

Getting Involved:

Cooperative Program and Grant Opportunities for Fishermen in the South Atlantic Region

An Overview

Fisheries managers often receive questions from fishermen regarding opportunities to participate in cooperative management programs or, in some cases, funding opportunities for small business entities. Below is a list of federal and state cooperative programs that exist to provide an avenue for fishermen to pursue project opportunities that address critical resource issues and needs identified within agencies' strategic management plans. A primary goal of cooperative management programs allows scientists and fishermen to bring valuable tools and experience to the objectives of a research project. The following programs aim to utilize the collective experience of fishermen and scientists to produce the best advice to fishery managers based on fishing experience and sound scientific research procedures. A background of the programs is provided, along with protocol requirements for applying and a point of contact for further information.

NOAA Fisheries Service Programs

The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, through the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), provides funding through various programs and grant initiatives in which fishermen may be eligible to apply. The following program descriptions provide you with background on funding programs and a point of contact for additional information. Potential applicants should refer to the Federal Funding Opportunity Announcement available off of each program's web site for specific proposal requirements prior to submitting an application. Requests for proposals (commonly referred to as "RFPs") for the following federal funding opportunities has expired in 2009, however those interested in these types of opportunities can begin developing project proposals for next year's application process. Requests for proposals are published in NOAA Omnibus Federal Register notice on or around July 1 every year. Applications are available through www.grants.gov.

- **Cooperative Research Program**
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/grants/crp.htm>
- ❖ The Cooperative Research Program provides an opportunity to compete for financial assistance for projects that seek to increase and improve the working relationship between fisheries researchers from the NMFS, state fishery agencies, universities, and the U.S. fishing (recreational and commercial).
- ❖ Project topics should focus on the greatest probability of collecting data that aids in recovering, maintaining, or improving the status of stocks upon which fisheries depend; improving the understanding of factors affecting recruitment success and long-term sustainability of fisheries; and/or generating increased values and opportunities for fisheries.

- ❖ Projects that focus on providing information pertaining to species of concern may be given priority selection. Those species of concern are listed by South Atlantic Council (in the South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone from NC to the east coast of FL): Greater Amberjack, Red Snapper, White Grunt, Golden Tilefish, Snowy Grouper, Hogfish, Vermilion Snapper, Black Sea Bass, Speckled Hind, Red Porgy, Warsaw Grouper, Shrimp, and Goliath Grouper.

Requirements:

- ❖ All applicants must include a written agreement with a person employed by NMFS who will act as a partner in the proposed research project.
- ❖ Eligible applicants may be institutions of higher education, nonprofits, commercial organizations, individuals, and state, local, and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible. Applicants who are not commercial or recreational fisherman must have commercial or recreational fishermen participating in their project. There must be a written agreement with a fisherman describing the involvement in the project activity.

What can you do now?

Contact NMFS to determine if the scope of your project meets criteria, establish a NMFS partner for the project.

Examples of projects that have previously received funding:

- Characterization of bycatch associated with the South Atlantic snapper grouper bandit fishery with electronic video monitoring, at-sea observers, and biological sampling;
- Reproductive biology and ecology of important shallow-water snapper species in south Florida and the Florida Keys.

Point of contact:

Dax Ruiz

State-Federal liaison branch NMFS

(727) 551-5733

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- **Marine Fisheries Initiative (MARFIN)**
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/grants/grants.htm> <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/grants/marfin.htm>
- ❖ MARFIN funds research and development projects that optimize the use of fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico and off the South Atlantic states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida involving the U.S. fishing industry (recreational and commercial), including fishery biology, resource assessment, socioeconomic assessment, management and conservation, selected harvesting methods, and fish handling and processing.
- ❖ Projects funded under MARFIN provide answers for fishery needs covered by the NMFS Strategic Plan, particularly those goals relating to: rebuilding over-fished marine fisheries, maintaining currently productive fisheries, and integrating conservation of protected species and fisheries management.

- ❖ Priority topics for projects include: bycatch, reef fish and other fishery resources, associations with reef environments, red snapper research, economic and sociocultural studies and aquaculture.

