



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

2025 Coastal Program Accomplishment Report



Note from the Chief of Refuges



I am proud to recognize the extraordinary work of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program and its many partners in advancing conservation across our Nation's coastal landscapes and waters. Habitat conservation is a long-term commitment requiring persistence, collaboration, and shared vision among partners.

In 2025, this dedication led to the completion of 178 projects in 19 states and territories. Together, we protected more than 106,000 acres and restored more than 7,500 acres of habitat that sustain the fish, wildlife, and the communities that depend on them.

Partnerships with state agencies and indigenous communities remained a priority for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Working with 50 state, tribal, and indigenous partners, the program conserved more than 2,200 acres on state, tribal, and indigenous lands, advancing priorities for all partners.

Invasive species continue to be a significant threat to coastal ecosystems and communities. Through 69 invasive species removal projects, the Coastal Program restored more than 4,000 acres of native habitat, strengthening ecological integrity, local

economies, recreation, and public safety. The Coastal Program also implemented proactive land management by assisting with nine prescribed fire projects, improving 224 acres while reducing wildfire threats and protecting both habitats and communities.

Expanding public access to nature and recreation remains central to our mission. Thirty projects enhanced access to more than 1,600 acres of nature, connecting people to the outdoors and fostering the next generation of hunters, anglers, and conservationists.

Innovation is central to effective, science-based conservation. By adopting new tools, such as drones and investing in equipment, certified pilots, and shared capacity, the Coastal Program improves adaptive management, reduces costs, and delivers lasting results.

To the Coastal Program and your many partners, thank you for your leadership and steadfast commitment. Your work reflects the strength of voluntary, partnership-driven conservation and ensures our natural resources endure for generations to come.

Warm regards,

Cynthia Martinez

Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System

Cynthia Martinez, Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System / USFWS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program

A Conservation Leader

that works with communities to voluntarily and collaboratively protect and improve habitats that benefit fish, wildlife, and people. We also provide resources for decision makers, land managers, and restoration practitioners to implement better habitat conservation and management. By working together, we sustain the people and wildlife that rely on coastal and marine ecosystems.



Our Mission

is to achieve voluntary habitat conservation by providing technical and financial assistance, in collaboration with partners, for the benefit of federal trust species.

Working with Communities

along our nation's coasts, we conserve habitat on private and public lands to deliver landscape conservation, build resilient coasts and communities, and maintain habitat connectivity and continuity from headwater streams to the ocean.

Find the Coastal Program online:

Webpage
bit.ly/3Q0leLf

YouTube
bit.ly/3dihu7A



Program Priority Investing in Excellence



Stream assessment training with Coastal Program staff

Technical assistance is the cornerstone of the Coastal Program's approach to habitat conservation. It is through this assistance that we inform evidence-based decisions, refine conservation plans and policies, foster local expertise, and improve the science and delivery of habitat restoration.

For the Coastal Program, [technical assistance](#) encompasses a wide range of activities that includes assessing natural habitats, developing assessment tools and resources, securing essential funding, overseeing construction, and monitoring the success of conservation projects.

Another example of this work is our dedication to strengthening the conservation community through training. Our staff have shared their expertise on a variety of subjects including structured decision making, emergency response, field survey techniques, and habitat restoration.

Participants in these trainings reflect the remarkable breadth of the conservation community – private landowners, state, local, and federal agencies, engineering and environmental firms, students and educators, and nonprofit organizations.

The impact of our assistance can be far reaching. For example, from a survey of participants from one stream assessment training, we estimate that participants will collectively apply their new expertise to 60 restoration projects and 30 miles of stream each year.

The technical assistance that we provide to partners reflect a deep, enduring commitment to the communities we serve – an investment not just in plants, fish, and wildlife, but in the people who steward and appreciate these special places.

