

Tampa Bay Oil Spill

Turtle Restoration Projects: These projects were selected to compensate for injured turtles and turtle habitat resulting from the spill.

Project: Nesting beach survey

Location: Egmont Key

Funding: \$50,000 (from Tampa Bay Oil Spill settlement)

Year of Completion: 2000 through 2010

This project was undertaken at Egmont Key as part of the Index Nesting Beach Survey Program, a turtle nest monitoring program structured to generate reliable data that resource managers need to direct and support on-going sea turtle recovery efforts as identified in sea turtle recovery plans. The [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) and the [Florida Department of Environmental Protection \(FDEP\)](#) began the Florida Index Nesting Beach Survey (INBS) in 1989 in order to standardize the nesting survey effort. Standardized protocols were developed to guide nesting beach survey efforts on selected beaches. Long-term monitoring of nesting beaches is needed to begin to see sea turtle population trends beyond the often misleading yearly fluctuations in nesting efforts. As a result, participants in the INBS program are asked to make a ten-year commitment to the survey program.

Egmont Key has a relatively active turtle-nesting beach, and nesting per unit of beach length is greater than on any other beach in either of the surrounding counties. As one of only a few completely natural beaches near Tampa Bay, Egmont Key may serve as a much-needed indicator of nesting trends that are not influenced by human-related nesting beach disturbances. The project is the enrollment of Egmont Key in the INBS program and was implemented by [the Egmont Key Alliance](#).

Project: Turtle Enforcement

Location: Gulf of Mexico

Funding: \$50,000

Year of Completion: 2004

Using an existing agreement, the [National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Enforcement Division](#) provided the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Marine Enforcement Division](#) with funds for additional overtime hours dedicated for increased enforcement/education of resources laws for the protection of sea turtles targeted at fishing boats engaged in net fisheries (e.g., shrimp trawlers, purse seiners, etc.) on the central west coast of Florida. .

Net fisheries represent the most significant cause of adult turtle strandings and mortalities. This project was expected to decrease incidences of actual or potential harm to sea turtles in Tampa Bay and local Gulf waters through education, deterrence and opportunities for increased detection and enforcement of sea turtle protection laws. The sea turtle protection achieved through this project would translate to reduced strandings, particularly during the shrimp-fishing season. Efforts to police sea turtle protection efforts in this area have suffered in recent years due to other higher priority marine enforcement responsibilities.