

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

October 27, 2025

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary.

1. Welcome/Call to Order (<i>R. Zobel</i>)	9:00 a.m.
2. Council Consent (<i>R. Zobel</i>)	9:05 a.m.
• Approval of Agenda	
• Approval of Proceedings from May 2025	
3. Public Comment	9:10 a.m.
4. Consider FY2026 ACCSP Project and Administrative Proposals for Funding (<i>J. Simpson</i>) Action	9:15 a.m.
5. Program and Committee Updates (<i>G. White, J. Simpson</i>)	10:00 a.m.
6. Other Business/Adjourn	10:50 a.m.

The meeting will be held at Hyatt Place Dewey Beach (1301 Coastal Highway, Dewey Beach, Delaware; 302.864.9100) and via webinar; click [here](#) for details.

**DRAFT PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM
COORDINATING COUNCIL**

**The Westin Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia
Hybrid Meeting**

May 7, 2025

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the ACCSP Coordinating Council.
The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

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1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 3).
2. **Approval of Proceedings of October 21, 2024** by consent (Page 3).
3. **Move to approve the ACCSP FY2026 RFP including updated priorities as presented in the funding decision document, biological and bycatch matrices** (Page 6). Motion by Renee Zobel; second by Jason McNamee. Motion passes by unanimous consent (Page 9).
4. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 19).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Bob Beal, ASMFC
Carl Wilson, ME
Megan Ware, ME proxy for C. Wilson
Renne Zobel, NH proxy for C. Patterson
Dan McKiernan, MA
Jason McNamee
Greg Wojcik, CT proxy for J. Davis
Marty Gary, NY
Joe Cimino, NJ
Kris Kuhn, PA
Richard Wong, DE
Carrie Kennedy, MD, proxy for L. Fegley

Stephanie Iverson-Cason, VA
Brandi Salmon, NC
Ben Dyar, SC
Kathy Knowlton, GA
Erika Burgess, FL
Ingrid Braun-Ricks, PRFC
Dave McCarron, NEFMC
Julia Beaty, MAFMC
John Carmichael, SAFMC
Max Appelman, NMFS
Richard Cody, NOAA
Rick Jacobson, US FWS

Staff

Alex DiJohnson
Caitlin Starks
Ed Martino
Emilie Franke
Geoff White

Jeff Kipp
Jennifer Ni
Julie Defilippi Simpson
Katie Drew
Michael Opiekun

Madeline Musante
Toni Kerns
Tina Berger
Tracey Bauer
Geoff White

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Jefferson Ballroom of the Westin Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Wednesday, May 7, 2025, and was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Chair Kathy Knowlton/Geoff White.

CALL TO ORDER

MR. GEOFF WHITE: Good morning, everyone, we are ready to start the ACCSP Coordinating Council. My name is Geoff White, and I'm glad to have you all here. I wanted to welcome Kathy Knowlton at her first meeting as Chair. Kathy, appreciate your long history within ACCSP at all levels, from Rec Tech, Ops and now Coordinating Council Chair, and your thoughtful contributions. With that I will hand it over to you to get us through.

CHAIR KATHY KNOWLTON: Good morning, I really appreciate you all's time and being here. We have a couple of members who are attending virtually, so we will make sure that at the end of our welcoming introductions, that we do not forget to have them also address the group.

I see some new faces here at the table, and I know that we have got some new members here, and some of the faces are unfamiliar to me, because I do not sit on any of the Commission Committees. We have a little bit of time this morning, so I would like to take a few minutes to go around the table please and introduce yourself.

If you can think about it very quickly, about how many years you have been involved with ACCSP. I know we've maybe got some new faces that have some years on other committees. I will start this off. I am Kathy Knowlton with Georgia DNR, Coastal Resources Division. I started in 1999 with Recreational Technical Committee, spent many years on that and Ops, and about 5 or 6 years here with the Coordinating Council.

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MS. RENEE ZOBEL: I am Renee Zobel with New Hampshire's Fish and Game, and I started with ACCSP Committees, I think in about 2006, so it's been a little while for me as well. I will assist Kathy as her Vice-Chair.

DR. JASON McNAMEE: Hi everybody, I'm Jason McNamee, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. I'm like searching the memory banks, maybe 3 or 4 years on the Council here. Not too, too long, but starting to get up there.

MR. DANIEL MCKIERNAN: Dan McKiernan, Director at the Mass Division of Marine Fisheries. One decade since Paul Diodati retired.

MR. MARTIN GARY: Good morning, everybody, Marty Gary with the Division of Marine Resources for New York, as their Director. Previously, participated with ACCSP when I was at the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, so that goes back to 2013. Since I've arrived in New York in 2023, I have been representing New York here at ACCSP.

MS. JULIA BEATTY: Hello, I'm Julia Beatty, I'm staff with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. I have been with the Mid-Atlantic Council for ten years, and in that time, I've used information from the ACCSP, and got a lot of helpful assistance from ACCSP staff. But I've only been on an ACCSP committee or what have you since January, so I'm a baby committee member.

MR. JOE CIMINO: Joe Cimino, while I was with VMRC, I was on bycatch and bio committees. I don't know, Julia, maybe since you started, but I think around 2005, 2006, when we were doing week long meetings in person. That's how I became friends with Richard. I've been with New Jersey for a little over 7 years, and Heather Corbett, who is my proxy, typically sits for us, and she's online, and I appreciate that, but she's sick today.

MR. RICHARD CODY: Richard Cody with the Office of Science Technology with NOAA. On the NOAA side I've been involved for the last, probably 8 years

or so in different capacities. But as Joe alluded to, we've been involved with ACCSP for a number of years, going back to the early 2000s, not long after Kathy started her involvement. That was with the state of Florida, FWC.

MR. KRIS KUHN: I'm Kris Kuhn, I'm the Director of the Bureau of Fisheries with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and serve as the proxy for Administrative Commissioner Tim Shaeffer on ASMFC, and I've been in that role since 2020.

MS. ERIKA BURGESS: Erika Burgess, Section Leader with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. I have been sitting as Jessica McCawley of Marine Fisheries Division Director's proxy since 2021. But if you want to go in the way, way back machine, my first job out of Grad School was an FMP Coordinator for ASMFC, and I got to work with Geoff and his team way back when.

MR. BEN DYAR: Ben Dyar with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, indirectly I've been working with ACCSP products for quite some time, but formally this is only my second year, so happy to be here.

MS. BRANDI SALMON: I'm Brandi Salmon, I'm the Section chief for our license and statistics section at the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. I've only been a part of the ACCSP Coordinating Council for like a year or two, so you might as well call me a baby also.

MS. STEPHANIE IVERSON-CASON: Good morning, I'm Stephanie Iverson-Cason and of course I've been here multiple years, many, many years. I'm not even going to give you the date that I started. Just say I've done this for 32 and a half years. I've been with ACCSP, managed many of the committees. I think I was on all of them as a chair, except for maybe Rec Tech. It's a pleasure to meet you all, because it's my last meeting, I'm retiring. But it's been a pleasure working with ACCSP and the team. You know, I've seen this grow from really, we

had nothing on the table but a signed MOU when I started, and now look at what you've become, how amazing is that. It's a pleasure to be here.

MS. INGRID BRAUN-RICKS: Hi everyone, my name is Ingrid Braun-Ricks. I am the representative for PRFC, proxy for Ron Owen, and I've been involved with ACCSP Committee since 2023, kind of a baby also.

MS. CARRIE KENNEDY: I am Carrie Kennedy, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, proxy for Lynn Fegley. I am a baby Coordinating Council member, but I've been around Rec Tech and Operations since circa 2006, 2007. I have a very distinct memory of Stephanie welcoming me to my first Operation's meeting with a big hug. Stephanie, you and those hugs will definitely be missed.

MR. RICH WONG: I'm Rich Wong at Delaware Fish and Wildlife, and thank you, Madam Chair for allowing us to introduce ourselves, because I am new here. I have a stock assessment background, so I have been wholly reliant on ACCSP data for many years, going back to North Carolina Marine Fisheries in the early 2000s, so it's been a while and I'm glad to be here.

MR. CARL WILSON: Hello, I'm Carl Wilson, I'm the Commissioner for the Maine Department of Marine Resources. I'm still in the NICU Unit, and yes, this is my first time here. I have been with the Department for 25 years though, the first 15 was around lobster, and so we interacted with ACCSP quite a bit back in those days, setting up the lobster database and good times, bulk filling lobster databases at that time.

MS. MEGAN WARE: Megan Ware; I think six years now on the Coordinating Council, you probably went to toddler wing, I think, and then previously Commission staff.

EXECUTIVE DIRECT ROBERT E. BEAL: Bob Beal; ASMFC staff, I'm probably in like the nursing home wing. I think I started 1997 out of grad school, my first part time job at the Commission was working

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on socioeconomic issues for ACCSP. Whatever the math there is, from '97.

MS. JULIE DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: Hi, I'm Julie DeFilippi Simpson; I've been with the ACCSP as a staff member for one month shy of 18 years.

MR. WHITE: Geoff White, ACCSP Director. I started at the Commission a year after Bob, in '98, and so was part of the science depart as Lisa Cline was getting the MOU signed, well, it had been signed by that point, but getting ACCSP up and running and became ACCSP staff in 2004.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Okay, and I think we've got three of our members, including Heather, though Joe is sitting at the table. If they're online and they would like to introduce themselves, that would be great. Let's start with John Carmichael, if he is online, we would like to hear from you, John.

MR. JOHN CARMICHAEL: I am here. I appreciate this opportunity. John Carmichael; Executive Director of the South Atlantic Council representing the Council. I think I've been on the Coordinating Council maybe since about 2015, perhaps. I've been the Executive Director here since 2020, joined the Council about 2003.

I also spent times on the Ops Committee. I'm another former ASMFC staffer from 30 years ago, so put me in the nursing home with Bob. I've been involved to some degree with ACCSP pretty much from the beginning, it seems, from a data user to now the Coordinating Council. Thank you.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Thank you, John, and Greg.

MR. GREG WOJCIK: Good morning, Greg Wojcik with the Connecticut Marine Fisheries, I'm a proxy for Matt Gates today. I've been with Connecticut for 27 years now, and I've been involved with ACCSP for, I would say at least 10, probably more years at some level or another with Rec Tech and Ops.

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CHAIR KNOWLTON: Thank you, Sir, and Heather. We'll keep looking for you, Heather. I appreciate everybody's patience with that. That was very entertaining and interesting to hear about, and thank you to whoever started, I guess with Erika, with the baby members, oh sorry, Joe, because I am definitely feeling I'm not only in the nursing care wing, but I might be in the memory care wing. Just everything is getting more difficult.

My sort of style with chairing is I try to keep it a little bit fun, try to keep it light. The work that is going on here through ACCSP is massive. It can be very technical. I have worked with Geoff; we are trying to restrain ourselves from the eye blazing technical that we nerd out and get so excited about. If nobody has any offense with it, I'm going to be a first name person kind of gal, and we will just get into this. Heather is unmuted now. Heather, we'll try to catch up with you later in the meeting as well.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR KNOWLTON: First thing we've got is going to be the agenda. Are there any requested changes, additions, or deletions to the agenda? I am not seeing in the room, we'll check with online. We're good online, can we approve the agenda as it is submitted then. Okay, I'm not seeing objections around the room, we will consider this approved by unanimous consent.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Rinse repeat, we're going to do the proceedings for our last meeting, from the October 2024 meeting. Does anybody have any edits, deletions, additions they would like to make to those meeting proceedings? Seeing none around the table, do we have any online? No, we're good to go. Are there any objections? Okay, seeing none; they are approved by unanimous consent as well.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Public comment. Do we have any public in the room that would like to make a comment? Seeing none, any public comment

online? No, so we are ready to roll right into Julie's portion.

CONSIDER FUNDING DECISION DOCUMENT AND FY2026 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

MS. DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: The Funding Subcommittee was charged by this group in October of 2024 to look at some of potential changes to the primary program priorities. The membership of that committee sort of needed to be reconstituted, because some folks have left their positions. The chair of that group was Bob Beal, and then we had Julia Byrd, Nicole Lengyel Costa, Maryellen Gorden, Fran Karp, Carrie Kennedy, Kathy Knowlton and Renee Zobel.

You'll notice that the next of Operations is an Advisor, and then also Coordinating Council members so we can get all three of those groups represented. Between December of 2024, which I just noticed was a typo, and March of 2025, we did not go back in time, but we did do three meetings of that group.

What the Committee reviewed was they did an analysis of how choosing the scoring would impact the overall ranking. Nicole had done this previously as an exercise, so she reconstituted that, and what it does is they go back and look at the rankings that were done in a previous year using the new criteria to see how different that was.

Julia, Carrie and Maryellen also did that exercise, just to give us a little bit of perspective from different folks. Then there was an open discussion of the priorities, and the determination was, changing the priorities gave us a little bit of a new direction in the right way is what we were thinking, and also that it wasn't a significant change.

It wasn't going to be like, oh my goodness, now you can't fund something that previously would have been funded. The first recommendation for the primary priority was to decrease the

catch in effort from a range of 0 to 10 to 0 to 8, and increase the socioeconomic range from 0 to 4 to 0 to 6. We are upping socioeconomics and bumping catch and effort down.

On the next slide what you'll see that does is it actually swaps the biological sampling and makes it the top priority with a range of 0 to 10, because that was increased four or five years ago, something like that. Catch and effort is now our second priority with a 0 to 8. This is really on the idea that a lot of catch and effort work has been done.

Obviously, we need to continue to maintain that, but given the factors of what the RFP money is meant to be spent on new projects, and the more advancement, we want that focus to really switch towards the biological projects, while still recognizing that we do want to fund any new catch in effort projects that are still out there.

That is the first recommendation from the Funding Subcommittee that was accepted by Operations and the Advisors. The second recommendation here is on the secondary priorities. It was noted that socioeconomic was the only one that was different. It was 0 to 1, and all of the other ones had a secondary priority of 0 to 3. This is just, your project has two priorities, you can gain some extra points.

The recommendation from the Committee was that Ops and Advisors should choose one of the following options, in sort of making there be a little bit more of a fair playing field or an even playing field in the secondary priority, which was to make all of them equal, or to make each secondary half of the existing primary. On the next slide you'll see that they chose to make each secondary half of the existing primary. The range goes from 0 to 5 for the biological all the way down to 0 to 3. On the next slide there was conversation about the useful to stock assessment, or the impact on stock assessments, and it was noted that you can actually have something that is useful to management and you can say oh, okay well because it's useful for management, or because it has impact on the stock

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assessment, therefore it's going to be useful for management.

But the reality is that those are two separate things. Their recommendation was to add a new criterion, which was useful to management, but it would have the same range of 0 to 3 as the impact on the stock assessment. If you click again, it was also suggested that we add the following language in the Guidance Document.

The long and short of this longer language is that when we were doing your summary for ranking, we were requesting that proposers justify the impact on stock assessment or useful to management with language that doesn't say, we think this will be useful to management. Provide a little proof as to why you think that will be true.

Then the final change for the Funding Decision Document is the addition of language. This is something that was discussed, and it was decided that we shouldn't rule it out altogether, but there was the question of paying for third party data, or the development of third-party software that has the same functionality as existing ACCSP software that was available to the partners.

We realized that while that may in some cases be necessary, do we want to rule it out altogether? The language is just hinting to proposers that you have to have a really good justification. You can put in your proposal, but you have to recognize that it might not get funded for those reasons, because the focus is not to pay for those kinds of things.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: I am going to push pause right here, just wanted to make sure that everybody is crystal clear on the changes that are being recommended, especially the fact that we are adding, this is the first time that we're adding a new ranking criterion. It is only a range of 0 to 3 points, but the impact on management is something that has bubbled up

several times, relative to a lot of proposals we can speak to and pass on stock assessments.

But if there is not a stock assessment coming up, we're preparing for one in about two or three years, by perhaps going and having additional biological data collection. There are other ways of perhaps that we use and account for the impacts to management is something that could be so highly necessary and a priority for a management issue on the table.

I think you all here at the table are pretty familiar with the need for data for making our informed management decisions. I just wanted to make sure everybody was clear, and you're clear on the fact that the range of scores changing, also remember that those are multiplied for the primary program modules.

We are very excited about these recommendations, I'm very proud of the team for going through and testing them, using a year or two of prior proposals, to see how their scores would have changed. I feel confident with those, but I wanted to stop and take a minute. Do we have any questions around the table up to now? Yes, Ben.

MR. DYAR: Quick question for clarity. I totally agree, and I appreciate the insight for use of management. But in proposals in the future, are they going to be allowed to, if the opportunity arises because there is a stock assessment coming up to apply to both of those, so the stock assessment and management, they would be able to meet both those criteria.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Yes, absolutely. Okay, seeing no other questions, Julie, if you would please continue, ma'am. Thank you.

MS. DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: That is the end of changes to the criteria. The only other changes to the RFP that we have for this year is the matrices from the biological sampling priorities, and the bycatch sampling priorities. Both of those committees do meet every other year to update those matrices, so

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this was their years, and they met in January of this year to do that.

There were no changes to the recreational priorities, so those remain the same, and the same is also true for the socioeconomic priorities, those have not changed as well. This is fairly standard in terms of the way the priorities are put together. Species in the upper 25% of the priority matrix for biological should be considered for funding.

Sampling projects that cover multiple species are obviously highly recommended, because they would cover multiple species. On the next slide you have a really long list that you can't read. But this is the upper 25% of the matrix, so we're just going to jump to the next slide, where you can read it a little bit better.

These upper 25% of the matrix is actually grouped based on the sampling adequacy along the top, and then also the average priority. This is taking the priority of the Commission, the states, the Councils and averaging it, so that you could see that anything that is in that red box in the upper right is considered to have inadequate sampling and a high priority.

Those are things that like okay, if you can hit one of those species that's ideal. That includes the black sea bass, the Spanish mackerel, and the red snapper. In the yellow boxes they are high in one category and low in the other. Then in the green box you have species that are adequately sampled, they do have a low priority, so additional sampling is not really needed.

They are in the upper 25%, but there is just sort of a note from the Committee there that this isn't really a species that needs a lot of extra help at this point. They did want to note that Ocean Pout does have a low average priority, but there are high significant changes in management and landings, and it does have a high resilience score. The next matrix is the Bycatch Sampling Priority Matrix. Again, they

use the top quartile device of the matrix, and this is listed by fleet.

These are regional gear specific sampling, and this is just a straight, if it's in the upper 25% then these are fleets that would be recommended for more sampling. There are not additional criteria that goes in to breaking down the top 25. Does anybody have any questions on the matrices? I'll just pause really quick. Okay, and then I will turn it back over to you.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Thank you so much, Julie. Do we have any questions on the RFP as we've presented it, including the Subcommittee's recommendations for changing the ranking criteria? Do we have any online? Any questions online? Okay, then I would ask about, if there are no questions, seeing none around the room, and if we can have a motion, please. Somebody willing to make the motion to accept this RFP. Renee.

MS. ZOBEL: Sure; move to approve the ACCSP FY2026 RFP including updated priorities as presented in the funding decision document, biological and bycatch matrices.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Thank you, Renee, and we've got a second by Jason. Is there any discussion on the motion? We'll go with Megan and then Carrie.

MS. WARE: I fully intend to support this motion. I just wanted to provide a few comments. I think it's really a great improvement on the management, impacts the management in bolstering that criteria. I think that's a really good improvement. Probably not strikingly, a little nervous about the reduction of the catch in efforts, given Maine's reliance on this type of funding for our lobster reporting.

But I think this is worth trying, and we should try it and see what happens. I would just ask maybe in October, after we get through a round of 2026 RFPs, we just check in and make sure this aligns with what we thought we wanted to achieve, and we're getting closer to our ACCSP goals, things like that. But I appreciate the Subcommittee's work. I think this is worth trying, and we'll see how it goes.

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CHAIR KNOWLTON: Very much appreciate that, thank you, and Carrie.

MS. KENNEDY: Yes, I want to second what Megan said. I really appreciate that the Subcommittee could do this work. I know that I was very unavailable for most of it, so I can't take much credit. But I do think, especially adjusting the socioeconomic impacts is an important change, and it reflects a changing priority that is happening on the ground and in management. I think that is a really beneficial change.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Thank you, we've got Renee.

MS. ZOBEL: Yes, Carrie, I just want to echo that. You know I know many times we've gone through and had recommendations out of Ops, but this is a wonderful project that is terribly ranked, and a lot of those are socioeconomic projects that we know is providing meaningful information to the fisheries, that we all work on every day and would have helped move anyone some way, so I just have to echo that as well.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Yes, Brandi.

MS. SALMON: Yes, and one of these projects might have been one of North Carolina's, because I remember starting this a few years ago, maybe, and going what, why socioeconomic? Like the way it is structured, it's not even going to put that project high up with everyone else. It was impossible, and I'm like, well that makes no sense, especially when we're getting a lot of feedback from the public about socioeconomic impacts. I fully support this. I'm super excited about it, and I think it's really going to help us with our proposals.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Thank you, for those of us in the room that are long enough for the senior citizens and the memory care unit. This is a testament to the accomplishments of ACCSP, and over 25 years of funding, and getting the

majority of the partners to the point at which we could even think about daring to possibly reduce the range for the ranking by two points, which adds up to more, because it's multiplied.

But to your point, Megan, great point about rechecking in October to make sure this is being implemented and coming to fruition like we're intending. To your point, Brandi, about the socioeconomic, it was impossible. When we first started the majority of the states had no trip ticket system, and we were still trying to support more sampling on the ground with the recreational fisheries and the for-hire methodology.

It was impossible. It's really a reflection of the investment of the money that has gone on with ACCSP for 25 years. We can finally put that module at a place where potentially some funding to go towards this project, so thank you. We have Richard next, please.

MR. CODY: Just sort of a question. Do you have any thoughts or concerns about the interplay between catch and effort being reduced and then socioeconomic going up, if there is any compensation there, or if there would be any impact to some species more than others? It's kind of a loaded question.

MS. DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: I'm going to give that a go. When the group did their sort of analyses, what they noticed was to Brandi's point, it gave the socioeconomic projects more of a shot. However, a lot of the rankings actually ended up staying the same, in terms of one, two, three, four. It did create a few more ties. But one of the things that we did look into was how often folks are using the full range of points.

Most folks do use the full range of points, but I think that is probably something we're going to want to encourage moving forward, to help break some of those ties. But I think what it's doing is it's really mushing everything into a little bit more of a narrow range, instead of such a broad range. It's going to give the proposals at the bottom a little bit more of a lift and put them in play, so to speak. But

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I don't think it's going to push out the proposals that have always ranked really high.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Jay.

DR. McNAMEE: I have been thinking about something with this, and I was trying to find the right spot to sort of, it's a tangent. You can tell me to, yes, it's relevant, but a tangent. But Richard gave me a nice chance here to jump in. Well maybe I'll ask a question first, to Julie or Geoff. These are scores. I had never really thought much about, you know I know about the scores, what is happening with the scores though? Is there additional math or are you just sort of adding them up? I'll ask the question first and then I'll follow up.

MS. DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: Yes, somewhere buried deep there is the whole ranking guide, and it will show you exactly how. What happens is, some of the numbers get multiplied, as Kathy mentioned. The priorities will get multiplied by different amounts. Then what we do is all of the scores are average, where we look at only those people that have responded, so it is not based on the number of people on the Committee, it's just based on the number of people that responded in both the Operations and Advisory Committee, and we'll calculate them separately by Ops and Advisors, and then calculate them once with everybody all together, which usually tends to direct towards the Operations, because they have more people.

But one of the things that we've always noticed from the mathematical standpoint is, it doesn't matter if you are a generous or a stingy scorer, as long as you are consistent. Our big thing is to tell everyone to be consistent, because once we average everything out, it actually looks like what folks have individually done, as long as they are consistent. I don't know if that answered your question.

DR. McNAMEE: Yes, no it does, so thanks for that. I'll try to be brief to not get us super off

track. I guess what I was thinking about as I was going through this. The system you have is pretty rigid, and what you do is great. You know I think it was really thoughtful in thinking about doing that testing as well.

I think that is fantastic, you okay, it's like reproducing like relatively well, that kind of a thing. That is all great. I guess there are other methods that you can use, where the actual point range, you can turn that into, right now you are using the point range to weight, so it's doing kind of like two things.

When you add new things in, you have to be super thoughtful about it, because you are changing, and now you are not going to be able to kind of tie things back historically, because you have more information going in. I guess something to think about for the future, not now, but there is like other methods. I'll just offer what the Risk Policy that we've been working on for a super long time.

You know we were using a logistic curve, so you kind of set your scoring with a logistic curve, and so that is consistent. It's always between 0 and 1. Instead of tweaking the scale of your inputs, what you tweak is the weighting, so there is like two pieces, and so you can upweight something or down weight something. But then you can plug new stuff in and it still sits between 0 and 1. Just a thought.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: I think I can make you feel a little bit better. We probably should have thought to have a slide on that in the presentation. The weighting is done by the multiplying of the primary program priority list. Such a hard series of words to say. When you get sort of to the bottom half of the criteria that are available, those are not multiplied.

You see very small ranges for the number of points that a proposal could earn in that section, so 0 to 3 for impact on a stock assessment, 0 to 3 for impact or usefulness in management. There is even with the proposal prepared properly, too many Ps. I think that we are adding a very small range. That will not make or break a bunch of other proposals, in terms of how they were coming out

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before. It gives the author of the proposal the opportunity to raise awareness about the importance from a different aspect, and make their pitch to the people that are doing ranking. Some of the folks that are doing the ranking, as Geoff alluded to, do use the range of the points available, but some of them have a little bit more variety between whether they give them some of the points or all of the points.

Again, as long as people are being consistent within their own rankings, then that works. I get what you're saying about reaching the total number of points, and then adding anywhere from 0 to 3 points for a new criterion. But I think those are going to make very slight nuance changes that really more allow the opportunity for the author to promote the importance from that aspect.

The authors have to be very specific with the criteria they present for stock assessment, and now with useful to management, because every proposal that is going to come in could all be argued that it relates to the stock assessment, and of course it's useful to management. That is where it's been a lot of power and responsibility, to be used wisely, by our Advisors and our Operations members really matters, with how much they agree with that and then give those scores.

Before we had this process, believe it or not we were ranking these proposals from 0 to 3. We had some folks wanting to get down to the decimal number, because they were all jammed together, and it was too difficult. I appreciate the suggestion of looking at alternative ways to do it, and if we get into that I will contact you to chair that subcommittee and lead us to victory. Thank you, Jay.

MR. WHITE: I just want to add one more thing. Really in response to Megan, your point. There were scoring criteria, many of you who scored them remember this, but the maintenance proposals and then the new proposals have different aspects of the percentages of total

funding, so 75% toward maintenance and then 25% towards new proposals.

This scoring is expected to really impact the new proposals more than the maintenance, because of how that process works. Maintenance proposals, specifically Maine Dealer Reporting and Lobster Trip Reporting fall under maintenance and would be smaller impact as this goes through. Very excited about that future looking new proposal standpoint, and along those lines.

In recent years not all of the maintenance funding has been allocated under maintenance, and the remaining gets pushed to other new projects. Anyway, so that is where our evolution in project funding is at the moment, and I look forward to the new approach.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Thank you for those points. Any more discussion on this? Okay, I'm going to choose the easy way for voting, and just ask if there are any objections to the motion. **Any objections around the table? Seeing none; do we have any objections online? All good, and so we are approved by unanimous consent.** I appreciate you all's attention to this matter. On the surface it could look like it wasn't that big a deal, but it's a good one. Thank you.

UPDATE ON PROGRAM AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

CHAIR KNOWLTON: I think we're going to move on to Program Updates. We have Julie next.

MS. DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: I'm going to start with some software priorities. We have two projects that are currently being tested by the partners in the SAFIS management system. The first one is registration tracking. This is just how we manage the data for the people, the permit, the vessel, and how that is all tied together. What we're doing is we're essentially adding on a little bit on the edge. If what we've been doing has been working for you, great, you don't have to change anything. But if you are a partner that typically has, especially like,

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oh there is a corporation name and then there are two people that own that corporation.

Now we can manage that properly and identify those two people, and they don't need two accounts, they will be able to have one account. We'll be able to manage it a lot better. I'm actually going to be presenting all of that to the Vessel Registry Program that Geoff is going to talk about a little bit later. I'm going to be presenting that to them this afternoon.

The other one is some online validations for eTRIPS. This is an ability for a partner to basically go in and look at any of the core fields and set their own validations. It's the opportunity for a partner to say, this gear in this area does not work. You are setting up a warning, and we've built in standardized warnings, so you can use ours that basically say this gear/area combination doesn't work, or you can write your own message.

We are asking everyone to write kind messages. There are very few opportunities to reject, because we don't necessarily want people to not report things that they have done that they shouldn't have done. But we are going to limit things like, if people just accidentally choose that they caught a lobster on the longline, and you say are you really sure?

Then they look and they go no, that's not really what I did. This gives them that opportunity to do that, and each partner gets to set up all of those for their own, so it's customized by partner. We actually, throughout this year, have planned on doing the scoping of State One Stop Reporting.

This made excellent progress at the Com Tech and IS meetings, especially at the IS meeting. We think we're probably not even going to need to have a workshop, because of the excellent progress we made at IS. What does this mean? This means that so far from all of the One Stop Reporting or OSR Initiative, we've been able to merge the federal report.

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If someone has both a GARFO and a SERO fishing report, and they go in, the form says aha, I see you have permits for both regions. It asks all the appropriate questions, et cetera, et cetera. It will add in HMS questions if necessary. What we're now going to be doing is, it's going to recognize that you as a person when you go in, eTRIPS you choose the permit you're reporting under, and that permit for the person is always tied to a state.

Now it's going to say, okay you've chosen the state of Massachusetts as your permit, we're going to ask some Massachusetts questions as well. If there are additional questions that the state has always "lost" the ability to ask, because they were accepted in the federal form. Those questions are now going to be asked of the user, so that the state essentially sees that functionality back. A lot of the details got worked out, so we are going to be able to move forward on that. The next big part, oops, you've got Carrie?

MS. KENNEDY: Yes, so that is the 2025 timeline, but what is big picture timeline for when this might be available? We've had the stakeholders asking for this as of late. We have some legislators that are interested as a result.

MS. DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: I don't have an exact answer for you, but the EDR redesign that I'm going to talk about now, is slated to end at the end of this year. It will roll out in January of 2026. I'm going to say, based on the priorities that we asked, we asked folks in IS to put forth, hey these are all the software queries. It's a very high priority, so I expect it's going to get scheduled fairly soon. I can't guarantee it would be 2026, but I suspect that that is a possibility. I don't know, that's a very vague answer.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Joe.

MR. CIMINO: Just a follow up on that. To Carrie's point, I am aware that that was mentioned in Maryland. Quite frankly, I thought that we had buy in from the commercial fishery of the importance of this. I thought they are so well past it, but I think

we're seeing in a lot of different places, one of the common comments to the current administration is the burden of reporting, which to me is shocking. But I think this has been an important priority for us, and the sooner that can move forward the better.

MS. DeFIIPPI SIMPSON: Okay, thank you, we will add that to the weight of the priorities that were talked about with the IS Folks. Back to EDR redesign. This is sort of our big hallmark project for this year in software. This is our timeline right now. We've started our active programming here.

We had partner testing separated throughout what were done is, beginning this Friday we're going to be having meetings every three weeks, with folks from all of the partners. We will be updating them on our progress. We will occasionally be asking for testing and feedback. We're just going to do this in active. Every time we get something done, come test it, so that we can really sort of keep everybody involved, and you all know exactly where we are in the project.

I would say stay in touch with your Com Tech folks on that, because those are the folks that are primarily on that group of reviewers every Friday. One of the things that we did discuss at IS, was we talked about we have done a lot of requirements gathering. We went through all of that. We are going to be requiring the mobile application, it had a whopping two users, so we felt like we could move away from that safely without causing too much consternation.

But we are going to be moving into a progressive web app, which at some point in the future may be available to be used offline. But it will be available on all devices. Even now you can use it on your phone, as long as your phone is connected to the internet. It's a balance there, if you're on a dock and you want to use it on your phone, you can.

We also talked a little bit about the User Interface. The current page is one page; we're going to be splitting it out into two pages. Everybody was okay with that, as long as we didn't go more than two pages, because ease of data entry is really important. One of the things that we've asked the partners for is we've already solicited folks to find us a couple of dealers that use the key entry, and a couple of dealers that use file uploads. We want them to be part of our testing group, just so that we can get actual dealers coming in and saying, no the partners say it's fine or not fine, I don't like it. We want that feedback while we're developing it, rather than after. I'm going to move into the Spring Data Load.

We did have an on time public data release of 04/15, so yay, very exciting! There are a couple of highlights that I wanted to point out, but mostly just checkup, because your figure on the right, much love. I know when I started doing the Spring Data Load, it was a struggle for everybody to get data in this early, and there were a lot of issues.

This year, for a number of reasons, it was a struggle for a lot of partners to get their data in, and everybody put in a lot of time and effort to get stuff in. We really appreciate that. There was a conversion facto with Atlantic mackerel, and those data have been corrected prior to the load, so that is ready to go.

The New York data was supplied, despite the fact that the New York data contact person resigned. New York staff stepped up and was like, hey yes, we can get you some other people are going to take care of that. Kudos to the New York folks there. Then also, North Carolina worked really, really hard. They've had a lot of staff transition down there.

There is a portion of the December data that isn't quite entered, otherwise they got us all of their data, which is huge, because they had to put a lot of work into that. Thank you to everybody that put in a lot of hard work for that. We really appreciate all of your efforts. I'm just going to go into two other projects that we've been talking about.

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One is Limited Confidential Access. The current Confidential Access, essentially what happens is you apply and if you fill out that form, you then have a data base account. Unfortunately, we built that on the idea that we were going to be picking people who would be filling out the form, because they needed a visitors account.

Then the partners started saying, oh well if they can still fill out your form, could they fill out your form for coast and data requests too, and we're like great. But then they get the database account and then someone has to go in and cancel the database account, and it causes a lot of extra work.

What we're going to do is we wanted to form a new partner access level. We now have something called limited access, so folks can apply for something, and this is excellent for, if you are on a TC or something like that. You go through a database account; you can't query anything. But you are allowed to look at the spreadsheet that you get, if it's a result of a custom data request.

The original full access is still going to exit. Limited access is primarily used for folks that are stock assessment, folks on technical committees, or SEDAR analysts or someone who is a grant for a researcher who needs those confidential data, and the partner says it's okay for them to see the spreadsheet or to be in the meeting where the spreadsheet is talked about. But they are not getting the full bang. But then there are other folks that are staff for partners or data security, and they will be able to do full access. Essentially, we've just expanded the capabilities of the Confidential Access Module that we have.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Just wanted to touch on this briefly. As you guys remember, confidentiality in the protection of our data are core to ACCSP. I really appreciate this change, and the fact that it was a change that was made that makes it easier for people to get the data only that they need to see, and I really

appreciate the efficiency of this. Thank you very much. Because of the importance of confidentiality, I wanted to stop here and see if there were any questions. Jay.

DR. McNAMEE: Yes, thanks for this. I'm being a little dense. I am not understanding the nuance here. Give it another go, and I'll see maybe if it sinks in.

MS. DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: Sorry, I was trying to go quickly but that was bad. If you go into the Data Warehouse and go to the forms, you can choose limited access or full access. There will be a little info button that tells you, you probably only want limited access, but if you're not sure, click here and we'll explain to you what those two mean.

Limited access means that you are signing the form, you agree to all the confidentiality rules, but you are not going to get a database account. You won't be able to query any of your own confidential data when you log into the data warehouse. However, when ACCSP does your custom data request, you can actually look at that form and you understand that okay, I got this data, I shouldn't share it with anybody, because I signed the form and I understand the rules.

This is excellent for folks who are on TC, because oftentimes one person will have a confidential file and they can't share it in the room, because not everybody has the thing. But we also want to, as Kathy said, we don't want everyone to have full access, because just because you are on the TC, we want you to be able to do your job on the TC, but that doesn't mean you can necessarily get in the database and query whatever you want from that partner. Does that help describe the nuance better?