Field course instruction by Coastal Program staff / Mark Secrist, USFWS

Program Priority Innovative Technology



Aerial view of Kennebunk Forest

As a leader in habitat conservation, the Coastal Program regularly evaluates and adopts innovative tools to improve the delivery and success of our habitat conservation actions. Drones play an increasingly important role in conservation by providing cost-effective, high-quality data collection, habitat monitoring, and project planning and implementation.

The Coastal Program is expanding our drone pilot expertise and use of drones for a growing number of field tasks, as drones allow the Coastal Program to capitalize on innovation, assess habitats at a reduced cost, and efficiently use staff time.

Using U.S.-made, National Defense Authorization Act-compliant drones equipped with high-resolution cameras and specialized sensors, we are evaluating habitat and vegetation conditions and conducting topographic surveys.

Drones are also improving our ability to detect emerging threats, including invasive species, inform on-the-ground restoration designs, and monitor project outcomes – improving adaptive management and long-term outcomes of our conservation actions.

The Coastal Program is increasing our investment in this technology by purchasing more drones and equipment, training more staff to be certified drone pilots, and sharing our expertise and resources with other Service programs and partners to advance conservation efforts more broadly.

(Left) Coastal Program and other Service staff launching drone / Cornell Lab of Ornithology and (Right) Aerial view of Kennebunk Forest, Maine / Bonnie Turek, USFWS

Coastal Program State and Local Preparedness



Example of a dam removal in Maine

Habitat conservation plays an important role in supporting the President's [Executive Order 14239](#) – *Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness*. Investments in habitat conservation strengthen community preparedness and resilience to natural disasters by protecting water sources and quality, reducing flooding and wildfire risks, and delivering a wide-range of additional resilience benefits.

The Coastal Program works with partners to restore and protect natural habitats that benefit fish and wildlife, while improving ecosystem functions that safeguard infrastructure, military facilities, businesses, and communities. The following projects highlight our recent efforts to improve state and local preparedness.

In Maryland, the Coastal Program assisted the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and

other partners to remove Cypress Branch Dam in Millington, Maryland. Removed in 2025, the project reconnected more than 35 miles of aquatic habitat for herring and hickory shad, while protecting the local community and wastewater treatment plant from potential flood hazards.

In Michigan, the Coastal Program is currently helping Rose City and the Michigan Departments of Natural Resources and Environment to plan the removal of the Sanback Dam, rated as “unsatisfactory” by dam safety experts. In addition to eliminating the risk of catastrophic dam failure and protecting downstream communities, the project will safeguard more than 70 miles of coldwater habitat for brook trout from Beechwood Creek to Saginaw Bay.

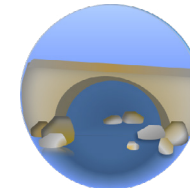
Excavator beginning to removal of Walton's Mill Dam in Maine / USFWS

Coastal Program Priorities



Species Conservation

Conserving habitats that recover and sustain federal trust species.



Coastal Resiliency & Habitat Connectivity

Building resilient ecosystems and communities, protecting infrastructure, and supporting habitat connectivity on national wildlife refuges and other public and private lands.



