

Sea Grant Support of Amberjack Research

SPECIAL PROJECTS ANNOUNCEMENT

Competition: Amberjack Research Program

EXTENDED Closing Date: May 15, 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 \$10,000,000 in federal funding will be available to a Sea Grant Program or a partnership of Sea Grant Programs to administer a research competition regarding the Gulf and South Atlantic stocks of Greater Amberjack (*Seriola dumerili*) subsequent to conducting listening sessions or workshops to ascertain research needs. The NSGO anticipates making one award to the lead Sea Grant Program. Applications will require 30% non-federal match.

Project Description:

The Greater Amberjack (*Seriola dumerili*) became an alternative to red drum when the latter experienced decreased commercial landings in the 1980s and 1990s. The Gulf of Mexico Greater Amberjack stock was declared overfished in 2001 and is subject to a rebuilding plan as the stock falls below target population levels and remained overfished as of the 2017 stock assessment, but not subject to overfishing based on 2017 catch data. In the South Atlantic, the stock is above target population levels, not overfished nor subject to overfishing. The goal of this research program is to develop additional data sources, assessment approaches, and knowledge to improve agency and agency-independent estimates of the abundance of Greater Amberjack throughout the Greater Amberjack's range. Specific approaches will be informed by stakeholder input to provide critical knowledge gaps and may include techniques such as a tagging program, genetic assessment of South Atlantic and Gulf stock connectivity and reproductive dynamics studies, for example.

The goals of the funding are to:

1. Support listening sessions and/or workshops to assist in defining the elements of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for research projects related to the Gulf and South Atlantic stocks of Greater Amberjack (*Seriola dumerili*);
2. Administer the subsequent research competition;
3. Support one or more subawards for meritorious research proposals submitted in response to the RFP.

The majority of funds must be used to support the successful research proposals, but funds may also be used to support the costs of the listening sessions/workshops organized by Sea Grant; for administration of a research competition subsequent to the listening sessions/workshops; and/or related expenses.

It is a priority that the awardee provide a clear plan for how it will carry out listening sessions and/or workshops and develop and release the request for research proposals within four months or less of the start date.

Application Requirements:

Applicants may request up to \$10,000,000 in federal funds. Applications will require 30% non-federal matching dollars.

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 15 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 15-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:

EXTENDED TO MAY 15, 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 "H"** 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 (30 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.
5. Outreach and Education (10 percent). This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.

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 implementing the listening sessions/workshops, 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. Please specify that your question is related to the Amberjack Research Program competition in the subject line and CC Kelly Samek, kelly.samek@noaa.gov. An optional Q&A session via teleconference will be offered for interested Sea Grant programs on Thursday, March 19, at 3:00 pm Eastern. To participate, dial 877-718-4283 and at the prompt, enter participant code 7779791.

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>