DR. McNAMEE: Yes, so it's kind of like on demand, it's just like for that individual thing you need, but then it goes away when you're done with that. Got it, thank you.

MS. DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: Any other questions? Megan.

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MS. WARE: Is the limited access limited in time, so you have like a specific amount of time that you have access to the file, or is it limited in, you are on the Menhaden TC, you get access to menhaden data, but in perpetuity?

MS. DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: It works the same way, in terms of you can have up to five years. If you are someone who is on multiple TCs, we don't want you to have to fill out the form every time a TC ramps up and has a meeting. We want you to say, I'm on these three TCs.

Then a partner can say, you may have access for three years, or one year, whatever that partner normally says is okay. Then we would remove that access. When a TC goes to do their work, they will easily be able to see, okay, yes, these people have access to data. They can go ahead and do their work. The timing and the way that we revoke access and cancel access, works exactly the same way. As you start to approach your expiration date, you'll get an e-mail that says, hey it's expiring, you may want to renew.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Yes, we've got Geoff and then Renee, please.

MR. WHITE: Just to say it in a little bit different way. The full confidential access lets you log in and query whatever you want. The limited confidential access is really to view a dataset prepared by somebody else.

MS. ZOBEL: Yes, and Megan, as the state's confidential access person, we look at any requests pretty heavily, and if somebody just says, hey, I need to have access to the database query New Hampshire data for this purpose, and they put the five-year range. I will send them an e-mail and I will say, do you really need five years? Your project looks like it's only a year long. We have the ability to change the end dates regardless, so that both of them could be limited in scope. If that helps that.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Folks online, wanted to make sure we afford an opportunity if you have any questions. Okay, we're good. All right, we'll keep moving then, to Julie.

MS. DeFILIPPI SIMPSON: Okay, I'm just finding where I am. The next one is Conversion Factors. Conversion Factors have been talked about; we started a project years ago with the Commercial Technical Committee. As some of you may or may not be aware, several of the older conversion factors are existing conversion factors.

The question is, where did they come from, and the answer is, nobody really knows. They are just conversion factors that were found in a report at some point, and the origin of them is sort of a mystery. There has been a push to investigate what are current conversion factors, and how we handle that information.

That's true of both on the Atlantic Coast and also in the Gulf, based on a number of these projects as well. The conversion factor history is, there are very few updates that are ever done to these conversion factors, and there is limited data supporting those numbers. This particular round is to have five priority species; American eel, Atlantic menhaden, Atlantic Sharpnose Shark, blue crab and snowy grouper.

Then we had six states that were participating, Maine, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina and Florida. If you go to the next slide, you can see that there were significant samples in a few of those species, some of them not as much, like Sharpnose Shark, but that was expected going in. Part of this was delayed, because as you may have noticed, this was initiated to start in 2020, and we all know that nothing happened in 2020 that was supposed to start in 2020.

Sampling was delayed, and that's why we're here now, talking about the results of this project. From these samples we now have better data documentation of where the conversion factors are going to be coming from. There is geographic distinction, what we're finding is partners have

always had different conversion factors, but now we're noticing that they are a little more different in some species than we had anticipated. This also allows for partner specific time periods. The recognition is that these fisheries have not necessarily remained the same, so it isn't appropriate to say, this is the conversion factor today, therefore we should use today's math all the way back to 1950. That is not how that should work.

We're figuring out how far back we should be applying these. Maybe it's just we use them from now, today forward. Our next steps are creating and maintaining the background code. This is probably on the ACCSP side. Then partners will be updating and maintaining their conversion factors and timelines.

Conversion factors will very likely have timelines associated with them, which is a newer feature. We wanted to just take the time to thank all of the folks that participated, and a special shout out to Chris Bradshaw and Alan Bianchi, because they did all the math to take all the samples that were collected and turn those into conversion factors. Really appreciate their time and effort in working on math projects.

Then there is one more slide that I wanted to go over, which is some Citizen Science updates. The SciFish Project does have a new project that has been approved to come online. This is the Rhode Island Recreational Discards. These data are actually being collected through Angler Catch, which is a Harbor Light product and it's being used in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and a couple of other places.

Rhode Island would like to see their data showing up in the SciFish module, so they are going to continue to use the application, because you don't want to lose users by having them change applications. But they are going to be sending the data into the SciFish API, so they will be standardized and they'll be living in

the central place but the end user isn't changing their experience.

This is a really particular project in Rhode Island. It has John Lake from the state and then also Scott Travers from RISA that are the PIs for this. They are trying to close some gaps for recreational discards, and then also try to get a little bit more information on the catch and effort for some of the short term or pulse fisheries, like the cod and tautog.

They are really excited about this project, especially because they think that enhancing collaboration between the stakeholders and the fisheries managers is just going to be overall good for recreational sampling, and the recreational estimates that are produced. We're glad to have that project come on as a new SciFish project.

Also, as part of SEDAR 90, which was the data workshop of last week. There are two South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Citizen Science projects that ACCSP at one point had provided some support for. We wanted to give them a shout out here, because the data from both of these projects was actually accepted for use in the stock assessment.

The first is called FISHstory, and that is the picture this year. This is a project that uses historical pictures, primarily from the 1940s through the 1980s, and it uses trained volunteers who use these pictures to determine fish length. That data was able to be used in the red snapper assessment from FISHstory, and then also the release data, and release discards that are currently being connected, so these are more current data, so the release length of fish were accepted towards the end of the week. Shout outs to the South Atlantic Council, and if you have any questions about the details of those projects, Julia Byrd from the Council is in the back, and she knows more about both of those projects than I do. That is my part of the program update.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Am I allowed to double shout out to Julia and the Council for those projects? I'm going to do it anyway. The fact that lengths of fish from photos was accepted for use in the stock

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assessment from 80 to 60 years ago, to me is mind boggling, and it's a huge accomplishment, so kudos to you all, and we'll pass it over to Geoff.

MR. WHITE: All right, thank you. Those are some great examples of where ACCSP selected and funded projects have come to fruition, and been useful in their intended purpose. Very, very cool. Stepping forward to recreational fisheries project status. We're really excited there has been work from the Rec Tech Committee over the last year to do a release catch card project with the discard project.

That data collection just started May 1st, in eight states. It's a testament to the states taking ownership and wanting to try in a new method to supplement the MRIP APAIS, the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, and collect a little bit more information from anglers during their trip about what species they are releasing, and not keeping what those sizes were, and really what was their condition a little bit more.

We are really excited to collect that data over the next six months, and that is leading to other folks being interested in this general methodology and applying it elsewhere. Another major project that we've been working on for a long time is For-hire Methodology. We proposed a data review of existing 2000 through 2024 data.

The GARFO VTR logbooks, and the APAIS data collection, to kind of test out some of the feedback we got from an MRIP external peer review on what that design looks like. We are wanting and close to being ready to do that work, simply waiting on the funding to get approved, and we will move forward on that.

Thank you for the correction, that was not the year 2000 that was 2020 through 2024, where we had both the tablet data collection and the GARFO VTRs. Love the help, perfect. In the moment. Within APAIS, I do want to touch on

two items that are on screen a little bit weedy. But these are great in the kind of coordinated process of the Rec Tech Committee being the Atlantic focal point for all the states, and to figuring out what questions are important and how to ask them, and then what timeline to get those integrated into one of the MRIP general surveys.

There has been interest more detailed information on depredation. HMS has put in a request to really add that information as values to an existing question. That is a relatively simple change, and it has been discussed by Rec Tech, and they might want to add a new question so the new codes can get added in 2026, the new question would have to go through the paperwork reduction act, and so that probably wouldn't be able to come on as a new question until 2027. Under areas fished, there has been more work by Rec Tech Committee, and presentations by Massachusetts staff and New England Council support for discussing more granular area fished, whether that was a ten-minute grid cell. In the South Atlantic there are some concerns about the level of detail and the ability to complete those intercepts, and so the Committee continues to work on where would different size grid cells work, so that it would be a consistent question for a range of states.

One of the things they are discussing at this point, it would be ten-minute grid cells from maybe the Virginia/North Carolina line and the statistical areas the area definitions from North Carolina down through Georgia. That is one area that they are still discussing, and that is why implementation in 2027 is related to both the Committee making their decisions and once those decisions are made getting it through the NOAA Paperwork Reduction Act.

Then assuming those go well, actually programming that into the tablet. They are looking at ten minute, three-minute squares in the statistical area, but those are all areas and basically, you've got additional input please with your Rec Tech members before their September meeting to move that forward.

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Another item related to recreational sampling this year was a really great pilot from January and February. There was for-hire telephone survey effort sampling that was done from Maryland through Georgia, and the APAIS dockside catch sampling was performed in South Carolina. This verified that there is fishing activity occurring in previously unsampled months.

South Carolina and Georgia looking forward to 2026, are willing and able to continue with the for-hire telephone survey part, and add in the APAIS dockside piece. We had sent a memo to NOAA Fisheries requesting fishing effort survey sampling to be done on the Atlantic during January and February, starting in 2026. That would allow the calculation of general survey MRIP estimates 12 months of the year for the South Atlantic.

North Carolina and Florida already do Wave 1 by adding in South Carolina and Georgia, it would really expand the availability of data, so we're optimistic about that. Also, the Atlantic Implementation Plan for Recreational Data includes the desire for that effort sampling FES to occur in the Mid-Atlantic. Again, to track when it would be useful to begin the dockside sampling further north.

As that happens, I just want to let you know this is being explored and talked about for next year, we're keeping that optimistic hat on at the moment for the effort sampling, and just request that again, talk to your Rec Tech members and coordinate people to get to the September meeting to move forward there.

We are doing pretty well on time, with what we have left in the presentation. I wanted to touch on Regional Data Coordination, or really highlighting some projects that have significant recurring years. These are either weekly or biweekly meetings that have been occurring for over a year in most cases. They discussed addressing requirements, data flows, technical developments as kind of ACCSP and our

partners modernize the data collection, and we update those submission methodologies. North Carolina is updating their dealer reporting software, and integrating the HMS bluefin tun dealer reporting submission pathways. They have been coordinating with us and HMS On the use of SAFIS electronic dealer reporting, to capture some data elements that are still in development of the North Carolina software, and then that will help maintain the HMS reporting needs. They have been great in kind of identifying who can do what when.

Informing and developing the outreach to their dealers, and meeting the needs of HMS. When that development is done the burden will be less. We are at kind of a hiccup point at the moment, where it might take a little bit of extra effort by those dealers when they land a bluefin tuna, to make sure that those reports get in, and meet everyone else's requirements.

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center Coastal Logbook and HMS Logbooks, we've been working with them long term movement to move from paper to electronic. A lot of what is already programmed in SAFIS is there and working from the initial data collection points, but we're still working on how to get that information from ACCSP to Southeast Fisheries Science Center when they're ready on their end.

To do that as well as when the regulations are put in place, so that fishermen would not have to do both paper and the electronic logbook. The technical piece is largely in place, we are continuing on that, and we need to get some additional pieces with the partners going for that. They are actively testing the software as we go.

Then the third one, ACCSP and GARFO have been collaborating on dealer reporting and development. They are modernizing their infrastructure on Dealer Landings Database, and those changes are expected to be transparent to end users. I do want to say, they have been really great about positively sharing their approaches and our approaches and finding ways that work both without redeveloping each system.

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GARFO has, just a little shout out to them, they had selected ACCSP SAFIS Dealer Reporting as the primary pathway for dealer data, back in May 2004, so happy 21st birthday to SAFIS Dealer Reporting. They are maintaining that kind of primary data flow, both through key entry, other software that submits to the API, and historical file upload, which we are likely rebranding as file validation and transfer, because that will have a little bit more feedback to the users come 2026.

The next coordination project is on FIS, and IRA Atlantic Coast Projects. These are two federal data modernization projects that had ACCSP involvement. As Julie touched on earlier, the federal vessel permit registry is to align the permits from GARFO and Southeast Regional Offices for that same vessel, and make sure that the vessel identifier, representation and permits are available in one place.

We certainly appreciate that to be inclusive of the FINS, when those things like which dataset has the right current name for a vessel gets resolved, that makes the ACCSP work of collecting that information, presenting it in the end and have it work a little bit smoother. We're excited about how that is going to go. Both of these two systems are to really consolidate the infrastructure from multiple federal offices into central cloud-based data system. That is part of the nod for efficiency, and the East Coast Logbook Project is looking to do some of what eTRIPS has already been able to accomplish on one-stop reporting, but also extend that to some other projects and apply it to an underlying infrastructure. We appreciate the inclusiveness of that approach, resolving issues across multiple partners.

They've asked ACCSP how we've done that in the past to really support both federal and state future implementation of these projects again, will help what happens within ACCSP. Sometimes there are a lot of things that happen behind the scenes, and this slide kind of summarizes what we put in our last six-month

grant report, and wanted to at least call out some of the exciting things that we have here.

We run and fund the SAFIS Help Desk. They had 612 calls over the last six months, fishermen and dealers calling to say, I've got this issue, how can you help here? Was this a bug, was it something I did to my electronic device? We've had 99% uptime; it was the highlight of some of our outreach and committee meetings.

Have we been doing our outreach posts? How many committee meetings have we had in the last six months, et cetera, and then also, how much the bottom left is custom data requests, so 32 custom data requests. Those are usually things that people can't do on their own. They take somewhere between two and six weeks of staff time, to back and forth to get done. That is a pretty high workload.

Then the data polls that we've done for software support. There were 60 of those that occurred in the last grant reporting period. The really exciting one from the spring data load getting out on time, the bottom right pie graph there. Adding up to all those different types of datasets that go into the spring data load. That has 47 datasets, so I want to note that is a huge workload on partner staff as well as ACCSP staff to consolidate that together and get the 2024 commercial landings done and out the door to support everyone.

Kudos to all of your staff that contributes to that. Then what would a meeting be without at least touching on our funding uncertainty. At this point, we did have some fiscal year 2024 ACCSP approved projects that were not yet funded. Within the last two days, one of those projects has been funded, the Massachusetts modernization of their database.

We do know that there has made movement on that one to reimburse Massachusetts for funds already spent. Two others are getting their paperwork prepared, and we expect the funding to come through soon. The FY2025 Admin Grant and projects are not yet funded, and we are getting

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word that there is movement on those things as early as this morning.

We are really excited that NOAA and the Commission have really prioritized funding for the Commissions and the FINS to move that as fast as possible. I do have a note on screen that during the October meeting, the 2025 projects, there was one for Maine for materials for halibut age sampling and before Pat Keliher retired, he said, let's hold off on that.

Let's figure out where the funding goes, and if there is money in the Admin Grant to be able to support it then we should be able to purchase the equipment on behalf of Maine when that time comes. We still don't have that answer, but it's still on the table. Two other things, the FY2025, ACCSP had an approved FIS proposal to modernize and kind of expand some of our IP infrastructure to make it more redundant and scalable, and a little bit kind of dip our toe in the cloud data bases.

We are excited about getting that project started, and being able to support parts of the EDR redesign. It's start date got moved to July, so we are still hopeful that things will get approved and moving by the time we get to that point. That is the end of the program updates, Madam Chair.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Does anyone around the table have any Other Business they would like to bring before the Council? I'm not seeing anything, and do we have anybody?

MR. WHITE: I have one.

CHAIR KNOWLTON: Well, I've got to know. Sorry, do we have anything online? Okay, and Geoff, I believe you have an item.

OTHER BUSINESS

MR. WHITE: I do, thank you. I want to take a moment to thank Stephanie Iverson and congratulate you on your retirement. As you

correctly noted at the beginning of the meeting, you have been a key member of ACCSP development for over 25 years. You were on proposals to ACCSP, both in creating them and working on them for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

They are listed on kind of the bottom left here. You've been on pretty much all the technical committees, you've been chair of Operations Committee, and it's great to have you at the table at Coordinating Council. We did happen to find a picture from a 2006 Ops meeting, so if you do look on screen, Stephanie is stylish as always in something pink, and having a ball.

If you look really closely at the far end of the picture, our chair Kathy Knowlton is also represented. But we do have a little gift card for you. We hope that you can put that toward some of your fabulous, stylish sunglass collection that we always look forward to seeing. I do have a card for you that many folks have signed.

If I did not properly give you an opportunity to sign it then let's get that done as the meeting closes, before we let Stephanie disappear with that. Anyway, Stephanie, thank you. Appreciate your contributions. You've always been looking forward to moving ACCSP forward, and of course I knew you when I was at VIMS and working on projects through VMRC, and so thank you for that mentorship as well. (Applause)

MS. IVERSON-CASON: Wow! It felt the same 25 years ago. Sure, I'm in the moment. Thank you, guys. This has been my absolute pleasure to watch ACCSP grow into the organization that it is now. Nobody knew the little segment of ACCSP people moving around to a table sometimes nitty gritty, fighting all the way through, trying to get data along the Atlantic Coast to look like each other, to compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges, and that was the great accomplishment.

There are so many more accomplishments that happened in my tenure here in the last 32 and a half years that I've been at VMRC, and 25 plus years on ACCSP. I think I came in 1998 or 1997 I was

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The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

sitting at the table. Thank you, guys, thank you so much for an amazing career and amazing friendships.

I don't know how many friends I have developed over these last years, but they know who they are. We have and will have some time together once I leave here. They know I'm available, I'm in Chesapeake, I have a lovely home. They know they can come, drop by and come see me any time they like. They know who they are, so I appreciate you all. Thank you, Geoff. Thank you, Julie, thank you, Kathy.

Kathy was one of my, you were my vice chair. She was my vice chair when we did Operations Committee. Cheri Patterson was with me, so many. Where is Cheri? Cheri, in the back. Long time girlfriend. It has truly been a pleasure. I cannot tell you how difficult it was to come in here for my last meeting and know that a lot of my friends, I won't see them as frequently as I normally would see them.

But we will see each other again. We have wine that travels and you know what to do. I appreciate you guys, thank you for allowing me to spend and share my years here to grow up, so to speak, and leave, knowing that I'm leaving in capable hands to amazing young men and women who will be working with you all in the future. Good luck, keep doing what you do. It's been a blast, and of course I will buy something, you know. I'll have a nice pair of new shoes for that. Thank you, guys!

CHAIR KNOWLTON: I remember when I walked into my first Ops meeting. At that time, it was a much smaller group, it was not representation from all of the state partners yet. There was only about seven people around the table, and I kept thinking that my Chief of Fisheries was absolutely crazy to send me out, way too young and didn't know what I was doing.

Unfortunately for me, that meeting was going through the data standards document line by line, group editing. I remember just thinking,

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don't fall asleep. Don't fall asleep, you have to represent the South Atlantic. I thought I was not going to make it through that meeting, but I did, and part of it was also with Stephanie's guidance.

Stephanie, along with Dee Lupton and Cheri in particular, they beat the drum of the importance of the partnerships, and representation of all the different entities here at the table, and it sounds so simple to have a standard data collection. It just sounds so simple, but Stephanie, you were a legacy creator for where we are now, thank you, Ma'am.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR KNOWLTON: With that we are at the end of the agenda, so we are not only getting you back on schedule, we are giving you 7 whole minutes back. See how we roll here, this is how we roll. Can I get a motion to adjourn, please? Jay, can we get a second? Thank you, Ben, and we're adjourned, thank you. Safe travels everyone. Be careful.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 11:43 p.m. on Wednesday, May 7, 2025)



Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

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FY26 Proposal Recommendations to Coordinating Council

From the Operations and Advisory Committees

- The Operations and Advisory Committees would like to present the rankings from both groups individually.

\$3.5 Level Funding Recommendation

- All Maintenance proposals and the Administrative budget should be funded in full.
- The recommendation for new proposals is to follow the average rankings with the caveats below dependent upon partial funding viability:
 - New Recommendation
 - Fully fund the Black Sea Bass (*Centropristis striata*) Age and Growth Data Collection
 - Partially fund FY26: Catch, Effort, and Biological Data Collection for North Carolina and Florida Fisheries Dependent Data
 - Alternative if New Recommendation is not viable
 - Fully fund the Black Sea Bass (*Centropristis striata*) Age and Growth Data Collection and the MA Electronic Reporting Transition
 - Partially fund the Fishery Dependent Sampling of Federal and State Permitted Vessels and Electronic Reporting Initiatives in New York

\$3.35 Level Funding Recommendation

- Fund first four maintenance proposals and the Administrative budget should be funded
- Partially fund the FY26: North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of existing and future data to the 75% level split
- The recommendation for new proposals is to follow the average rankings with the caveats below dependent upon partial funding viability:
 - New Recommendation
 - Fully fund the Black Sea Bass (*Centropristis striata*) Age and Growth Data Collection
 - Partially fund FY26: Catch, Effort, and Biological Data Collection for North Carolina and Florida Fisheries Dependent Data
 - Alternative if New Recommendation is not viable
 - Fully fund the Black Sea Bass (*Centropristis striata*) Age and Growth Data Collection and the MA Electronic Reporting Transition
 - Use remaining funding to fully fund the Maintenance proposal FY26: North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of existing and future data

** all above are consensus decisions*

*Our vision is to be the principal source of fisheries-dependent information
on the Atlantic coast through the cooperation of all program partners.*



FY2026 Operations Proposal Rankings

Project Name	Partner	Score	Cost	Cumulative Cost	3.5M Amt Remaining	3.35M Amt Remaining
Pilot test of recreational released catch cards into the sampling design of the MRIP APAIS	ACCSP RTC	55.36	\$ 180,510	\$ 180,510	\$ 588,632	\$ 476,132
FY26: Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine	ME DMR	54.79	\$ 223,785	\$ 404,295	\$ 364,847	\$ 252,347
FY26: Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the SAFMC Release Citizen Science Project	SAFMC	54.43	\$ 132,994	\$ 537,289	\$ 231,853	\$ 119,353
Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission Commercial Fisheries Sector	PRFC	52.74	\$ 71,172	\$ 608,461	\$ 160,681	\$ 48,181
FY26: North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of existing and future data"	NC DMF	45.60	\$ 145,020	\$ 753,481	\$ 15,661	\$ (96,839)

includes carryover from maintenance projects

Black Sea Bass (Centropristis striata) Age and Growth Data Collection to Address Stock Assessment Needs	RI DEM, CFRF, NOAA	56.33	\$ 64,994	\$ 64,994	\$ 207,048	\$ 153,887
FY26: Catch, Effort, and Biological Data Collection for North Carolina and Florida Fisheries Dependent Data	SEFSC, NC DMF, FL FWC	55.79	\$ 345,223	\$ 410,217	\$ (138,175)	\$ (191,336)
Fishery Dependent Sampling of Federal and State Permitted Vessels and Electronic Reporting Initiatives in New York	NY DEC	54.88	\$ 302,609	\$ 712,826	\$ (440,784)	\$ (493,945)
Electronic Reporting Transition for Massachusetts Harvesters	MA DMF	54.88	\$ 101,433	\$ 814,259	\$ (542,217)	\$ (595,378)
Comprehensive Outreach and Pilot Observer Program for New York, New Jersey and Delaware State Waters Gillnet Fisheries	NY DEC	50.90	\$ 289,029	\$ 1,103,288	\$ (831,246)	\$ (884,407)



FY2026 Advisors Proposal Rankings

		Admin Grant	2,430,054	\$44,423	2,474,477
3.35M	Maint @ 75%		656,642	New @ 25%	218,881
3.50M	Maint @ 75%		769,142	New @ 25%	256,381
Score	Cost	Cumulative Cost	3.5M Amt Remaining	3.35M Amt Remaining	
52.00	\$ 223,785	\$ 223,785	\$ 545,357	\$ 432,857	
52.00	\$ 132,994	\$ 356,779	\$ 412,363	\$ 299,863	
51.25	\$ 180,510	\$ 537,289	\$ 231,853	\$ 119,353	
50.00	\$ 71,172	\$ 608,461	\$ 160,681	\$ 48,181	
46.00	\$ 145,020	\$ 753,481	\$ 15,661	\$ (96,839)	

includes carryover from maintenance projects

Black Sea Bass (Centropristis striata) Age and Growth Data Collection to Address Stock Assessment Needs	RI DEM, CFRF, NOAA	53.40	\$ 64,994	\$ 64,994	\$ 207,048	\$ 153,887
FY26: Catch, Effort, and Biological Data Collection for North Carolina and Florida Fisheries Dependent Data	SEFSC, NC DMF, FL FWC	51.60	\$ 345,223	\$ 410,217	\$ (138,175)	\$ (191,336)
Electronic Reporting Transition for Massachusetts Harvesters	MA DMF	49.60	\$ 101,433	\$ 511,650	\$ (239,608)	\$ (292,769)
Comprehensive Outreach and Pilot Observer Program for New York, New Jersey and Delaware State Waters Gillnet Fisheries	NY DEC	48.80	\$ 289,029	\$ 800,679	\$ (528,637)	\$ (581,798)
Fishery Dependent Sampling of Federal and State Permitted Vessels and Electronic Reporting Initiatives in New York	NY DEC	47.40	\$ 302,609	\$ 1,103,288	\$ (831,246)	\$ (884,407)



**FY2026 Proposal
Rankings
(Combined)**

			Admin Grant			
			2,430,054		\$44,423	
			2,474,477			
		3.35M	Maint @ 75%	656,642	New @ 25%	218,881
		3.50M	Maint @ 75%	769,142	New @ 25%	256,381
Project Name	Partner	Score	Cost	Cumulative Cost	3.5M Amt Remaining	3.35M Amt Remaining
Pilot test of recreational released catch cards into the sampling design of the MRIP APAIS	ACCSP RTC	54.70	\$ 180,510	\$ 180,510	\$ 588,632	\$ 476,132
FY26: Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine	ME DMR	54.34	\$ 223,785	\$ 404,295	\$ 364,847	\$ 252,347
FY26: Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the SAFMC Release Citizen Science Project	SAFMC	54.04	\$ 132,994	\$ 537,289	\$ 231,853	\$ 119,353
Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission Commercial Fisheries Sector	PRFC	52.30	\$ 71,172	\$ 608,461	\$ 160,681	\$ 48,181
FY26: North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of existing and future data"	NC DMF	45.66	\$ 145,020	\$ 753,481	\$ 15,661	\$ (96,839)

includes carryover from maintenance projects

Black Sea Bass (Centropristis striata) Age and Growth Data Collection to Address Stock Assessment Needs	RI DEM, CFRF, NOAA	55.77	\$ 64,994	\$ 64,994	\$ 207,048	\$ 153,887
FY26: Catch, Effort, and Biological Data Collection for North Carolina and Florida Fisheries Dependent Data	SEFSC, NC DMF, FL FWC	54.98	\$ 345,223	\$ 410,217	\$ (138,175)	\$ (191,336)
Electronic Reporting Transition for Massachusetts Harvesters	MA DMF	53.87	\$ 101,433	\$ 511,650	\$ (239,608)	\$ (292,769)
Fishery Dependent Sampling of Federal and State Permitted Vessels and Electronic Reporting Initiatives in New York	NY DEC	53.44	\$ 302,609	\$ 814,259	\$ (542,217)	\$ (595,378)
Comprehensive Outreach and Pilot Observer Program for New York, New Jersey and Delaware State Waters Gillnet Fisheries	NY DEC	50.50	\$ 289,029	\$ 1,103,288	\$ (831,246)	\$ (884,407)

		Partner	Title	Primary Module	Others	Cost	Max Funding Year 5/6
Maintenance	1	ME DMR	FY26: Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine	Catch/Effort (100%)		\$ 223,785	\$ 223,785
	2	PRFC	Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission Commercial Fisheries Sector	Catch/Effort (100%)		\$ 71,172	\$ 71,172
	3	NCDMF	FY26: North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of existing and future data"	Socioeconomic (100%)		\$ 145,020	
	4	ACCSP RTC	Pilot test of recreational released catch cards into the sampling design of the MRIP APAIS	Catch/Effort (100%)		\$ 180,510	
	5	SAFMC	FY26: Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the SAFMC Release Citizen Science Project	Biological (85%)	Bycatch (15%)	\$ 132,994	
					Total Maintenance	\$ 753,481	
New		Partner	Title	Primary Module	Others	Cost	
	1	NY DEC	Comprehensive Outreach and Pilot Observer Program for New York, New Jersey and Delaware State Waters Gillnet Fisheries	Bycatch (70%)	Catch/Effort (30%)	\$ 289,029	
	2	NY DEC	Fishery Dependent Sampling of Federal and State Permitted Vessels and Electronic Reporting Initiatives in New York	Biological	Catch/Effort	\$ 302,609	
	3	SEFSC, NCDMF, FLFWC	FY26: Catch, Effort, and Biological Data Collection for North Carolina and Florida Fisheries Dependent Data	Catch/Effort (50%)	Biological (50%)	\$ 345,223	
	4	RI DEM, CFRF, NOAA	Black Sea Bass (<i>Centropristis striata</i>) Age and Growth Data Collection to Address Stock Assessment Needs	Biological (100%)		\$ 64,994	
	5	MA DMF	Electronic Reporting Transition for Massachusetts Harvesters	Catch/Effort (100%)		\$ 101,433	
					Total New	\$ 1,103,288	
Admin		ACCSP	ACCSP Administrative Budget	Admin		\$ 2,430,054	
					Grand Total Proposed	\$ 4,286,823	



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
MARINE RESOURCES
MARINE RESOURCES LABORATORY
P.O. BOX 8, 194 MCKOWN POINT RD
W. BOOTHBAY HARBOR, MAINE 04575-0008

CARL J. WILSON
COMMISSIONER

July 29, 2025

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland St. Ste. 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear ACCSP:

We are pleased to submit the proposal titled “FY26: Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine” for your consideration. This is a maintenance proposal which has not changed in the scope of work. The continuation of this project will allow the Maine Department of Marine Resources (MEDMR) to continue its compliance with ASMFC’s Addendum 26 requirement that the MEDMR move from 10% lobster reporting to 100% electronic lobster reporting. The MEDMR implemented 100% lobster reporting starting January 1, 2023; which was a full year ahead of the addendum’s requirement to be fully implemented by January 1, 2024. The MEDMR felt it was important to implement as early as possible to comply with and track the pending vertical line reductions resulting from the new regulations to reduce the risk of entanglement to right whales through the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan. Collecting as much information on these gear configurations during the recent six year pause of these regulations is imperative to accurately document the effort and vertical line use in the lobster fishery. The MEDMR’s initial goal was to implement 100% reporting in 2021; however, funding shortfalls prevented this from occurring. Continued funding of this proposal would allow MEDMR to continue the implementation.

The MEDMR does not currently have the funds needed to continually support and staff the program at the 100% reporting level. Overall, MEDMR created nine new positions that have been filled and vital to the successful roll out of 100% electronic lobster harvester reporting. Not all nine positions are included in our funding request as other one-time funding sources have been secured to alleviate the burden of our request to ACCSP. Please view all graphs in color. This proposal addresses the following 2025 ranking criteria: catch and effort, data delivery plan, regional impact, funding transition plan, in kind contribution, improvement in data quality and timeliness, impact on stock assessment and properly prepared.

MEDMR received two questions which we will address here and within the proposal where necessary.

- Budget question: The fringe costs are often the same or more than the salary, which seems odd.

MEDMR reviewed the costs with our finance team and they determined that they had an error in their calculation where they added an extra year of service to the benefit calculation. They recalculated and those new amounts are reflected in the budget. The entire budget was recalculated to account for the first year step down required.

- Page 33: Please check the in-kind calculation

MEDMR had to recalculate their entire request to meet the first-year step down and double checked their in-kind calculation. Our total request is now \$223,785 and our in-kind contribution is \$223,935. The in-kind was modified based on the same mis-calculation for the requested positions. This puts the total FY26 cost at \$447,720 and the in-kind percentage at 50%.

For a summary of the proposal for ranking purposes, please see page 33. Please contact Robert Watts at the MEDMR with any questions. Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Watts II
Marine Resources Scientist III
rob.watts@maine.gov
(207) 350-7154

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland Street. Suite. 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

FY26: Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine

Total Cost: \$223,785.00

Submitted by:

Robert B. Watts II
Maine Department of Marine Resources
PO Box 8
West Boothbay Harbor, ME 04575
rob.watts@maine.gov

Jesica Waller
Maine Department of Marine Resources
PO Box 8
West Boothbay Harbor, ME 04575
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Applicant Name: Maine Department of Marine Resources (MEDMR)

Principal Investigator: Robert Watts, Marine Resource Scientist

Project Title: FY26: Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine

Project Type: Maintenance Project

Requested Award Amount (without the NOAA administration fee): \$223,785

Requested Award Period: One year after receipt of funds

Objectives:

The objective of this proposal is to comply with Addendum XXVI (http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/5a9438ccAmLobsterAddXXVI_JonahCrabAddIII_Feb2018.pdf) of ASMFC's (Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission) American lobster Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) which required MEDMR increase the percentage of trip level landings information MEDMR collects from commercial lobster harvesters from the current "optimized draw method" (approximately 380 harvesters) to 100% (approximately 5,400 harvesters). Starting in 2019, ASMFC Addendum XXVI required MEDMR move to an "optimized draw" selection method to choose the lobster harvesters required to report for the following year. The "optimized draw" selects different percentages of license types and active/non-active harvesters based a statistical analysis of the variability of each license class using a combination of dealer data and harvester reported data. In the past MEDMR would select approximately 700 to 800 harvesters per year, now around 350 to 400 harvesters are selected with the idea that the selected harvesters would provide the same number of trip records (See Figure 3). Addendum XXVI requires 100% reporting (electronic reporting is recommended but not mandatory) by January 2024 in addition to other new required fields that became mandatory in January 2021. MEDMR started collecting total endlines and 10 min square data at the trip level in 2020 even though ASMFC moved these requirements back to 2021. Starting January 1, 2023, MEDMR required 100% electronic lobster harvester reporting. This requirement has caused MEDMR to increase landings and licensing staff by a total of 9 positions to effectively manage, monitor and audit what was a 1000% increase in the number of trip level reports the MEDMR receives from the lobster industry on an annual basis.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) was in the process of finalizing new rules to protect North Atlantic right whales as part of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) for the Northeast lobster fishery. The implementation of these plans have been pushed back as part of a six year moratorium. This will allow states the ability to collect vital information such as end line counts and gear configuration with a spatial component to better map out where actual fishing activity are occurring. The MEDMR required trackers be placed on all federally permitted vessels starting December, 2023. ASMFC is requiring 100% reporting in the lobster fishery by 2024. GARFO started requiring all federal lobster permits submit eVTRs on April 1, 2024. The AWTRT has recommended on more than one occasion that fisheries move to 100% reporting as soon as possible. MEDMR strongly agrees with this recommendation because our ability to achieve and monitor the consensus goals of the AWTRT is tied to the availability of these data in the short term. MEDMR believes that the January 2023 date was necessary to meet the data guidelines outlined in Addendum 26, the needs of the AWTRT, and work out any data collection and data management issues well before the 2024 deadline. Additionally, MEDMR was interested in moving the timeframe for 100% electronic lobster harvester reporting up to as early as 2023 to track effort and vertical line use in support of pending new regulations. The FY20 proposal intended MEDMR to require 100% reporting starting in January 2021; however, lack of funding has required this timeframe be pushed back to 2023. Similarly, with the 2023 timeframe the MEDMR does not

have the funding to continuously fund all the positions necessary to effectively administer, collect, audit and distribute the data required in Addendum XXVI. If the MEDMR are not able to secure adequate funding, the continued implementation of the 100% reporting would need to be revisited. **The MEDMR has self-funded the creation of a new offline mobile application for both iOS® and Android® platforms through dedicated technology funds. This program was built to accept reports from all fisheries and meet NMFS electronic reporting requirements. This new program has dynamic entry pages and is completely table driven allowing the entry pages to display more concise field descriptions based on species and gears fished. There are built in data validations, basic end user analytics and reoccurring selections appear at the top of drop down lists.** The MEDMR released this program industry wide in the fall of 2021. With the release of this program, the MEDMR has required electronic reporting in multiple fisheries if there's a data management need. **The primary tasks will be electronic reporting software training, regulation compliance, data audits, data entry and general outreach. Staff will also focus on harvester outreach to help industry understand the importance of the accurate and timely reporting. Electronic reporting are required for commercial lobster harvesters and heavily pushed for those that still report other fisheries on paper. The focus on expansion of electronic reporting will require the MEDMR to spend a significant amount of time on outreach, explaining the reporting system to harvesters and troubleshooting any issues that might arise.** Currently, MEDMR only requires electronic reporting in our Atlantic herring, scallop (inshore state fishery), halibut (inshore state fishery), lobster and Atlantic menhaden fisheries. There are currently no plans to mandate electronic reporting for other fisheries, as this is not an ACCSP requirement.