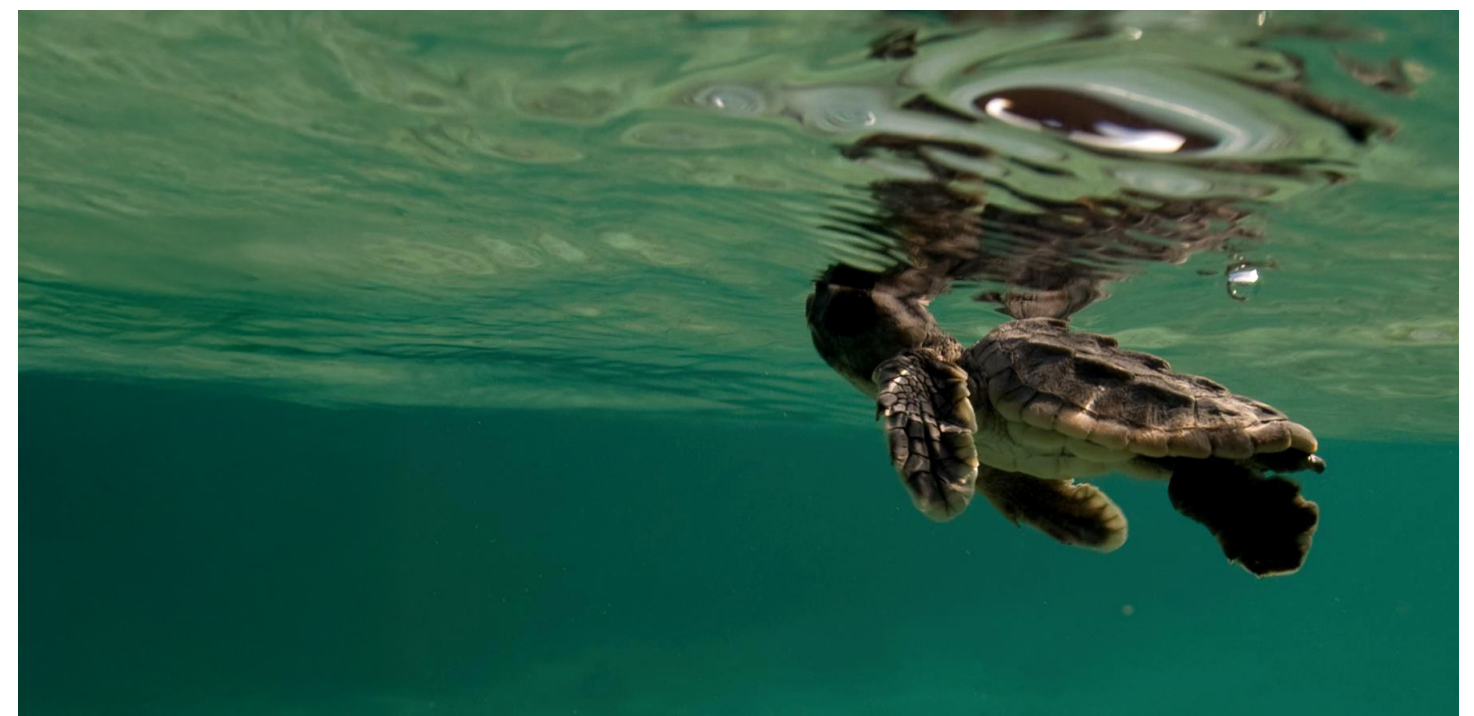
Access & Recreation

Enhancing the visitor experience at national wildlife refuges and building a legacy of stewardship by expanding public access and recreation on public lands and elsewhere.

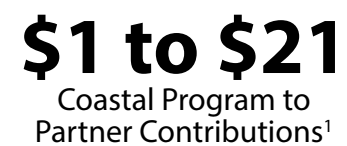


Community Engagement

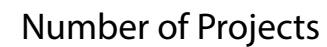
Working with Tribes, states, and others to implement habitat and species conservation, including in urban areas.



Coastal Program



Coastal Program



	1 - 5
	6 - 10
	11 - 15
	16 - 20
	21 - 30

● Completed Projects

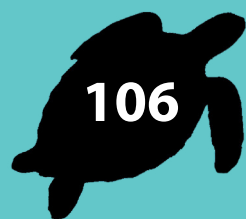
2. The accomplishment map includes only habitat improvement projects. Technical assistance (e.g., conservation planning and monitoring) projects are not included on the map. Technical assistance projects often have a broad geographic impact that does not make projects easy to display graphically. Project circles may indicate more than one project.

2025 Accomplishment Statistics



114

Projects for Migratory Birds³



106

Projects for Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species³



48

Projects for Interjurisdictional Fish³

Species Recovered Georgia

Wood storks are the only stork species that breed in North America, nesting in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida. Listed as federally endangered in 1984, conservation efforts led to the bird's downlisting to federally threatened in 2014 and delisting in 2026.

