NFWF | Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

RECIPIENTS
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

AWARD AMOUNT
$9,933,900

PARTNERS
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Mississippi State University

Institute for Marine Mammal Studies

University of Southern Mississippi

LOCATION
Mississippi Gulf Coast

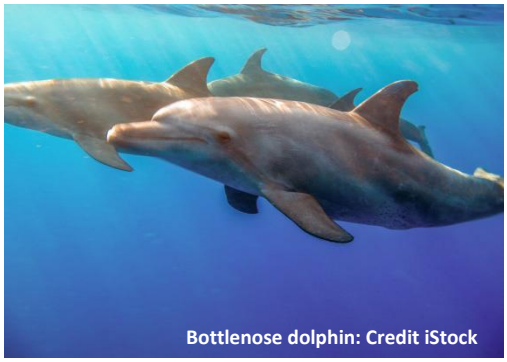
AWARD DATE
November 2016

The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), supports projects to remedy harm and eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to Gulf Coast natural resources affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To learn more about NFWF, go to **www.nfwf.org.**

MISSISSIPPI

Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation, Recovery, and Monitoring Program – Phase I

This five-year project will engage state and federal agencies, academic institutions and conservation organizations to bolster the capacity of Mississippi's marine mammal and sea turtle stranding network. The overall goal is to improve response to injured or dead animals and develop a consistent scientific understanding of the causes of mortality to inform management actions in the state. Project components will seek to: 1) bolster state partnerships and enhance stranding network capacity, 2) perform health and mortality assessments, 3) rehabilitate and release injured sea turtles, as appropriate, 4) use satellite telemetry tagging to assess habitat utilization and validate rehabilitation success, 5) improve compliance with utilization of Turtle Excluder Devices, and 6) establish a fisheries observer program. This project seeks to address scientific gaps and improve the understanding of foundational causes of marine mammal and sea turtle strandings in order to increase populations in the Mississippi Sound.


Bottlenose dolphin: Credit iStock

Green turtle: Credit iStock

The Mississippi Sound is critical habitat for marine mammals and sea turtles. A better understanding of stranding events will shape best practices in the future.