Need:

Maine currently requires harvesters from 14 fisheries to report trip level landings on a variety of timelines (daily, weekly or monthly). A total of five fisheries require mandatory electronic harvester reporting (lobster, scallop, menhaden, herring and halibut). Two quota monitored fisheries (Atlantic herring and Atlantic menhaden) have daily reporting requirements during their "open quota monitored seasons (i.e. directed and episodic fishing season for menhaden) and two other fisheries (halibut and scallop) have trip level reporting due weekly during their inshore state seasons. **When the MEDMR implemented 100% lobster reporting in 2023, the number of new harvesters (see Table 1) required significant resources in outreach, tracking compliance, and entering and auditing a ~500% increase in the number of reports received from approximately 60K to ~300K. In the past, MEDMR would select approximately 700 to 800 harvesters for mandatory reporting per year. During the 2019 season, the MEDMR moved to an "optimized draw" selection method to choose the lobster harvesters required to report for the following year. Using a combination of dealer data and harvester reported data, the "optimized draw" looked at active/non-active harvesters and selected different percentages of license types for mandatory reporting based on a statistical analysis of the variability of each license class. In 2022, which was the last year of the optimized draw, approximately 5,643 lobster harvesters were licensed to fish in Maine. Of those 5,643, MEDMR selected 474 harvesters to report trip level information, with the idea that the selected harvesters would provide the same number of trip records (See Figure 3) as the previous 10%. The number of individual lobster harvesters required to report electronically increased to just under 5,700 when 100% lobster harvester reporting became mandatory in 2023. With 100% reporting continuing in 2024, all 5,171 license holders were required to report for each month they held a current license. Of the 5,171 harvesters, MEDMR dealer reports indicate 3,667 harvesters sold at least once to a licensed dealer.**

Of the 5,171 licensed harvesters, ~1,250 (24%) are required to report to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) since April 1, 2024 since they possess a federal lobster permit. **Regardless of their federal permit status, MEDMR will work with all harvesters to ensure all landings are reported either to MEDMR or NMFS since the collected data will benefit all partners. MEDMR staff will also audit all records with a**

state landed of Maine but defer any federal data changes to NMFS. The rollout of federal reporting was not smooth and brought many challenges that have been addressed and appear to be in the past. The biggest challenge with the state to federal reporting transition was “re-training” the 1,300 “new” federal harvesters that were used to reporting their landings using the “state only form”. The differences in form and terminology have caused an increase in the number of phone calls MEDMR staff have received since April 1. MEDMR and GARFO are continuously looking for ways to streamline these reporting issues and ways to simplify the reporting process within the lobster industry.

Table 1: Increase in Individual Harvester Reporting Expected in Maine

Moving from 10% to 100% Lobster Reporting							
Year	Total Trips Entered	Lobster Only Entered	10% Active Lobster Harvesters	100% Active Lobster Harvesters	100% Lobster Harvesters	Lobster Trips From Dealer Reoprts	Lobster Harvester Reports Expected if 100% Required
2015	55,876	29,563	532	4,406	6,014	270,324	282,759
2016	58,576	30,931	566	4,504	6,009	293,919	307,439
2017	59,529	30,172	535	4,485	5,997	276,754	289,485
2018	59,612	27,110	543	4,391	5,925	264,095	276,243
2019	46,386	17,693	276	4,336	5,834	258,089	269,961
2020	44,550	18,326	297	4,065	5,773	220,608	230,756
2021	56,573	25,170	367	4,168	5,763	255,507	267,260
2022	44,221	21,889	308	3,981	5,643	211,514	221,244
2023	284,340	244,796		4,240	5,372	221,876	
2024*	280,521	242,161		4,096	5,171	221,466	

*2024 data are preliminary and subject to change without notice.

100% active license based on dealer reported data from 2015 - 2022

100% active license count for 2023 and 2024 based on harvesters that reported as of 5/20/2025

Harvester counts are individual harvesters. Many harvesters have multiple licenses that are tracked seperately.

Expected reports are calculated from reports received by harvesters and extraoplated based on reports received by dealers.

***Increase in the number of harvesters and reports expected when MEDMR implements 100% lobster harvester reporting.**

In 2016 MEDMR converted to a new online licensing and landings system, called Maine LEEDS (**L**icensing **E**nforcement and **E**nvironmental **D**ata **S**ystem). Using this system, harvesters and dealers are able to:

- Renew a license you previously held
- Apply for a new license you’ve never held before
- Order tags (for certain licenses)
- Reprint your license
- Upgrade a license (if applicable)
- Pay administrative fees
- Report landings
- Check reporting compliance status
- Upload documents to the department
- Change your password to the system

This web application has been an extremely useful tool that has allowed for more “self-service” for harvesters and dealers, has improve customer satisfaction and increase MEDMR staff efficiency. The Landings Program now utilizes this LEEDS system to send compliance emails to industry informing them of what reports are delinquent. Harvesters and dealers also have the ability to login to the system and see what reports are missing as well. Overall, this program has saved the MEDMR thousands of dollars in mailing cost as many of our correspondence have been sent via email as opposed to mail when appropriate. The process of informing harvesters that they have a license with reporting requirements has been automated and each harvester that

purchases a license for the first time with reporting requirements are provided a notice included in their license packet to streamline our notification process. **In late spring 2018, MEDMR started allowing harvesters to enter their data through the LEEDS system and in 2021 released the VESL application to a group of test harvesters. Since the MEDMR provided harvesters with an electronic reporting option, the number of harvesters utilizing an electronic reporting option has increased from 85 in 2018 to almost 1,300 harvesters in 2022. At the time of writing this proposal, just under 5,550 harvesters (out of ~5,700 total) have reported electronically in 2024. Since 2018, the percentage of electronic reports has increased from just over 1% to 43% in 2022 (and 99% in 2024) (Figure 1 – view in color and Table 2 for electronic reporting breakdown).** Having industry enter their own information also saves staff time because paper reports do not need to be opened or processed through the mail, scanned into our LEEDS system or entered by hand. Staff have spent significant time training and creating outreach material (videos, electronic user guides, etc.) and communicating directly with industry. The shift to electronic reporting has caused staff to focus more of their time on data audits and outreach with industry. While MEDMR recommends industry utilize Maine LEEDS (state reporting only) or VESL (GARFO and ME state only reporting), we do not require users to use these two programs. We have users that have elected to utilize Fish Online (FOL), eTRIPS and other reporting options to fulfill their state and federal combo reporting requirements.

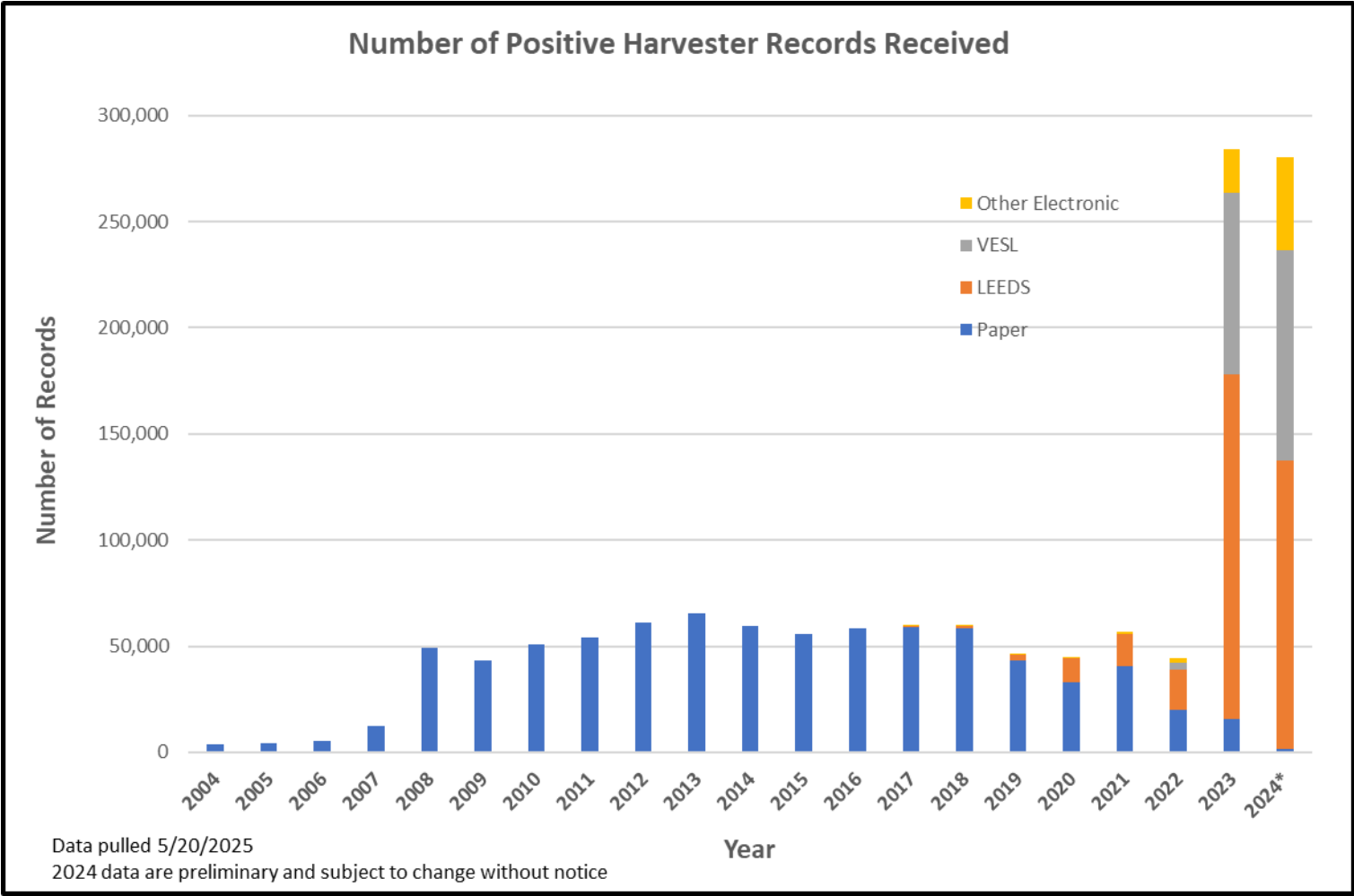


Figure 1: Number of Positive Trip Records Entered by MEDMR Staff and Industry into MARVIN and SAFIS

MEDMR Harvester Reported Data Trends (Data received through 5-20-2025)										
		Electronic Reports								
		LEEDS		VESL		Other Programs				
Year	Paper Reports	# Trips Reported	# Users	# Trips Reported	# Users	# Trips Reported	# Users	Total Electronic	Total Reports	% Electronic
2020	33,240	11,076	604	0	0	234	6	11,310	44,550	25%
2021*	40,676	14,942	774	352	15	929	15	16,223	56,899	29%
2022	20,052	18,981	1,244	3,297	170	1,891	94	24,169	44,221	55%
2023**	15,864	162,004	3,187	85,685	1,428	20,787	269	268,476	284,340	94%
2024***	1,762	135,613	3,405	98,846	1,428	44,300	572	278,759	280,521	99%
Paper reports are entered directly into MEDMR's MARVIN database by MEDMR staff LEEDS is MEDMR's web based online reporting application that feeds directly to our MARVIN database. VESL data numbers include state only and GARFO trips *2021 was pilot year for roll out of VESL in Maine **2023 is the first year of 100% lobster reporting for MEDMR (approx 5,800 harvesters) ***2024 data are preliminary and subject to change without notice. MEDMR currently requires lobster, menhaden, Atlantic herring, Atlantic halibut and scallop to report electronically. Number LEEDS and VESL users could overlap and be counted more than once. Other Programs are mostly Fish Online and eTrips										

Table 2: Breakdown of trip reports entered by Maine harvesters between 2020 and 2024 (to date)

MEDMR currently requires (with some potential exemptions based on to be determined criteria) 100% electronic harvester reporting for lobster, herring, halibut, scallop and menhaden. Reliable high-speed internet access is not available in certain parts of the state which prohibits full 100% electronic reporting. The goal is to get as close to that as possible. The addendum allowed until January 1, 2024 to meet this requirement. The MEDMR has taken a strict approach to allowing harvesters under certain circumstances to report on paper. **Scallop, halibut, herring and menhaden are quota monitored species that MEDMR has identified as benefiting from requiring state only harvesters to report electronically. Starting in 2020 all herring and menhaden harvesters were required to report electronically through either Maine LEEDS or some federally accepted reporting application during the active harvest season. This requirement replaced the email system MEDMR relied upon in the past to monitor quota. Requiring daily electronic reporting saved the harvesters from emailing and then filling out complete harvester reports at the end of the week/month. Starting in 2022, the MEDMR required trip level electronic reporting due weekly for scallop and halibut. The offline mobile application MEDMR had Bluefin Data LLC built through its own funds has allowed harvesters with multiple reporting fisheries the ability to use one program to fulfill all their requirements whether they are state only or federal. Of the 1.340 million trips for 2024 in the data warehouse, 46% of them were landed in Maine which exceeds any other state (Figure 2 – view in color). This figure includes both dealer and harvester records. These records were submitted by both “state-only” harvesters (those that only report to MEDMR) as well as federal harvesters (those that report to fulfill both NMFS and MEDMR reporting requirements). Because all state licensed harvesters are required to report to the MEDMR regardless if they have federal reporting requirements or not, MEDMR works with NMFS to collect data from federally permitted harvesters so they do not need to double report. MEDMR staff devotes time and resources to help all harvesters that submit data to NMFS and MEDMR.**

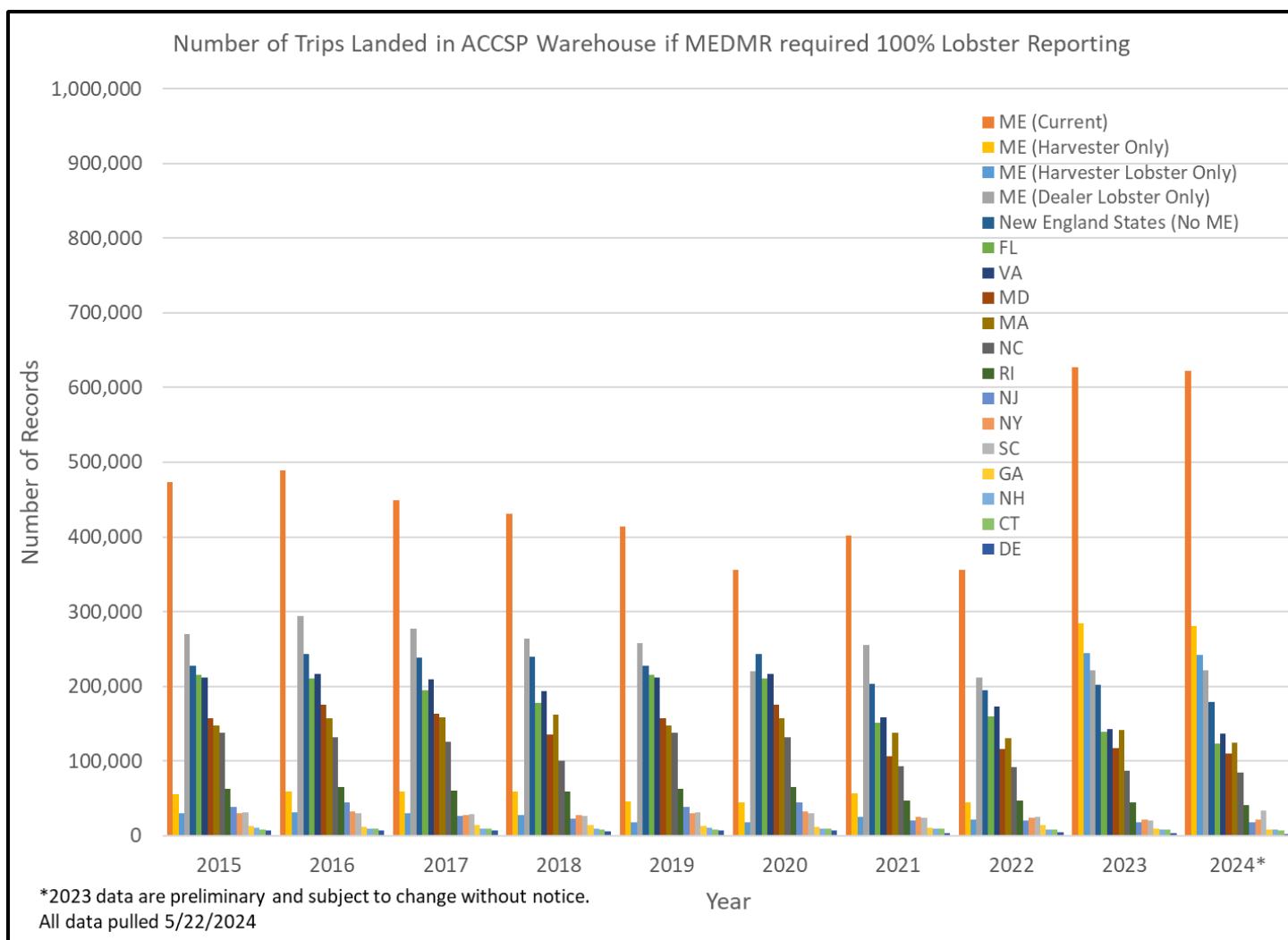


Figure 2: Number of Reported Trip Records by State Landed in ACCSP Data Warehouse

Since the MEDMR has required 100% lobster harvester reporting the volume of phone calls and data requests have increased. Throughout the year, approximately 40% to 60% of all harvesters are out of compliance for at least one month of reporting. In 2024 there were 8,142 harvesters with 9,301 individual licenses from all 14 fisheries that required harvester reporting and MEDMR sent out approximately 6,800 compliance letters (and emails) and fielded thousands of calls a month relating to reporting questions and compliance/license renewal status. Doubling the total number of harvesters required to report (many lobster harvesters are required to report other fisheries) has increased these figures and require more staff and staff time to provide industry with an acceptable level of customer service. In 2024, all 5,171 lobster harvesters were required to report (the penalty for not reporting is the inability to renew their license until they become compliant. If they do not renew their license before the end of the licensing year, then they forfeit their license).

Additional staff are needed to assist with audits and the increase in data that require auditing. The increase in data has significantly increased the time it takes to complete audits. The implementation of 100% lobster harvester reporting allows the MEDMR to audit and compare 100% of our lobster dealer and harvester data. These two datasets alone account for just under 500,000 records annually and will take significant staff resources to complete. MEDMR historically matched up what the 10% harvester reports indicate against what dealers reported for the same individuals. Any discrepancies over 2,000 pounds for the year are flagged and further research is conducted. Even with certain data validations in place, the data submitted through an electronic means

will require a large amount of staff time to run the audits and research and correct any flagged records. These audits have taken up significant staff time the first few years of 100% reporting. The current staff level has been spending audit time assisting with federal lobster harvester reporting since many of the federal lobster harvesters are using our VESL system to report. Other audits that staff perform on the data include spatial audits, trap counts, sea time, set time, gear configuration audits (this includes a spatial component to ensure that gear configuration matches regulatory requirements by area), over trip limits and basic vessel/harvester combinations. MEDMR has started to look at building audits around federal tracker data and compare that spatial data to the single location provided in the harvester report to use for spatial validation. The Landings Program also intends to use the data from the location information to validate other reporting fields (i.e. depth, 10 min square, stat area, number of sets and sea time for instance). While these next level audits are in the works, it will be some time before they replace current audit methods.

The first few years have required significant outreach with industry. **Communicating with industry and fielding electronic reporting questions will be the biggest time burden the landings program will face. Prior to 2023, 57% of all harvester records submitted to MEDMR are key entered by MEDMR staff. This number dropped to 1% in 2024 which created its own challenge of increasing the level of audits required to ensure data accuracy. Electronic reporting has been a cultural shift for the lobster fishery, which will require diligent customer service and an intuitive reporting application. MEDMR staff have spent significant resources (mostly time) holding in person and virtual meetings with industry to assist with the implementation and education of electronic reporting options with industry.** MEDMR has funded the development of a new harvester reporting application that is user friendly and meets the reporting needs of all MEDMR reporting fisheries, as well as meet NMFS eVTR reporting requirements. MEDMR spent significant time testing ACCSP's eTRIPS V2, which was greatly improved over the previous versions. However, there are still significant concerns about the number of reporting pages it took to complete, the agility of a program that is not fully table driven, and the ease of use for different fisheries. The program MEDMR contracted with Bluefin Data LLC to build works on both Android® and iOS® and meets all GARFO eVTR requirements so those harvesters with state and GARFO permits will be able to utilize this system. The MEDMR has a contract with Bluefin Data LLC that will allow any harvester with a MEDMR license or permit to use the VESL application free of charge. Since VESL was approved by GARFO, those harvesters with a MEDMR license or permit that also has reporting obligations to GARFO, will be able to use VESL to fulfill their GARFO reporting requirements regardless of where they are landing. **All data collected through the new MEDMR funded harvester applications will be submitted directly to ACCSP through the newly developed API (requirements are listed here <https://accsp-software.github.io/spec-unified-api-prod/>).** The funding source for the new mobile applications are through dedicated technology funding within MEDMR's budget. These funds must be used for advancing technologies and cannot be used for personnel.

The number of trip records that MEDMR staff and industry entered into MARVIN (MEDMR's database that contains all sampling, biological and landings data that MEDMR collects) has increased ~1124% since 2007 (Figure 1 – view in color), which was the last year the MEDMR did not require 10% lobster harvester reporting. The overall number of reports by harvesters during this same period has increased by 2,295%. If not for the electronic reporting requirement this increase would not have been possible. Since the start of electronic reporting in ME, the number of electronic trip reports has increased 23,996% between 2024 and 2018 (278,759 reports in 2024 compared to 1,163 in 2018). When harvesters submit paper reports, they are entered into the MARVIN database. MARVIN is used for reports submitted on paper because it is a faster method of data entry and MEDMR uses this tool to audit the data before sending a copy of it to ACCSP. Routines are configured to convert the MARVIN data to ACCSP codes before they are uploaded to the ACCSP warehouse.

Landings data entered in MARVIN are uploaded to the ACCSP data warehouse. The significant increase in the amount of data entry, outreach/education and auditing are the single greatest challenge facing the landings harvester (including lobster) program staff. MEDMR currently funds seven positions that work at least part-time on harvester reporting. Currently four positions working on the harvester program are funded by ACCSP grants. In addition to the FY24 ACCSP grant, MEDMR was able to secure additional one-time funding of \$600K (funding ended on 6/20/2024) from NOAA through congressional appropriations as part of a large \$1.6 million dollar bill to offset costs that might result from new regulations in the lobster fishery to protect right whales (split with MA, NH, ME and RI) and two million for a one-time ARPA funding (this is why the MEDMR did not request funding in FY2023). While this funding is vital, it does not provide MEDMR with enough funds to fully fund multiple years of lobster reporting. MEDMR continues to look for other sources of funding (both internal and external) to fund 100% lobster reporting. MEDMR has modified the current budget from previous years funded proposals to account for the ARPA and other NOAA funds. The positions listed in this grant currently have no other fully funding sources available. MEDMR is now requesting continued funding for four positions.

This proposal is designed to continue to assist with funding the transition from 10% harvester reporting to 100% harvester reporting where most harvesters will be required to report electronically as required by Addendum XXVI. MEDMR understands that not everyone will be able to report electronically so a paper option must still be available. The positions being funded will be doing very little data entry and will mostly be assisting harvesters with reporting questions, educating harvesters with electronic reporting options and other outreach duties along with other data entry/auditing duties.

Summary of staffing:

MEDMR Landings Program staff involved in harvester reporting who are fully funded by MEDMR:

- Scientist IV: makes decisions on the general Landings Program direction.
- Scientist III: oversees the Landings Program, participates in ACCSP committees, transfers data to ACCSP; reporting technology development and responds to data requests.
- Scientist II: manages the day-to-day operations of the Landings Program, is responsible for database development, responds to data requests and updates the Landings Program web page. This position also audits data, and monitors licenses and compliance.
- Scientist I: provides one-on-one outreach with the harvesters; trains harvesters how to report electronically or on paper; follows up on compliance issues. This position audits data from “state-only” and “NMFS” harvesters. See the *Approach* section below for further details on auditing. This position is also assigned tasks in the dealer-reporting project.
- Office Associate II: corresponds with industry regarding new suspension authority for failure to report on time; identifies and notifies delinquent reporters; follows protocols for suspending licenses; works with the licensing division to ensure licenses are re-issued when reports have been submitted.
- Office Associate I (2 positions): opens and processes mail and enters data into MARVIN.

New MEDMR Landings Program staff to be funded by additional ARPA grant:

- Marine Resource Scientist II (1 position): Oversee the daily operations of harvester reporting program, including but not limited to scheduling of duties, directly supervising four employees, managing harvester data audits, database maintenance and assisting with reporting writing.
- Marine Resource Scientist I (2 positions): Oversee the rollout of the new offline harvester reporting application, outreach with industry and overseeing data audits. These two positions will be one of the primary contacts for industry members that have reporting program questions.
- Office Specialist I Supervisor (1 position): Supervise two Office Associate I positions and two Office Associate II positions located in the West Boothbay Harbor, ME Laboratory. This position will assist

with incomplete reports, handle in-person report drop-off, report rejections, compliance mailings and calls and data audits.

- Office Associate II (1 position): Will have similar duties to the Office Associate II listed below. Will be based out of our Augusta office and will be cross trained to assist our Licensing Department when help is needed.
- Office Associate II: Primary contact for incomplete reports, rejects reports, primary contact for compliance and reporting questions, notifies new harvesters of reporting requirements, assists with audit research.

New MEDMR Landings Program staff to be funded by ACCSP grant:

- Marine Resource Specialist (2 positions): Help run data audits and correct erroneous data, primary data audit researcher for dealer vs harvester audits and will assist the Marine Resource Scientist I's with any industry technical outreach questions.
- Office Associate II (2 positions): Will have similar duties to the Office Associate II listed above. This position will be based out of our West Boothbay Harbor office.

The MEDMR decided against the idea to ramp up the current number of harvesters selected to report to 100% reporting. It was determined the best way forward is to go directly to 100% harvester reporting. For MEDMR to provide excellent customer service from the beginning, the number of positions proposed were what we felt necessary to provide the best level of customer service while being as fiscally responsible as possible. Each position created was a limited period position and each year MEDMR will evaluate these positions to determine if they are still needed. We anticipate that by year 3 to 5 we might be able to reduce the number of positions as harvesters become more versed with the reporting programs.

Finding funding to help defray the costs for this federally mandated requirement is something that the MEDMR has been looking for and will continue to look for. MEDMR will also look for ways to bring the overall costs down through either staff reductions as the program evolves or any and all in-house or outside sources. MEDMR will continue to look at ways to streamline the Landings Program's operation and will continue to try and automate as many processes (compliance and audits for instance) that will cut down on staffing needs. The extra staff included in this proposal will assist with the initial roll out and anticipated help that industry will need and the ability to assist industry within a reasonable amount of time to answer their questions.

It is essential that this harvester reporting program continues to meet funding needs, which are born because of ASMFC's requirement that MEDMR collect trip level harvester reports from 100% of all licensed commercial lobster harvesters. The implementation of new lobster fishery regulations in the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan to reduce the threat of entanglement to endangered right whales is expediting the timeframe to increase reporting to 100% faster than Addendum XXVI required. **Requiring 100% lobster reporting will add another tool for monitoring Maine's commercial fisheries, which are large and economically important to the U.S. seafood industry.** According to the NMFS commercial fisheries database (as of 5/29/2024), Maine was ranked as the highest state on the Atlantic Coast in commercial value (\$630.7 million of which \$464.4 million were lobster) and fourth highest in whole pounds landed (198.4 million of which 93.73 million were lobster) in 2023. **This comprehensive harvester reporting program also addresses ASMFC compliance issues for several fisheries, including American lobster, Atlantic herring, American eel and Atlantic menhaden.**

This grant does not include any funding for the offline mobile harvester reporting application. The MEDMR has fully funded the original programming, programmatic updates and maintenance costs associated with this project. The MEDMR will continue to fund the monthly maintenance fees. MEDMR will continue to try to identify alternative sources of funding for the harvester reporting project, but the

State of Maine is continuing to face budget challenges and there are few options for state funding to cover the total cost.

Results and Benefits:

The data collected so far through MEDMR's harvester reporting program has shown how valuable this information is for Maine's fisheries. **Currently MEDMR requires 14 fisheries to submit trip level harvester reports and prior to 2023, lobster was the only fishery not collecting 100% of harvester trips (Figure 3 shows all non-confidential fisheries trips reported over past 5 years).** **Maine's commercial lobster fishery is by far the largest lobster fishery on the East Coast in both volume and number of individuals.** There are just under 5,400 licensed harvesters of which MEDMR previously selected between 380 and 800 harvesters each year to report. Even with selecting only a percentage of harvesters in the lobster industry, MEDMR scientists have learned more about the fleet characteristics, gear configurations and fishing patters for full time and part time fishermen involved in this fishery than they have been able to with the current sampling programs. Other fishery managers are now analyzing landings data to learn more about the fishing fleet and the makeup of other fisheries. **Requiring 100% reporting will only increase the MEDMR's knowledge base and increase the amount of data collected.** Since most data will be submitted to SAFIS and all data stored in the ACCSP Warehouse, this large dataset will be available to all partners.

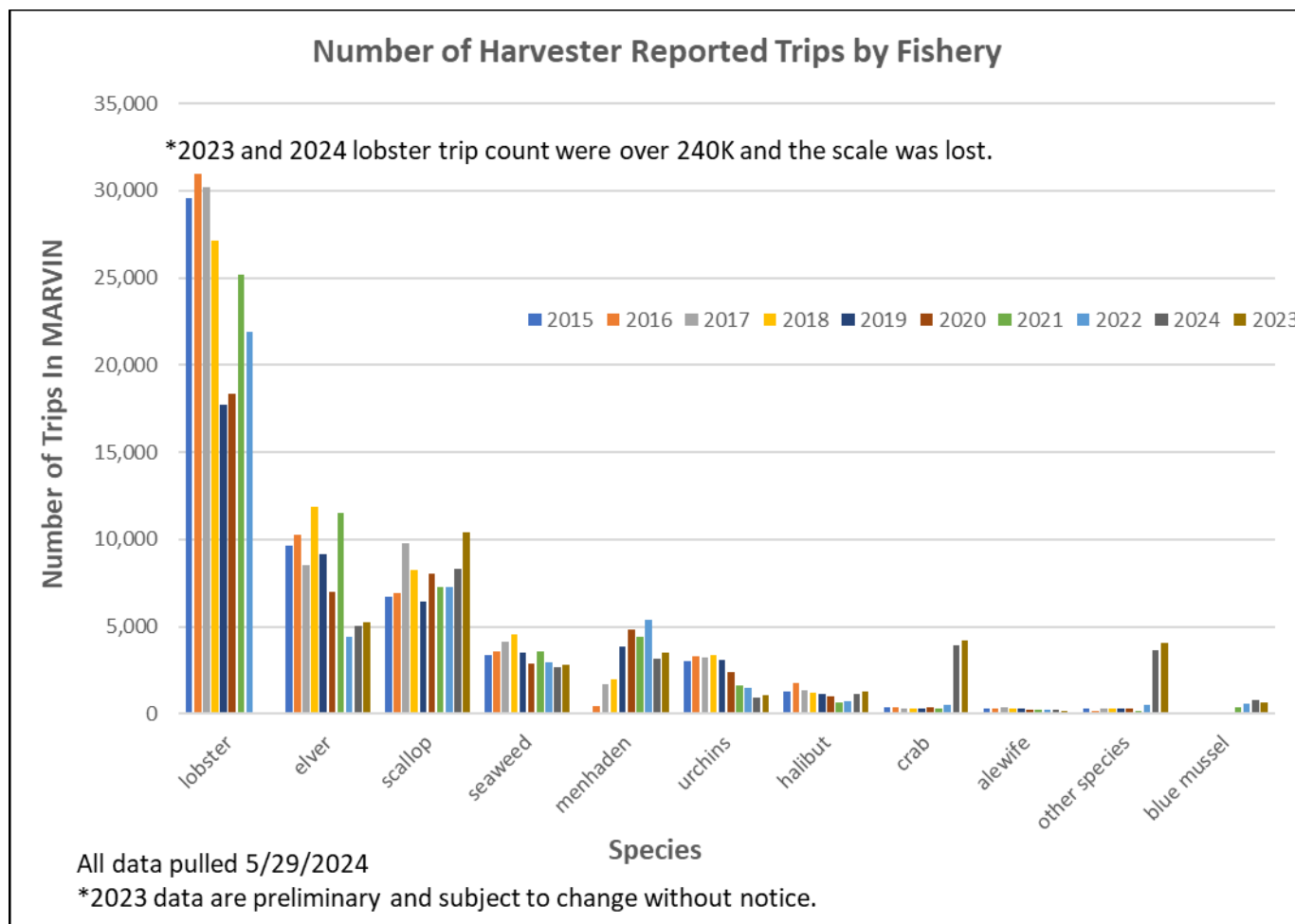


Figure 3: Number of Harvester Reported Trips by Fishery from Harvester Data

This grant will continue to allow MEDMR to meet ASMFC's Addendum XXVI target of 100% harvester reporting in the lobster fishery by January 2024. MEDMR wanted to speed up this deadline for protected

species issues and required 100% trip level reporting in the lobster fishery in January 2023. This grant will allow MEDMR the ability to continue to fund positions needed to ensure the data collected are as accurate as possible through more data auditing, especially linking dealer and harvester reports together through our “dealer vs harvester reporting” audits where we match up each harvester report to the dealer report and their total landings are scrutinized. MEDMR staff’s ability to audit the spatial data while overlapping effort data has also provided fisheries managers with a level of certainty that was previously **unattainable**. Addendum XXVI does not necessarily require 100% electronic reporting; however, MEDMR has required nearly 100% lobster harvester electronic reporting and know that harvesters in other fisheries were looking to move from paper reporting to electronic reporting. MEDMR anticipates that harvesters that report on paper will be offset by those that have reported on paper but will be required to switch to an electronic reporting option and the data entry staff currently employed will be sufficient. Staff are fielding more calls each day asking about electronic reporting and are promoting our Maine LEEDS and VESL online reporting, but most want a mobile friendly reporting option. **MEDMR is already uploading data reported to MARVIN to ACCSP every six months and intends to start uploading every other month, which benefits all partners.**

Metadata for the harvester program will be updated as needed according to the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and the Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata (CSDGM) standards where appropriate. The resulting metadata will be reported to ACCSP as text and XML.

This project will help MEDMR meet the data collection standards of ACCSP. All partners will benefit, as all data will be uploaded to ACCSP and many of the species landed in Maine have a broad geographic range which includes many other agencies in their management. Partners will benefit from the technologies built and lessons learned from the offline harvester reporting application MEDMR intends to have in production by early summer as this will be available to any partner.