The Coastal Program worked with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to sustain the delisting of the wood stork by expanding nesting habitat, where the availability of nests constrains stork populations. The partnership is working to establish 100 - 250 nesting pairs of storks at the Altama Plantation Wildlife Management Area.

In 2025, the partnership completed the restoration of rookery habitat by installing 25 artificial nesting platforms and planting native trees and shrubs. The first nesting pair of wood storks was observed in April 2025, demonstrating the effectiveness of collaborative habitat conservation.



³ Statistics represent a frequency count because habitat improvement projects may have multiple species benefits, such as benefits for endangered species and migratory birds.

Pair of wood storks / Ryan Hagerty, USFWS and (inset) Wood stork and chicks / Mary Ellen Urbanski, USFWS Volunteer



A Rare Bloom Florida



Flowering white birds-in-a-nest

The Coastal Program provides technical and financial assistance to partners to advance the science and recovery of imperiled species. We partnered with the Atlanta Botanical Garden to help recover the federally threatened white birds-in-a-nest, a rare mint found in only four counties in Florida.

The botanical garden, a national leader in plant conservation, led efforts to standardize monitoring, collecting and propagating seeds from multiple white birds-in-a-nest populations. They also confirmed that traditional seed banking is not viable for this species – underscoring the need to maintain living plants for recovery.

The botanical garden also discovered a previously unknown white birds-in-a-nest population, which expanded the known range of the species and influenced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2024 Five-Year Status Review.

In 2025, this long-standing science-based partnership continues to strengthen recovery planning, coordination among partners, and delivery of meaningful progress toward the recovery of one of Florida's rarest native plants.

White birds-in-a-nest plant / Atlanta Botanical Garden

Dogs with Jobs Michigan



Bat detecting dog with handler

Many bat species are declining due to habitat loss, incidental take, and white-nose syndrome – a deadly fungal disease that is devastating certain hibernating bat species. These threats have driven severe population declines for the federally endangered northern long-eared bat.

The Coastal Program is working with the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians to use acoustic monitoring to detect bats in the Beaver Island Archipelago. The partnership is also piloting a new method to identify hidden bat roosts by training dogs to identify bat guano – a promising approach where traditional survey methods fall short.

The Coastal Program provides technical and financial assistance for the recovery of bats across the Great Lakes region. We supported the planning, delivery, and monitoring of forest conservation projects by conducting surveys that inform management actions, removing invasive species, planting native vegetation, and supporting community outreach.

Bat detecting dog with handler / Jenny Wong, USFWS

Flock Together Texas



Black skimmer

Black skimmers are one of Texas's most iconic coastal birds, and the region's bays and estuaries provide critically important habitat for black skimmers and other colonial waterbirds. However, black skimmers populations have declined more than 70% over the past 40 years due to habitat loss, disturbance, and predation.⁴

To help reverse these declines, the Coastal Program partnered with the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP) to conserve rookery habitat. In 2025, with Coastal Program technical and financial support, CBBEP restored and managed hundreds of acres across nearly 100 constructed and natural island rookeries by installing interpretive signs and nesting platforms, controlling invasive species, and monitoring bird use.

The Coastal Program also helped to expand native seedling production at CBBEP's nursery to improve the implementation of rookery restoration projects. These native plants reduce erosion, suppress invasive grasses, and improve nesting habitat. CBBEP also organized rookery cleanups where local volunteers removed thousands of pounds of trash and debris.

4. Newstead, D., Serenari, C., Sharp, A., Hill, B., & Meeks, A. Black Skimmer Conservation on the Texas Coast. Texas Parks & Wildlife. Publication Pending.

