



WS' work at Homestead Air Reserve Base is one example of the program's successful efforts to reduce the risk of wildlife strikes. In 1999, an F-16 coming in for a landing at the base, sustained \$825,000 in damage after a turkey vulture was sucked into one of its engines. The plane and the pilot were almost lost. The base subsequently contracted with WS to protect its aircraft, which significantly improved safety at the base. Since then, there have not been any major bird collisions with aircraft, and wildlife hazards have been reduced substantially.

**Protecting Threatened and Endangered Species**—WS protects threatened and endangered species from wildlife predation and damage. WS protects 14 threatened and endangered species in Florida, including 5 species of sea turtles (green, leatherback, hawksbill, Kemp's ridley, and loggerhead); 5 species of beach mice (Perdido Key, Saint Andrews, Anastasia Island, southeastern, and Choctawhatchee); 3 bird species (roseate tern, least tern, and Puerto Rican parrot); and 1 fish species (the Okaloosa darter). WS' efforts have successfully helped all 14 species increase or maintain their populations.

For example, WS has ensured the survival of thousands of sea turtle hatchlings by reducing predation at Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge. Before WS went to work in 1997, more than 95 percent of all hatchlings were lost to predation at Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge. WS saved an estimated 120,597 sea turtle nestlings at Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge in FY 2002 alone.



**Protecting Transportation, Timber, and Natural Resources from Beaver Damage**—WS conducted beaver control activities in Columbia, Bay, Duval, Santa Rosa, and Escambia counties to remove problem beavers that were causing flooding to timber lands, crop lands, and roadways. WS' efforts saved nearly \$1 million dollars in Florida resources, including 623 acres of timber, 240 acres of natural wildlife habitat, and 28 roads.

**Looking to the Future**

While WS provides the citizens of Florida with safe, effective, and humane assistance for a diverse range of wildlife conflicts, challenges remain. Wildlife continue to threaten the safety of air travelers at many Florida airports. Resource constraints, however, have prevented WS from providing a systematic and thorough evaluation of wildlife hazards for many Florida airports.

WS is working with State and county agencies to begin an oral rabies vaccination project to reduce, and hopefully eliminate the raccoon strain of rabies from Florida. Five hundred thousand baits containing the oral rabies vaccine are scheduled to be distributed in a 4 county area (Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco and Polk) in 2003.

**Florida Wildlife Services Funding** ●●●●●●●●●●

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators; such as producers; private individuals; businesses; and other Federal, State, and local government agencies who have a vested interest in the program. In most cases, these cooperators need help to resolve wildlife damage problems or they play a role in wildlife damage management.