Approach:

1. Enforce compliance

MEDMR staff will enforce compliance of the trip level reporting regulation through these methods:

- **Provide initial outreach and technical support needed for harvesters to report trip level landings to MEDMR. Meet with harvesters in a group setting and one on one as needed to explain reporting procedures, install application, troubleshoot issues with reporting, and explain consequences for failing to report.**
- **Review paper reports submitted for completeness and verify the submissions in Maine LEEDS. If reports are incomplete, MEDMR will contact industry to correct reporting mistakes. If a harvester cannot be contacted by phone, the report will be returned for correction. Reports submitted electronically are deemed complete upon submission. If during the data audit process reports are unable to be reconciled, MEDMR staff will reject the electronic report back to the harvester for correction and re-submission.**
- **Send delinquent harvesters not included in the suspension process emails indicating what they are missing and send automated notifications within the Maine LEEDS program when a report is received or not.**
- **Complete suspension notices monthly to those harvesters involved in the halibut, herring, menhaden and elver fisheries that are delinquent enough to meet the minimum notification criteria as outlined in the suspension law (Attachment 3).**
- **Complete follow-up suspension notices monthly to those harvesters that are delinquent enough to meet the minimum notification criteria as outlined in the suspension law (Attachment 4).**
- **MEDMR will suspend harvester licenses for those who fail to report in a timely manner. See Attachment 4 for the law, which dictates suspension procedures MEDMR will follow.**

2. Data entry

Paper reports and electronic reports entered through the Maine LEEDS system will go directly into MARVIN and then be uploaded to the ACCSP Warehouse at least every 6 months once it has been thoroughly audited.

The harvester reporting application MEDMR contracted to have built by Bluefin Data LLC includes point of entry validations for harvester, vessel, gear, gear to various other variables (i.e. fisheries, gear quantities), gear quantities, locations, pounds, dispositions for example. The data entered through these new applications will utilize ACCSP's API and all data will be submitted directly into SAFIS.

3. Encourage electronic reporting

MEDMR staff will require lobster, menhaden, scallop, halibut and herring harvesters to report electronically and encourage harvesters who report on paper for other fisheries to report using one of the two electronic reporting methods MEDMR will offer (Maine LEEDS or our own Offline Electronic Reporting Application). MEDMR staff will train all harvesters who are required to report electronically regardless if they have reporting obligations to NOAA or not.

MEDMR believes that electronic reporting will benefit industry as much as it benefits MEDMR. If harvesters enter their own data through the proposed MEDMR application, they will have the ability to run basic analytics within the application to view their own trends and harvest information. MEDMR will benefit by reducing the amount of staff time spent entering data. If MEDMR could not offer an electronic reporting option, the number of data entry staff required to handle approximately 280,000 records per year would be at least 7 or 8 individuals in addition to what is currently proposed. Electronic reporting will not only save MEDMR staff data entry time, but we will also automate many of our daily reporting processes, including data validation at the point of harvester entry and automate compliance and spend more time on data audits and outreach with industry.

4. Continue outreach with industry to promote buy-in.

MEDMR staff will continue to work with harvesters to explain the purpose and benefits of harvester reporting. MEDMR staff spent two days at the annual Fishermen's Forum in March 2025 and were available to assist harvesters with setting up and demonstrating the two reporting options MEDMR are currently offering (VESL and Maine LEEDS). These two days were very successful with staff directly assisting over 30 individuals and providing information to others that were not quite ready to start fishing and just wanted to see what was available. MEDMR in 2023 held six meetings along the coast of Maine to assist harvesters with setting up their reporting software or answer questions. All six sessions were very successful and heavily attended. MEDMR staff are available by phone or video calls Monday – Friday from 8 to 4:30 but many harvesters need the extra help of someone in person to guide them through the initial set up and first few reports. Many of these individuals have little to no experience with smartphones, tablets or computers so the learning curve can be steep. MEDMR staff have also added resources on our Landings Program homepage (<https://www.maine.gov/dmr/fisheries/commercial/landings-program>) to assist harvesters with reporting questions. Currently we have “how-to” guides for each fishery available and will have videos to help assist harvesters. Before the 100% reporting became a requirement staff (along with staff from GARFO and Bluefin Data LLC) attended the annual Maine Fishermen's Forum in March 2020 to facilitate an electronic reporting discussion. This discussion allowed MEDMR, GARFO and Bluefin Data LLC an opportunity to show harvesters the current and future electronic reporting options that are/will be available. The session was lightly attended but helped formulate ideas of how to improve this important part of outreach. In addition to the in-person trainings we have offered we will also utilize videos and remote outreach; however, there are times when it is most productive to hold a few large in-person meetings

to assist those that are not as tech savvy as others and are more comfortable having an in-person meeting. Having to on board almost 5,400 new harvesters required every tool we had in our toolbox. There are also areas in Maine where internet speeds and or connectivity are lacking so remote meetings are difficult (this is why we developed a reporting application that will work “offline”). We intend to rely heavily on remote meetings and self-help video and reporting how-to’s to assist those individuals that are comfortable with that format but will continue to hold in-person meetings for those that need extra assistance. In addition to the above issues was the delay in NOAA requiring 100% lobster reporting until April 1, 2024. There are approximately 1,250 federally permitted lobster harvesters in Maine that also have a MEDMR commercial lobster license. The majority of these 1,250 harvesters had no previous federal reporting experience and were not familiar with NOAA’s different forms and terminology. MEDMR staff have been working closely with NOAA GARFO staff to help educate these harvesters and explain the differences from what harvesters were reporting as “state only” now that they are required to report to NOAA.

Staff will work with established industry organizations, such as the MEDMR advisory councils, lobster zone councils, and dealer and harvester associations to reiterate the program goals and show results of mandatory reporting. Staff will also focus on explaining the statutory authority for suspending licenses for those who fail to report on time, and how this will help gather more accurate data.

5. Audit of harvester data submitted.

Staff will audit data submitted bi-weekly. Paper data will be audited twice per month; electronic audits sent via email from SAFIS will be corrected weekly. SAFIS audits for “state-only” harvesters will be corrected through the VESL app by either industry or MEDMR staff. **Audits concerning federal harvesters will be vetted through the NMFS Northeast Region. MEDMR staff will audit electronic data submitted by federal harvesters because these harvesters submit data to fulfill MEDMR reporting requirements. MEDMR performs basic audits of records to catch potential oversights from NMFS audits.** MEDMR also compares dealer-reported landings with harvester-reported landings and identifies both parties if there are any discrepancies. In these audits, MEDMR contacts dealers and harvesters when discrepancies are discovered and works to correct records or recover missing data.

MEDMR does intend to audit 100% of all individual records that are submitted. **Many of these audits will be simple gross audits (over the trip, gear quantity, spatial audits, etc.); however, the data submitted through the new mobile application have some validations built-in for pre-submission checks. Harvesters will not be able to enter certain gear/species combinations, certain dispositions for certain species and gear quantity checks for instance. The app also utilizes validations built into ACCSP’s API (species/market/grade combos for instance). Many of these audits will be canned within the audit database and will be added to a routine check. Staff have been working on incorporating spatial audits into our routine. They have added gear configuration by area reported to these audits to catch any harvesters that might be reporting their gear configuration incorrectly based on the area they reported their activity. The dealer/harvester audits are performed annually and start by looking at yearly totals with a 2,000-pound discrepancy. Dealer/harvester audits are not performed on a trip-by-trip basis. MEDMR is also exploring the utilization of the tracker data collected on federal lobster boats to cross reference the spatial data reported on the trip report. It’s the intent of the Landings Program to expand the use of the tracker data to better validate and audit other trip and effort fields collected on the trip reports (i.e. 10 min square, depth, lat/long, # of sets, sea time, date of report, etc). These audits are in the early phase of brainstorming but it’s a goal we hope to have implemented at some level by the end of 2025.**

6. Transmission of harvester data to ACCSP.

MEDMR will continue to upload harvester data from MARVIN to the ACCSP data warehouse once every two months. In each data feed, the following fields are uploaded to the warehouse according to ACCSP protocols: cf_license_nbr, iss_agency, trip_type, supplier_trip_id, port, state, coast_guard_nbr, state_reg_nbr, trip_start_date, trip_start_time, trip_end_date, trip_end_time, num_crew, num_anglers, vtr_number, vessel_permit, sub_trip_type, reporting_source, fuel_used, fuel_price, charter_fee, distance, in_state, area_code, sub_area_code, local_area_code, latitude, longitude, gear, lma, gear_quantity, gear_sets, fishing_hours, hours_days, total_gear, gear_size, mesh_ring_length, mesh_ring_width, stretch_size, target_species, avg_depth, species_itis, disposition, market_code, grade_code, unit_of_measure, sale_disposition_flag, dealer_license_nbr, date_sold, reported_quantity, price, dea_iss_agency, catch_source, catch_latitude, catch_longitude, supplier_catch_id. MEDMR enters data daily and audits data weekly, so the data uploaded to the warehouse is a mix of pre- and post-audited records. MEDMR does not keep track of what percentage of the uploaded records are “reloads” due to errors but simply reloads all the data in MARVIN to the warehouse once every three months. **In addition, the data supplied by the MEDMR offline mobile application will be sent directly to SAFIS daily.**

The MEDMR does not upload data from MARVIN to SAFIS because MEDMR staff continually audit data each week, so the data that are uploaded to the warehouse are a mix of pre- and post-audited records. The reloading of data from MARVIN to the Warehouse is an automated process that the MEDMR loads into a temporary table provided by the Warehouse. If we were to perform the same upload method to SAFIS we would need the ability to mass delete records from SAFIS (which we do not have the ability to do at this time) before records are reloaded to avoid creating duplicate records.

7. Report metadata to ACCSP.

Metadata will be created with ESRI ArcCatalog 10 to conform to the FGDC (Federal Geographic Data Committee) standards and specifications. As specified by the federal standard, MEDMR metadata will include the following main sections with detailed information on identification information, data quality information, spatial data organization information, spatial reference information, entity and attribute information, distribution information, metadata reference information, citation information, time period information and contact information. Created metadata will be available in text and XML formats.

Geographic Location: Operations will be based out of Boothbay Harbor, Maine and the project will take place throughout Maine.

Milestone Schedule:

	<u>Months</u>											
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
1. Enforce harvester compliance	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Data enter harvester reports	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Encourage electronic harvester reporting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
4. Industry outreach to promote industry buy-in	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5. Audit harvester data	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Upload harvester data to ACCSP		X		X		X	X		X		X	
7. Report metadata to ACCSP												X
8. Semi-annual reports						X						X
9. Annual reports												X

Table 3. Project Accomplishments Measurement:

Goal	Measurement	2019	2020*	2021	2022	2023	2024
Enforce Harvester Compliance	Number of compliance letters to harvesters	3,226	2,555	1,903	3,283	6,374	6,782
Enforce Harvester Compliance	Number of harvesters suspended for failing to report timely	447	421	560	628	257	0
Harvester Data Entry	Number of trip records by year landed in data warehouse	46,386	44,550	56,573	44,221	284,340	280,521
Harvester Data Entry	Number of positive trip records by year landed in MARVIN	46,172	44,316	55,618	39,033	177,868	137,375
Harvester Data Entry	Number of paper trip records entered in MARVIN	43,388	33,240	40,676	20,052	15,864	1,762
Harvester Data Entry	Number of electronic trip reports entered into Maine LEEDS	2,784	11,076	14,942	18,981	162,004	135,613
Harvester Data Entry	Number harvesters entering directly into Maine LEEDS	240	604	774	1,244	3,187	3,405
Harvester Data Entry	Number of electronic trip reports entered into VESL	-	-	352	3,297	85,685	98,846
Encourage Electronic Reporting	Number harvesters entering directly into VESL	-	-	15	170	1,428	1,428
Harvester Data Entry	Number of positive trip records by year landed in SAFIS	-	234	1,283	4,950	105,858	105,858
Encourage Electronic Reporting	Number of harvesters submitting positive reports in SAFIS	-	-	30	170	1,447	1,472
Transmit Harvester Data to Data Warehouse	Frequency of data submitted by year landed	1 time every 6 months	1 time every 6 months	1 time every 6 months	1 time every 6 months	1 time every 6 months	1 time every 6 months
Outreach	Number of custom data requests	479	946	733	1,044	1,057	1,158
Outreach	Number of custom data requests from portal	-	362	667	648	559	703

*2024 data are incomplete at time of report creation.

Text in bold indicate where proposal hit on ranking criteria.

Cost Summary: FY26 Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine				
5/1/2026 - 4/30/2027				
Personnel ^A			Description	Cost
072002692	Z. May	Marine Resource Specialist	full time position for 6 months	\$27,024.18
072002693	S. Gamber	Marine Resource Specialist		\$24,759.78
072002705	K Hamblen	Office Associate II		\$22,392.61
072002706	L. Schinhofen	Office Associate II		\$25,656.76
			Subtotal	\$99,833.32
Fringe Benefits^A				
072002692	Z. May	Marine Resource Specialist II	Includes health, dental, workers comp, FICA, life insurance and retirement	\$16,177.09
072002693	S. Gamber	Marine Resource Specialist II		\$17,685.20
072002705	K Hamblen	Office Associate II		\$16,085.30
072002706	L. Schinhofen	Office Associate II		\$16,823.64
			Subtotal	\$66,771.23
			Total Personnel	\$166,604.55
Travel				
1 vehicle ^B			1 car * \$377.34/mo * 12 mo	\$4,528.08
Mileage fee			1 car * 1,150 mi per mo * \$.1533/mi * 12 mo	\$2,115.54
2 Overnight stays ^C			2* \$150/night	\$300.00
Per diem (includes extended days)			(2 overnights @ \$65/day & 5 extended days @ \$24/day)	\$250.00
			Total Travel	\$7,193.62
Supplies				
Year labels			1,000 labels (500/box * 2 boxes * \$15.00/box)	\$30.00
Folder labels			1,000 labels (500/box * 12 boxes * \$24.50/box)	\$49.00
Other				
Telecommunication charges ^D			5 phones * \$50/mo * 12 mo	\$3,000.00
			Total Supplies	\$3,079.00
			Subtotal	\$10,272.62
Total Direct Costs				\$176,877.17
Indirect Costs (26.52%)				\$46,907.83
Total Award to DMR				\$223,785.00
A: Cost includes salary and benefits, which are dictated by contract with State of Maine and are non-negotiable. B: All state agencies must rent vehicles through state's Central Fleet Agency which is non-negotiable. Vehicle costs include the following services and costs: maintenance, repairs, insurance, and gasoline. C: DMR staff meet with and train harvesters how to electronically report to DMR and/or NMFS. D: One cell phone for each of the Scientist II, Scientist I (2) and Specialist II (2) working on the project.				

Partner Contribution For ACCSP Purposes			
J. Waller	072001271	Scientist IV (7% time)	\$11,900
R. Watts	072002431	Scientist III (25% time)	\$39,000
L. White, Jr	072002453	Scientist II (25% time)	\$38,500
E. Layland	072002398	Scientist I (25% time)	\$28,684
D. Chase	072002540	Office Associate I (85% time)	\$44,715
D. Whelan	072002657	Office Associate I (50% time)	\$39,395
D. Young	072002647	Office Associate II (25% time)	\$21,741
			\$223,935

Text in bold indicate where proposal hit on ranking criteria.

Budget Narrative for FY2026 proposal:

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: The positions in this proposal (2 Marine Resource Specialists and 2 Office Associate II). These positions are funded part-time (50%) by this award and are Department of Marine Resources' employees. Salary and benefits for this employee are dictated by the contract with the State of Maine and are non-negotiable. Benefits include retirement benefits, FICA, health insurance, dental insurance, workers compensation and life insurance. The benefits are determined by a formula the state uses which is variable dependent upon the position classification, the pay grade of the employee (e.g. the number of years the person has been employed by the State of Maine) and the type of coverage the employee selects.

Travel: The Scientists and Specialists are the employees who will be travelling. The travel is for holding electronic harvester reporting workshops, visiting harvesters to install reporting software, training harvester staff how to electronically report or troubleshooting reporting problems. Staff provide harvesters with one-on-one training first via phone but then in person if individuals need further assistance with the reporting system and help troubleshoot electronic reporting problems. Travel occurs throughout the coast of Maine, although trips to the interior are unusual unless the harvester can only meet inland. These harvesters must be trained in the use of electronic reporting and in some cases a group informational setting will not be enough for some to learn how to report their landings information.

The monthly fee for the vehicle is dictated by contract with the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency; the fee is based on the type of vehicle leased, and the mileage fee is based on how many miles the car was driven the previous year. Because of this, the vehicle fees between projects may differ. This project has one Nissan Rogue SUV which is a state-owned vehicle that MEDMR leases from the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency.

Occasionally extended day travel is necessary. If multiple harvester appointments to these remote areas are made for the same day, extended days may be necessary. The rates were calculated through the GSA website for posted rates.

Supplies: Filing supplies are needed each year but as more harvesters eventually shift to electronic reporting the need for filing supplies will decrease. The filing supplies include labels (year and name) and protective coatings for these labels. These are the same folders used for all MEDMR's harvester reports and are purchased from Allied Systems Products AAK Filing system.

Other: Cell phones for the Specialists and the Scientists are necessary for communication and safety when travelling to harvester meeting locations. Staff often need to call NMFS or the programmer when installing software or troubleshooting reporting issues in the field.

Indirect costs: The Department of Marine Resources has an indirect cost rate of 26.52%. These indirect funds are a necessity to help defray and offset the administrative costs associated with the ASMFC's directive to increase MEDMR's lobster reporting from its current rate to 100%. These indirect monies are utilized to help cover the administrative costs not covered directly by this grant proposal and help offset any burden MEDMR assumes by fulfilling their ASMFC reporting requirements.

Cost Summary: FY25 Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine				
5/1/2025 - 4/30/2026				
Personnel ^A			Description	Cost
072002692	E. Patrick	Marine Resource Specialist II	full time position for 12 months	\$39,053.01
072002693	Z. May	Marine Resource Specialist II		\$39,053.01
072002705	M. Angelico	Office Associate II		\$36,014.93
072002706	L. Schinhofen	Office Associate II		\$36,014.93
			Subtotal	\$150,135.87
Fringe Benefits ^A				
072002692	E. Patrick	Marine Resource Specialist II	Includes health, dental, workers comp, FICA, life insurance and retirement	\$25,587.76
072002693	Z. May	Marine Resource Specialist II		\$25,577.39
072002705	M. Angelico	Office Associate II		\$23,410.96
072002706	L. Schinhofen	Office Associate II		\$23,420.81
			Subtotal	\$97,996.91
			Total Personnel	\$248,132.78
Travel				
1 vehicle ^B			1 car * \$377.34/mo * 12 mo	\$4,528.08
Mileage fee			1 car * 1,150 mi per mo * \$.1533/mi * 12 mo	\$2,115.54
2 Overnight stays ^C			2 * \$150/night	\$0.00
Per diem (includes extended days)			(2 overnights @ \$65/day & 5 extended days @ \$24/day)	\$250.00
			Total Travel	\$6,893.62
Supplies				
Year labels			1,000 labels (500/box * 2 boxes * \$15.00/box)	\$30.00
Folder labels			1,000 labels (500/box * 12 boxes * \$24.50/box)	\$49.00
Other				
Telecommunication charges ^D			5 phones * \$50/mo * 12 mo	\$3,000.00
			Total Supplies	\$3,079.00
			Subtotal	\$9,972.62
Total Direct Costs				\$258,105.40
Indirect Costs (30%)				\$77,431.62
Total Award to DMR				\$335,537.01
A: Cost includes salary and benefits, which are dictated by contract with State of Maine and are non-negotiable.				
B: All state agencies must rent vehicles through state's Central Fleet Agency which is non-negotiable. Vehicle costs include the following services and costs: maintenance, repairs, insurance, and gasoline.				
C: DMR staff meet with and train harvesters how to electronically report to DMR and/or NMFS.				
D: One cell phone for each of the Scientist II, Scientist I (2) and Specialist II (2) working on the project.				

Partner Contribution For ACCSP Purposes		
J. Waller	072001271 Scientist IV (7% time)	\$11,739
R. Watts	072002431 Scientist III (25% time)	\$39,528
L. White, Jr	072002453 Scientist II (25% time)	\$40,902
E. Layland	072002398 Scientist I (25% time)	\$27,562
D. Chase	072002540 Office Associate I (85% time)	\$43,002
C. Bear	072002657 Office Associate I (50% time)	\$32,404
D. Young	072002647 Office Associate II (25% time)	\$22,713
		\$217,850

Text in bold indicate where proposal hit on ranking criteria.

Budget Narrative for FY2025 proposal:

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: The positions in this proposal (2 Marine Resource Specialist II and 2 Office Associate II). These positions are funded part-time (75%) by this award and are Department of Marine Resources' employees. Salary and benefits for this employee are dictated by the contract with the State of Maine and are non-negotiable. Benefits include retirement benefits, FICA, health insurance, dental insurance, workers compensation and life insurance. The benefits are determined by a formula the state uses which is variable dependent upon the position classification, the pay grade of the employee (e.g. the number of years the person has been employed by the State of Maine) and the type of coverage the employee selects.

Travel: The Scientists and Specialists are the employees who will be travelling. The travel is for holding electronic harvester reporting workshops, visiting harvesters to install reporting software, training harvester staff how to electronically report or troubleshooting reporting problems. Staff provide harvesters with one-on-one training first via phone but then in person if individuals need further assistance with the reporting system and help troubleshoot electronic reporting problems. Travel occurs throughout the coast of Maine, although trips to the interior are unusual unless the harvester can only meet inland. These harvesters must be trained in the use of electronic reporting and in some cases a group informational setting will not be enough for some to learn how to report their landings information.

The monthly fee for the vehicle is dictated by contract with the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency; the fee is based on the type of vehicle leased, and the mileage fee is based on how many miles the car was driven the previous year. Because of this, the vehicle fees between projects may differ. This project has one Nissan Rogue SUV which is a state-owned vehicle that MEDMR leases from the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency.

Occasionally extended day travel is necessary. If multiple harvester appointments to these remote areas are made for the same day, extended days may be necessary. The rates were calculated through the GSA website for posted rates.

Supplies: Filing supplies are needed each year but as more harvesters eventually shift to electronic reporting the need for filing supplies will decrease. The filing supplies include labels (year and name) and protective coatings for these labels. These are the same folders used for all MEDMR's harvester reports and are purchased from Allied Systems Products AAK Filing system.

Other: Cell phones for the Specialists and the Scientists are necessary for communication and safety when travelling to harvester meeting locations. Staff often need to call NMFS or the programmer when installing software or troubleshooting reporting issues in the field.

Indirect costs: The Department of Marine Resources has an indirect cost rate of 33.7%; however, our commissioner has authorized this proposal to use the lower rate of 30%. See Attachment 3 for the Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement. These indirect funds are a necessity to help defray and offset the administrative costs associated with the ASMFC's directive to increase MEDMR's lobster reporting from its current rate to 100%. These indirect monies are utilized to help cover the administrative costs not covered directly by this grant proposal and help offset any burden MEDMR assumes with fulfilling their ASMFC reporting requirements.

Cost Summary: FY24 Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine				
5/1/2024 - 4/30/2025				
Personnel ^A			Description	Cost
072002692	E. Patrick	Marine Resource Specialist II	full time position for 12 months	\$37,260.66
072002693	Z. May	Marine Resource Specialist II		\$37,260.66
072002705	M. Angelico	Office Associate II		\$37,495.13
072002706	L. Schinhofen	Office Associate II		\$37,495.13
			Subtotal	\$149,511.59
Fringe Benefits^A				
072002692	E. Patrick	Marine Resource Specialist II	Includes health, dental, workers comp, FICA, life insurance and retirement	\$24,553.58
072002693	Z. May	Marine Resource Specialist II		\$24,533.17
072002705	M. Angelico	Office Associate II		\$24,635.70
072002706	L. Schinhofen	Office Associate II		\$24,640.32
			Subtotal	\$98,362.76
			Total Personnel	\$247,874.35
Travel				
1 vehicle ^B			1 car * \$377.34/mo * 12 mo	\$4,528.08
Mileage fee			1 car * 1,150 mi per mo * \$.1533/mi * 12 mo	\$2,115.54
2 Overnight stays ^C			2* \$150/night	\$300.00
Per diem (includes extended days)			(2 overnights @ \$65/day & 5 extended days @ \$24/day)	\$250.00
			Total Travel	\$7,193.62
Supplies				
Year labels			1,000 labels (500/box * 2 boxes * \$15.00/box)	\$30.00
Folder labels			1,000 labels (500/box * 12 boxes * \$24.50/box)	\$49.00
Other				
Telecommunication charges ^D			5 phones * \$50/mo * 12 mo	\$3,000.00
			Total Supplies	\$3,079.00
			Subtotal	\$10,272.62
			Total Direct Costs	\$258,146.97
			Indirect Costs (30%)	\$77,444.09
			Total Award to DMR	\$335,591.06
A: Cost includes salary and benefits, which are dictated by contract with State of Maine and are non-negotiable.				
B: All state agencies must rent vehicles through state's Central Fleet Agency which is non-negotiable. Vehicle costs include the following services and costs: maintenance, repairs, insurance, and gasoline.				
C: DMR staff meet with and train harvesters how to electronically report to DMR and/or NMFS.				
D: One cell phone for each of the Scientist II, Scientist I (2) and Specialist II (2) working on the project.				

Partner Contribution For ACCSP Purposes		
J. Waller	072001271 Scientist IV (7% time)	\$9,484
R. Watts	072002431 Scientist III (25% time)	\$33,317
L. White, Jr	072002453 Scientist II (25% time)	\$31,627
E. Layland	072002398 Scientist I (25% time)	\$17,762
Vacant	072002540 Office Associate I (85% time)	\$39,796
C. Young	072002657 Office Associate I (50% time)	\$29,513
D. Young	072002647 Office Associate II (25% time)	\$20,719
		\$182,218

Text in bold indicate where proposal hit on ranking criteria.

Budget Narrative for FY2024 proposal:

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: The positions in this proposal (2 Marine Resource Specialist II and 2 Office Associate II). These positions are funded part-time (90%) by this award and are a Department of Marine Resources' employee. Salary and benefits for this employee are dictated by contract with the State of Maine and are non-negotiable. Benefits include retirement benefits, FICA, health insurance, dental insurance, workers compensation and life insurance. The benefits are determined by a formula the state uses which is variable dependent upon the position classification, the pay grade of the employee (e.g. the number of years the person has been employed by the State of Maine) and the type of coverage the employee selects.

Travel: The Scientists and Specialists are the employees who will be travelling. The travel is for holding electronic harvester reporting workshops, visiting harvesters to install reporting software, training harvester staff how to electronically report or troubleshooting reporting problems. Staff provide harvesters with one-on-one training first via phone but then in person if individuals need further assistance with the reporting system and help troubleshoot electronic reporting problems. Travel occurs throughout the coast of Maine, although trips to the interior are unusual unless the harvester can only meet inland. These harvesters must be trained in the use of electronic reporting and in some cases a group informational setting will not be enough for some to learn how to report their landings information.

The monthly fee for the vehicle is dictated by contract with the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency; the fee is based on the type of vehicle leased, and the mileage fee is based on how many miles the car was used the previous year. Because of this, the vehicle fees between projects may differ. This project has one Nissan Rogue SUV which is a state-owned vehicle that MEDMR leases from the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency.

Occasional extended day travel or overnight stays are necessary. If multiple harvester appointments to these remote areas are made for the same day, or appointments are made for consecutive days, overnight travel may be necessary. The rates were calculated through the GSA website for posted rates.

Supplies: Filing supplies are needed each year but as more harvesters eventually shift to electronic reporting the need for filing supplies will decrease. The filing supplies include labels (year and name) and protective coatings for these labels. These are the same folders used for all MEDMR's harvester reports and are purchased from Allied Systems Products AAK Filing system.

Other: Cell phones for the Specialists and the Scientists are necessary for communication and safety when travelling to harvester meeting locations. Staff often need to call NMFS or the programmer when installing software or troubleshooting reporting issues in the field.

Indirect costs: The Department of Marine Resources has an indirect cost rate of 32.83%; however, our commissioner has authorized this proposal to use the lower rate of 30%. See Attachment 3 for the Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement. These indirect funds are a necessity to help defray and offset the administrative costs associated with the ASMFC's directive to increase MEDMR's lobster reporting from its current rate to 100%. These indirect monies are utilized to help cover the administrative costs not covered directly by this grant proposal and help offset any burden MEDMR assumes by fulfilling their ASMFC reporting requirements.

Cost Summary: FY22 Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine				
5/1/2022 - 4/30/2023				
Personnel ^A		Description		Cost
2 Marine Resource Specialist II (to be created)		full time position for 12 months	2 @ \$40,816	\$81,632.00
2 Office Associate II (to be created)		full time position for 12 months	2 @ \$34,361.60	\$68,723.20
			Subtotal	\$150,355.20
Fringe Benefits ^A				
2 Marine Resource Specialist II (to be created)		Includes health, dental, workers comp, FICA, life	2 @ \$24,490	\$48,980.00
2 Office Associate II (to be created)		insurance and retirement	2 @ \$20,617	\$41,234.00
			Subtotal	\$90,214.00
			Total Personnel	\$240,569.20
Travel				
1 vehicle ^B		1 car * \$377.34/mo * 12 mo		\$4,528.08
Mileage fee		1 car * 1,150 mi per mo * \$.1533/mi * 12 mo		\$2,115.54
Toll allowance		Estimated		\$200.00
5 Overnight stays ^C		4* \$150/night		\$600.00
Per diem (includes extended days)		(2 overnights @ \$65/day & 5 extended days @ \$24/day)		\$250.00
			Total Travel	\$7,693.62
Supplies				
Year labels		1,000 labels (500/box * 2 boxes * \$15.00/box)		\$30.00
Folder labels		1,000 labels (500/box * 12 boxes * \$24.50/box)		\$49.00
AAK Color Coded Folders ^D		1,000 folders (50/box * 120 boxes * \$23/box)		\$460.00
Other				
Printing and binding of harvester report forms		500 logbooks * \$2.50 per logbook		\$1,250.00
Postage for logbooks		Mail 500 logbooks * \$5.00 per logbook		\$2,500.00
Postage for info packets and letters		(\$0.55*1000 compliance letters)		\$550.00
Maine LEEDS enhancement programming				\$2,100.00
Telecommunication charges ^E		5 phones * \$50/mo * 12 mo		\$3,000.00
			Total Supplies	\$9,939.00
			Subtotal	\$17,632.62
Total Direct Costs				\$258,201.82
Indirect Costs (30%)				\$77,460.55
Total Award to DMR				\$335,662.37

A: Cost includes salary and benefits, which are dictated by contract with State of Maine and are non-negotiable.

B: All state agencies must rent vehicles through state's Central Fleet Agency which is non-negotiable. Vehicle costs include the following services and costs: maintenance, repairs, insurance, and gasoline.

C: DMR staff meet with and train harvesters how to electronically report to DMR and/or NMFS.

D: AAK Color Coded Folders are folders MEDMR uses for all harvester reporting, they are reusable but will need 2 years supply eventually.

E: One cell phone for each of the Scientist II, Scientist I (2) and Specialist II (2) working on the project.

Partner Contribution For ACCSP Purposes

Scientist IV (7% time)	\$9,116
Scientist III (25% time)	\$25,919
Scientist II (25% time)	\$28,742
Specialist II (25% time)	\$19,788
Office Associate I (85% time)	\$66,322
Office Associate I (50% time)	\$39,013
Office Associate II (25%)	\$19,604
	\$208,504

Budget Narrative for FY2022 proposal:

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: The new positions proposed in this proposal (2 Marine Resource Specialist II and 2 Office Associate II). These positions are funded full-time (100%) by this award and are a Department of Marine Resources' employees. Salary and benefits for this employee are dictated by contract with the State of Maine and are non-negotiable. Benefits include retirement benefits, FICA, health insurance, dental insurance, workers compensation and life insurance. The benefits are determined by a formula the state uses which is variable dependent upon the position classification, the pay grade of the employee (e.g. the number of years the person has been employed by the State of Maine) and the type of coverage the employee selects.

Travel: The Scientists and Specialists are the employees who will be travelling. The travel is for holding electronic harvester reporting workshops, visiting harvesters to install reporting software, training harvester staff how to electronically report or troubleshooting reporting problems. Staff provide harvesters with one-on-one training first via phone but then in person if individuals need further assistance with the reporting system and help troubleshoot electronic reporting problems. Travel occurs throughout the coast of Maine, although trips to the interior are unusual unless the harvester can only meet inland. These harvesters must be trained in the use of electronic reporting and in some cases a group informational setting will not be enough for some to learn how to report their landings information.

The monthly fee for the vehicle is dictated by contract with the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency; the fee is based on the type of vehicle leased, and the mileage fee is based on how many miles the car was used the previous year. Because of this, the vehicle fees between projects may differ. This project has one Nissan Rogue SUV which is a state-owned vehicle that MEDMR leases from the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency.

Occasional extended day travel or overnight stays are necessary. If multiple harvester appointments to these remote areas are made for the same day, or appointments are made for consecutive days, overnight travel may be necessary. The rates were calculated through the GSA website for posted rates.

Supplies: Filing supplies are needed each year but as more harvesters eventually shift to electronic reporting the need for filing supplies will decrease. The filing supplies include AAK folders used to store individuals log sheets, labels (year and name) and protective coatings for these labels. These are the same folders used for all MEDMR's harvester reports and are purchased from Allied Systems Products AAK Filing system.

Other: The MEDMR will try and push electronic reporting as much as possible and will require waivers to report on paper for lobster reporting. To help cut down on costs, MEDMR will try and have harvesters print their own paper forms when necessary from the MEDMR website. We do accept forms via email, fax or U.S. mail. The bound logbook includes a carbon copy that harvesters use for their records, or to resend should the original get lost in the mail. Many harvesters like this carbon copy feature, which is one of the main reasons why we choose to continue to purchase these bound logbooks. Cell phones for the Specialists and the Scientists are necessary for communication and safety when on travel to harvester meeting locations. Staff often need to call NMFS or the programmer when installing software or troubleshooting reporting issues in the field. The line for Maine LEEDS enhancement programming is to cover any programmatic cost associated with enhancements identified by MEDMR's once the new 100% reporting requirement is put in place. MEDMR anticipates that after the compliance enhancement is in place, other features that will be a large time saver for MEDMR will be identified.

Indirect costs: The Department of Marine Resources has an indirect cost rate of 34.3%; however, our commissioner has authorized this proposal to use the lower rate of 30%. See Attachment 3 for the Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement. These indirect funds are a necessity to help defray and offset the administrative costs associated with the ASMFC's directive to increase MEDMR's lobster reporting from its current rate to 100%. These indirect monies are utilized to help cover the administrative costs not covered directly by this grant proposal and help offset any burden MEDMR assumes by fulfilling their ASMFC reporting requirements.