Black skimmer / Robert Burton, USFWS

A Rare Lizard U.S. Virgin Islands



St. Croix ground lizard

Green Cay National Wildlife Refuge is a 14-acre offshore cay north of St. Croix, established in 1977 to protect critical habitat for the federally endangered St. Croix ground lizard. The refuge supports one of only four remaining populations, as the species has been extirpated from the main island, with the other populations on cays managed by the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources and the National Park Service.

The Coastal Program provided technical and financial assistance to restore ground lizard habitat through partnerships with the St. Croix Environmental Association, Service's Caribbean Refuge Network, National Park Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources. Our technical assistance included restoration design, construction management, regulatory compliance, monitoring, and field training.

In 2025, the project restored nearly two acres of habitat by removing invasive grasses and planting native trees and shrubs. Population modeling of previous restoration efforts indicate this approach increases ground lizard populations and advances species recovery.

St. Croix ground lizard / Jan Zegarra, USFWS

2025 Accomplishment Statistics



224

Acres Treated with Prescribed Fire



4,062

Acres Treated for Invasive Species



18

Miles of Stream Habitat Conserved

Creek Reopened Washington

Undersized and degraded road culverts are a serious threat to infrastructure and public safety. Failing culverts are also a barrier to fish migration, isolating spawning habitat and affecting recreational, subsistence, and commercial fisheries.

In Washington, the Coastal Program worked with the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, Wahkiakum County Public Utility District, and residents to replace a failing culvert with a channel-spanning bridge on Clear Creek. In addition to financial and regulatory support, we conducted habitat surveys, supported community outreach, and helped expedite construction to minimize impacts to nearby residents.

In 2025, the project restored natural stream functions and connectivity and enhanced more than half a mile of riparian and stream habitat. Located upstream of Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge for the Columbian White-Tailed Deer, the project advances Service and regional conservation goals and supports Pacific salmon recovery.

Early observations of salmon upstream confirm the project's success and long-term value. Ongoing monitoring by the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce will inform adaptive management and strengthen stream resilience, benefiting water quality, flood protection, public safety, and recreation.



Replaced undersized culvert

New span bridge / Teal Waterstrat, USFWS and (inset) Replaced undersized culvert / Tracy Hruska, CREST

Data turns the Tide Connecticut



Construction of new road crossing

In the town of Clinton, a \$10 million bridge and tide gate replacement project is restoring tidal flow to a 300-acre salt marsh while strengthening flood protection for nearby neighborhoods. The project replaces an undersized culvert and failing tide gate on the Hammock River that had caused chronic flooding, vegetation loss, and marsh subsidence – degrading habitat that supports one of the state’s densest populations of at-risk saltmarsh and seaside sparrows.

The Coastal Program partnered with Ducks Unlimited, the Town of Clinton, and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to provide technical support, including avian and hydrologic monitoring to establish baseline conditions, inform infrastructure design, and guide future adaptive management. Project completion is anticipated in 2027.

The Coastal Program installed long-term tidal monitoring stations to track tidal function before, during, and after construction. Working with the monitoring system vendor, the team helped develop and evaluate a new real-time data comparison feature that supported construction decision-making and helped prevent flooding and property damage during Hurricane Melissa in 2025.

Construction of new road crossing / Jonah Saitz, USFWS

Working with Water Texas



Spotted sandpiper

The Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge is home to salt marshes, coastal prairies, and dunes that support thousands of migratory birds on the Central Flyway and provide public access for hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching. Historically, areas of the refuge were ditched and drained for cattle grazing, degrading the wetland habitat for waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, and fish.

Since 2014, the Coastal Program has partnered with Ducks Unlimited, the Danbury Drainage District, and other partners to restore wetland hydrology and reduce flooding near Chocolate Bay. We provided funding and technical support for planning, design, and regulatory compliance, with additional funding from Ducks Unlimited, the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund.