Requirements:

- ❖ Eligible applicants may be institutions of higher education, nonprofits, commercial organizations, individuals, state, local and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible.
- ❖ Applicants are not required to have a NMFS partner in order to submit a proposal

What can you do now?

- ❖ Start thinking about a project proposal that may fit under a MARFIN priority topic. The topics do not vary much from year to year.

Examples of projects that have previously received funding:

- The operations and economics of the for-hire fishing fleets of the South Atlantic states and the Atlantic coast of Florida;
- Social impacts of the allocation / reallocation of marine fisheries resources on communities in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic: development of an empirical model.

Point of contact:

Ellie Roche
NOAA Fisheries SER
(727) 824-5324
ellie.roche@noaa.gov

- **Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program (S-K)**
www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mb/financial_services/skhome.htm
- ❖ The S-K program provides financial assistance (grants or cooperative agreements) for research and development projects that benefit the U.S. fishing industry.
- ❖ Project priority topics for this grant program change annually and past projects have addressed many aspects of U.S. fisheries, including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing, marketing, fisheries socioeconomics and associated infrastructures.

Requirements:

- ❖ The S-K Program is open to applicants from a variety of sectors, including industry, academia, and state and local governments. Applications are encouraged that involve collaboration between industry and the other sectors noted above. NMFS will consider the extent of the fishing community involvement when evaluating the potential benefit of funding a proposal.

What can you do now?

- ❖ Potential applicants can begin thinking of research topics, working on a draft project narrative and budget narrative.

Examples of projects that have previously received funding:

- Development of social indicators for fishing communities of the southeast: measures of dependence, vulnerability, resilience and gentrification;

- Indirect effects of the bait shrimp fishery on juvenile gag grouper

Point of contact:

Dan Namur

S-K Program manager

301-713-1364 ext. 118

dan.namur@noaa.gov

Other Funding Opportunities

- **NOAA Capital Construction Fund Program**

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/fs/fs.html>

- ❖ Exists to help construct, reconstruct, or (under limited circumstances) acquire fishing vessels with before-tax, rather than after-tax, dollars.
- ❖ Available through the Financial Services Branch at NOAA Fisheries
- ❖ Items available for financing and refinancing the construction, reconstruction, reconditioning or purchase costs of:
 - Aquacultural Facilities, including land
 - Fisheries Shoreside Facilities, including land. Fishing vessels (usually, refinancing only)
 - Halibut and Sablefish IFQs
 - Fishing Capacity Reduction Buybacks

Contact:

NOAA Southeast Regional Financial Services Branch

(727) 824-5377

- **The Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation**

- ❖ This non-profit works cooperatively with the commercial fishing industry and academia to conduct projects geared towards topics that directly impact the commercial fishing sector. Since the organization's inception, over 600 collaborative projects specific to the commercial harvesting and seafood industries have been supported.
- ❖ **Previously funded project topics include:**
 - Improving bycatch reduction in the southeastern shrimp trawl fleet;
 - Catch characterization and discards within the snapper-grouper vertical hook and line fishery;
 - Developing social indicators for fisheries management;
 - Refinement of an electronic logbook to support fishing.

Point of Contact:

Judy Jamison

Executive Director

(813) 286-8390

www.gulfsouthfoundation.org

State Program Funding Opportunities

- **North Carolina Fisheries Resource Grant Program**

www.ncseagrant.org/home/research/fishery-research

- ❖ This program is funded by the NC General Assembly and administered through NC Sea Grant to support fisheries related projects in NC
- ❖ The program's basic principle is that people in fisheries related activities often have compelling ideas for improving and protecting fisheries, but may lack the financial resources or scientific background to conduct experiments, collect data, and analyze results. Priority topics for projects include:
 - Fisheries Equipment & Gear
 - Environmental Pilot Studies
 - Aquaculture & Mariculture
 - Seafood Technology

Requirements:

- ❖ Any NC resident associated with the NC fishing industry (commercial or recreational) is eligible to apply.
- ❖ Those thinking about submitting a proposal must first attend a workshop held in the fall of each year where applicants are given an introduction to the program, assistance in the development of research ideas and help identifying possible collaborators.