Cost Summary: FY21 Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine (Proposal Withdrawn at Operations Fall Meeting)				
5/1/2021 - 4/30/2022				
Personnel ^A		Description		Cost
2 Marine Resource Specialist II (to be created)		full time position for 12 months	2 @ \$37,766	\$75,532.00
1 Office Associate II (Alice Mayberry)		full time position for 12 months	1 @ \$45,553.89	\$45,553.89
1 Office Associate II (to be created)		full time position for 12 months	1 @ \$33,289	\$33,289.00
			Subtotal	\$154,374.89
Fringe Benefits ^A				
2 Marine Resource Specialist II (to be created)		Includes health, dental, workers comp, FICA, life insurance and retirement	2 @ \$21,652	\$43,304.00
1 Office Associate II (Alice Mayberry)			1 @ \$26,116.81	\$26,116.81
1 Office Associate II (to be created)			1 @ \$19,085	\$19,085.00
			Subtotal	\$88,505.81
			Total Personnel	\$242,880.70
Travel				
1 vehicle ^B		1 car * \$377.34/mo * 12 mo		\$4,528.08
Mileage fee		1 car * 1,150 mi per mo * \$.1533/mi * 12 mo		\$2,115.54
Toll allowance		Estimated		\$200.00
5 Overnight stays ^C		6* \$150/night		\$900.00
Per diem (includes extended days)		(6 overnights @ \$65/day & 36 extended days @ \$24/day)		\$1,254.00
			Total Travel	\$8,997.62
Supplies				
Year labels		1,000 labels (500/box * 2 boxes * \$13.95/box)		\$27.90
Folder labels		1,000 labels (500/box * 12 boxes * \$24.50/box)		\$49.00
AAK Color Coded Folders ^D		1,000 folders (50/box * 120 boxes * \$23/box)		\$460.00
Other				
Printing and binding of harvester report forms		1000 logbooks * \$2.50 per logbook		\$2,500.00
Postage for logbooks		Mail 1000 logbooks * \$5.00 per logbook		\$5,000.00
Postage for info packets and letters		(\$0.55*3250 compliance letters)		\$1,787.50
Maine LEEDS enhancement programming				\$28,000.00
Telecommunication charges ^E		5 phones * \$40/mo * 12 mo		\$2,400.00
			Total Supplies	\$40,224.40
			Subtotal	\$49,222.02
Total Direct Costs				\$292,102.72
Indirect Costs (15%)				\$43,815.41
Total Award to DMR				\$335,918.13
A: Cost includes salary and benefits, which are dictated by contract with State of Maine and are non-negotiable.				
B: All state agencies must rent vehicles through state's Central Fleet Agency which is non-negotiable. Vehicle costs include the following services and costs: maintenance, repairs, insurance, and gasoline.				
C: DMR staff meet with and train harvesters how to electronically report to DMR and/or NMFS.				
D: AAK Color Coded Folders are folders MEDMR uses for all harvester reporting, they are reusable but will need 2 years supply eventually.				
E: One cell phone for each of the Scientist II, Scientist I (2) and Specialist II (2) working on the project.				

Partner Contribution For ACCSP Purposes

Scientist IV (7% time)	\$9,116
Scientist III (25% time)	\$25,919
Scientist II (25% time)	\$28,742
Specialist II (25% time)	\$19,788
Office Associate I (85% time)	\$66,322
Office Associate I (50% time)	\$39,013
Office Associate II (25%)	\$19,604
Mobile Harvester Reporting App Development	\$32,050
	\$240,554

Budget Narrative for FY2021 proposal (Proposal withdrawn at Operations Committee Meeting 9/2020:

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: The new positions proposed in this proposal (2 Marine Resource Specialist II and 1 Office Associate II) and current Office Associate II (currently filled by Alice Mayberry). These positions are funded full-time (100%) by this award and are a Department of Marine Resources' employees. Salary and benefits for this employee are dictated by contract with the State of Maine and are non-negotiable. Benefits include retirement benefits, FICA, health insurance, dental insurance, workers compensation and life insurance. The benefits are determined by a formula the state uses which is variable dependent upon the position classification, the pay grade of the employee (e.g. the number of years the person has been employed by the State of Maine) and the type of coverage the employee selects.

Travel: The Scientists and Specialists are the employees who will be travelling. The travel is for holding electronic harvester reporting workshops, visiting harvesters to install reporting software, training harvester staff how to electronically report or troubleshooting reporting problems. Staff provide harvesters with one-on-one training first via phone but then in person if individuals need further assistance with the reporting system and help troubleshoot electronic reporting problems. Travel occurs throughout the coast of Maine, although trips to the interior are unusual unless the harvester can only meet inland. These harvesters must be trained in the use of electronic reporting and in some cases a group informational setting will not be enough for some to learn how to report their landings information.

The monthly fee for the vehicle is dictated by contract with the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency; the fee is based on the type of vehicle leased, and the mileage fee is based on how many miles the car was used the previous year. Because of this, the vehicle fees between projects may differ. This project has one Nissan Rogue SUV which is a state-owned vehicle that MEDMR leases from the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency.

Occasional extended day travel or overnight stays are necessary. If multiple harvester appointments to these remote areas are made for the same day, or appointments are made for consecutive days, overnight travel may be necessary. The rates were calculated through the GSA website for posted rates.

Supplies: Filing supplies are needed each year but as more harvesters eventually shift to electronic reporting the need for filing supplies will decrease. The filing supplies include AAK folders used to store individuals log sheets, labels (year and name) and protective coatings for these labels. These are the same folders used for all MEDMR's harvester reports and are purchased from Allied Systems Products AAK Filing system.

Other: The MEDMR will try and push electronic reporting as much as possible and will require waivers to report on paper for lobster reporting. To help cut down on costs, MEDMR will try and have harvesters print their own paper forms when necessary from the MEDMR website. We do accept forms via email, fax or U.S. mail. The bound logbook includes a carbon copy that harvesters use for their records, or to resend should the original get lost in the mail. Many harvesters like this carbon copy feature, which is one of the main reasons why we choose to continue to purchase these bound logbooks. Cell phones for the Specialists and the Scientists are necessary for communication and safety when on travel to harvester meeting locations. Staff often need to call NMFS or the programmer when installing software or troubleshooting reporting issues in the field. The line for Maine LEEDS enhancement programming is to cover any programmatic cost associated with enhancements identified by MEDMR's once the new 100% reporting requirement is put in place. MEDMR anticipates that after the compliance enhancement is in place, other features that will be a large time saver for MEDMR will be identified.

Indirect costs: The Department of Marine Resources has an indirect cost rate of 34.3%; however, our commissioner has authorized this proposal to use the lower rate of 15%. See Attachment 3 for the Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement. These indirect funds are a necessity to help defray and offset the administrative costs associated with the ASMFC's directive to increase MEDMR's lobster reporting from its current rate to 100%. These indirect monies are utilized to help cover the administrative costs not covered directly by this grant proposal and help offset any burden MEDMR assumes by fulfilling their ASMFC reporting requirements.

Cost Summary: FY20 Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine				
3/1/2020 - 2/28/2021				
Personnel ^A		Description		Cost
	1 Marine Resource Scientist II (to be created)	full time position for 12 months	1 @ \$50,079	\$50,079
	2 Marine Resource Scientist I (to be created)	full time position for 12 months	2 @ \$45,340	\$90,680
	2 Marine Resource Specialist II (to be created)	full time position for 12 months	2 @ \$37,849	\$75,698
	2 Office Specialist I Supervisory (to be created)	full time position for 12 months	2 @ \$36,234	\$72,468
	1 Office Specialist I (to be created)	full time position for 12 months	1 @ \$34,424	\$34,424
	1 Office Associate II (to be created)	full time position for 12 months	1 @ \$31,741	\$31,741
			Subtotal	\$355,090
Fringe Benefits ^A				
	1 Marine Resource Scientist II (to be created)	Includes health, dental, workers comp, FICA, life insurance and retirement		\$32,551
	2 Marine Resource Scientist I (to be created)			\$58,942
	2 Marine Resource Specialist II (to be created)			\$49,204
	2 Office Specialist I Supervisory (to be created)			\$47,104
	1 Office Specialist I (to be created)			\$22,376
	1 Office Associate II (to be created)			\$20,632
			Subtotal	\$230,809
			Total Personnel	\$585,899
Travel				
	1 vehicle ^B	1 car * \$188.67/mo * 12 mo		\$2,264
	Mileage fee	1 car * 1,000 mi per mo * \$.1533/mi * 12 mo		\$1,840
	Toll allowance	Estimated		\$100
	5 Overnight stays ^C	5* \$150/night		\$750
	Per diem (includes extended days)	(5 overnights + 5 extended days) * \$65/day		\$650
			Total Travel	\$5,604
Supplies				
	Filing Supplies	folders, folder labels, year labels		\$500
Other				
	Printing and binding of harvester report forms	1000 logbooks * \$2.50 per logbook		\$2,500
	Postage for logbooks	Mail 1000 logbooks * \$4.75 per logbook		\$2,375
	Postage for info packets and letters	(\$0.50*3250 compliance letters)		\$1,625
	Software (Adobe DC Professional)	8 copies at \$329.65/copy		\$2,637
	Technology (equipment, licenses)			\$500
	Enhancements to Maine LEEDS system	Automate compliance for electronic reporting		\$40,000
	Telecommunication charges ^D	5 phones * \$40/mo * 12 mo		\$2,400
			Total Supplies	\$52,537
			Subtotal	\$58,141
	Total Direct Costs			\$644,039
	Indirect Costs (30%)			\$193,212
	Total Award to DMR			\$837,251

A: Cost includes salary and benefits, which are dictated by contract with State of Maine and are non-negotiable.

B: All state agencies must rent vehicles through state's Central Fleet Agency which is non-negotiable. Vehicle costs include the following services and costs: maintenance, repairs, insurance, and gasoline.

C: DMR staff meet with and train harvesters how to electronically report to DMR and/or NMFS.

D: One cell phone for each of the two specialists, one each for the two scientists and one scientist II working on the project.

Partner Contribution For ACCSP Purposes

Scientist IV (7% time)	\$9,115
Scientist III (25% time)	\$24,542
Scientist II (25% time)	\$26,854
Specialist II (25% time)	\$18,710
Office Associate I (85% time)	\$47,568
Office Associate I (50% time)	\$37,191
Office Associate II (50%)	\$32,813
Office Associate II (15%)	\$10,531
Office Associate II (15%)	\$9,750
Office Associate II (15%)	\$8,513
Office Associate II (100%)	\$65,626
<u>Mobile Harvester Reporting App Development</u>	<u>\$150,000</u>

\$441,211

Budget Narrative for FY2020 proposal:

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: The new positions proposed in this proposal (1 Marine Resource Scientist II, 2 Marine Resource Scientist I, 2 Marine Resource Specialist II, 2 Office Specialist I Supervisory, 1 Office Specialist I and 1 Office Associate II). These positions are funded full-time (100%) by this award and are a Department of Marine Resources' employees. Salary and benefits for this employee are dictated by contract with the State of Maine and are non-negotiable. Benefits include retirement benefits, FICA, health insurance, dental insurance, workers compensation and life insurance. The benefits are determined by a formula the state uses which is variable dependent upon the position classification, the pay grade of the employee (e.g. the number of years the person has been employed by the State of Maine) and the type of coverage the employee selects.

Travel: The Scientists and Specialists are the employees who will be travelling. The travel is for holding electronic harvester reporting workshops, visiting harvesters to install reporting software, training harvester staff how to electronically report or troubleshooting reporting problems. Staff provide harvesters with one-on-one training first via phone but then in person if individuals need further assistance with the reporting system and help troubleshoot electronic reporting problems. Travel occurs throughout the coast of Maine, although trips to the interior are unusual unless the harvester can only meet inland. These harvesters must be trained in the use of electronic reporting and in some cases a group informational setting will not be enough for some to learn how to report their landings information.

The monthly fee for the vehicle is dictated by contract with the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency; the fee is based on the type of vehicle leased, and the mileage fee is based on how many miles the car was used the previous year. Because of this, the vehicle fees between projects may differ. This project has one Nissan Rogue SUV which is a state-owned vehicle that MEDMR leases from the State of Maine Central Fleet Agency.

Occasional extended day travel or overnight stays are necessary. If multiple harvester appointments to these remote areas are made for the same day, or appointments are made for consecutive days, overnight travel may be necessary. The rates were calculated through the GSA website for posted rates.

Supplies: Filing supplies are needed each year but as more harvesters eventually shift to electronic reporting the need for filing supplies will decrease. The filing supplies include folders used to store individuals log sheets, labels (year and name) and protective coatings for these labels.

Other: The MEDMR will try and push electronic reporting as much as possible and will require waivers to report on

paper for lobster reporting. To help cut down on costs, MEDMR will try and have harvesters print their own paper forms when necessary from the MEDMR website. We do accept forms via email, fax or U.S. mail. The bound logbook includes a carbon copy that harvesters use for their records, or to resend should the original get lost in the mail. Many harvesters like this carbon copy feature, which is one of the main reasons why we choose to continue to purchase these bound logbooks. Cell phones for the Specialists and the Scientists are necessary for communication and safety when on travel to harvester meeting locations. Staff often need to call NMFS or the programmer when installing software or troubleshooting reporting issues in the field. All Landings Program staff use Adobe DC Pro to enter or audit paper reports or PDF's that have been received electronically. The cost for this program has been set by our OIT Department. The line for Maine LEEDS enhancement is the programmatic cost to streamline MEDMR's compliance with harvester data submitted to SAFIS. MEDMR will need to create a SQL Server table to pull any data submitted by a harvester from the ACCSP Warehouse with Maine permits and flip their Maine LEEDS compliance record to submitted. This feature will be a large time saver for MEDMR and will save at least one full-time staff position.

Indirect costs: The Department of Marine Resources has an indirect cost rate of 30%. See Attachment 3 for the Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement. These indirect funds are a necessity to help defray and offset the administrative costs associated with the ASMFC's directive to increase MEDMR's lobster reporting from its current rate to 100%. The anticipated increase to ~300,000 new harvester records and overall ~700,000 records (dealer and harvester) supplied to ACCSP's Data Warehouse will account for roughly 42% of all reports stored in the Data Warehouse. The increase in harvester reports received by MEDMR will be roughly 538%. These indirect monies are utilized to help cover the administrative costs not covered directly by this grant proposal and help offset any burden MEDMR assumes by fulfilling their ASMFC reporting requirements.

Attachment 1. Project History

Fund Year	Title	Cost	Extension through	Actual dates funding covered	Results
2020	FY20- Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine	\$336,120	Apr-22	May 2020 – Apr 2021	Start preparing for MEDMR to move from mandatory 10% lobster harvester reporting to 100% lobster. Work on enhancement to Maine LEEDS program and continue work on app development.
2021	FY21- Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine	\$335,918.13 (withdrawn)		May 2021 – Apr 2022	Continue preparations for MEDMR to move from mandatory 10% lobster harvester reporting to 100% lobster. Finalize enhancement to Maine LEEDS program, outreach with industry and rolling out MEDMR's offline harvester application built by Bluefin Data LLC.
2022	FY22- Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine	\$335,662		May 2022 – Apr 2023	Final preparations before 100% reporting requirement is implemented in January 2023. Continue with outreach, audits and implementing reporting requirements.
2023	FY23- Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine	No Proposal Submitted		May 2023 – Apr 2024	100% reporting requirement implemented in January 2023. Continue with outreach, audits and implementing reporting requirements. Utilized funds from FY20 and FY22 before asking for more funds.
2024	FY24- Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine	\$335,591	Funds were never dispersed and unable to be rolled over by NOAA	May 2024 – Apr 2025	Continue with 100% reporting requirement. Assist with GARFO harvesters once NOAA implements 100% lobster reporting in April 2024. Continue with outreach, audits and implementing reporting requirements.
2025	FY25- Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine	\$335,591		May 2025 – Apr 2026	Continue with 100% reporting requirement. Continue with outreach, audits and implementing reporting requirements.
2026	FY26- Managing 100% Lobster Harvester Reporting in Maine	\$223,785		May 2026 – Apr 2027	Continue with 100% reporting requirement. Continue with outreach, audits and implementing reporting requirements.

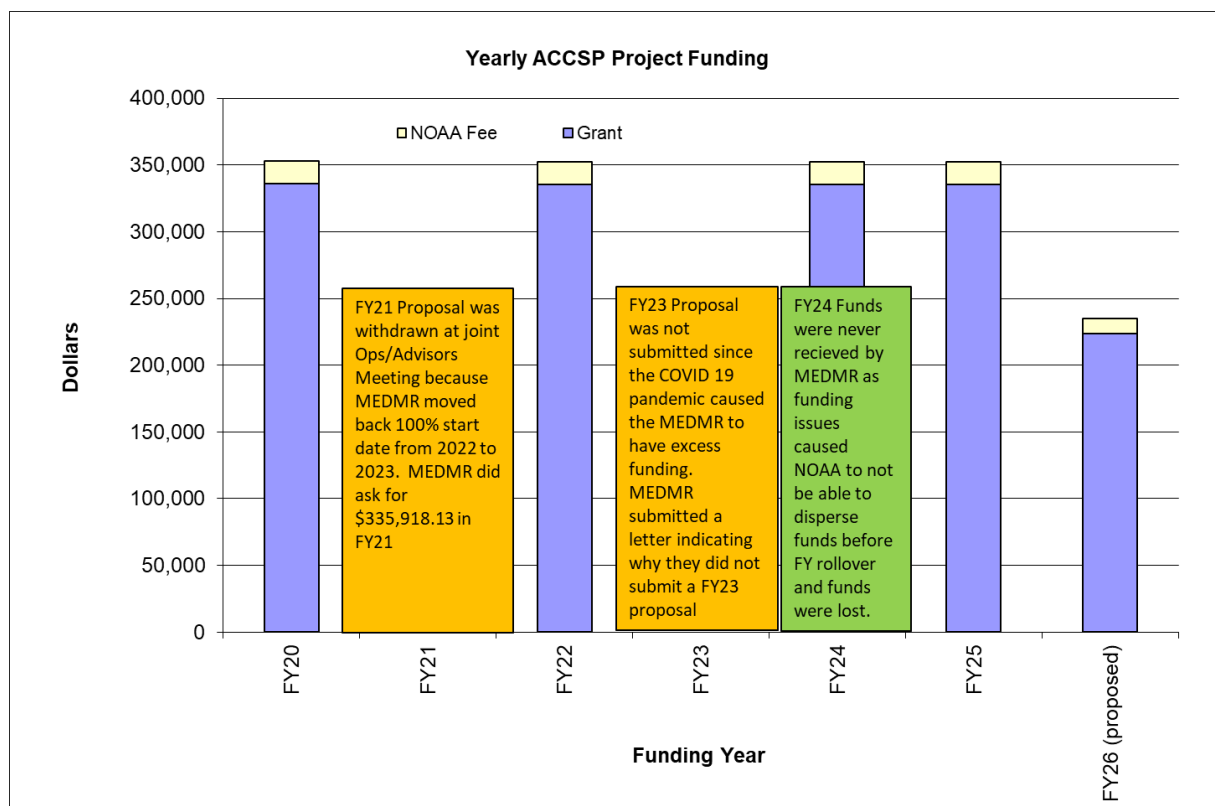


Figure 4. Project Funding History

Text in bold indicate where proposal hit on ranking criteria.

Attachment 2: Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement and Letter of Acknowledgement

U.S. Department of Commerce

Office of Acquisition Management – Grants Management Division
1401 Constitution Ave., NW, HCHB Rm 6412
Washington, DC 20230, Attn: Indirect Cost Program

CERTIFICATE OF INDIRECT COSTS

This is to certify that I have reviewed the indirect cost rate proposal prepared and maintained herewith and to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (1) All costs included in this proposal dated APRIL 24, 2025 to establish indirect cost billing rates for July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 are allowable in accordance with the requirements of the federal awards to which they apply and 2 CFR Part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards". This proposal does not include any costs which are unallowable as identified in the applicable federal cost principles. For example, advertising contributions and donations, bad debts, entertainment costs or fines and penalties.
- (2) All costs included in this proposal are properly allocable to federal awards on the basis of a beneficial or causal relationship between the expenses incurred and the agreements to which they are allocated in accordance with applicable requirements. Further, the same costs that have been treated as indirect costs have not been claimed as direct costs. Similar types of costs have been accounted for consistently and the Federal Government will be notified of any accounting changes that could affect the rate.
- (3) The indirect cost rate calculated within the proposal is **26.52%** which was calculated using an indirect cost rate base type of Modified Total Direct Costs. The calculations were based on actual costs from fiscal year July 1, 2023 thru June 30, 2024 to obtain a federal indirect cost billing rate for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025.

Subject to the provisions of the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1986, (31 USC 3801 et seq.), the False Claims Act (18 USC 287 and 31 USC 3729); and the False Statement Act (18 USC 1001), I declare to the best of my knowledge that the foregoing is true and correct.

Organization Name: State of Maine, Department of Marine Resources

CFO Signature: Gilbert M. Bilodeau Date: 04/24/2025
Gilbert M. Bilodeau (Apr 24, 2025 15:51 EDT)

Name/Title Authorized Official: Gilbert M. Bilodeau, Director, Natural Res Ser Ctr

Dept Head Signature: Carl Wilson Date: _____
Carl Wilson (Apr 24, 2025 16:04 EDT)

Name/Title Authorized Official: Carl Wilson, Commissioner

Attachment 3: Authority to Suspension Licenses for Delinquent Reporters

An Act to Improve the Quality of the Data Used in the Management of Maine's Fisheries

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §6301, sub-§6 is enacted to read:

6. Ownership identified. If a license issued under chapter 625 is issued to a firm, corporation or partnership, the individual who owns the highest percentage of that firm, corporation or partnership must be identified on the license application. When 2 or more individuals own in equal proportion the highest percentages of a firm, corporation or partnership, each of those owners must be identified.

Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §6412 is enacted to read:

§ 6412. Suspension of license or certificate for failure to comply with reporting requirements

1. Authority to suspend. The commissioner, in accordance with this section, may suspend a license or certificate issued under this Part if the holder of the license or certificate fails to comply with reporting requirements established by rule pursuant to section 6173. A license or certificate suspended under this section remains suspended until the suspension is rescinded by the commissioner. The commissioner shall rescind a suspension when:

A. The commissioner determines and provides notice to the holder of the suspended license or certificate that the holder has come into compliance with the reporting requirements established by rule pursuant to section 6173; and

B. The holder pays to the department a \$25 administrative fee.

When a suspension is rescinded, the license or certificate is reinstated. Until the suspension is rescinded, the holder of the suspended license or certificate is not eligible to hold, apply for or obtain that license or certificate.

2. Process for suspension for failing to comply with weekly reporting. If the commissioner determines that a person who holds a license or certificate under this Part has failed to comply with a weekly reporting requirement established by rule pursuant to section 6173, the commissioner shall notify the person at the telephone number provided on the application for the license or certificate and by e-mail if an e-mail address is provided on the application. If the license or certificate holder has not complied with the reporting requirements within 2 days after the commissioner has provided the notice, the commissioner shall mail a notice of suspension to the license or certificate holder by certified mail or the notice must be served in hand. The notice must:

A. Describe the information that the license or certificate holder is required to provide pursuant to this Part that the department has not received; and

B. State that, unless all the information described in paragraph A is provided to the department or the license or certificate holder requests a hearing, the license or certificate will be suspended in 3 business days after the license or certificate holder's receipt of the notice.

If the license or certificate holder has not complied with the reporting requirements or requested a hearing within 3 business days after receipt of the notice, the commissioner shall suspend the license or certificate.

3. Process for suspension for failing to comply with monthly reporting. If the commissioner determines that a person who holds a license or certificate under this Part has failed to comply with a monthly reporting requirement established by rule pursuant to section 6173, the commissioner shall notify the person at the telephone number provided on the application for the license or certificate and by e-mail if an e-mail address is provided on the application. If the license or certificate holder has not complied with the reporting requirements within 45 days after the commissioner has provided the notice, the commissioner shall mail a notice of suspension to the license or certificate holder by certified mail or the notice must be served in hand. The notice must:

A. Describe the information that the license or certificate holder is required to provide pursuant to this Part that the department has not received; and

B. State that, unless all the information described in paragraph A is provided to the department or the license or certificate holder requests a hearing, the license or certificate will be suspended in 3 business days after the license or certificate holder's receipt of the notice.

If the license or certificate holder has not complied with the reporting requirements or requested a hearing within 3 business days after receipt of the notice, the commissioner shall suspend the license or certificate.

4. Hearing. A license or certificate holder receiving a written notice of suspension pursuant to this section may request a hearing on the suspension by contacting the department within 3 business days of receipt of the notice. If a hearing is requested, the suspension is stayed until a decision is issued following the hearing. The hearing must be held within 3 business days of the request, unless another time is agreed to by both the department and the license or certificate holder. The hearing must be conducted in the Augusta area. The hearing must be held in accordance with:

A. Title 5, section 9057, regarding evidence, except the issues are limited to whether the license or certificate holder has complied with reporting requirements established by rule pursuant to section 6173;

B. Title 5, section 9058, regarding notice;

C. Title 5, section 9059, regarding records;

D. Title 5, section 9061, regarding decisions, except the deadline for making a decision is one business day after completion of the hearing; and

E. Title 5, section 9062, subsections 3 and 4, regarding a presiding officer's duties and reporting requirements, except that notwithstanding Title 5, section 9062, subsection 1, the presiding officer must be the commissioner or the commissioner's designee.

Summary of Proposal for ACCSP Ranking

Proposal Type: Maintenance Proposal

Primary Program Priority and Percentage of Effort to ACCSP modules:

Catch and Effort (8 points): 100% of licensed lobster (and 13 other fisheries) must report trip level information. Most of these reports will be electronic.

Data Delivery Plan (2 Points): All electronic data through the MEDMR offline application will be submitted into SAFIS daily. All data entered into MEDMR's MARVIN database and will be sent to the ACCSP Data Warehouse on at least a bi-annual basis after all data have been thoroughly audited.

Project Quality Factors:

Regional Impact (5 Points): all partners will benefit, as all the data collected will be uploaded to ACCSP. Regional management organizations, such as ASMFC, will benefit from the trip level information from Maine. Partners may also benefit from the technologies/procedures tested in the new offline MEDMR mobile application. MEDMR is currently contracted with Bluefin Data LLC to build a mobile app for harvesters to use to meet the 100% lobster reporting requirement mandated in ASMFC Addendum XXVI. MEDMR is currently paying for all start-up costs associated with this project and shares findings with ACCSP. Partners will be able to utilize (the developer might charge a support fee) this application once they have built if they choose.

Funding transition plan (4 Points): MEDMR will continue to look for other funding sources; however, with the timeline of 100% lobster reporting being pushed forward from the date set in Addendum XXVI, MEDMR will need help to achieve the requirements coming in the next few years. MEDMR is funding the development of an offline mobile harvester reporting application that will meet MEDMR and GARFO reporting requirements. MEDMR will pay for the ongoing monthly maintenance fee associated with this program. MEDMR has already secured an additional one-time \$600K in additional federal funding and a one-time 2 million ARPA fund for this project. Currently, the MEDMR does not have any plans to require electronic reporting for all fisheries but intends on pushing electronic reporting. Geographical restrictions prevent all harvesters from having reliable high-speed internet access at this time.

In-kind Contribution (3 Points): the partner contribution is listed on page 16. MEDMR's in-kind contribution is approximately 50%.

Improvement in Data Quality/Timeliness (4 Points): MEDMR can audit data at a more detailed level, including checking harvester reported data against dealer reported data. MEDMR encourages reporting timeliness through outreach with harvesters and is working with Marine Patrol to ensure industry understands the importance of submitting accurate and timely information. The Maine State Legislature also passed law that authorizes license suspensions for those who fail to report on time which has improved the timeliness and quality of the data submitted for the fisheries that utilize this law.

Potential secondary module as a by-product (in program priority order) (3 points): The offline application that MEDMR envisions will eventually link up with certain dealer reports and accept tracker data which will revolutionize the way spatial data could be used to determine many effort fields and dealer, and harvester reports are matched up.

This project has also been used to help with socio-economic programs such as disaster relief from flooding in the winter of 2024. Having access to landings data has proven to be useful in town/working waterfront planning.

Impact on Stock Assessment (3 Points): Regional management organizations which carry out stock assessments will benefit from the detailed landings data reported from Maine. This information is used in stock assessments for many species that are managed by regional agencies.

Impact on Management (3 Points): MEDMR and Federal Fisheries Managers rely on these data daily to make decisions about quota monitored fisheries. Lobster data collected through this project are used to inform State and Federal regulatory authorities about where fishing activity and the effort of fishing activities to make management decisions.

Properly Prepared (1 Points): MEDMR followed ACCSP guidelines and pertinent documents when preparing this proposal.

Merit (3 points): This proposal allows MEDMR to comply with mandatory ASMFC requirements. The MEDMR currently provides more data to the data warehouse than any other state and accounts for over 30% of all records landed in the Data Warehouse. MEDMR are always looking for ways to collect data in a timely and efficient manner.

Summary of Proposal for ACCSP Ranking (Abridged Ranking Process)

Achieved Goals: MEDMR did not receive FY20 funding for this grant from NOAA until June 8, 2020. MEDMR also pulled back our FY21 and FY23 proposals with the understanding that the FY22 would be treated as a maintenance proposal since our new data to require 100% lobster reporting shifted from January 1, 2022 to January 1, 2023. MEDMR has already completed the Maine LEEDS enhancement to automate electronic reporting compliance. The offline harvester application (VESL) was rolled out to industry members in 2021. The VESL software was GARFO approved in 2021 and has been submitting data directly to SAFIS since.

Data Delivery Plan (2 Points): All electronic data through the MEDMR offline application will be submitted into SAFIS daily. All data entered into MEDMR's MARVIN database and will be sent to the ACCSP Data Warehouse on at least a bi-annual basis after all data have been thoroughly audited.

Level of Funding (1 Point): In FY20 MEDMR asked for \$837,251 and was awarded \$336,162. In FY22 MEDMR asked for and received \$335,591.06. In FY25 MEDMR is asking for \$335,280.41.

Properly Prepared (1 Points): MEDMR followed ACCSP guidelines and pertinent documents when preparing this proposal.

Merit (3 points): This proposal allows MEDMR to comply with mandatory ASMFC requirements. The MEDMR currently provides more data to the data warehouse than any other state and accounts for over 30% of all records landed in the Data Warehouse. MEDMR are always looking for ways to collect data in a timely and efficient manner.

Robert B. Watts II
Maine Department of Marine Resources
(207) 350-7154
rob.watts@maine.gov

June 2025

PROFILE:

- Knowledge of Maine and federal regulations pertaining to commercial fishing and associated reporting requirements through working with the Department of Marine Resources and the National Marine Fisheries Service.
- Knowledgeable of Maine's fishing industries and how they operate.

EDUCATION:

B.S. Marine Science, Maine Maritime Academy, Castine, ME 2002

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE:

May 2016 – Present Marine Resource Scientist III
Maine Department of Marine Resources
West Boothbay Harbor, ME

- Manages daily operations of Maine's Commercial Landings Program, which collects, compiles and distributes commercial fishery statistics for Maine's commercial fisheries.
- Supervises Landings Program personnel.
- Maintain Microsoft Access databases for licensing information, compliance and data entry.
- Communicates with industry regarding reporting requirements, monitors reporting compliance and works with the licensing division in order to ensure all mandatory reporting requirements are met and licenses are issued accordingly.
- Oversees DMR's landings suspension authority and process.
- Oversees DMR's swipe card reporting program.
- Oversees MEDMR's MARVIN database.
- Maintains dealer and harvester auditing databases.
- Oversaw Maine's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) reporting program (IVR reporting ended in 2019)
- Serves as key contact for Maine commercial landings information.
- Promotes Maine's partnership with Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistical Program (ACCSP), serving on the Operations Committee, Commercial Technical Committee, Information Systems Technical Committee, Standard Codes Committee and Outreach Committee; working to bring the Landings Program into compliance with ACCSP standards.

Jan 2014 – Jan 2016 Marine Resource Scientist III (Acting Capacity)
June 2015 – Apr 2016 Marine Resource Scientist II
Feb 2012 – Apr 2015 Marine Resource Scientist I

Maine Department of Marine Resources
West Boothbay Harbor, ME

- Manages daily operations of Maine's Commercial Landings Program, which collects, compiles and distributes commercial fishery statistics for Maine's commercial fisheries.
- Supervises Landings Program personnel.
- Maintain Microsoft Access databases for licensing information, compliance and data entry.

- Communicates with industry regarding reporting requirements, monitors reporting compliance and works with the licensing division in order to ensure all mandatory reporting requirements are met and licenses are issued accordingly.
- Oversees DMR's landings suspension authority and process.
- Oversees DMR's swipe card reporting program.
- Maintains dealer and harvester auditing databases.
- Oversees Maine's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) reporting program.
- Serves as key contact for Maine commercial landings information.
- Promotes Maine's partnership with Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistical Program (ACCSP) through serving on the Commercial Technical Committee, Information Systems Technical Committee and Outreach Committee; working to bring the Landings Program into compliance with ACCSP standards.

**Oct 2007 – Jan 2012 Marine Resource Specialist II
Maine Department of Marine Resources**

- Oversee daily operations of the harvester landings program.
- Notify new harvesters about reporting requirements.
- Maintain databases used for data audits and data entry.
- Monitor reporting compliance database and notifies harvesters if they are delinquent.
- Supervise two Landings Program personnel.
- Oversees IVR reporting.
- Prepare data requests from various sources

**Jul 2005 – Oct 2007 Marine Resource Specialist I
Maine Department of Marine Resources**

- Interviewed marine recreational anglers all over the Maine coast to help determine fish stocks. Identified, weighed, measured and recorded fish caught by anglers.
- Created publications, updated regulation handouts and updated the recreational fishing website as needed.

**May 2001 – Jun 2005 Conservation Aid
Maine Department of Marine Resources**

- Interviewed marine recreational anglers all over the Maine coast to help determine fish stocks. Identified, weighed, measured and recorded fish caught by anglers.
- Acted as a liaison between the State of Maine and the recreational anglers, answered anglers questions about fishing regulations.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

Watts, Robert B, Bartlett, J., Bates, E., Bray, H., Brown, M., Cieri, M., ... & Wilson, C. (2023). Reflecting on the recent history of coastal Maine fisheries and marine resource monitoring: the value of collaborative research, changing ecosystems, and thoughts on preparing for the future. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 80(8), 2074-2086.

Jesica Waller
Maine Department of Marine Resources
(207) 350-6440
Jesica.d.waller@maine.gov

June 2025

PROFILE:

- Knowledge and oversight of the State of Maine's programs to research, monitor, and compile data from commercial and recreational coastal marine fisheries. This includes coordination of research plans across programs and with external research partners.
- Knowledgeable of Maine's fishing industries and how they operate.
- Knowledgeable about state and federal funding structures to support this work.

EDUCATION:

B.S. Marine and Freshwater Biology, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 2009

M.S. Marine Biology, University of Maine, Orono, ME 2016

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE:

July 2022 – Present **Marine Resource Scientist IV**
Maine Department of Marine Resources
West Boothbay Harbor, ME

- Division Director for the Division of Biological Monitoring and Assessment
- Oversee fishery monitoring and research for commercially important marine species
- Lead research around emerging fisheries and climate related topics
- Supervise a staff of 38 MEDMR researchers and maintain external collaborations
- Hire, train, and supervise research staff and students supported by MEDMR programs
- Write research proposals to federal agencies to obtain funding for MEDMR programs
- Coordinate the drafting and submission of all federal grant reporting requirements
- Conduct research and analyses, and write and review reports on timely research questions
- Work with diverse stakeholders to coordinate research in support of MEDMR priorities
- Represent MEDMR on state, regional, and federal research panels
- Advise senior staff on issues ranging from new research findings to funding opportunities
- Represent MEDMR on the Maine Climate Council Steering Committee and lead staff support

March 2018 – July 2022 **Marine Resource Scientist III**
Maine Department of Marine Resources
West Boothbay Harbor, ME

- Lead question-based lobster research to support the management of the Maine lobster fishery
- Build research collaborations, submit proposals for funding and author research publications
- Co-develop the MEDMR wet lab and serve as the point person for biosecurity
- Coordinated the MEDMR Lobster Research Collaborative and organized quarterly meetings

Jan. 2017 – March 2018 **Research Technician**
Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
East Boothbay Harbor, ME

- Designed and performed laboratory and field experiments for grant funded projects
- Contributed to authorship of peer-reviewed publications and federal/state grant proposals

**Sept. 2014 – Dec. 2016 Graduate Student and Canadian American Center Fellow
University of Maine (UMaine), Darling Marine Center
Walpole, ME**

- Thesis title: Linking Rising $p\text{CO}_2$ and Temperature to the Larval Development, Physiology and Gene Expression of the American Lobster (*Homarus americanus*)
- Completed all thesis research and coursework and secured fellowship funding annually

Selected Publications

1. **Waller, J. D.**, Bartlett, J., Bates, E., Bray, H., Brown, M., Cieri, M., ... & Wilson, C. (2023). Reflecting on the recent history of coastal Maine fisheries and marine resource monitoring: the value of collaborative research, changing ecosystems, and thoughts on preparing for the future. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 80(8), 2074-2086.
2. Ellertson, A. A., **Waller, J. D.**, Pugh, T. L., & Bethoney, N. D. (2022). Differences in the size at maturity of female American lobsters (*Homarus americanus*) from offshore Southern New England and eastern Georges Bank, USA. *Fisheries Research*, 250, 106276.
3. McClenachan, L., Record, N. R., & **Waller, J. D.** (2022). How do human actions affect fisheries? Differences in perceptions between fishers and scientists in the Maine lobster fishery. *FACETS*, 7(1), 174-193.
4. **Waller, J. D.**, Reardon, K. M., Caron, S. E., Jenner, B. P., Summers, E. L., & Wilson, C. J. (2021). A comparison of the size at maturity of female American lobsters (*Homarus americanus*) over three decades and across coastal areas of the Gulf of Maine using ovarian staging. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 78(4), 1267-1277.
5. **Waller, J.D.**, Reardon, K.M., Caron, S.E., Masters, H.M., Summers, E.L. & Wilson, C.J. (2019). Decrease in size at maturity of female American lobsters *Homarus americanus* (H. Milne Edwards, 1837) (Decapoda: Nephropidae) over a 50-year period in Maine, USA. *Journal of Crustacean Biology*, 39(4), 509-519.