The partners developed hydrologic models that guided restoration actions that, in 2025, improved habitat across 9,500 acres, including enhanced wetland function on 2,196 acres by directing stormwater into wetlands using water control structures. Post-project monitoring showed substantial hydrologic improvements, demonstrating the value of evidence-based, collaborative restoration.

Spotted sandpiper / Woody Woodrow

Protected by Nature California



Dune restoration site



Sand dune development



Flowering beach evening primrose and red sand verbena

The Coastal Program partnered with Coastal Environments, Inc., California State Parks, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to restore 1.27 acres of dune habitat and more than 900 feet of shoreline at Ponto State Beach in Carlsbad, California. We assisted with project coordination, conservation planning, regulatory compliance, construction oversight, monitoring, and community outreach.

Managed for both recreation and wildlife, this public beach lies between the Pacific Ocean and critical infrastructure, including U.S. Route 101 and a popular bike route. The restored dunes improved protection of the existing infrastructure from flooding, storm surge, and windblown sand.

In previous years, the partners evaluated restoration techniques and parameters that mimic natural dune processes. Monitoring of the techniques documented two to four feet of dune growth, increased sand retention, vigorous native plant growth, and greater use of the dunes by wildlife.

In 2025, the partners expanded restoration efforts at the beach by using sand fencing, wood shims, and native plantings. The project demonstrates that low-cost, engineering with nature can successfully restore dune habitat while protecting infrastructure.

(Clockwise from top) Dune restoration site; Native beach evening primrose and red sand verbena; and Sand fencing with developing sand dune / Carolyn Lieberman, USFWS

2025 Accomplishment Statistics



3,467
Acres Restored on
Service Land



30
Projects with
Public Access



6
Fish Passage
Projects

People & Wildlife Alaska

The Coastal Program has a long history of working with local communities to protect habitats that benefit people and wildlife – providing access to nature and hunting, fishing, and other recreation.

In Anchorage, Alaska, the Coastal Program helped the Great Land Trust acquire 300 acres of wetland and upland habitat, leading to the creation of [Potter Marsh Watershed Park](#), which is managed by the Anchorage Department of Parks and Recreation. Specifically, we helped with project planning and acquiring funding for the acquisition.

“This has been a long-awaited project for the Anchorage community. It’s a win for both conservation and the community.”

– Ellen Kazary, Executive Director of Great Land Trust

Beyond new hiking and other recreation opportunities, the park expands an important wildlife corridor that connects the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge and Chugach State Park. The park also maintains the hydrology of Potter Marsh that benefits migratory and resident fish and wildlife.

The project was made possible through strong partnerships and investments, including the discounted land sale by GCI Communication Corp and land contributed by the Municipality of Anchorage Real Estate Department. Additional financial support came from two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants](#), Alaska’s first Community Forest Program grant from the U.S. Forest Service, a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, and contributions from foundations, businesses, and local donors, including more than \$240,000 from the Anchorage community.

Aerial view of Potter Marsh / Kerry Tasker

Day at the Beach California



Aerial view of wetland construction

In San Francisco Bay, the Coastal Program worked with the Tomales Bay Watershed Council to improve more than 680 feet of stream and 1.23 acres of wetlands at Chicken Ranch Beach in Tomales Bay, California. The Coastal Program assisted with project planning, regulatory permitting, and technical design review. The more than \$1 million in project funds came from the National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant Program and Marin County Open Space District.

The project benefits a wide range of wetland species, including the federally endangered tidewater goby and federally threatened California red-legged frog. The project also addresses elevated bacterial pathogens that threaten public health and recreation at the Chicken Ranch Beach. The restored stream and wetland removed stagnant seasonal water and improved water quality, which reduced human pathogen exposure and improved recreation opportunities.

Aerial view of Chicken Ranch wetland construction / John Hardy, PCI Ecological

Keep Fishin' Wisconsin



Panoramic view of bluff and stream restoration

The Coastal Program works with partners to restore natural habitats that support recreation and community benefits. Since 2014, the Coastal Program has been part of a broad coalition restoring habitats along Fish Creek, a Lake Superior tributary. Partners include the Burke Center for Ecosystem Research, U.S. Forest Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Fish Creek Restoration LLC, Ken and Dale Excavating, InterFluve, Inc., and private landowners, among other partners.

