

Research Set-Aside Program

An Overview for Fishermen and other Interested Parties



NOAA Fisheries Service
Northeast Regional Office
Northeast Fisheries Science Center

What are Research Set-Aside Programs?

Research Set-Aside (RSA) Programs are developed by NOAA Fisheries Service in collaboration with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Councils) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. These programs currently include Sea Scallops, Monkfish, Mid-Atlantic, and Atlantic Herring.



RSA programs provide a mechanism to fund research and compensate vessel owners participating in research through the sale of fish harvested under a research quota or research days at sea (DAS) that has been set aside from the overall quota of each respective RSA species. Because there is no direct Federal funding for this program, the industry lands fish as the funding source. NOAA's Northeast Fishery Science Center (NEFSC) and the Councils establish research priorities for each RSA program, which are used when selecting projects. These research priorities are listed in the *Federal Register* several times a year and in more detail under Federal Funding Opportunities at: <http://www.grants.gov/search/basic.do> Keyword: RSA

The RSA Goal

The RSA program's aim is to further the understanding of our Nation's fisheries, enhance information for management of fisheries, and to foster collaborations between marine fisheries interests.

Such cooperative research also benefits fishermen, Councils, and NOAA Fisheries Service by promoting communication and understanding among the industry, scientists, and managers.

The Research Supported

The RSA programs have been active since 2000, with the start of the Sea Scallop Program. The Mid-Atlantic Program, which includes black sea bass, *Loligo* squid, summer flounder, and several other species, was added in 2001; the Monkfish Program in 2006; and in 2008, the Atlantic Herring Program.

RSA projects provide the Councils and NOAA Fisheries Service a variety of useful information.



Past projects include collecting fish abundance and distribution information, developing a new and improved dredge for sea scallops, *Loligo* squid gear modifications, black sea bass vent studies, biology of large monkfish, and a tagging study for monkfish.

For additional information on RSA projects funded in the past, go to:
www.nero.noaa.gov/StateFedOff/coopresearch/rsa.html

Announcement: RSA Workshop



Workshops are held periodically on specific RSA programs. Such workshops are centered on explaining the program, answering questions, and discussing issues and recommendations to improve the program. RSA participants also provide their opinions and experiences with the program so that fishermen and scientists can hear firsthand what the program is like.

Highly encouraged projects, as well as priority research topics that the Councils and NOAA Fisheries Service would like to see funded, may also be discussed.

Announcements for workshops can be found at Council meetings or online at www.nero.noaa.gov/StateFedOff/coopresearch/rsa.html

The Application Process

Applications are submitted electronically through the internet at Grants.gov. If you are a first time applicant, you must register on Grants.gov to receive a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number that is used to identify a business before submitting material. Registration is a one-time event, and can take a few days to process. It is highly recommended that you do this well in advance of submission deadlines.

Once an application is received, the proposal is reviewed for technical merit by individuals with expertise in the field of the proposed research, and given scores and comments.

All proposals are reviewed by various offices in NOAA Fisheries Service to ensure that endangered, threatened, or other protected species will not be harmed during the project; essential fish habitats will not be in danger, and that the research complies with pertinent regulations and permitting.

Proposals are then discussed during a review panel meeting, recommendations are facilitated by NOAA Fisheries Service, and options are proposed. The options are then reviewed and recommendations are made for final project selection by the Director of NOAA's NEFSC.

An additional review is conducted, consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act

NEPA



(NEPA), to assess any environmental impacts that may occur as a result of awarding a grant for a project. It is essential to fill out a NEPA form (provided as part of the grant application) thoroughly when first submitting your proposal to avoid the need for submitting additional information to NOAA Fisheries Service during the NEPA review process.

For more information on NEPA visit:
http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NEPA_HANDBOOK.pdf

For favorably reviewed proposals, a negotiation period follows, with recommendations for modifications, if needed, and applicants are advised of any additional application material or permits that may be needed. Final approval is then given by the NOAA Grants Office.

For more information on cooperative research, and the application process, go to:
<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/StateFedOff/coopresearch/guidelines/> and select Working Together: The Guide.

Permitting



After proposals have been selected for funding, special authorizations or permits may be needed to conduct compensation fishing or to conduct the research. These include Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP), Letters of Acknowledgement, and Letters of Authorization. State permits may also be

necessary for the state that RSA will be landed in, or if research is conducted in state waters.

Many RSA projects are issued EFPs (permits that exempt vessels from certain regulations), but for the Sea Scallop program, it is common for a Letter of Authorization or Letter of Acknowledgement to be issued.

If your proposal is selected, you should review the Northeast Regional Office Website at www.nero.noaa.gov/permits for permit application information.

Participants are Saying...

A number of participants have found the RSA program useful. Below are quotations from fishermen and researchers stating what they thought about the RSA Program.



“Terrific way to get research done without government money”

“Very useful, couldn’t do the work without it”

“Great program, great concept”

“Only way we could get gear research done”

“Benefits fishermen by doing industry surveys that provide more accurate data for access areas”

“Beneficial to fishermen because it has led to major gear modifications to reduce groundfish and sea turtle bycatch”

Why You should Participate

You have the chance to play an important role in providing improved information for managing your fishery. RSA programs help NOAA Fisheries Service and the Councils to improve fisheries management by acquiring critical data on mortality, discard rates, bycatch, and the biology of certain species, and by designing gear improvements - You can be part of that!

Aside from having a part in the process, the program also provides the economic opportunity to land more fish. This is because you will be able to land fish from the set-aside amounts to compensate you for the cost of the research. You may also get a higher price for the fish if the RSA can be landed when the regular season has closed, or you receive exemptions from certain landing limits, depending on the specific conditions of the approved project.

Benefits of taking part in this process include better data and assessments for our fisheries, the opportunity to increase revenue from additional landings, and an increase in communication between the fishing community and scientists. In addition, gear modifications, such as those implemented for black sea bass, may result in better fishing practices.

The success of this program depends on your participation!

For more information on the RSA program, please call or e-mail any of our contacts:

Northeast Regional Office

One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930
Phone (978) 281-9300
www.nero.noaa.gov

Contacts

Mid-Atlantic Program: Paul Perra
Phone: 978-281-9153
E-mail: Paul.perra@noaa.gov

Monkfish Program: Allison McHale
Phone: 978-281-9103
E-mail: Allison.McHale@noaa.gov

Sea Scallop & Atlantic Herring Program: Ryan Silva
Phone: 978-281-9326
E-mail: Ryan.silva@noaa.gov

Northeast Fisheries Science Center

166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026
Phone (508) 495-2000
www.nefsc.noaa.gov

Contacts

Cooperative Research Coordinator: John Hoey
Phone: 401-782-3323
E-mail: John.Hoey@noaa.gov

Cooperative Research Catalyst: Earl Meredith
Phone: 978-281-9276
E-mail: Earl.Meredith@noaa.gov

Grants and Acquisitions Coordinator: Kelly Taranto
Phone: 508-495-2312
E-mail: Kelly.Taranto@noaa.gov