Synergistic Activities

2025, Invited Review Board Member, North Pacific Research Board, Federal Disaster Relief Research Fund for Bering Sea King Crab and Snow Crab
 2025-present, *Proposal Reviewer*, Maine Sea Grant
 2024-present, *Staff support and author*, Maine State Wildlife Action Plan
 2024-present, *Advisory Committee Member*, Maine Department of Environmental Protection Surface Water Ambient Toxics Monitoring Program (SWAT)
 2024-present *Reviewer*, *Fisheries Research*
 2024-present *Reviewer*, *Marine Ecology Progress Series*
 2023-present *Steering Committee Member*, Maine Climate Council
 2021-present *Advisory Committee Member*, Dalhousie University (PhD student, M. Rampual)
 2021-present *Reviewer*, *Journal of Crustacean Biology*
 2019-present *Agency support and member*, Maine Climate Council, Coastal and Marine Working Group
 2019-present *Reviewer*, *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*
 2018-2022 *Coordinator*, Maine Department of Marine Resources Lobster Research Collaborative
 2017-present *Reviewer*, *ICES Journal of Marine Science*



MARYLAND - VIRGINIA
"Potomac River Compact of 1958"



Potomac River Fisheries Commission

P.O. BOX 9
Colonial Beach, Virginia 22443
TELEPHONE: (804) 224-7148 ·
www.prfc.us contactprfc@gmail.com

June 13, 2025

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland St. Ste. 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear ACCSP:

The Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) is pleased to submit its proposal for the Fiscal Year 26 ACCSP Request for Proposal, titled "FY26: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission Commercial Fisheries Sector" for your consideration. This project's continued maintenance enabled PRFC to expand its electronic catch reporting leveraging the ACCSP eTrips application while improving accuracy, timeliness, and level of detail for catch reporting throughout the Potomac River.

PRFC has made significant progress in the first five years of this project, including the initial groups of testers gaining access to eTrips, PRFC-developed training, initial ACCSP-PRFC interface development, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)/Platform as a Service (PaaS) procurement, and the development of the new Sport & commercial Application Integrated Licensing (SAIL) tool.

This final Year 6 proposal is an exciting opportunity for ACCSP and PRFC to maintain momentum as more PRFC license holders adopt eTrips for their catch reporting and interfaces constructed for bi-directional data management between SAFIS and SAIL. Additionally, the data connections between SAIL and SAFIS will be expanded and enhanced in Year 6. Thank you for your consideration, and please contact Ron Owens with any questions.

Sincerely,

Ronald W. Owens
Executive Secretary
(804)682-1527
ron.owens@prfc.us

Proposal for Funding made to:
Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program
Operations and Advisory Committees
150N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22204



FY26: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the
Potomac River Fisheries Commission
Commercial Fisheries Sector

Submitted by:
Ronald W. Owens
Executive Secretary
Potomac River Fisheries Commission
222 Taylor Street
Colonial Beach, VA 22443
ron.owens@prfc.us

Applicant Name: Potomac River Fisheries Commission

Project Title: **Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) Commercial Fisheries Sector**

Project Type: Maintenance Project
(No change in scope of work, continued emphasis on Electronic Data Reporting using eTrips, increasing participation, and integration with PRFC databases)

Principal Investigator: Ingrid Braun-Ricks, PRFC Asst. Executive Secretary

Project Manager: Ronald W. Owens, PRFC Executive Secretary

Requested Award Amount: **\$71,172.00** for the year five maintenance project. This is intended to scale both participation and supporting IT infrastructure.

Requested Award Period: One year after receipt of funds

Objective: This is the sixth and final year of the project to report trip-level catch and effort data using the ACCSP eTrips tools, from Commercial license holders who fish within the jurisdiction of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) continuing in the 2026 seasons, which begins in July 2026 for the FY26 licenses and January 2026 for the CY26 licenses.

Need:

ACCSP and its partner agencies have established the collection of trip-level data as the standard which all agencies should strive to reach and maintain. Over 60 years ago, PRFC began collecting catch and effort data from commercial shellfish (oyster and crab) and finfish permit holders, which are submitted weekly. Storage of the data in electronic databases has taken place since the late 1980s. Since that time, more details regarding the catch have been collected in terms of targeting specific locations, species, and gear. The data are reported at the trip-level on a daily basis and are submitted weekly to PRFC and provided to ACCSP twice annually for the previous calendar year.

The sixth year of the project will work to increase the use of census-style reporting by expanding the use of ACCSP eTrips technology among a group of PRFC Commercial license holders through both incentives. Additionally, the interface connection between PRFC SAIL and ACCSP SAFIS will be expanded and enhanced for official real-time transmission of data between the two systems.

Participating license holders will use ACCSP eTrips tools to report their catch and effort in PRFC managed waters. In Year 6, the plan is to continue to transition all applicable eTRIPS users to electronic catch reporting. Only allowing paper reports provided to PRFC to be submitted by PRFC staff for the waterman who do not use eTRIPS. Electronic harvest reporting has been discussed in the proceedings of meetings of advisory committees to the PRFC and the Commission itself for several years, and numerous harvesters have expressed an interest and willingness to participate. Many commercial constituents are already participating in electronic harvest reporting in Maryland or Virginia and are eager for similar opportunities to report electronically for PRFC.

Results and Benefits:

During the sixth year of the project, trip-level reporting to collect catch and effort data from commercial permit holders - harvesters is a goal for all ACCSP partners. On average, on an annual basis (Table 1):

Table 1: Average Count of License Holders and Daily Catch Reports for FY22 & CY22

Gear	License Holders	Daily Catch Reports
Oyster	204	1462
Crab	426	10082
Fish	339	12970

Presently, the PRFC staff collect, organize, validate, obtain corrections, and enter the catch data for each License Holder - Harvesters, which is a rather labor-intensive effort that potentially induces errors and is time consuming; therefore, the data stored and available for decision making reports can be lagging. **The anticipated benefits use of ACCSP eTrips are faster data entry with less errors and less staff hours required.**

Data Delivery Plan: During the sixth year of the project, ACCSP eTrips will continue to collect all catch data reports either directly entered by commercial harvesters or entered on their behalf by PRFC staff. PRFC will look at new ways to incentivize watermen to adopt eTrips vice submitting paper reports, and will look to streamline monitoring, control, and reporting to ACCSP using the PRFC SAIL application. PRFC will leverage the ACCSP eTrips database API to synchronize eTrips catch data with the new PRFC cloud-based Sport & commercial Application Integrated Licensing tool (SAIL) that was deployed for use in 2025 and currently holds ALL the catch data records that are NOT being entered directly into ACCSP eTrips by the commercial harvesters. The PRFC staff will be entering catch data for some of the paper reports that are submitted to PRFC by the commercial harvesters (see Task 2 in the Approach).

Biological Sampling Priority

PRFC's managed fisheries include five of the species identified in the FY26 Biological Sampling Priority Matrix, these include: #1 ranked Black Sea Bass, #20 ranked Atlantic

Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC)

ACCSP Funding Proposal: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the PRFC Commercial Fisheries Sector

Bold Comments indicate sections that help with the ranking process

Highlighted text indicates changes from the first submission

Menhaden, #14 ranked Cobia, #8 ranked Spanish Mackerel, and #15 ranked American eel.

For species such as Atlantic Menhaden, Cobia, and Spanish Mackerel, they are managed under a coastwide quota with state-by-state allocations. When a percentage of the total quota is reported, possible coastwide closures would be initiated to avoid overages. Menhaden is one of PRFC's biggest fisheries, PRFC reported over 3.5 million pounds landed in 2022. Currently, PRFC harvest is only reported twice a year to ACCSP with each of those data loads containing landings for the previous year to be downloaded into the ACCSP Data Warehouse. Therefore, PRFC landings are not typically accounted for on the coastwide scale until the end of the year, which leaves little room to take preventative measures. Electronic reporting and enabling PRFC system integration into SAFIS will help coastwide management.

Metadata: Below is a list of metadata that PRFC will be capturing via SAIL/eTrips and providing to ACCSP as part of this project.

Meta Data Field	Definition
Trip Type	Type of fishing trip
Coast Guard #	Coast Guard vessel registration #
State Reg #	State vessel registration #
Vessel Name	
Permit ID	Permit ID #
License Nbr	License # (PRFC Specific)
Fisherman	Legal Name
Corporate Name	Corporate Name, if applicable
Trip Start Date	Start date of trip
Trip Start Time	Start time of trip
Trip End Date	End date of trip
Trip End Time	End time of trip
State	State of trip
End Port	End port of trip
Submit Method	Method of submission for trip data
Submitted By Participant	If submitted by someone else
Nbr Of Crew	# of crew on trip
Area Code	Code for the area of the trip
Sub Area Code	Code for the sub area of the trip
Local Area Code	Code for the local area of the trip
In State	State of trip origin
Fishing Hours	Hours fished during trip
Gear Code	Code for gear used during trip
Gear Name	Name for gear used during trip
Gear Quantity	Quantity of gear used during trip

Gear Sets	Sets of gear used during trip
Depth	Depth of gear used during trip
Latitude	Latitude of gear used during trip
Longitude	Longitude of gear used during trip
Common Name	Common name of species fished during trip
Unit Measure	Measure of species caught during trip
Reported Quantity	Quantity of measure of species caught during trip
Market Code	Market code sold to during trip
Grade Code	Grade of species caught during trip
Disposition Code	Disposition of species caught during trip
Sale Disposition Flag	If species caught were sold
Catch Source	Source of catch of species sold
Nbr Fish	Number of caught sold during trip
Comments	Used to capture TAG#s and other relevant data for catch and trip
Cf Iss Agency	PRFC
Validating Agency	PRFC
Confirmed Validating Agency	PRFC
Vendor App Name	Name of application used to capture information

PRFC will continue transmitting data twice per year for all catch reports submitted for the prior year but excluding the records that have been entered into ACCSP eTrips. This will be discontinued once two consecutive reports show 100% consistency with data from ACCSP eTrips.

Approach:

During the sixth year of the project, PRFC will be fully transitioned from the legacy Microsoft (MS) Access databases and Operator interface code that require all license issuing and catch data reporting performed by PRFC staff. The new PRFC cloud-based SAIL application will be live, and the focus will be on enhancing its capabilities and integrations with ACCSP eTrips database. This enhanced integration will result in increased timeliness and accuracy of trip report data processed by PRFC being available in the SAFIS DB. PRFC will continue to expand its participation rate and update/improve training processes and materials. Additionally, PRFC will maintain a contract with a Software Development provider company or consultant to continue to maintain relevant interfaces and continue to develop the upgraded cloud application.

During Year 5, PRFC will be in maintenance for the following items:

1. Task 1 Identification of License Holder Participants: Continued Identification of commercial harvesters to participate:

In Year 6 of the project, continue to expand participation in using eTrips by commercial harvesters. It is expected that all harvesters with interest will be using eTrips in this phase, but that continued outreach and marketing will be necessary to those who are holdouts. Additionally, new innovative methods to get harvesters access to and using eTrips will be explored, i.e. kiosks and positive incentives. The commercial harvester community is comprised of a mix of limited entry and open access fishery participants. Though the number varies year to year, approximately 750 commercial harvesters are candidates. The participants will be volunteers. This would provide a large portion of the existing license holders (50%) and each Gear category. These numbers are manageable for the purpose of refining the SAIL application and the integration interfaces between eTrips and SAFIS tools, developing enhanced training guides & gaining feedback for future participant expansion.

2. Task 2 eTrips installation & training; data entry: ACCSP eTrips installation and training for commercial harvesters. It is anticipated that on average, four (4) hours will be provided to each harvester to support on data entry, submission and use of mobile devices and software. Included within the four hours are staff hours for making presentations at meetings, developing/updating "cheat sheet" guides, and identifying enhancements and overall process improvement. In addition to the harvesters, the PRFC staff will enter a sampling of a variety of paper catch reports into ACCSP eTrips:

In Year 6, this item is expected to be complete but with ongoing adjustments and training as required based on harvester feedback and issue tracking. Additionally, PRFC will look to augment in-person training using dynamic web-based training. The PRFC staff will augment the commercial harvesters ACCSP eTrips submissions to ensure a more comprehensive data set is being processed for the purpose of identifying enhancement requests for the ACCSP eTrips tools and the data can be successfully processed (downloaded, modified / corrected, and uploaded).

3. Task 3 MS Access Operator Interface Maintenance: Maintenance of MS Access required interfaces until ACCSP eTrips collected data is verified as 100% matching with PRFC records:
 - a. Download ACCSP eTrips data from ACCSP
 - b. Maintain an Operator Interface to validate downloaded data
 - c. Upload verified data to ACCSP

In Year 6, this function will be completely developed and no longer necessary to support. **All support will instead be to the new Sport & commercial Application Integrated Licensing tool (SAIL) to enhance its capabilities and align with eTrips and SAFIS reporting.**

4. Task 4 Software Development: During year 6 of the project, PRFC intends to expand its modern database platform: SAIL. SAIL is a cloud-based application with a more consistent Operator Interface and more efficiently maintained and upgraded. The requirements will be documented, and the selected vendor will continue to develop and implement. **This effort will look to grow SAIL's capabilities from the original MS Access Database to a modern, scalable, web-first tool that can more effectively capture and report on PRFC catch information in real time using advanced analytics.**
5. Task 5 Maintain Oracle Cloud Database: During Year 6 of the project, PRFC will continue to procure cloud-based resources with a focus on providing cost savings up-front and long term during the sustainment and maintenance phases. **Huge infrastructure cost savings have been achieved in Year 4 through a revamped SAIL architecture, and these savings will persist in the out years.**
6. Task 6 Develop & Maintain Oracle web-based applications: Continue development and maintenance of web based PRFC SAIL applications to perform PRFC office automation functions:
 - a. Process License issue and renewal requests
 - b. Print Licenses and associated tags, flags, and catch report forms, etc.
 - c. Processing paper catch reports
 - d. Reporting interface – currently there are approximately 25 unique reports with many that have sub-options
 - e. Database Utility interface – currently there are approximately 13 unique operations required to modify lookup tables, set/re-set sequencing, and perform database integrity checks and repair
 - a. Perform modifications as necessary to resolve technical problems
 - b. Perform updates as necessary to support new requirements

The current (historical) PRFC data was exported, reformatted, and imported into the new SAIL database system. **In Year 6, innovations and advanced processing will be a focus on quality of data improvements and data reporting. Examples of innovations to be reviewed for implementation include Optical Character Recognition (OCR) for hand submitted reports by non-eTrips harvesters, photo OCR submission by non-eTrips harvesters, data analytics and reporting for better data quality monitoring, Machine Learning/Artificial Intelligence (ML/AI) implementation trained on historical catch patterns to identify and flag potential catch data errors, and the addition of generative AI to provide natural language data queries and reports.**

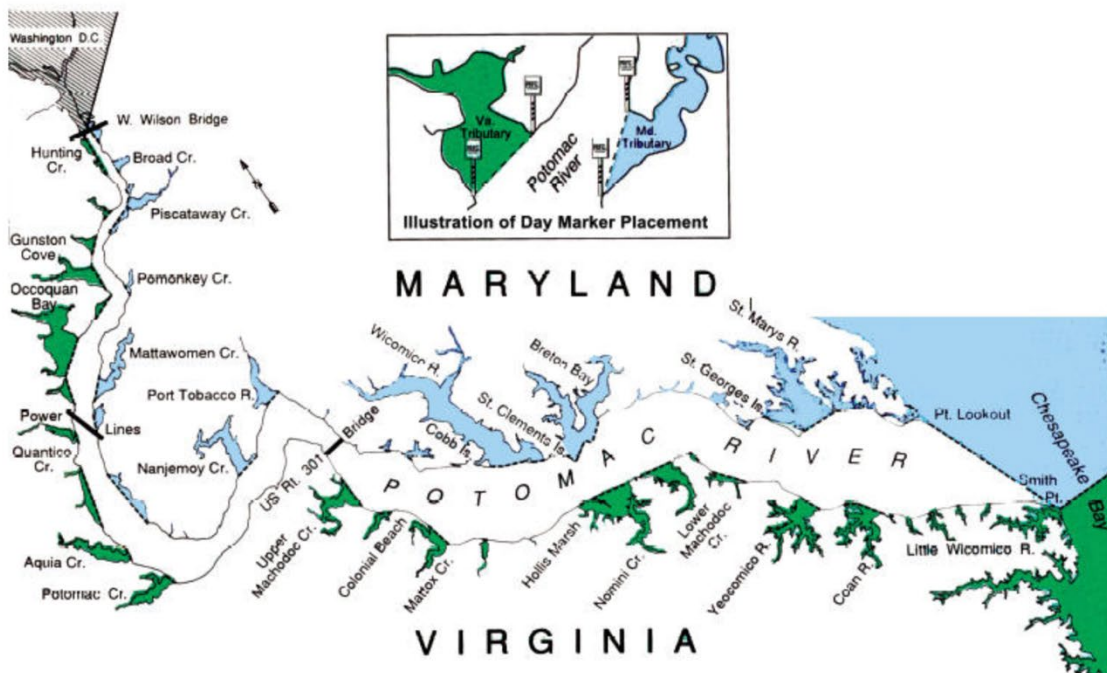
7. Task 7 Commercial Harvesters increased participation: Continue to increase the number of commercial harvesters using the ACCSP eTrips-tools:

The goal would be to have 100% of the commercial harvesters using the ACCSP eTrips tools in Year 6, where able, and supported by PRFC staff, where not.

To facilitate the effort to meet these goals:

- i. Provide direct support as needed using PRFC staff via phone or in-person
- ii. Presentations at various Committee meetings with demonstrations and open for questions
- iii. Creating short "tri-fold" instructions specific to various topics
- iv. Creating short YouTube video tutorials specific to various topics
- v. Utilize existing ACCSP support products (e.g., videos, tech support and other)
- vi. Incentivizing future participation by using various strategies, such as:
 1. Successful strategies used by other jurisdictions (e.g., Rhode Island license endorsement)
 2. Establishing a fee for having the PRFC staff perform the ACCSP eTrips data entry such as:
 - a. Flat fee - \$100 per License Holder per year
 - b. Fee per Gear Type - \$25 for each gear type license
 - c. Fee per Week per Gear Type - \$5 for each weekly report for each gear type license
 3. Discounting the Commercial Licenses Registration Fee if harvester opts-in to electronic reporting
 4. Exploring increased creel limits or other regulatory changes for those who opt-in

Geographic Location: Jurisdictional waters of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. From the Woodrow Wilson Bridge (District of Columbia Demarcation) downriver to the confluence of the Chesapeake Bay. Approximately 100 nautical miles.



Milestone Schedule: In the below table, a check mark indicates a task that is already complete from previous project years and a 'X' indicates the task is ongoing and will be worked on throughout the entire proposed project period.

Task # / Month	Project Period Month											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
T1: Identification of License Holder Participants	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
T2: eTrips installation & training; data entry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
T3: MS Access Operator Interface Maintenance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
T4: Software modifications	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
T5: Maintain Oracle Cloud Database	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
T6: Develop & Maintain Oracle web-based applications	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
T7: Commercial Harvesters increased participation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Project Accomplishments Measurement:

The results of this project will provide the basis to improve the accuracy and timeliness of catch and effort estimations, and could subsequently inform science, stock assessments, and management policies.

The results will help determine the scope of the effort to migrate to a more robust database system that is more accessible to the Commercial License Holders.

PRFC in Year 1 completed one task fully and made progress on many others.

1. Year 1 Task 5: Established contract for the software development work required to complete Tasks 3 through 6.

PRFC in Year 2 completed five tasks for the year, with several repeating each cycle.

1. Year 2 Task 1: Identified and trained 20% of license holders with most moving to full time electronic catch reporting.
2. Year 2 Task 2: Developed eTrips installation and training guides/data for use by the license holders.
3. Year 2 Task 3: Completed all maintenance on the Access Database and prepared process for de-commissioning software.
4. Year 2 Task 4: Completed initial round of software modifications to support the reporting and synchronization between the Access DB and SAIL.
5. Year 2 Task 5: Maintained contract for the software development work required to complete Tasks 3 through 6. Established Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) account and procured the Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) for use in SAIL.
6. Year 2 Task 6: Completed initial development on the OCI hosted, SAIL application. Iterated through team and volunteer issues to.

PRFC in Year 3 completed five tasks for the year, with several repeating each cycle.

1. Year 3 Task 1: Continued to identify and train additional license holders, of those interested and able to adopt eTrips.
2. Year 3 Task 2: Finalized eTrips installation and training guides/data for use by the license holders.
3. Year 3 Task 3: Successfully beta tested SAIL program.
4. Year 3 Task 4: Completed initial round of software modifications to support the reporting and synchronization between the ACCSP SAFIS DB and SAIL.
5. Year 3 Task 5: Maintained contract for the software development work required to complete Tasks 3 through 6. Maintained, secured, and advanced Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) architecture to optimize costs and operations of SAIL.
6. Year 3 Task 6: Completed development of API and Direct DB integrations between SAIL DB and ACCSP SAFIS DB to streamline trip data timeliness and accuracy.
7. Year 3 Task 7: Completed initial discussions of incentives for harvesters to adopt eTrips implemented and adjusted based on feedback.

PRFC in Year 4 completed five tasks for the year, with several repeating each cycle.

1. Year 4 Task 1: Continued to identify and engage license holders with a goal of 80% of those interested and able to adopt eTrips.
2. Year 4 Task 2: Continued to refine and deliver eTrips installation and training guides/data for use by the license holders.
3. Year 4 Task 3: Continue to finalize and migrate all reports, custom queries, and dashboards to SAIL.

4. Year 4 Task 4: Finalize second round of design and architecture software modifications to support the reporting and synchronization between the ACCSP SAFIS DB and SAIL.
5. Year 4 Task 5: Maintained contract for the software development work required to complete Tasks 3 through 6. Maintained, secured, and advanced Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) architecture to optimize costs and operations of SAIL achieving significant savings.
6. Year 4 Task 6: Continued refinement of API and Direct DB integrations between SAIL DB and ACCSP SAFIS DB to streamline trip data timeliness and accuracy.
7. Year 4 Task 7: Secondary rollout of communications and marketing to harvesters to adopt eTrips implemented and adjusted based on feedback.

PRFC in Year 5 completed five tasks for the year, with several repeating each cycle.

1. Year 5 Task 1: Continued to identify and engage license holders with a goal of 100% of those interested and able to adopt eTrips.
2. Year 5 Task 2: Continued to refine and deliver eTrips installation and training guides/data for use by the license holders.
3. Year 5 Task 3: Continued to finalize and migrate all reports, custom queries, and dashboards to SAIL.
4. Year 5 Task 4: Finalized second round of design and architecture software modifications to support the reporting and synchronization between the ACCSP SAFIS DB and SAIL.
5. Year 5 Task 5: Maintained contract for the software development work required to complete Tasks 3 through 6. Maintained, secured, and advanced Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) architecture to optimize costs and operations of SAIL achieving significant savings.
6. Year 5 Task 6: Continued refinement of API and Direct DB integrations between SAIL DB and ACCSP SAFIS DB to streamline trip data timeliness and accuracy.
7. Year 5 Task 7: Continued rollout of communications and marketing to harvesters to adopt eTrips implemented and adjusted based on feedback.

PRFC will continue to monitor progress and accomplishment using the following goals and measurements.

Task	Goal	Measurement
T1: Identification of License Holder Participants	Identification of remaining commercial harvester holdouts and continued marketing/engagement for enrollment in eTrips electronic catch reporting.	Records updated to reflect they have been contacted and notified about the opportunity and its benefits.

T2: eTrips installation & training; data entry	100% of identified eTrips participants who request training/support receive in person or electronic training/support. Updated training materials and classes based of eTrips users feedback.	Participant records updated to note whether training has been provided and support provided.
T3: MS Access Operator Interface Maintenance	Full archival of Access DB with no reach back required for operations and integrations in support of ACCSP.	Access DB is unmodified/accessed.
T4: Software modifications	Requirements updated on evolving ACCSP SAFIS integration and implementation.	Verification that RTM is completed and updated.
T5: Maintain Oracle Cloud Database	100% of cloud-based services procured and available.	Verification by PRFC staff that cloud services are invoiced and available.
T6: Develop & Maintain Oracle web-based applications	100% of year 6 requirements identified, developed, and delivered. Analysis completed and requirements generated for advanced technologies to be integrated into SAIL capabilities.	Completed RTM showing Year 4 requirements marked as complete and verification by PRFC staff.
T7: Commercial Harvesters increased participation	Marketing materials developed and presented at regular meetings and in routine communications. Incentives identified and presented to the PRFC Commissioners for approval. At least one incentive applied to PRFC catch report submission for harvesters not using eTrips.	Verification by PRFC staff that materials were sent and communicated during meetings. Documented minutes showing discussions at Commission meetings.

Project Funding Justification for Continuance / Transition Plan:

Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC)

ACCSP Funding Proposal: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the PRFC Commercial Fisheries Sector

Bold Comments indicate sections that help with the ranking process

Highlighted text indicates changes from the first submission

PRFC is requesting the maximum amount of maintenance funding available due to the amount of work required to completely synch SAIL with ACCSP SAFIS. Additionally, continued marketing and engagement is required for watermen who continue to use paper reporting. While great achievements have been made over the previous five years, there is still a good amount of effort to synchronize the PRFC SAIL catch report information with SAFIS in a way that does not cause harm to overall data quality and improves ACCSP/PRFC efficiency. Additionally, there are a large number of license holders that will take significant outreach and training to get them onboard with using eTrips as a replacement for the paper forms. PRFC has detailed plans to address both of these factors in Year 6.

Funding transition is expected for this project beginning in Year 6 when funding is reduced based on maintenance project rules. PRFC is working to complete all development and activities by Year 7 to minimize funding necessary to keep SAIL and eTrips usage. PRFC will leverage new state resources and existing IT budgets to cover SAIL OCI expenses and additional routine maintenance costs.

BUDGET FOR PROPOSAL PLANNING – FY2026

Description	Calculation	ACCSP Cost	PRFC Cost	Total Cost
Personnel (a)				
Principal Investigator	0 ACCSP / 500 PRFC hours @ \$34.68/hr	\$0.00	\$17,340.00	\$17,340.00
Data Administrator	0 ACCSP / 2080 PRFC hours @ \$27.12/hr	\$0.00	\$56,409.60	\$56,409.60
Data Management Specialist	0 ACCSP / 1400 PRFC hours @ \$16.08/hr	\$0.00	\$22,512.00	\$22,512.00
Executive Secretary	0 ACCSP / 160 PRFC hours @ \$54.05/hr	\$0.00	\$8,648.00	\$8,648.00
Personnel Subtotal		\$0.00	\$104,909.60	\$104,909.60
Fringe (b)				
Principal Investigator	42% of salary	\$0.00	\$31,319.96	\$31,319.96
Data Administrator	45% of salary	\$0.00	\$25,558.06	\$25,558.06
Data Management Specialist	47% of salary	\$0.00	\$16,228.82	\$16,228.82
Executive Secretary	22% of salary	\$0.00	\$24,775.53	\$24,775.53
Fringe Subtotal		\$0.00	\$97,882.37	\$97,882.37
Travel (c)				
n/a				
Travel Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Equipment (d)				
n/a				
Equipment Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies (e)				
Oracle Cloud VM				
a. Autonomous DB 1 instance, 744 hrs/month, 24 hours/day 1 OCPU 512 GB Storage	\$100.00/month x 12 months	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$1,200.00
Supplies Subtotal		\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$1,200.00
Contractual (f)				

In-house Consultant/Developer	25 ACCSP / 20 PRFC Hours @ \$112.45/hr	\$2,811.77	\$2,249.08	\$5,060.43
Vendor/Developer	497 ACCSP / 150 PRFC Hours @ \$135.13/hr	\$67,160.65	\$20,269.81	\$87,430.47
Contractual Subtotal		\$69,972.42	\$22,518.89	\$92,490.89
Other (h)				
n/a				
Other Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Totals				
Total Direct Charges (i)		\$71,172.00	\$225,310.86	\$296,482.86
Indirect Charges (j)	n/a	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total (sum of Direct and Indirect)		\$71,172.00	\$225,310.86	\$296,482.86
Percentage		24%	76%	100%

BUDGET NARATIVE

(Funding Period, FY26)

Project: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) Commercial Fisheries Sector

Project Period: 1 Feb 2026 – 31 January 2027

1 Year Funding: \$71,172.00

Prepared By: Ronald W. Owens, PRFC Executive Secretary

Personnel (Salaries) \$0.00: No PRFC employee salaries will be covered using ACCSP funds, all coverage by PRFC personnel will be in-kind.

Personnel In-Kind \$201,791.97: The four PRFC employees proposed in this effort spend most if not all of their remaining hours working on catch report data and the tool. For each employee, their salary + Fringe costs not covered by the ACCSP grant is considered In-Kind by the PRFC. For this Principal Investigator (500 hours, \$17,340.00 + \$31,319.96 Fringe), Executive Secretary (160 hours, \$8,648.00 + \$24,775.53 Fringe), Data Administrator (2080 hours, \$56,409.60 + \$25,558.06 Fringe), and Data Management Specialist (1400 hours, \$22,512.00 + \$16,228.82 Fringe) sum up to **\$201,791.97** or 68.3% of total expense for Year 6.

Fringe Benefits \$0.00: No PRFC personnel fringe costs will be reimbursed by ACCSP grant funds. Fringe calculations are below for in-kind evaluation and included in the previous section above.

Fringe Benefits Details					
		Principal Investigator	Data Administrator	Data Management Specialist	Executive Secretary
Gross	Annually	\$72,136.00	\$56,416.00	\$33,453.00	\$112,415.00
	Hourly	\$34.68	\$27.12	\$16.08	\$54.05
Fringe	Health	\$18,009.60	\$18,009.60	\$9,734.40	\$9,734.40
	Retirement	\$11,325.35	\$6,882.75	\$5,252.12	\$13,714.63
	Life	\$851.20	\$665.71	\$394.75	\$1,326.50
	Disability	\$533.81		\$247.55	
	Def Comp	\$600.00		\$600.00	
	Total	\$31,319.96	\$25,558.06	\$16,228.82	\$24,775.53
	Per Hour	\$15.06	\$12.29	\$7.80	\$11.91
	Rate	43%	45%	49%	22%

ACCSP Project Hours					
FY 2024 Hours / Year:		2080			
	ACCSP Hours	0	0	0	0
	Fringe Cost	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	ACCSP Cost	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	PRFC Hours	100	2080	2080	2080
	PRFC Fringe	\$31,319.96	\$25,558.06	\$16,228.82	\$24,775.53
	PRFC Cost	\$3,468.08	\$56,416.00	\$33,453.00	\$112,415.00

Travel \$0.00: N/A

Equipment \$0.00: N/A

Supplies \$1,200.00: Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) resources are procured to host the PRFC interface between ACCSP and PRFC's SAIL application on a monthly basis. PRFC plans to procure Oracle Autonomous Database, with APEX, to host the SAIL application and provide the primary data interface between PRFC and ACCSP catch and report information. Additionally, a cloud Compute Virtual Machine, and additional block storage will all be required to host the application business logic, interface connection management, and user interface. All cloud services will be procured in full for the year in order to lock in cloud discounts for reserved usage.

Contractual \$69,972.00:

In-house Consultant – Ray Draper: \$2,811.35

Updating the existing PRFC Access based application will require the knowledge and expertise of the consultant/developer Ray Draper. Ray has designed and developed the entire PRFC application from the ground up over the last 15 years and will be the primary developer of the ACCSP interface. This work will be in a maintenance phase and requires part-time development work, estimated at 25 hours total, and PRFC has contracted with Ray at a rate of \$112.45 an hour to perform these services.

Talent & Technical Solutions Corporation (TTSC): \$67,160.65

Developing the new PRFC SAIL application, procuring cloud services and infrastructure, and assisting with the PRFC-ACCSP integration will be handled by TTSC. PRFC has contracted with TTSC at a rate of \$135.13 an hour and expects the work to support T3, T4, T6, and T7 to take 12 months of part-time work and an estimated 497 hours. TTSC has unique knowledge of PRFC business processes and is an OCI SME enabling the most efficient execution of this project. This contract is already in place from previous years, and this funding will support funding for their outyear.

Contractual In-Kind \$22,518.89: The two contractual service providers proposed in this effort will only partially be funded by the ACCSP grant and the additional hours not covered by the ACCSP grant would be considered In-Kind by the PRFC. For this, In-house Consultant/Developer (20 hours, \$2,249.08) and Vendor/Developer (150 hours, \$20,269.81) sum up to **\$22,518.89** or 7.6% of total expense for Year 6.

Other \$0.00: N/A

Summary of Proposal for Ranking

Project Details

Proposal Type: Maintenance

Primary Program Priority:

Catch and Effort (10 points / 100%): 100% of interested license holders will be providing electronic catch reporting and PRFC staff will enter the rest by hand to ensure accuracy.

Data Delivery Plan (2 points): All metadata collected and supplied has been defined in this proposal.

Project Quality Factors

Multi-Partner/Regional impact including broad applications (5 points): PRFC's migration to eTrips and electronic catch reporting will benefit ACCSP and all regional partners in ensuring they have access to accurate, timely data on PRFC monitored species.

Contains funding transition plan (4 points): A detailed justification and funding transition plan is laid out in the proposal. PRFC sees a large need to continue funding at current levels in Year 4 with reduced funding in the out years and a transition to routing IT budgets and other state grants.

In-kind contributions (3 points): PRFC has provided a breakdown of the in-kind contributions made in support of this program and show that PRFC is providing 76% In-kind contributions. The contributions are significant and cover all the time for three personnel that manage and oversee the current catch reporting system.

Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness (4 points): Transition to eTrips and PRFC's new SAIL application will greatly increase the timeliness of reporting from bi-annually to almost real time. This will reduce manual entry and ensure much high-quality data is available for review by PRFC and other members.

Potential secondary module as a by-product (4 points): This project has led to the development of SAIL which will greatly streamline PRFC operations and interactions with ACCSP's SAFIS.

Impact on stock assessment (3 points): Regional management organizations that perform stock assessments will have better data to operate from as a direct result of this proposal and continued funding for PRFC's efforts.

Impact on management (3 points): Regional management will be greatly improved based on the data collection and higher quality data capture as a direct result of this proposal and continued funding for PRFC's efforts.

Other Factors

Properly Prepared (5 point): PRFC followed all applicable ACCSP and RFP guidelines in preparing this document along with feedback gleaned from previous years proposal.

Merit (3 points): The Electronic Catch Reporting proposal is vital to the continued evolution of PRFC and ACCSP regional partners in implementing innovated processes for increasing data capture, quality, and timeliness.