In addition to restoring native habitats, the coalition aims to reduce flooding and 16,000 tons of sediment annually that threaten infrastructure, private property, and water quality. A U.S. Geological Survey study identified 17 eroding bluffs as excessive sediment sources to North Fish Creek, which flows into Chequamegon Bay – the City of Ashland’s drinking water source. The creek is also a Class I trout stream providing critical coldwater habitat for brook trout, a sportfish valued by anglers for its beauty and heritage as one of America’s native trout species.

In 2025, the coalition installed eight upland wetland basins and completed five bluff stabilization projects, reducing an estimated [10,600 tons of sediment](#) each year. Using nature-based approaches, the project has also restored more than 5,600 feet of stream channel to improve cold-water fish habitat.

Panoramic view of bluff and stream restoration / Matt Hudson, Burke Center for Ecosystem Research

Investing in Nature Delaware & New Jersey



Tourism and recreation are significant economic drivers for many coastal communities that are supported by hunting, fishing, boating, beach-going, birdwatching, and many other recreational activities.

In Delaware, tourism is one of the largest private-sector employers, supporting more than [55,000 jobs](#) and attracting more than [29 million visitors](#), with beaches being a leading reason for visits in 2023.⁵ In New Jersey, Cape May and Atlantic counties accounted for nearly [one-third of the State’s tourism economy](#), with record spending in beach communities in 2024.⁶

Coastal habitats, such as beaches and salt marshes, are essential to tourism and recreation, serving as destination attractions and natural defenses for the communities and resources that support these economies.

Delaware and New Jersey collectively have approximately 300,000 acres of salt marsh habitat, much of which is state-owned and managed for public recreation and wildlife conservation. These marshes also provide

important ecosystem services, including flood protection, clean water, and important habitat that support commercial and recreational fisheries. However, many marshes across the region are degraded and require restoration to sustain their ecological function and resilience.

State agencies have limited capacity to work across this expansive landscape. The Coastal Program is helping to fill this gap by using innovative technologies, such as drones and real-time kinematic positioning. In 2025, we collected data on marsh elevation, hydrology, salinity, and wildlife use to prioritize and guide restoration strategies. This work is refining techniques such as reopening isolated marsh through shallow channel construction and restoring marsh elevation through the beneficial use of dredged sediment.

By strengthening partnerships with state agencies, organizations, academic institutions, and private collaborators, the Coastal Program is expanding regional capacity to restore marsh ecosystems and sustain fish and wildlife, recreation, and essential ecosystem services.

5. Tourism Economics. *Economic Impact of Sports Tourism in Delaware*. Delaware Endless Discoveries. 2024.
6. Tourism Economics. *Economic Impact of Visitors to New Jersey*. New Jersey Division of Travel & Tourism. 2024.

Visitors to a marsh and beach / Firefly Imageworks, Inc.

2025 Accomplishment Statistics

 **3,467**
Acres Restored on Service Land

 **463**
Acres Conserved on Indigenous Lands

Landmark Achievement South Carolina

In 2025, a coalition of partners and funders permanently protected more than 62,000 acres of natural habitats along the Pee Dee, Santee, and Black Rivers. Known as the Pee Dee Basin Initiative, this landmark achievement sustains a vital landscape that supports local communities, rural economies, working forests, and wildlife.

The protection of this landscape ensures habitats for State species of concern; provides hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation opportunities; and preserves ecosystem functions, such as flood prevention, carbon sequestration, and clean water.

