

# Sea Grant Support of South Atlantic Red Snapper Stock Assessment

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS "J" ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Competition:** South Atlantic Red Snapper Stock Assessment

**Closing Date:** May 12, 2020

**Eligible Sea Grant Programs:** This competition is open to all Sea Grant programs.

### **Funding availability:**

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) anticipates that up to \$1,575,000 in federal funding will be available to a Sea Grant Program, or a partnership of Sea Grant Programs to administer a research competition investigating abundance of the South Atlantic stocks of Red Snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*). \$1.5M is available for research sub-award(s) and an additional \$75,000 is available to the Sea Grant program(s) for administrative costs. Applications do not require the standard 50% non-federal match for Sea Grant projects, as funds are provided in partnership with the NOAA Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC)

### **Project Description:**

Red snapper is a popular target of sportfishers and the commercial fishing industry throughout the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Historical overharvesting resulted in a depleted population in the South Atlantic, but under current management measures the population is recovering, with full recovery expected by 2032. Some controversy surrounds the current stock assessment for South Atlantic red snapper, particularly with regard to accuracy of population estimates. Given this, interest exists in the development of an independent estimate of red snapper abundance in the U.S. waters of the South Atlantic.

The goal of this funding announcement is to identify a Sea Grant Program, or a partnership of Sea Grant Programs to oversee and implement a research competition that will support one or more sub-awards to generate an absolute abundance estimate for the entire South Atlantic red snapper stock.

It is anticipated that to achieve the absolute abundance estimate, with an accompanying measure of uncertainty, research projects will need to utilize one, or a combination, of the following three approaches: (1) Close-kin genetics analysis; (2) Utilize existing South Atlantic trap-video survey data to scale-up density estimates to total abundance; (3) utilize a research technique similar to that pursued in the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper abundance assessment, focusing predominantly on use of active acoustics and visual ground-truthing.

Of the funds available, \$1.5M must be invested in sub-awarded research activities to generate the South Atlantic Red Snapper abundance estimate, with an accompanying measure of uncertainty. An additional \$75,000 is available to support the administration of the research competition and/or other related administrative expenses.

It is a priority that the awardee provide a clear plan for how it will carry out the administrative responsibilities of this award, as well as select and begin research activities within 6 months of the start of this award. A strong proposal is expected to describe the program(s) capabilities to

engage with NSGO, SEFSC, academic researchers and other appropriate stakeholders as needed to achieve the goal described above.

**Application Requirements:**

Applicants may request up to \$1,575,000 in federal funds and applications DO NOT require the standard 50% non-federal match for Sea Grant projects.

Projects should propose a start date no earlier than September 1, 2020 with a proposed end date no longer than three years after the proposed start date.

Applicants must include the following components in their proposal package:

1. Project Narrative:

- Project Proposal Narrative of not more than 3 pages:
  - Introduction/background/justification
  - Project objectives
  - General work plan and milestones
  - Anticipated outcomes
  - Coordination with other program elements, if relevant.
  - References/literature citations

Include with the Project Narrative the following components which do not count toward the 3-page limit:

- Short CVs (no more than 2 pages each) for each principal and co-principal investigator
- Letters of Commitment/Support. Required in the instance that a Sea Grant program is applying on behalf of a partnership of multiple Sea Grant programs; otherwise optional.

\*Note: The activities intended for funding by this competition fall into the listed exceptions in the NOFO Announcement for [NOAA-OAR-SG-2020-2006252](#) (administrative actions and workshop/conference), therefore, at this time an Abbreviated Environmental Compliance Questionnaire is NOT required with the application. Research project(s) that are recommended for funding, as a result of the subsequent research competition administered by the selected recipient(s) of this competition, must be reviewed for environmental compliance by NOAA. No funding for the recommended research projects (including match funding) may be drawn down, expended, or committed to activities until environmental review for actions is complete, including, as appropriate, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) and Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA, EFH), and National Historic Preservation Act. Any mandatory mitigation measures developed through the environmental compliance review shall be implemented by the recipient as a condition of award.

\*Note: This announcement is not seeking proposals that generate environmental data. Therefore, a Data Management Plan is not required as part of the Proposal. A Data Management Plan will be required with applications submitted in response to the resulting Request for Proposals.

2. Budget Narrative
  - 90-4 Budget detail form(s)
  - Budget justification
3. Overall application
  - SF-424
  - SF-424A
  - SF-424A, Extra Section B
  - SF-424B Assurances
  - CD-511
  - SF-LLL (if applicable)

**Deadlines:**

**May 12, 2020:** Consult the NOFO [NOAA-OAR-SG-2020-2006252](#), available at [Grants.gov](#), for eligible applicants, required elements of the application, how to submit, general programmatic priorities and selection factors, and other necessary information. Submit your application to **SPECIAL PROJECTS "J"** under this Opportunity in grants.gov. Projects should propose a start date no earlier than September 1, 2020 and an end date of no longer than three years after the proposed start date.

**Application Evaluation Criteria:**

The following criteria, which are outlined in greater detail in the Special Projects NOFO, will be used to evaluate proposals. Note that these criteria are different than the Evaluation Criteria laid out in the Special Projects NOFO. Proposals will be evaluated by three independent written reviews based on:

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of proposed projects to the program goals (40 percent). This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities: i.e., how does this proposed activity enhance NOAA and Sea Grant strategic focus areas and mission goals? This includes how well the proposed activity addresses the goals of the individual competition announcement, and any geographic, programmatic, or other restrictions placed on available funds.
2. Technical/scientific merit (20 percent). This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals, objectives, and data management considerations. For this competition this includes: articulation of need and priority, including demonstrated support by partners and others in Sea Grant.
3. Overall qualifications of applicants (20 percent). This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project.
4. Project costs (20 percent). This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

Additionally, projects will be recommended for funding only if they have a complete application package and if funds are available.

**Other Information:**

**Award Form:** The award will be in the form of a Cooperative Agreement with NOAA. The awardee will work closely with the National Sea Grant Office and subject matter experts from

the National Marine Fisheries Service throughout the process in developing the RFP and monitoring and evaluating the resulting projects.

Reporting: Progress will be reported semi-annually.

Questions: Questions about this competition or the Special Projects Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) may be sent to [oar.hq.sg.competitions@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.hq.sg.competitions@noaa.gov). Please specify that your question is related to the Atlantic Red Snapper Research Program competition in the subject line and CC Rebecca Briggs, [rebecca.briggs@noaa.gov](mailto:rebecca.briggs@noaa.gov).

Fillable versions of required Sea Grant forms can be found here:

<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>

Guidance for completing these forms is located in the Sea Grant General Application Guidance Document:

(<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/1/Guidance/SeaGrantGeneralApplicationGuide.pdf>)

A checklist for building your application is available here:

<https://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Implementation>