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NOAA Fisheries Accepting Proposals for Research Set-Asides in 2009

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service is accepting proposals for the Mid-Atlantic Research Set-Aside Program (RSA) research activities concerning summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, Loligo squid, Illex squid, Atlantic mackerel, butterfish, Atlantic bluefish, and tilefish fisheries.

The goals of the RSA programs are to further the understanding of the nation's fisheries, enhance information used in fisheries management decision-making, and foster collaborations among marine fisheries interests. Deadline for proposals is March 24, 2008.

"This program provides opportunities for fishermen and scientists to work together and conduct research on fish species that are managed through the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council," said Earl Meredith, Cooperative Research Program coordinator for NOAA Fisheries' Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, Mass. "Several hundred fishermen and their crews have participated in research projects totaling more than \$2.8 million in actual research and more than \$6 million in compensation fishing since the program began in 2000."

For the fishing year 2009 (January 1-December 31, 2009), the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council may set aside up to three percent of the total allowable landings in certain Mid-Atlantic fisheries to be used for research purposes under the RSA program, which provides a mechanism to fund research and compensate vessel owners through the sale of fish harvested under the research quota.

Vessels participating in an approved research project may be authorized by the NOAA Fisheries' Northeast Regional Administrator to harvest and land fish in excess of any imposed trip limit or during fishery closures. Landings from such trips are sold to generate funds that help defray the costs associated with the approved research projects. No Federal funds are provided for research; the industry lands fish as the funding source.

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, hospitals, other nonprofit organizations, commercial organizations, individuals, and state, local, and Native American tribal governments. Applications are also encouraged from historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that work in underserved areas. NOAA encourages applications from members of the fishing community and applications that involve fishing community cooperation and participation.

Past RSA projects include collecting abundance and distribution information, biology of large monkfish, studies on escape vents for discard reduction in the black sea bass pot/trap fishery, developing a new and improved dredge for sea scallops, Loligo squid gear modifications, and a tagging study for monkfish.

The full Federal funding announcement for this RSA program can be viewed through the NOAA Grants On-line website at <http://www.grants.gov/>, under Funding Opportunity Number NMFS-NEFSC-2009-2001252.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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Related links:

2009 RSA program <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/marsa/>

Cooperative Research Program: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/StateFedOff/coopresearch/rsa.html>

RSA program brochure:

<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/StateFedOff/coopresearch/guidelines/FishermanBrochure.pdf>