The coalition includes the Open Space Institute, Pee Dee Land Trust, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Forestry Commission, and Resource Management Service,

LLC – one of the world’s largest timberland investment groups, among many other partners and stakeholders. As a part of the coalition, the Coastal Program conducted a comprehensive survey documenting the high value of landscape’s habitats. The information was used to acquire funds, inform management decisions, and as a basis for biological monitoring and regulatory compliance.

The habitat survey identified a new population of spotted turtle – a state species of concern - as well as other species of concern, such as colonies of black-crowned night heron and green heron. The protected landscape includes expansive hardwood forests, upland ridges, natural lakes, backswamps, and miles of creeks and floodplains.

Protected forested wetlands / Jason Ayers

Return on Investment Alabama



American Conservation Experience interns

The Coastal Program provides technical and financial assistance to build capacity across Service programs and facilities. In 2025, the Coastal Program supported two interns who expanded fieldwork and public outreach capacity at the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge.

Working with Share the Beach, the interns conducted sea turtle surveys that located 12 loggerhead sea turtle nests and helped with the successful emergence of more than 900 hatchlings. They also monitored nesting shorebirds with Alabama Audubon, surveyed federally endangered Alabama beach mice, and prepared endangered species reports to support recovery and regulatory compliance.

The interns enhanced public outreach by assisting researchers, staffing the visitors station, and leading visitor enrichment activities. The achievements of the interns and similar opportunities supports collaborative conservation and advances Department priorities by strengthening partnerships, supporting species recovery, promoting recreation, and enhancing public enjoyment of America's natural resources.

Interns at public outreach event / USFWS

Citizen Science Hawai'i



Green sea turtle hatchlings

The Coastal Program works with organizations and communities to connect people with nature and support citizen science.

Revered by Native Hawaiians, the honu, or Hawaiian green sea turtle, is an iconic marine species for residents and visitors to Hawai'i. Honu populations dramatically declined due to over-exploitation in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They were listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act in 1978, when nesting sites were mostly limited to one place in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Following decades of conservation success, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service downlisted the honu to federally threatened in 2015.

Since 2016, the Coastal Program has partnered with Mālama i nā Honu to train and organize community volunteers to survey beaches for sea turtle nests on O'ahu. When a nest is found, volunteers and staff monitor the nest to reduce threats and excavate it as hatchlings emerge – collecting data on egg counts, emergence success, and other metrics. In 2025, volunteers documented 65 nests on O'ahu. This community partnership supports honu recovery that may lead to its delisting.

Volunteers watching green sea turtle hatchlings / Sheldon Plentovich, USFWS

Return of Indigenous Lands Alaska



Aerial view and (below) habitat types of protected property



In 2010, the Coastal Program and Great Land Trust (GLT) worked together to prioritize habitat conservation across the Matanuska-Susitna River watersheds. The O'Brien Creek Estuary was identified as a priority conservation area because of its pristine and productive habitat for wildlife, migratory birds, and Pacific salmon.

In 2025, the Coastal Program worked with the Knik Tribe and GLT to permanently protect 270 acres of undeveloped land at the mouth of O'Brien Creek. The property is owned and managed by the Knik Tribe and represents a significant step toward restoring Indigenous stewardship of culturally and ecologically important lands. Funding for the acquisition was



provided by the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund and a generous donation by a local family.

The property, located within Dena'ina Elnena – the traditional homeland of the Dena'ina Athabascan people, contains important archaeological resources and has long supported subsistence fishing, hunting, and gathering by members of the K'enaKatnu (Knik) and Eydlughet (Eklutna) Tribes. This project demonstrates the impact of community-led conservation and restoring traditional lands to Indigenous communities.

(Clockwise) Aerial photo of O'Brien Creek conservation site; Stream habitat; and Forest habitat on O'Brien Creek conservation site / Tammy Ervin, Great Land Trust



Learn more about the Coastal Program at:
<https://www.fws.gov/program/coastal>



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(Front Cover) Ocean wave / Mourad Saadi, Unsplash and (Back Cover) Surfers at sunset / Chris Eng, USFWS