Point of Contact:

Scott Baker

Fisheries Specialist, NC Sea Grant Extension Program

UNC-W Center for Marine Science

Phone (910)-962-2492

bakers@uncw.edu

www.ncseagrant.org

- **North Carolina Marine Resources Fund**

www.ncdmf.net/CRFL/index.html

- ❖ This program utilizes a portion of NC's Coastal Recreational Fishing License Fees (CRFL) to fund research and monitoring projects that enhance the state's marine resources
- ❖ Priority topic areas to be funded are established based upon the CRFL's Strategic Plan and are categorized by Program Area Objective.
- ❖ The annual funding cycle begins July 1 and requests for proposals will be issued prior to this date

Point of Contact:

Bonnie Jones

CRFL Project Coordinator

(252) 808-8113

Bonnie.b.jones@ncdenr.gov

- **Sea Grant Core Projects**

- ❖ Each state's Sea Grant Extension Program sponsors Core projects supporting research in cross cutting themes dealing with fisheries. The projects focus on various thematic areas, including Healthy Coastal Ecosystems and Safe and Sustainable Seafood Supply. Each Sea Grant Program solicits concept letters for innovative research, education, and extension activities which seek to address major issues, problems, opportunities and, at the same time, increase the knowledge and understanding of marine and coastal resources by the citizens of each state and region.
- ❖ NC: www.ncseagrant.org/home/research/core-research
Point of contact:
Dr. Steve Rebach, NC SG Associate Director
(919) 515-9104
- ❖ SC: www.scseagrant.org/pdf_files/FY10-12_RFP.pdf (The next SC Sea Grant Request for Proposals will be announced in 2011.)
Point of contact:
Rick DeVoe, Executive Director
rick.devoe@scseagrant.org
Denise Sanger, Assistant Director for Research and Planning
denise.sanger@scseagrant.org
- ❖ GA: www.marsci.uga.edu/gaseagrant/funding.html
Point of contact:
Dr. Chuck Hopkinson, Director
chopkins@uga.edu
(706) 542-6009
- ❖ FL: www.flseagrant.org/
Point of contact:
Dr. Karl Havens, Director
khavens@ufl.edu
(352) 392-5870

- **Business & Cooperative Programs available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture**

Includes grant and loan programs that are available to commercial fishermen for technical assistance, business planning and marketing

USDA Loan Programs

- ❖ Business & Industry Guaranteed Loan Program
www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/bussp/b&i_gar.htm
- A borrower must be engaged in or proposing to engage in a business that will provide employment; improve the economic or environmental climate; promote the conservation, development, and use of water for aquaculture; or reduce reliance on nonrenewable energy resources by encouraging the development and construction of solar energy systems and other renewable energy systems.

USDA Grant Programs

❖ Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/b&i_gar.htm

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rbeg.htm

- The Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program provides grants for rural projects that finance and facilitate development of small and emerging rural businesses help fund distance learning networks, and help fund employment related adult education programs. To assist with business development, RBEGs may fund a broad array of activities.

❖ Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rbog.htm

- The Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program promotes sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs through provision of training and technical assistance for business development, entrepreneurs, and economic development officials and to assist with economic development planning.

❖ Small Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grant Program

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/b&i_gar.htm

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/ssdpg/ssdpg.htm

- The primary objective of the Small Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grant Program is to provide technical assistance to small, socially-disadvantaged agricultural producers through eligible cooperatives and associations of cooperatives.

❖ Value Added Producer Grant Program

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm (note: this grant program is currently open and applications are due November 30, 2009)

- Grants may be used for planning activities and for working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy. Eligible applicants are independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/b&i_gar.htm

To help fishermen find their local USDA regional field offices, visit the following Web sites:

NC: www.rurdev.usda.gov/nc/whoweare.htm

SC: www.rurdev.usda.gov/sc/whoweare.htm

GA: www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga/ao-list.htm

FL: www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl/so_list.htm

This summary is compiled as a service of the:
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