Achieved Goals (3 point): PRFC has achieved a great number of its goals over the last four years and has plans to achieve the majority in Year 5 with this proposal.

Data Delivery Plan (2 points): A detailed data delivery plan has been included for review. PRFC will continue to work with ACCSP to increase speed of delivery as more electronic catch reports are captured and interfaces stood up.

Level of Funding (1 points): PRFC has requested a smaller level of funding compared to FY25 as an acknowledgement for the large decrease in funding given up in Year 1 to help support other projects.

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APPENDIX A: BUDGET – FY2021 – APPROVED BY ACCSP

Description	Calculation	Cost
Personnel (a)		
Principal Investigator	60 hours @ \$55.50/hr	\$3,330.00
Data Administrator	200 hours @ \$20.50/hr	\$4,100.00
Data Management Specialist	600 hours @ \$11.50/hr	\$6,900.00
Fringe (b)		
Principal Investigator	14% of salary	\$455.55
Data Administrator	51% of salary	\$2,092.93
Data Management Specialist	49% of salary	\$3,401.46
Travel (c)		
n/a		
Equipment (d)		
Oracle Cloud Database:		
a. MySQL DB Services 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day 50 GB storage 50 GB backup	\$21/month x 8 months	\$168.00
b. Java Cloud Service Enterprise Edition 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day	\$550/month x 8 months	\$4,400.00
c. Cloud Infrastructure 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day 50 GB storage	\$33/month x 8 months	\$264.00
Supplies (e)		
n/a		
Contractual (f)		
In-house Consultant/Developer	501 hours @ \$100/hr	\$50,100.00
Vendor/Developer	1,080 hours @ \$130/hr	\$140,400.00
Other (h)		
n/a		
Totals		
Total Direct Charges (i)		\$215,612.00
Indirect Charges (j)	n/a	\$0.00
Total (sum of Direct and Indirect) (k)		\$215,612.00

BUDGET NARATIVE

(Requested Funding Period, FY21)

Project: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) Commercial Fisheries Sector

Project Period: 1 March 2021 – 28 February 2022

1 Year Funding: \$215,425.44

Prepared By: Martin L. Gary, PRFC Executive Secretary

Personnel (Salaries) \$14,759.90: Three PRFC employees' salary time will be covered using these funds. The three employees are: Principal Investigator, for 60 hours (\$3,429.90); Data Administrator, for 200 hours (\$4,223.00), and a Data Management Specialist, for 600 hours (\$7,107.00).

Fringe Benefits \$5,950.00: The current PRFC fringe benefit cost is set per employee at: Principal Investigator at 14% of Salary (\$455.55), Data Administrator at 51% of salary (\$2,092.93), and Data Management Specialist at 49% of salary (\$3,401.46). The Principal Investigator falls within the fringe guidelines set forth by NOAA, however, a full breakdown of how the Fringe Benefits are calculated below (PRFC does not have a NICRA established).

		Principal Investigator	Data Administrator	Data Management Specialist
Gross	Annually	\$ 111,000.00	\$ 41,000.00	\$ 23,000.00
	Hourly	\$ 55.50	\$ 20.50	\$ 11.50
Fringe	Health	\$ -	\$ 15,418	\$ 8,333
	Retirement	\$ 13,086	\$ 4,945	\$ 2,696
	Life	\$ 1,499	\$ 566	\$ 309
	Disability	\$ -	\$ -	
	Def Comp	\$ 600	\$ -	\$ -
	Total:	\$ 15,185	\$ 20,929	\$ 11,338
	Per Hour:	\$ 7.59	\$ 10.46	\$ 5.67
Hours / Year:	2000			
	Rate:	14%	51%	49%
		\$ 7.59	\$ 10.46	\$ 5.67
	Hours:	60	200	600
		\$ 455.55	\$ 2,092.90	\$ 3,401.40
	Total Cost:	\$ 3,330.00	\$ 4,100.00	\$ 6,900.00

Travel \$0.00: N/A

Equipment \$15,372.00: Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) resources are procured to host the PRFC interface between ACCSP and PRFC's MS Access application on a monthly basis. Additionally, PRFC's modernized application runs on the OCI infrastructure as well.

Supplies \$0.00: N/A

Contractual \$179,343.60:

In-house Consultant – Ray Draper: \$40,788.00

Updating the existing PRFC Access based application will require the knowledge and expertise of the consultant/developer Ray Draper. Ray has designed and developed the entire PRFC application from the ground up over the last 15 years and will be the primary developer of the ACCSP interface. This work will require five (5) months of part-time development work, estimated at 396 hours total, and PRFC has contracted with Ray at a rate of \$103 an hour to perform these services.

Talent & Technical Solutions Corporation (TTSC): \$138,555.60

Developing a new PRFC database, procuring cloud services and infrastructure, and assisting with the PRFC existing application integration will be handled by TTSC. PRFC has contracted with TTSC at a rate of \$123.60 an hour and expects the work to support T3, T4, T6, and T7 to take 12 months of part-time work and an estimated 1,121 hours.

Other \$0.00: N/A

APPENDIX B: BUDGET – FY2022 – APPROVED BY ACCSP

Description	Calculation	Cost
Personnel (a)		
Principal Investigator	60 hours @ \$57.57/hr	\$3,429.90
Data Administrator	200 hours @ \$21.12/hr	\$4,223.00
Data Management Specialist	600 hours @ \$11.85/hr	\$7,107.00
Personnel Subtotal		\$14,759.90
Fringe (b)		
Principal Investigator	14% of salary	\$455.55
Data Administrator	51% of salary	\$2,092.93
Data Management Specialist	49% of salary	\$3,401.46
Fringe Subtotal		\$5,949.94
Travel (c)		
n/a		
Travel Subtotal		\$0.00
Equipment (d)		
Oracle Cloud Database:		
d. MySQL DB Services 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day 1 OCPU 16 GB RAM 50 GB storage 50 GB backup	\$58/month x 12 months	\$696.00
e. Java Cloud Service Enterprise Edition 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day 2 OCPU	\$461/month x 12 months	\$5,532.00
f. Cloud Infrastructure 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day 2 X9 OCPU 32 GB X9 RAM 50 GB storage	\$164/month x 12 months	\$1,968.00
g. Oracle APEX 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day 2 OCPU 1 TB Storage	\$598/month x 12 months	\$7,176.00
Equipment Subtotal		\$15,372.00
Supplies (e)		
n/a		
Supplies Subtotal		\$0.00

Contractual (f)		
In-house Consultant/Developer	396 hours @ \$103/hr	\$40,788.00
Vendor/Developer	1,121 hours @ 123.60/hr	\$138,555.60
Contractual Subtotal		\$179,343.60
Other (h)		
n/a		
Totals		
Total Direct Charges (i)		\$215,425.44
Indirect Charges (j)	n/a	\$0.00
Total (sum of Direct and Indirect) (k)		\$215,425.44

BUDGET NARATIVE

(Approved Funding Period, FY22)

Project: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) Commercial Fisheries Sector

Project Period: 1 March 2022 – 28 February 2023

1 Year Funding: \$215,612.00

Prepared By: Martin L. Gary, PRFC Executive Secretary

Personnel (Salaries) \$14,330.00: Three PRFC employees' salary time will be covered using these funds. The three employees are: Principal Investigator, for 60 hours (\$3,330.00); Data Administrator, for 200 hours (\$4,100.00), and a Data Management Specialist, for 600 hours (\$6,900.00).

Fringe Benefits \$5,950.00: The current PRFC fringe benefit cost is set per employee at: Principal Investigator at 14% of Salary (\$455.55), Data Administrator at 51% of salary (\$2,092.93), and Data Management Specialist at 49% of salary (\$3,401.46). The Principal Investigator falls within the fringe guidelines set forth by NOAA, however, a full breakdown of how the Fringe Benefits are calculated below (PRFC does not have a NICRA established).

		Principal Investigator	Data Administrator	Data Management Specialist
Gross	Annually	\$ 111,000.00	\$ 41,000.00	\$ 23,000.00
	Hourly	\$ 55.50	\$ 20.50	\$ 11.50
Fringe	Health	\$ -	\$ 15,418	\$ 8,333
	Retirement	\$ 13,086	\$ 4,945	\$ 2,696
	Life	\$ 1,499	\$ 566	\$ 309
	Disability	\$ -	\$ -	
	Def Comp	\$ 600	\$ -	\$ -
	Total:	\$ 15,185	\$ 20,929	\$ 11,338
	Per Hour:	\$ 7.59	\$ 10.46	\$ 5.67
Hours / Year:	2000			
	Rate:	14%	51%	49%
		\$ 7.59	\$ 10.46	\$ 5.67
	Hours:	60	200	600
		\$ 455.55	\$ 2,092.90	\$ 3,401.40
	Total Cost:	\$ 3,330.00	\$ 4,100.00	\$ 6,900.00

Travel \$0.00: N/A

Equipment \$4,832.00: Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) resources are procured to host the PRFC interface between ACCSP and PRFC's MS Access application on a monthly basis. Additionally, PRFC's modernized application runs on the OCI infrastructure as well.

Supplies \$0.00: N/A

Contractual \$190,500.00:

In-house Consultant – Ray Draper: \$50,100.00

Updating the existing PRFC Access based application will require the knowledge and expertise of the consultant/developer Ray Draper. Ray has designed and developed the entire PRFC application from the ground up over the last 15 years and will be the primary developer of the ACCSP interface. This work will require five (5) months of part-time development work, estimated at 501 hours total, and PRFC has contracted with Ray at a rate of \$100 an hour to perform these services.

Talent & Technical Solutions Corporation (TTSC): \$140,400.00

Developing a new PRFC database, procuring cloud services and infrastructure, and assisting with the PRFC existing application integration will be handled by TTSC. PRFC has contracted with TTSC at a rate of \$130 an hour and expects the work to support T3, T4, T6, and T7 to take 12 months of part-time work and an estimated 1,180 hours.

Other \$0.00: N/A

APPENDIX C: BUDGET – FY2023 – APPROVED BY ACCSP

Description	Calculation	ACCSP Cost	PRFC Cost	Total Cost
Personnel (a)				
Principal Investigator	60 ACCSP / 100 PRFC hours @ 56.46/hr	\$3,387.60	\$5,646.00	\$9,033.60
Data Administrator	200 ACCSP / 1880 PRFC hours @ 22.4/hr	\$4,480.00	\$42,112.00	\$46,592.00
Data Management Specialist	600 ACCSP / 1480 PRFC hours @ 12.21/hr	\$7,326.00	\$18,070.80	\$25,396.80
Personnel Subtotal		\$15,193.60	\$65,828.80	\$81,022.40
Fringe (b)				
Principal Investigator	15% of salary	\$523.44	\$17,622.00	\$18,145.44
Data Administrator	49% of salary	\$2,192.47	\$20,635.00	\$22,827.47
Data Management Specialist	50% of salary	\$3,630.00	\$8,954.00	\$12,584.00
Fringe Subtotal		\$6,346.00	\$47,211.00	\$53,556.91
Travel (c)				
n/a				
Travel Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Equipment (d)				
Oracle Cloud Database:				
a. MySQL DB Services 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day 1 OCPU 16 GB RAM 50 GB storage 50 GB backup	\$58/month x 12 months	\$696.00	\$0.00	\$696.00
b. Java Cloud Service Enterprise Edition 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day	\$461month x 12 months	\$5,532.00	\$0.00	\$5,532.00

Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC)

ACCSP Funding Proposal: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the PRFC Commercial Fisheries Sector

Bold Comments indicate sections that help with the ranking process

Highlighted text indicates changes from the first submission

2 OCPU				
c. Cloud Infrastructure 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day 2 X9 OCPU 32 GB X9 RAM 50 GB storage	\$164/month x 12 months	\$1,968.00	\$0.00	\$1,968.00
d. Oracle APEX 1 instance, 31 days/month, 24 hours/day 2 OCPU 1 TB Storage	\$598/month x 12 months	\$7,176.00	\$0.00	\$7,176.00
Equipment Subtotal		\$15,372.00	\$0.00	\$15,372.00
Supplies (e)				
n/a				
Supplies Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contractual (f)				
In-house Consultant/Developer	387 Hours @ \$103/hr	\$39,861.00	\$0.00	\$39,861.00
Vendor/Developer	1121 Hours @ \$123.6/hr	\$138,555.60	\$0.00	\$138,555.60
Contractual Subtotal		\$178,416.60	\$0.00	\$178,416.60
Other (h)				
n/a				
Other Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Totals				
Total Direct Charges (i)		\$215,328.20	\$113,039.80	\$328,367.91
Indirect Charges (j)	n/a	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total (sum of Direct and Indirect) (k)		\$215,328.00	\$113,040.00	\$328,368.00
Percentage		66%	34%	100%

BUDGET NARATIVE

(Funding Period, FY23)

Project: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) Commercial Fisheries Sector

Project Period: 1 March 2023 – 28 February 2024

1 Year Funding: \$215,328

Prepared By: Martin L. Gary, PRFC Executive Secretary

Personnel (Salaries) \$15,193.60: Three PRFC employees' salary time will be covered using these funds. The three employees are: Principal Investigator, for 60 hours (\$3,387.60); Data Administrator, for 200 hours (\$4,480.00), and a Data Management Specialist, for 600 hours (\$7,326.00).

In-Kind \$113,039.80: The three PRFC employees proposed in this effort spend most if not all of their remaining hours working on catch report data and the tool. For each employee, their salary + Fringe costs not covered by the ACCSP grant is considered In-Kind by the PRFC. For this proposal Principal Investigator (100 hours, \$5,646.00 + \$17,622.00 Fringe), Data Administrator (1880 hours, \$42,112.00 + \$20,635.00 Fringe), and Data Management Specialist (1480 hours, \$18,070.80 + \$8,954.00 Fringe) sum up to \$113,014.41 or 34% of total expense for Year 3.

Fringe Benefits \$5,950.00: The current PRFC fringe benefit cost is set per employee at: Principal Investigator at 15% of Salary (\$523.44), Data Administrator at 49% of salary (\$2,192.47), and Data Management Specialist at 50% of salary (\$3,630.00). The Principal Investigator falls within the fringe guidelines set forth by NOAA, however, a full breakdown of how the Fringe Benefits are calculated below (PRFC does not have a NICRA established).

Fringe Benefits Details				
		Principal Investigator	Data Administrator	Data Management Specialist
Gross	Annually	\$117,436.80	\$46,592.00	\$25,396.80
	Hourly	\$56.46	\$22.40	\$12.21
Fringe	Health	N/A	\$15,840.00	\$8,572.80
				\$3,454.80 (Inc. Mission Square)
	Retirement	\$15,972.24	\$6,337.20	
	Life	\$1,573.68	\$624.48	\$340.32
	Disability			\$216.00 (VLDP)
	Def Comp	\$600.00		
	Total	\$18,145.92	\$22,801.68	\$12,583.92

	Per Hour	\$8.72	\$10.96	\$6.05
	Rate	15%	49%	50%
ACCSP Project Hours				
FY 22-23				
Hours / Year:		2080		
	ACCSP Hours	60	200	600
	Fringe Cost	\$523.44	\$2,192.47	\$3,630.00
	ACCSP Cost	\$3,387.60	\$4,480.00	\$7,326.00
	PRFC Hours	100	1880	1480
	PRFC Fringe	\$17,622.00	\$20,635.00	\$8,954.00
	PRFC Cost	\$5,646.00	\$42,112.00	\$18,070.80

Travel \$0.00: N/A

Equipment \$15,372.00: Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) resources are procured to host the PRFC interface between ACCSP and PRFC's MS Access application on a monthly basis. Additionally, PRFC's modernized application runs on the OCI infrastructure as well. PRFC plans to procure a MySQL database to host the upgraded application and provide the primary data interface between PRFC and ACCSP catch and report information. Additionally, Java Cloud, a cloud Virtual Machine, and Oracle APEX will all be required to host the application business logic, interface connection management, and user interface. All cloud services will be procured in full for the year in order to lock in cloud discounts for reserved usage.

Supplies \$0.00: N/A

Contractual \$178,416.60:

In-house Consultant – Ray Draper: \$39,861.00

Updating the existing PRFC Access based application will require the knowledge and expertise of the consultant/developer Ray Draper. Ray has designed and developed the entire PRFC application from the ground up over the last 15 years and will be the primary developer of the ACCSP interface. This work will require five (5) months of part-time development work, estimated at 501 hours total, and PRFC has contracted with Ray at a rate of \$100 an hour to perform these services.

Talent & Technical Solutions Corporation (TTSC): \$138,555.60

Developing a new PRFC database, procuring cloud services and infrastructure, and assisting with the PRFC existing application integration will be handled by TTSC. PRFC has contracted with TTSC at a rate of \$130 an hour and expects the work to support T3, T4, T6, and T7 to take 12 months of part-time work and an estimated 1,180 hours.

Other \$0.00: N/A

APPENDIX D: BUDGET – FY2024 – APPROVED BY ACCSP

BUDGET FOR PROPOSAL PLANNING – FY2024

Description	Calculation	ACCSP Cost	PRFC Cost	Total Cost
Personnel (a)				
Principal Investigator	60 ACCSP / 100 PRFC hours @ \$60.42/hr	\$3,625.00	\$6,042.00	\$9,667.00
Data Administrator	200 ACCSP / 1880 PRFC hours @ \$23.97/hr	\$4,794.00	\$45,064.00	\$49,858.00
Data Management Specialist	600 ACCSP / 1480 PRFC hours @ \$13.46/hr	\$8,076.00	\$19,921.00	\$27,997.00
Personnel Subtotal		\$16,495.00	\$71,027.00	\$87,522.00
Fringe (b)				
Principal Investigator	16% of salary	\$576.00	\$19,398.00	\$19,974.00
Data Administrator	47% of salary	\$2,264.00	\$21,284.00	\$23,548.00
Data Management Specialist	47% of salary	\$3,790.00	\$9,348.00	\$13,138.00
Fringe Subtotal		\$6,630.00	\$50,030.00	\$56,660.00
Travel (c)				
n/a				
Travel Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Equipment (d)				
Oracle Cloud Database:				
a. Autonomous DB 1 instance, 744 hrs/month, 24 hours/day 1 OCPU 1 TB Storage Includes APEX	\$1,118.41/month x 12 months	\$13,421.00	\$0.00	\$13,421.00
b. Compute VM AMD Standard Flex 1 instance, 744 hrs/month, 24 hours/day	\$59.31/month x 12 months	\$712.00	\$0.00	\$712.00

2 OCPU 16 GB Memory 100 GB Storage				
c. Block Storage 1 TB Balanced Performance 10 VPU 25000 Max IOPS 480 MBps Max Throughput	\$42.50/month x 12 months	\$510.00	\$0.00	\$510.00
Equipment Subtotal		\$14,643.00	\$0.00	\$14,643.00
Supplies (e)				
n/a				
Supplies Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contractual (f)				
In-house Consultant/Developer	100 ACCSP / 20 PRFC Hours @ \$106.09/hr	\$10,609.00	\$2,121.80	\$12,730.80
Vendor/Developer	1250 ACCSP / 150 PRFC Hours @ \$127.31/hr	\$159,135.00	\$19,096.20	\$178,231.20
Contractual Subtotal		\$169,744.00	\$21,218.00	\$190,962.00
Other (h)				
n/a				
Other Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Totals				
Total Direct Charges (i)		\$207,512.00	\$142,275.00	\$349,787.00
Indirect Charges (j)	n/a	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total (sum of Direct and Indirect)		\$207,512.00	\$142,275.00	\$349,787.00
Percentage		59%	41%	100%

BUDGET NARATIVE

(Funding Period, FY24)

Project: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) Commercial Fisheries Sector

Project Period: 1 March 2024 – 28 February 2025

1 Year Funding: \$207,512.00

Prepared By: Martin L. Gary, PRFC Executive Secretary

Personnel (Salaries) \$16,495.00: Three PRFC employees' salary time will be covered using these funds. The three employees are: Principal Investigator, for 60 hours (\$3,625.00); Data Administrator, for 200 hours (\$4,794.00), and a Data Management Specialist, for 600 hours (\$8,076.00).

In-Kind \$121,057.00: The three PRFC employees proposed in this effort spend most if not all of their remaining hours working on catch report data and the tool. For each employee, their salary + Fringe costs not covered by the ACCSP grant is considered In-Kind by the PRFC. For this proposal Principal Investigator (100 hours, \$6,042.00 + \$19,398.00 Fringe), Data Administrator (1880 hours, \$45,064.00 + \$21,284.00 Fringe), and Data Management Specialist (1480 hours, \$19,921.00 + \$9,348.00 Fringe) sum up to \$121,057.00 or 34% of total expense for Year 4.

Fringe Benefits \$6,630.00: The current PRFC fringe benefit cost is set per employee at: Principal Investigator at 16% of Salary (\$576.00), Data Administrator at 47% of salary (\$2,264.00), and Data Management Specialist at 47% of salary (\$3,790.00). The Principal Investigator falls within the fringe guidelines set forth by NOAA, however, a full breakdown of how the Fringe Benefits are calculated below (PRFC does not have a NICRA established).

Fringe Benefits Details				
		Principal Investigator	Data Administrator	Data Management Specialist
Gross	Annually	\$125,664.00	\$49,859.00	\$28,000.00
	Hourly	\$60.42	\$23.97	\$13.46
Fringe	Health	\$17,090.00	\$16,099.00	\$8,717.00
	Retirement	\$1,684.00	\$6,781.00	\$3,808.00
	Life		\$668.00	\$375.00
	Disability	\$600.00		\$238.00
	Def Comp	\$600.00		
	Total	\$19,974.00	\$23,548.00	\$13,138.00
	Per Hour	\$9.60	\$11.32	\$6.32
	Rate	16%	47%	47%
ACCSP Project Hours				

Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC)

ACCSP Funding Proposal: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the PRFC Commercial Fisheries Sector

Bold Comments indicate sections that help with the ranking process

Highlighted text indicates changes from the first submission

FY 2024 Hours / Year:		2080		
	ACCSP Hours	60	200	600
	Fringe Cost	\$576.17	\$2,264.23	\$3,789.81
	ACCSP Cost	\$3,624.92	\$4,794.13	\$8,076.92
	PRFC Hours	100	1880	1480
	PRFC Fringe	\$19,397.83	\$21,283.77	\$9,348.19
	PRFC Cost	\$6,041.54	\$45,064.87	\$19,923.08

Travel \$0.00: N/A

Equipment \$14,643.00: Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) resources are procured to host the PRFC interface between ACCSP and PRFC's SAIL application on a monthly basis. PRFC plans to procure Oracle Autonomous Database, with APEX, to host the SAIL application and provide the primary data interface between PRFC and ACCSP catch and report information. Additionally, a cloud Compute Virtual Machine, and additional block storage will all be required to host the application business logic, interface connection management, and user interface. All cloud services will be procured in full for the year in order to lock in cloud discounts for reserved usage.

Supplies \$0.00: N/A

Contractual \$169,744.00:

In-house Consultant – Ray Draper: \$10,609.00

Updating the existing PRFC Access based application will require the knowledge and expertise of the consultant/developer Ray Draper. Ray has designed and developed the entire PRFC application from the ground up over the last 15 years and will be the primary developer of the ACCSP interface. This work will be in a maintenance phase and requires part-time development work, estimated at 100 hours total, and PRFC has contracted with Ray at a rate of \$106.09 an hour to perform these services.

Talent & Technical Solutions Corporation (TTSC): \$159,135.00

Developing the new PRFC SAIL application, procuring cloud services and infrastructure, and assisting with the PRFC-ACCSP integration will be handled by TTSC. PRFC has contracted with TTSC at a rate of \$127.31 an hour and expects the work to support T3, T4, T6, and T7 to take 12 months of part-time work and an estimated 1,250 hours.

Other \$0.00: N/A

APPENDIX E: BUDGET – FY2025 – APPROVED BY ACCSP

BUDGET FOR PROPOSAL PLANNING – FY2025

Description	Calculation	ACCSP Cost	PRFC Cost	Total Cost
Personnel (a)				
Principal Investigator	0 ACCSP / 500 PRFC hours @ \$33.59/hr	\$0.00	\$16,795.00	\$16,795.00
Data Administrator	0 ACCSP / 2080 PRFC hours @ \$25.5/hr	\$0.00	\$53,040.00	\$53,040.00
Data Management Specialist	0 ACCSP / 1400 PRFC hours @ \$15.61/hr	\$0.00	\$21,854.00	\$21,854.00
Executive Secretary	0 ACCSP / 160 PRFC hours @ \$52.34/hr	\$0.00	\$8,374.00	\$8,374.00
Personnel Subtotal		\$0.00	\$83,268.00	\$83,268.00
Fringe (b)				
Principal Investigator	32% of salary	\$0.00	\$22,126.00	\$22,126.00
Data Administrator	46% of salary	\$0.00	\$24,146.00	\$24,146.00
Data Management Specialist	48% of salary	\$0.00	\$15,538.00	\$15,538.00
Executive Secretary	22% of salary	\$0.00	\$23,783.00	\$23,783.00
Fringe Subtotal		\$0.00	\$63,467.00	\$63,467.00
Travel (c)				
n/a				
Travel Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Equipment (d)				
n/a				
Equipment Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies (e)				
Oracle Cloud VM				
a. Autonomous DB 1 instance, 744 hrs/month, 24 hours/day 1 OCPU 512 GB Storage	\$100.00/month x 12 months	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$1,200.00

Supplies Subtotal		\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$1,200.00
Contractual (f)				
In-house Consultant/Developer	25 ACCSP / 20 PRFC Hours @ \$109.27/hr	\$2,731.82	\$2,185.45	\$4,917.27
Vendor/Developer	1055 ACCSP / 150 PRFC Hours @ \$131.20/hr	\$138,412.00	\$19,679.43	\$158,091.43
Contractual Subtotal		\$141,143.82	\$21,864.89	\$163,008.70
Other (h)				
n/a				
Other Subtotal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Totals				
Total Direct Charges (i)		\$142,343.82	\$168,599.89	\$310,943.70
Indirect Charges (j)	n/a	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total (sum of Direct and Indirect)		\$142,344.00	\$168,600.00	\$310,944.00
Percentage		46%	54%	100%

BUDGET NARATIVE

(Funding Period, FY25)

Project: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) Commercial Fisheries Sector

Project Period: 1 Feb 2026 – 31 January 2027

1 Year Funding: \$142,344.00

Prepared By: Ronald W. Owens, PRFC Executive Secretary

Personnel (Salaries) \$0.00: No PRFC employee salaries will be covered using ACCSP funds, all coverage by PRFC personnel will be in-kind.

In-Kind \$168,590.00: The four PRFC employees proposed in this effort spend most if not all of their remaining hours working on catch report data and the tool. For each employee, their salary + Fringe costs not covered by the ACCSP grant is considered In-Kind by the PRFC. For this proposal Principal Investigator (160 hours, \$8,374.00 + \$23,783.00 Fringe), Asst. Executive Secretary (500 hours, \$16,795.00 + \$22,126.00 Fringe), Data Administrator (2080 hours, \$53,040.00 + \$24,146.00 Fringe), and Data Management Specialist (1400 hours, \$21,854.00 + \$15,538.00 Fringe) sum up to **\$168,590.00** or **54%** of total expense for Year 5.

Fringe Benefits \$0.00: No PRFC personnel fringe costs will be reimbursed by ACCSP grant funds. Fringe calculations are below for in-kind evaluation.

Fringe Benefits Details					
		Principal Investigator	Data Administrator	Data Management Specialist	Executive Secretary
Gross	Annually	\$69,860.00	\$53,036.00	\$32,475.00	\$108,870.00
	Hourly	\$33.59	\$25.50	\$15.61	\$52.34
Fringe	Health	\$9,216.00	\$17,050.00	\$9,216.00	\$9,216.00
	Retirement	\$10,969.00	\$6,470.00	\$5,099.00	\$13,282.00
	Life	\$824.00	\$626.00	\$383.00	\$1,285.00
	Disability	\$517.00		\$240.00	
	Def Comp	\$600.00		\$600.00	
	Total	\$22,126.00	\$24,146.00	\$15,538.00	\$23,783.00
	Per Hour	\$10.64	\$11.61	\$7.47	\$11.43
	Rate	32%	46%	48%	22%
ACCSP Project Hours					

FY 2024 Hours / Year:		2080			
	ACCSP Hours	0	0	0	0
	Fringe Cost	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	ACCSP Cost	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	PRFC Hours	100	2080	2080	2080
	PRFC Fringe	\$23,783.00	\$24,146.00	\$15,538.00	\$22,126.00
	PRFC Cost	\$5,234.13	\$53,036.00	\$32,475.00	\$69,860.00

Travel \$0.00: N/A

Equipment \$0.00: N/A

Supplies \$1,200.00: Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) resources are procured to host the PRFC interface between ACCSP and PRFC's SAIL application on a monthly basis. PRFC plans to procure Oracle Autonomous Database, with APEX, to host the SAIL application and provide the primary data interface between PRFC and ACCSP catch and report information. Additionally, a cloud Compute Virtual Machine, and additional block storage will all be required to host the application business logic, interface connection management, and user interface. All cloud services will be procured in full for the year in order to lock in cloud discounts for reserved usage.

Contractual \$141,143.82:

In-house Consultant – Ray Draper: \$2,731.82

Updating the existing PRFC Access based application will require the knowledge and expertise of the consultant/developer Ray Draper. Ray has designed and developed the entire PRFC application from the ground up over the last 15 years and will be the primary developer of the ACCSP interface. This work will be in a maintenance phase and requires part-time development work, estimated at 25 hours total, and PRFC has contracted with Ray at a rate of \$109.27 an hour to perform these services.

Talent & Technical Solutions Corporation (TTSC): \$138,412.00

Developing the new PRFC SAIL application, procuring cloud services and infrastructure, and assisting with the PRFC-ACCSP integration will be handled by TTSC. PRFC has contracted with TTSC at a rate of \$131.20 an hour and expects the work to support T3, T4, T6, and T7 to take 12 months of part-time work and an estimated 1,055 hours. TTSC has unique knowledge of PRFC business processes and is an OCI SME enabling the most efficient execution of this project. This contract is already in place from previous years and this funding will support funding their outyear.

Other \$0.00: N/A

APPENDIX F: Maintenance Projects History for Primary Program Priorities:

Funding Fiscal Year	Amount	Time Period	Results/Comments
2021	\$215,612.00	1 Mar 2021 – 28 Feb 2022	Pilot implementation of ACCSP eTrips and initial development of PRFC Interface & modernized cloud application
2022	\$215,612.00	1 Mar 2022 – 28 Feb 2023	Completed development of PRFC Cloud application SAIL v1.0, piloted eTrips with expanded waterman beta group, delivered initial SAFIS interface to synchronize data between PRFC SAIL v1.0 and SAFIS.
2023	\$215,328.00	1 Mar 2023 – 28 Feb 2024	Completed development of PRFC SAIL v2.0, finalized eTrips PRFC training, revised SAFIS-SAIL two-way interface communication via API and Direct DB connections, expanded pilot to 20% of watermen, implemented initial incentives to transition to eTrips.
2024	\$207,512.00	1 Mar 2024 – 28 Feb 2025	Completed deployment of SAIL and increased eTrips participation of interested watermen, finalize SAFIS-SAIL interface design.
2025	\$142,344.00	1 Mar 2025 – 28 Feb 2026	Increase eTrips participation to 100% of interested watermen, enable SAFIS-SAIL interfaces, research and implement advanced analytics/AI-ML capabilities, additional incentives to use eTrips implemented.
2026	TBD (\$71,172.00 Requested]	1 Feb 2026 – 31 January 2027	Continue to increase participation amongst watermen that were previously not able/willing to adopt eTrips. Finalize all SAIL capabilities. Continue to improve innovative capabilities such as Analytics/AI-ML integration.

APPENDIX G: Resumes for all personnel proposed on the project

RONALD OWENS

CONTACT



Hayes, VA 23072



757-810-5866



ron.owens71@gmail.com

SKILLS

- Mission and Vision Oriented
- Agenda Development
- Improve Policies
- Multimedia Presentations
- Board Representation
- Policy Advisement
- Effective Communicator and Public Speaker
- Strategic Planning
- Policy and Procedure Improvement

APPOINTMENTS

Potomac River Fisheries Commission

- Commissioner (2022-2023)
- Vice Chairman (CY 2023)
- Member of the Budget Committee (CY 2023)
- OMR Review Panel
- Revenue & License Fees Review Panel

REFERENCES

References are available upon request

Results-driven professional with 30 years of experience in environmental management, compliance, and data analysis. Skilled in overseeing regulatory compliance activities, enforcing laws and regulations, and ensuring the safety of the public and natural resources. Strong expertise in program administration, database management, and strategic planning. Demonstrated leadership abilities, effective communication skills, and a track record of delivering high-quality results. Committed to promoting environmental sustainability and public health and safety.

In addition to my work experience, I have been appointed by Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin to serve as a Commissioner of Potomac River Fisheries Commission, serving a 4-year term. I hold various positions within the commission, including Vice Chairman, member of the Budget Committee, OMR Review Panel, and Revenue & License Fees Review Panel.

Throughout my career, I have demonstrated strong leadership skills, attention to detail, and a dedication to delivering high-quality results. I am an excellent communicator and collaborator, with a proven ability to work effectively with diverse stakeholders. I am a driven and knowledgeable professional with a passion for environmental management and compliance.

WORK HISTORY

November 2023 - Current

Executive Secretary, *Potomac River Fisheries Commission*

- Tasked with executing the directives of the appointed Commissioners, all while adhering to the stipulations outlined in the Maryland-Virginia Potomac River Compact of 1958.
- Serves as Commissions CEO and CFO
- Prepares for Quarterly Commission Meeting, assist in creating agenda, and provide background materials for meeting.
- Represents the Commission at local and interstate entities (ASMFC, MAFMC, NOAA Executive Committee GIT).
- Approving appropriate expenditures, preparing financial reports, supplying all materials related to the annual MD-VA audit, and presenting draft budgets to the financial committee.
- Prepare Grant Reports
- Manages a team of skilled professionals who support the Commission in handling of its affairs.

January 2008 - 2023

Chesapeake Bay Programs Administrator , Gloucester County

- Serve as Chesapeake Bay Local Programs Administrator enforcing local environmental, stormwater, wetland, and Chesapeake Bay preservation ordinances.
- Oversee regulatory compliance activities, coordinate program activities involving law violations, drafting environmental documents, and quality control standards.
- Frequent contacts with federal, state, and local governments, business and industry representatives, conservation non-profit organizations and citizens groups, legislative officials, County staff, and the public regarding natural resources.
- Advise Commissioners and board members on regulatory matters while also providing staff support.
- Summarizing environmental studies conducted by consultants; legislative issues, project review/development, delineation and mitigation, vegetation management; erosion and sediment, compliance determinations; environmental contract management; document and evidence preparation and restoration activities.
- August 2002 - December 2007
- Stock Assessment Director Virginia Marine Resources Commission
- Oversaw field and laboratory projects from concept through completion for team of 4 staff members.
- Applied knowledge of complex scientific, ecological Principals, conservation practices, and research methods.
- Effective planning and administration to promote or ensure compliance with federal and state environmental laws and prevents or reduces negative impact on the environment, and citizen safety.
- Collaborated with stakeholders to identify new methods to protect finfish and crabs species.
- Lead teams, manage budgets, advise commissioners and board members.
- Successfully assisted in the implementation of various conservation initiatives that resulted in increased fish populations and improved ecosystem health.
- Provided analysis and interpretation data, interacted with government and regulatory groups, and collaborated with state and local universities.
- Worked with state and federal agencies on fishery compliance issues, wrote documentation for programs, and prepared yearly program reports.

October 2000 - August 2002

Compliance Officer Virginia Marine Resources Commission

- Conducted inspections and investigations; surveys; analysis and evaluation of data, records, and reports; enforcement; mediating/negotiating agreements during the permitting process; analyzing and evaluating fisheries data; interpreting, reviewing, and regulating or conducting program and resource planning; natural and recreational area management; ecological assessments; or audit activities to support environmental protection.
- Analyzed trends, presented cases at hearings, advised Commissioners on enforcement based on regulations.

