pronghorn are reluctant to leap over fences that have been constructed across the West for rangeland management, causing disruptions of their ancient migration routes and reducing access to high-quality habitat. NFWF works with ranchers, Tribes and other grassland managers to improve fencing and construct highway overpasses to ensure pronghorn can continue their ancient migrations.



Red-cockaded woodpecker

This endangered species has long served as a linchpin for widespread efforts to restore and maintain the stately longleaf pine forests of the Southeast. These woodpeckers live in cooperative colonies centered around nest cavities excavated in the trunks of living longleaf pines. Sticky white sap drips down the trunks, helping to protect nest cavities from climbing predators. NFWF funds efforts by nonprofits, military facilities, family forest owners and others to protect and enhance habitats for red-cockaded woodpeckers through prescribed burning of longleaf forests, installation of artificial nest cavities and other conservation practices.



Red knot

Every May, Delaware Bay serves as a critical refueling stop for endangered red knots flying 10,000 miles from Argentina to Arctic breeding grounds. Famished birds congregate at New Jersey's Cape May to feast on horseshoe crab eggs, laid in the sand during massive spawning events. NFWF has long supported efforts to preserve this vital habitat, including through emergency beach renourishment following Hurricane Sandy in 2012.



Red snapper

Saltwater anglers and restaurant diners know and love red snapper, a large marine fish that congregates along reefs and ledges off the Southeast and Gulf coasts. NFWF-funded projects throughout these coastal regions benefit juvenile red snapper, which shelter in mangrove forests, oyster reefs and other inshore marine habitats. NFWF also funds scientific efforts to better understand the health and distribution of adult red snapper.



River herring

Alewives and blueback herring, similar species collectively referred to as "river herring," are born in freshwater but spend most of their lives at sea. Every spring, adults make their way from offshore waters into coastal estuaries from New England through the Carolinas. NFWF has funded successful efforts to restore access to and improve management of key spawning and nursery habitats throughout its native range.



Roseate spoonbill

A favorite species of birders and wildlife photographers, roseate spoonbills forage in the shallows of bays, mangroves, forested swamps and wetlands along the Southeast and Gulf coasts. These visually stunning birds have benefited from decades of NFWF grant-making, especially through more than \$2.3 billion awarded through NFWF's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, founded in the wake of the 2010 Gulf oil spill.



Rusty patched bumblebee

One of about 20 species of bumble bees native to the eastern United States, the rusty patched bumble bee was listed as federally endangered in 2017. NFWF works with federal, state and local resource managers, farmers, ranchers and local nonprofits to halt and reverse worrisome declines in bee populations by protecting and restoring pollinator habitat. Many grantees propagate and restore native flowering plants on public and private lands throughout much of the nation.



Wood thrush

The flute-like song of the wood thrush fills eastern deciduous forests during the birds' mating season each spring. Wood thrush are excellent indicators of healthy mature forests with structurally complex midstories and understories. Habitat loss and degraded habitat quality on both breeding and wintering grounds have resulted in population declines since at least 1970. NFWF works closely with partners to halt and reverse this decline.



Whooping crane

The whooping crane is the tallest and one of the most threatened birds in North America. The only wild population winters along the Texas coast and migrates about 2,500 miles to breed in Canada. NFWF's conservation focus on this amazing bird extends through most of the Foundation's 40-year history. Early grants supported captive breeding efforts, while modern grants help protect and enhance habitats and migration routes.

Long-tailed weasel
in Colorado



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Tony Bynum (cover, bison; p. 8, mule deer; p. 42 and p. 58, bighorn sheep; p. 66, moose; p. 68, pronghorn), Cassie Jensen (inside cover, leatherback sea turtle; p. 44, loggerhead sea turtle), Peter Brannon (p. 13, black skimmer), Pat Clayton, Engretson Underwater Photography (p. 18 and p. 61, cutthroat trout), Adam Rice, KAR Photography (p. 20-21, brown bear and salmon), D. R. Schrichte, Blue Planet Archive (p. 27, arc-eye hawkfish), Melissa Groo (p. 38, bobcats; p. 67, oystercatchers), David Stimac (p. 40-41, hummingbird and honeybee; p. 66, monarch butterfly; p. 67, piping plover), Isaac Szabo (p. 56-57, eastern brook trout; p. 60-61, eastern hellbender), Paul Vecsei, Engretson Underwater Photography (p. 60, coho salmon) Michael Patrick O'Neill, Blue Planet Archive (p. 64-65, loggerhead sea turtles), Sean Landsman, Engretson Underwater Photography (p. 70, river herring) Doug Perrine, Blue Planet Archive (inside back cover, red-footed booby)

Minden Pictures: Brian Skerry (p. 5, bottlenose dolphin), Tom Vezo (p. 14, mountain lion), Steve Gettle (p. 10, eastern bluebird; p. 17, pink-edged sulphur butterfly), Donald M. Jones (p. 24, badger; p. 59, black-footed ferret), Alan Murphy (p. 22, hooded merganser), Gerrit Vyn (p. 28, greater prairie chicken), Rolf Nussbaumer (p. 30, horned lizard), John Cancalosi (p. 34, prothonotary warbler), Shattil and Rozinski (p. 37, swift fox), Doug Wechsler (p. 51, snowy egret), Kevin Schafer (p. 58, Atlantic salmon), Jacob S. Spindelow (p. 68, red-cockaded woodpecker; back cover, horned puffin), Clay Bolt (p. 71, rusty-patched bumblebee), Thomas Lazar, Minden Pictures (p. 71, whooping crane) Jeff Foott (p. 72, long-tailed weasel)

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FRONT COVER

American bison in Montana

BACK COVER

Horned puffin in Alaska