November 1998 - October 2000

Fisheries Specialist Virginia Marine Resources Commission

- Assisted in quality assurance of data for Virginia commercial water harvest.
- Maintained databases and provided support in various fisheries-related activities.
- Conducted research and assisted in the implementation of various fish management plans.
- Presented information to Commission and various boards.
- Wrote bi-annual and annual grant reports.
- Represented Virginia on several technical boards.

November 1993 - November 1998

Stock Assessment Technician Virginia Marine Resources Commission

- Travel to assigned sites to interview anglers about their fishing experiences, collect a variety of information, and weigh, measure, and identify fish by species name that the anglers have caught.
- Assigned sites included beaches, piers, docks/jetties, and access points for private charter and head boats, including marinas, boat ramps and other points of entry to marine waters.
- Knowledge of applied seafood harvesting practices and business, scientific knowledge of marine species and the marine environment.
- Handled specimens and conducted tests according to established protocols, keeping efficient records on all experiments.

EDUCATION

Business Management Studies Rappahannock College, Glenss, VA

November 2004

Virginia Supervisory Institute

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

Ingrid Braun-Ricks

Core Competencies & Areas of Expertise

- Highly organized and skilled time manager
- Flexible and creative in meeting tight deadlines while juggling multiple projects
- Understanding the big picture (strategic) without losing sight of the details (operational)
- Working productively both independently and collaboratively as part of team

Work Experience

CHIEF FISHERIES SCIENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER | PRFC | JULY 2022 – PRESENT

- Lead science and technology staffer, functioning as biological and technical liaison for Potomac River Fisheries Commission to the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission, EPA-NOAA Chesapeake Bay Program, Chesapeake Bay Stock Assessment Committee, and other science-based groups
- Administrative oversight for PRFC's three advisory committees and PRFC's oyster programs, including logistical and financial oversight
- Oversees fixed gear fishery charting, electronic reporting, and material logistics coordination for PRFC's limited entry striped bass and crab fisheries
- Fiscal responsibilities include assistance with grant writing and reporting, budget preparation and review, front desk financial transactions, posting daily financial transactions, and daily bank deposits

GIS TECHNICIAN | IIC TECHNOLOGIES INC. | MARCH 2021 – MAY 2022

- Compiled and maintained NOAA Nautical Charts for the entire US marine territory, mainly charting depths, soundings, and other various map features as needed
- Packaged, advised and reviewed large scale mapping projects compiled by off site team
- Bridged communication between off site team(India) and National Ocean Service Marine Charting Division to complete tasks within tight deadlines

GIS/OUTREACH TECHNICIAN | PRFC | FEBRUARY 2020 – MAY 2022

- Created and maintained online maps for Fixed Fin Fish gear, PRFC Jurisdiction, and Oyster Bars in the Potomac River to integrate public with online map applications such as ArcGIS
- Delineated potential oyster planting locations for 2021 and 2022 plantings
- **CREATED A PLAN FOR MOBILE APP DEVELOPMENT THAT IS INTEGRATED WITH CURRENT ONLINE MAPS TO STREAMLINE EFFICIENCY**

NATURAL RESOURCE TECHNICIAN I | MD DNR | APRIL 2020 – FEBRUARY 2021

- Assisted in the reproduction of native wild oysters(diploid and triploid) for commercial industry and restorative efforts
- Maintained water chemistry in larval tanks by use of YSI observing pH, temperature, and salinity
- Outside maintenance of property and assorted tasks as needed

Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC)

ACCSP Funding Proposal: Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the PRFC Commercial Fisheries Sector

Bold Comments indicate sections that help with the ranking process

Highlighted text indicates changes from the first submission

GIS INTERN | CITY OF CUMBERLAND DEPT. OF ENGINEERING | MAY 2019 – AUGUST 2019

- Collected survey points using Survey123 and Trimble GPS for Parks and Recreation Department to assess the condition of existing park equipment and produce maps for further use
- Maintained and updated large data sets on varying city municipalities such as street signs, hydrants, and water line maintenance
- Partnered with city engineers to integrate GIS into infrastructure to assess efficiency and develop WorkForce to better record data in field

INTERN | PRFC | MAY 2018 – JANUARY 2019

- Reviewed and assessed current PRFC regulations for two invasive species: Northern snakehead & Blue catfish, recommended regulatory and policy changes. Represented PRFC at First Annual Northern Snakehead Symposium
- Assessed the status of PRFC jurisdictional boundary markers on the Potomac River on the MD & VA shorelines
- Inputted catch reports for Blue Crab Harvest and recreational pleasure boat licenses

CLERK | AQUALAND CAMPGROUND & MARINA | APRIL 2017 – AUGUST 2021

- Set up new software system and trained employees on new procedures while maintaining inventory of campground and marina occupants
- Effectively performed day-to-day front-end operations of a busy store front; taking reservations, collecting payment for recurring charges, providing fuel(gasoline, diesel, propane) and renting Carolina skiffs to a variety of customers
- Sold PRFC Recreational Individual and Pleasure Boat licenses

Education

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE | FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY | (GRADUATION DEC. 18TH, 2019)

- Major: Fisheries; Minors: Sustainability, Geography, and Biology. Cumulative GPA: 3.65, Dean's List (2016-2019)
- Related coursework: Ichthyology, Fish Management, Environmental Chemical Analysis, Surface Water Hydrology, Scientific Writing, Management & Conservation of Natural Resources
- Involvement: President(2019) & Treasurer(2018), The Wildlife Society

TECHNICAL SKILLS & HOBBIES: Proficient with Microsoft Suite (word, excel, outlook, powerpoint, access); efficient with ESRI ArcGIS software. Completed DNR Boaters Education Certification, CPR and First Aid, and MD Hunting/Firearm Safety Certification. Nationally ranked USAPL powerlifter, and wildlife/portrait photographer. Member of American Fisheries Society.

Cathy Friend

WORK EXPERIENCE

Potomac River Fisheries Commission

Colonial Beach, VA

Administrative Specialist

Jan 2012 – Present

- Operate office equipment such as fax machines, copiers, electronic postage machines, and multi-line phone systems, and use computers for spreadsheet, word processing, database management, and other applications;
- Greet customers or callers and handle their inquiries or direct them to the appropriate person according to their needs;
- Prepare the daily cash report making sure all monies balance for the day, verifying receipts vs. monies received that day match;
- Prepare and mail law enforcement manual updates monthly;
- Review and process incoming commercial and recreational license applications; ensuring the correct fees are collected;
- Attend and record all advisory committee meetings and quarterly Commission meetings. Transcribe and prepare minutes from each meeting in a timely manner for review by the Executive Secretary;
- Update and prepare any regulation changes or supplement updates and mail to the appropriate recipients including Commission members, law enforcement, judges, and clerks;
- Adhere to mandatory time lines for preparing and distributing certain documents;
- Enter daily deposits into Quickbooks.

Database Specialist

Jun 2006 – Present

- Troubleshoot and fix any errors associated with the operating database, including contact the IT person for help if needed;
- Maintain the integrity of the data entered by ensuring proper procedures are followed;
- Accurately enter hand written harvest catch data received weekly through the mail and in person; and reach out to any harvester with discrepancies found;
- Adhere to regulations regarding commercial activities to include making sure regulations are followed and provided to harvesters;
- Respond to customer or management request for data by creating queries in the database.

NSWC Federal Credit Union

Dahlgren, VA

Positions held:

1992 - 2004

Human Resource Assistant

Mortgage and Home Equity Loan Officer

Mortgage Loan Clerk

Customer Service Teller

EDUCATION

Rappahannock Community College (1994 – 2000)

King George, VA

Completed coursework towards a A.S. Accounting Specialist (degree not obtained)

West Virginia University (1986 – 1991)

Morgantown, WV

Completed coursework towards B.S. Speech Pathologist (125 credit hours – degree not obtained)

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- Proficient and accurate in using Microsoft Office suite, including Word, Excel, Access and Power Point;
- Entry level use of Quickbooks;
- Able to use a copier to make multiple collated copies as well as making booklets;

Morgan Shaffer

Objective

- To offer my services to a company that promotes conservation and education

Education

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE | MAY 2020 | UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

- Major: Environmental Science: Natural
- Minor: Environmental Sustainability Biology
- Related coursework: Introduction to GIS, Environmental Geochemistry, Field Methods in EESC & GEOL, Pollution Prevention Planning, Hydrology, Toxicology, Ornithology, Animal Behavior

ASSOCIATES | MAY 2017 | RAPPAHANNOCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Major: General Arts & Sciences

Skills & Abilities

COMPUTER SKILLS

- Excellent experience using Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Publisher, and the online Google equivalents
- Good understanding of Skype, Zoom, Webinar, Google Hangouts, and online application Trello
- Experienced in GIS map building, general data analysis, and graphical analysis
- Competent in research using the internet and online databases/libraries
- Quick to learn new programs and technologies

CONSERVATION

- Led and participated in State Park conservation programs such as beekeeping, monarch butterfly raising and tracking, implementing pollinator gardens, and collecting wildflower seeds
- Cared and handled animal ambassadors such as a corn snake, eastern king snake, red-eared sliders, and saltwater fish
- Informed the general public, school groups, and day-care groups about local flora and fauna
- Inspired creativity and critical thinking in children and adults of all ages regarding environmental problems by using hands-on outdoor activities

VISITOR EXPERIENCE & CUSTOMER SERVICE

- First point of contact greeting clients and answering phone calls
- Enriched the experience of 200 – 300 park guests daily through programs, point-duty, and roving
- Performed 2-4 20min-1h long programs daily on a wide variety of subjects, tailoring topics to fit the needs and interests of park guests
- Assisted in providing information, answering questions, taking pictures, and finding resources for guests
- Established a safe environment where the public felt comfortable asking a wide range of questions Assisted in activities directly targeting 4H groups, YMCA, YCC, homeschool groups, and summer school groups
- Adapted all programming and guest interactions to follow Covid guidelines

TEAMWORK

- Basic management such as scheduling other individuals and delegating tasks while taking into account strengths, weaknesses, and time available
- Shared responsibilities with coworkers, willing to take on additional work when coworkers needed extra support
- Capable of taking initiative and handling independent duties

Experience

DATA ENTRY SPECIALIST | POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION | JULY 2022 - PRESENT

- First point of contact between PRFC and the public via in person, phone, or electronic communication
- Data entry and management of fishery related data to fulfill the agency's mission to conserve and improve the valuable fishery resources of the tidal Potomac River
- Handled daily front office financial transactions and bank deposits

DATA ENTRY INTERN | POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION | FEBRUARY 2022 – JULY 2022

- Data entry and management of fishery related data
- Responsible for the daily upkeep and organization of harvest records
- Answering phone calls and taking messages for coworkers
- Analysis of data tables and catching anomalies/mistakes

INTERPRETIVE PARK RANGER | WESTMORELAND STATE PARK | MARCH 2021 – JANUARY 2022

- Supervisor of 1 other park staff and 2 AmeriCorps volunteers; in charge of fairly delegating tasks between coworkers and ensuring they submitted necessary data promptly
- Organized all park programming and the creation of fliers promoting weekly program guides
- Promoted Westmoreland State Park and offered educational programs at local events such as First Friday in Montross and the Fall Festival in Montross

- Created, revised, and transcribed educational park programs including 6 new programs
- Adapted all programming and guest interactions to follow Covid guidelines
- Enriched the experience of 3,000 – 5,000 guests during the summer months

INTERPRETIVE PARK RANGER | WESTMORELAND STATE PARK | MAY 2019 – JULY 2020

- Trained AmeriCorps volunteers
- Led guided tours and activities for park guests daily, teaching topics involving environmental and biological information
- Cared for permanent and temporary ambassador animals such as snakes, lizards, and frogs
- Planned, participated, and volunteered for yearly park events including races and family events

RESUME
Raymond (Ray) Draper

SUMMARY

More than 45 years of providing technical guidance and leadership for numerous people over a variety of computer systems and projects.

EXPERIENCE

Potomac River Fisheries Commission / Consultant, Independent Contractor (April 1993 –

Present) Produced multiple database programs in support of daily operations provided by the PRFC staff. Duties included understanding the requirements, designing the database, operator interfaces, and reports.

Provided hardware support for the first ten years. Supported the transition from the old to the new facility. Provide ad-hoc consulting regarding new technology and capabilities. Provide as-needed support to the staff regarding special requests and system modifications.

Enterprise Resource Planning Supervisor & Time Management Instructor (January 2012 – November 2020) *Contractor/Consultant/Employee – depending on the company who won the follow-on contracts:*

- Primarily responsible for conducting the Instructor Led Training (ILT) that is required for personnel to perform their duties as a Supervisor, Time Keeper, and/or Time Approver.
- Developed specific Step-by-Step guides for trained personnel to use as a refresher after the ILT.
- Modified Navy produced classroom material to be specific to personnel at NSWC Dahlgren.
- Presented ERP seminars to the Government population (general users) on how to use the new ERP system who did not require ILT.
- Developed Step-by-Step guides in PDF format and a parallel video (MP4) version for the general users.
- Designed and taught Knowledge Transfer (KT) sessions on specific, user requested topics related to the Time functionality, such as how to obtain names and quantity of employees working overtime or on a telework status.
- Provide follow-up support via phone, on-site, or on-line as needed.

Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division (September 1984 – December 2011) *Civil*

Service employee assigned to various technical and managerial positions on multiple Navy projects:

- Special Systems Intelligence & Surveillance Branch Head (2008 – 2011): Provided technical and personnel leadership to several intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) projects. These projects included approximately 45 personnel and twenty million dollars.
- Classified Project Software / Project Lead (2002 – 2008): Established and lead a team of software and hardware engineers, technicians, and support personnel with the development of

an intelligence

collection and data fusion system. Responsible for the requirements, design, development, documentation, installation, and training.

- Cooperative Engagement Capability Software Lead (1996 – 2002): Provided technical software oversight to the lead contractors (Raytheon and Lockheed-Martin) for the Government Program Office. Lead local team with software builds, metrics, and installation aboard ships and land sites.
- Cryptologic Systems Embedded Trainer Software Lead (1993 – 1996): Provided technical software oversight to the lead contractor (Electronic Warfare Associates) for the Government Program Office. Facilitated system and design requirements and conducted acceptance testing at the contractor's facility.
- Combat Direction Finder Software Independent Verification Lead (1989 – 1993): Provided technical software oversight to the lead contractor (Raytheon-Sanders) for the Government Program Office and conducted Independent Verification & Validation for initial systems.
- Computer Aided Design & Drafting System Software Developer / Site Lead (1984 – 1989): Developed local applications to improve efficiency with system management (printing, plotting, and data storage). Provided project leadership to cross-functional team and training across the Center.

United States Air Force (June 1974 – June 1980) *Telecommunications Specialist:*

Provided technical analysis and repair to long-haul communication systems, which included HF, VHF, landline, and tropospheric systems. Maintained cryptologic equipment and conducted training on systems to co-workers and members of the US Marine Corp during combat exercises.

EDUCATION

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (September 1980 – September 1984)

- BS Computer Science
- AS Aviation Management
- Commercial Pilot's License
- Flight Instructor



J. BLAIR PARSONS III, PMP, CISSP, ITIL4

Chief Information Officer (CIO)

PROFILE

Blair Parsons is a partner and CIO of Talent & Technical Solutions Corporation (TTSC). He has been an IT industry leader for the last 16 years where he has served in various senior leadership roles, including: Activity Command Information Officer (ACIO), Senior IT Program Manager (PM), Senior Software Engineer PM, and Senior Information Systems Engineer. Blair is laser focused on continuous process improvement through advanced use of IT systems both on-prem and in the cloud to provide accountability, performance monitoring, process metrics, and advanced reporting. His accomplishments include the design and implementation of a dynamic, workflow based, custom action tracking system at NAVSEA; a custom, Talent Management application across the US Navy; and numerous successful cloud native system migrations and refactoring projects.

CONTACT

PHONE: 540.903.3537

EMAIL: blair@tts-c.com

WEBSITE: www.tts-c.com

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

TTSC – Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Oct 2019 – Current

- ◆ Design and execute the corporate IT solutions business strategy to include identification of solutions and services being offered, targeting of customer markets and outreach to potential clients, development of technology roadmaps and trends assessments, and establishment of partner programs for rapid execution and value maximization.
- ◆ Lead all IT related efforts, including the implementation and deployment of MS365, design and development of the TTSC Assessment Model (OAM), design and development of the tts-c.com corporate home page, and design and development of the PowerBI OAM Dashboard.

Falconwood, Inc – Senior Cloud Engineer (DevSecOps)

Sep 2019 – April 2020

CACI – Senior IT Program Manager (PM) / ACIO

Oct 2017 – Sep 2019

CACI – Developer, Group Lead, Project Manager

July 2004 – Sep 2017

EDUCATION

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (2010)

University of Mary Washington ▪ Fredericksburg, VA

MASTER OF MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS (2010)

University of Mary Washington ▪ Fredericksburg, VA

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE (2004)

University of Mary Washington ▪ Fredericksburg, VA

CERTIFICATIONS

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL

(PMP) (2016)

Project Management Institute (PMI) ▪ ACTIVE



CERTIFIED INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY

PROFESSIONAL (CISSP) (2016)

International Information System Security
Certification Consortium (ISC)² ▪ ACTIVE



ITIL 4 FOUNDATION (2020)

ITIL ▪ ACTIVE



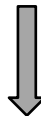
ACCF Funding Proposal, Electronic Trip-Level Reporting for the FRFC Commercial Fisheries Sector

Bold Comments indicate sections that help with the ranking process

Highlighted text indicates changes from the first submission

Ranking Guide - Maintenance Projects:

Primary Program Priority	Point Range	Description of Ranking Consideration
Biological Sampling	0 – 10	Rank based on range within module and level of sampling defined under Program design. When considering biological, bycatch or recreational funding, rank according to priority matrices.
Catch and Effort	0 – 8	
Bycatch/Species Interactions	0 – 6	
Social and Economic	0 - 6	
Data Delivery Plan	+ 2	Additional points if a data delivery plan to the Program is supplied and defined within the proposal.

Project Quality Factors	Point Range	Description of Ranking Consideration
Multi-Partner/Regional impact including broad applications	0 – 5	Rank based on the number of Partners involved in project OR regional scope of proposal (e.g. geographic range of the stock).
> yr 1 contains funding transition plan and/or justification for continuance	0 - 4	Rank based on defined funding transition plan away from Program funding or viable justification for continued Program funding.
In-kind contribution	0 – 4	1 = 1% - 25% 2 = 26% - 50% 3 = 51% - 75% 4 = 76% - 99%
Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness	0 - 4	1 = Maintain minimum level of needed data collections  4 = Improvements in data collection reflect 100% of related module as defined within the Program design. Metadata is provided and defined within proposal if applicable.
Potential secondary module as a by-product (In program priority order)	0 – 5 0 – 4 0 – 3 0 - 3	Ranked based on additional module data collection and level of collection as defined within the Program design of individual module.
Impact on stock assessment	0 - 3	Rank based on the level of data collection that leads to new or greatly improved stock assessments as specified in the proposal.
Impact on management	0 - 3	Rank based on the level of data collection that leads to new or greatly improved management as specified in the proposal.

Other Factors	Point Range	Description of Ranking Consideration
Properly Prepared	-1 – 1	Meets requirements as specified in funding decision document Step 2b and Guidelines
Merit	0 - 3	Ranked based on subjective worthiness

Ranking Guide – Maintenance Projects: (to be used only if funding available exceeds total Maintenance funding request)

Other Factors	Point Range	Description of Ranking Consideration
Achieved Goals	0 – 3	Proposal indicates project has consistently met previous set goals. Current proposal provides project goals and if applicable, intermediate metrics to achieve overall achieved goals.
Data Delivery Plan	0 – 2	Ranked based if a data delivery plan to Program is supplied and defined within the proposal.
Level of Funding	-1 - 1	-1 = Increased funding from previous year 0 = Maintained funding from previous year 1 = Decreased funding from previous year
Properly Prepared	-1 – 1	-1 = Not properly prepared 1 = Properly prepared
Merit	0 - 3	Ranked based on subjective worthiness



JOSH STEIN
Governor

D. REID WILSON
Secretary

KATHY B. RAWLS
Director

July 23, 2025

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
Operations and Advisory Committees
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22204

Dear Committee Members,

We respectfully submit this revised maintenance proposal titled **“FY26: North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of existing and future data”**. This request supports an additional year of development on NCDMF’s innovative socioeconomic database and web interface. Continued support aligns directly with ACCSP's goals to improve the collection, management, and dissemination of economic and sociological data.

To date, our development efforts have focused on a prototype using a commercial fishermen survey. In FY26, the scope of the project will not change but the focus will expand to include migrating historic socioeconomic data across all sectors (i.e., recreational, shellfish, for-hire, and dealer surveys) into the database and enhancing the interface to support their unique formats. The extensive variation in survey designs between sectors has made the development of a universal question bank and consistent data model a time-consuming effort but these steps are essential in ensuring broad compatibility and long-term utility of the new application by NCDMF.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jason Walsh
Fisheries Economics Program Manager
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
jason.walsh@deq.nc.gov

Proposal for Funding made to:

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
Operations and Advisory Committees
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22204

FY26: North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of existing and future data

Submitted by:

Jason Walsh
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
3441 Arendell Street; P.O. Box 769
Morehead City, NC 28557
jason.walsh@deq.nc.gov

Applicant Name: North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Project Title: FY26: North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of current and future data

Project Type: Maintenance

Principal Investigator: Jason Walsh
NCDMF Fisheries Economics Program Manager

Requested Award Amount: \$145,020

Requested Award Period: For one year, beginning after the receipt of funds.

Original Date Submitted: June 13, 2025

Objective

Continue developing a consolidated socioeconomic database to be used by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) to organize existing data for easier analysis and standardize future data entry and storage. In FY26, focus will be on migrating historical datasets into the new database and expanding the interface to support multiple survey types (e.g., recreational, for-hire, shellfish) beyond the commercial survey design used as the template by building a flexible question bank to accommodate their diverse survey structures. A consolidated database housing standardized data will also facilitate future transmissions of fishery-dependent socioeconomic data to the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Data Warehouse.

Background/Need

North Carolina's fisheries are a significant social and economic resource to the state and its communities. The NCDMF works to better understand and predict the impact these fisheries have both on their communities and on the state's economy. The North Carolina Fisheries Economics Program (NCFEP) has a wide range of surveys that they use to monitor economic performance over time including commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen, shellfish/aquaculture, for-hire, and dealer surveys.

NCDMF has been collecting socioeconomic information on commercial and recreational fishing in North Carolina for more than two decades. The NCFEP collects data on all stakeholders in commercial and recreational fisheries to better understand the role fisheries play in the state of North Carolina. Due to the diversity of stakeholder groups in fisheries, the data collected varies between surveys and between years as surveys are continuously updated to summarize contributions. The variables that are often collected include but are not limited to the following: demographic information, gear used, species targeted, expenditure and/or costs associated with business, income, fishing history, and perceptions and awareness of regulations. These data are collected to better understanding coastal communities that rely on the fishing industries, recreational and commercial fishermen, and the impact of all fishing industries on the State's economy through intra and interstate commerce.

The program administers surveys to stakeholders to monitor species-specific and broad fishery performance to achieve the goals of the Division. The data collected through these surveys are considered sensitive and confidential information about fishermen and dealers in North Carolina but are currently stored on a NCDMF network drive that is open to every employee within the License and Statistics Section. These data are collected and stored in Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access formats in organized folders with corresponding metadata in Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Word documents according to standard operating procedures written by the NCFEP. Given the diversity and structure of datasets there has not been a centralized location for data to be stored. This leads to data being disorganized, difficult to work with and challenging to identify trends which is pertinent to the goal of identifying fishery economic performance and participation over time. Consolidation of these data into a standardized database will allow for faster data entry, validation and analysis as well as facilitate increased protection and organization to ensure data are handled appropriately.

Some surveys are newly created every year, while other surveys are updated about every five years. In the last few years, there has been a delay in data collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic and staff turnover. To better accommodate future variability, consolidating data into a centralized system will reduce delays and improve the organization and structure of resources, enabling more efficient collection, management, and sharing of socioeconomic data across management bodies.

ACCSP funded a new project in FY2023 called “North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of existing and future data” and a developer to build this new database and interface was hired in January 2024. The delay in the start date of the FY2023 grant was due to funds not being available to NCDMF until September 2023 and longer than expected recruitment of a contract developer. An FY2025 maintenance project was also funded through the ACCSP entitled “FY25: North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of current and future data” to continue this work. Those monies are expected in July 2025. Between the end of the FY2023 grant in December 2024 and the upcoming start of the FY2025 grant, NCDMF supported the developer to continue work on this project with in-house monies but those were one-time monies and are unavailable for future use. This maintenance proposal is being submitted to continue funding a contractor for the development of the socioeconomic application for one more year. This project is a large consolidation of past surveys that have a variety of survey question types and variables. The new system will allow for standardized storage and use of past survey data and the development of a novel survey application to meet the needs of fishery managers and the Division. The development of this interface is centered around being flexible and object-oriented by using one past survey as an example to build the infrastructure of the new system but still allow the economist to add all other past surveys and their associated data without having to build additional functionality into the system. The new system will have a modular structure which will vary across fishery sectors and will provide the socioeconomic program with a simple “point and click” format that can adapt to changes in survey needs over time.

The project, initiated in FY2023, created a scalable SQL Server database and began building a dynamic web interface using a commercial fishermen survey as the template. However, to fulfill ACCSP's FY26 priorities and the Division's management goals, integration of additional survey types is essential. Each survey (e.g., commercial, recreational, shellfish, for-hire, dealer) varies substantially in structure, data types, and question logic. As a result, creating a flexible question bank and mapping legacy data into the unified system is a complex and resource-intensive task.

The scope of this project has not changed; however, this year, emphasis will be placed on:

- Migrating historic data into the new relational schema
- Building interface support for non-commercial surveys
- Expanding the survey question repository to accommodate diverse data fields

This proposal covers the socioeconomic module (100%).

Review of Previous Results:

A relational SQL Server database was developed to store existing data that have been historically housed in Microsoft Access and Microsoft Excel documents on the NCDMF servers. One survey was chosen as our prototype for this project which was a survey of commercial fishermen who fish in the Atlantic Ocean. All data for this survey has been migrated into the database and can be accessed by the NCDMF Economist with statistical software like SAS or R. The start of an interactive web-based interface has been developed with screens to view and manage surveys and survey questions, and a commercial survey template can be created by the system. In the future, this modern SQL Server database can be linked to the NCDMF FIN database for commercial license data and the GoOutdoors (formerly known as ALVIN) database which houses the recreational license data to facilitate pulling sample populations more efficiently.

Through the development of the database, it has become clear that the socioeconomic surveys are complex and variable across sectors. There is a wide variety of types of questions unique to sectors that require diverse relational structures in the database. The developer has produced tables in the database

for the commercial sector and has received feedback from NCDIT and the PI. The developer is currently working with NCDIT and the PI to refine the survey templates and to build functionality to view and edit existing survey records within the template.

The FY2023 grant ended in December 2024. The FY2025 maintenance proposal will begin in July 2025 (or whenever the money becomes available). NCDMF has sustained the same developer between the FY2023 and FY2025 projects to ensure continuity of institutional knowledge, maintain development momentum, and reduce onboarding time, significantly enhancing efficiency and consistency across all phases of the system's design and implementation. To support timely project completion, two additional NCDIT staff were provided as in-kind support to assist the ACCSP-funded contractor in developing a uniquely tailored application not currently available at NCDMF.

Approach

NCDMF staff will continue to work with NCDIT staff on a requirements document to detail specific needs and expectations of the new data structure and corresponding input/output (I/O) interface. This document will be fluid and will be updated as decisions are made. The requirements document will be updated to reflect multiple survey types added during this project.

All data will be consolidated into a relational database within SQL Server. This database will be able to interact with the NCDMF FIN database where the commercial license data are stored as well as the Wildlife Resources Commission GoOutdoors (formerly known as ALVIN) database where the recreational license data are stored.

A web-based application will continue to be built to serve as the front-end interface for data entry and editing of socioeconomic surveys for commercial, recreational, for-hire, shellfish, and dealers. A robust question bank supporting all survey formats will be built and the database fields will be expanded to accommodate the diversity of data fields between survey types. NCDMF staff will continue to work with NCDIT staff to complete this project. Several NCDIT staff are housed at the NCDMF Headquarters office in Morehead City, NC and will be overseeing, assisting, and facilitating this project as well as helping with database development. A contractor was hired under the FY2023 grant to complete the interface development, will continue on ACCSP funds for FY2025 and then this grant, if approved.

The new SQL Server database and web-based interface will allow for consolidation of NCFEP data for optimized use by the NCDMF to meet fishery management goals. Once the data are consolidated, a file can be submitted to ACCSP for use by other state partners and in regional fishery management plans such as Black Sea Bass, Bluefin Tuna, American Shad, Cobia, and other commercially and recreationally targeted species in North Carolina.

NCDIT at NCDMF has been using the Agile SCRUM methodology for software development over the last 10 years. Development of the database and interface referenced in this proposal will also be conducted using Agile and 3-week development Sprints. User stories to define "bite-sized" pieces of functionality from the requirements document will be created to guide the development process. During development, components of the system will undergo User Acceptance Testing (UAT) by the NCDMF Economist, who will validate that the functionality meets analytical and programmatic needs. This iterative feedback loop ensures the application remains aligned with user expectations and real-world use cases as new modules are developed and integrated.

Results and Benefits

By the end of FY26, the project will provide:

- Consolidation and standardization of NCDMF's socioeconomic data including legacy datasets
- Data that can be easily formatted to facilitate use of fishery-dependent socioeconomic data by NCDMF staff and other state partners once data are submitted to ACCSP
- Fully functional data entry and verification modules for North Carolina NCFEP data including multiple fishery sectors within the interface
- Increased timeliness and cleanliness of North Carolina's socioeconomic data to state and regional fishery managers and stakeholders

Geographic Location

The NCDMF Headquarters are located in Morehead City, North Carolina. This project may be performed remotely and does not require the position to be located in Morehead City. NCDIT staff working on this project are also based in Morehead City. NCDIT contractors working for the Department are located in Charlotte, North Carolina. The current NCFEP manager is located in Kill Devil Hills, NC, which is close to the NCDMF Manteo field office.

Data Delivery Plan

Documentation of the new data entry and editing interface as well as any metadata and the new database schema will be provided to ACCSP as part of the annual report. Documentation on the new database will include data mapping tables that provide a definition of each variable. Any new stored procedures created during this project will include documentation on primary function, data tables being accessed, and corresponding variables within the procedure's SQL code.

Completed Data Delivery to ACCSP

The FY2023 project finished in December 2024, after a no-cost extension. Throughout the project, performance reports have been submitted as required. The final report for FY2023 will be completed by the due date (due date is 6/28/2025). Reports for the FY2025 project, once started, will also be completed by the respective due dates.

Milestone Schedule (start date depending on time of grant award):

Task	Month											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Update requirements document and user stories	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Create new database tables for new survey types		X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Migrate historic survey data			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Refactor interface for new survey templates, as needed	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Expand question bank and mapping		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
QA, testing, and documentation						X	X	X	X	X	X	X

The contractor is expected to work 40 hours a week on this project. Report writing will follow the requirements of two semi-annual status reports and a final report due at the end of the grant award.

Project Accomplishments Measurement (Metrics and Achieved Goals)

Projects	Accomplishments
Update requirements document, as needed throughout project	Document is completed and describes functionality that needs to be completed in new application
User stories are created for Agile Development	User stories are written and document small tasks for developers to complete requirements within Sprints
Multi-survey interface integration	At least 3 new surveys active within the interface
Question bank development	Minimum of 150 validate reusable survey questions
Data migration	100% of data for surveys active within the system have been migrated to SQL
Documentation	Updated schemas and metadata delivered to ACCSP

Project Personnel

Jason Walsh— Fisheries Economics Program Manager, NCDMF License and Statistics Section (NCDEQ)

Stephanie McInerney—Section Chief, NCDMF IT Section (NCDIT)

Brandi Salmon—Section Chief, NCDMF License and Statistics Section (NCDEQ)

Semir Badic – Applications Systems Analyst II, NCDMF IT Section (NCDIT)

Chris Capoccia – Applications Systems Analyst II, NCDMF IT Section (NCDIT)

Funding Transition Plan

This project will hopefully be completed within the proposed 1-year maintenance grant period. After the FY26 grant, a better inventory of survey questions and survey types will exist in the system. Other historic surveys that still need to be migrated can be completed by NCDIT and NCDMF staff.

FY26 Budget Narrative

The cost summary table below shows an explanation for each budget item for a one-year period. NCDIT will not charge an indirect fee for the Contractor. The cost for the developer in the summary below is based on an expert level .NET developer from NCDIT's convenience contracts.

The hours represent the time dedicated to this project from the developer, NCDIT staff, and L&S staff. The contractor that was hired on the FY23 grant is still working on this project and will start on the FY2025 grant when the money become available. This contractor will continue to work on this project in the proposed maintenance window, if approved. In the case of the departure of the contractor from this project, a new contractor will be hired at the same hourly rate. Additional NCDIT staff were included in this year's project as in-kind to support the contractor on developing novel approaches to application development to facilitate this project.

FY26 Cost Summary

Category	Expense	Units	Cost	ACCSP Request	State In-Kind	Explanation
Personnel	Contractor	1	\$143,520	\$143,520		One Analyst @ \$69/hr for 2,080 hrs (1 year)
	IT Section Chief	1			\$40,768	\$10,192/month for 4 months
	L&S Section Chief	1			\$13,602	\$6,801/month for 2 months
	IT Applications Systems Analyst II	2			\$45,600	\$7,600/month for 3 months
	Fisheries Economics Program Manager	1			\$34,422	Average salary of \$5,737/month for 6 months
Subtotal				\$143,520	\$134,392	
Fringe	Retirement, Social Security, Health Insurance				\$44,965	Fringe=25.02% of salary (\$33,625) plus \$7,557/year for health insurance (1 month insurance = \$630*18 months combined work=\$11,340)
Indirect						No indirect needed for NCDIT contractors
Subtotal				\$0	\$44,965	
Supplies	Computer	1	\$1,500	\$1,500		Replacement laptop for contractor, if needed
Subtotal				\$1,500	\$0	
	Column Totals			\$145,020	\$179,357	Total project cost = \$324,377
	Total Request					
	Percent			45%	55%	Percentage calculated from total cost

Attachment 1: Budget Narrative and Cost Summary for previously funded projects (FY2023 and FY2025)

FY23 Budget Narrative

The cost summary table below shows an explanation for each budget item for a one-year period. NCDIT will not charge an indirect fee for the Contractor. The cost for the developer in the summary below is based on an expert level .NET developer from NCDIT's convenience contracts.

FY23 Cost Summary

Category	Expense	Units	Cost	ACCSP Request	State In-Kind	Explanation
Personnel	Contractor	1	\$143,520	\$143,520		One Analyst @ \$69/hr for 2,080 hrs (1 year)
	IT Section Chief	1			\$18,938	\$9,469/month for 2 months
	L&S Section Chief	1			\$11,154	\$5,577/month for 2 months
	Fisheries Economics Program Manager	1			\$28,134	Average salary of \$4,689/month for 6 months
Subtotal				\$143,520	<u>\$58,226</u>	
Fringe	Retirement, Social Security, Health Insurance				\$20,245	Fringe=24.19% of salary (\$14,085) plus \$7,397/year for health insurance (1 month insurance = \$616*10 months combined work=\$6,160)
Indirect						No indirect needed for NCDMF contractors
Subtotal				\$0	<u>\$20,245</u>	
Supplies	Computer	1	\$1,500	\$1,500		Laptop for contractor, if needed
Subtotal				\$1,500	\$0	
	Column Totals			\$145,020	<u>\$78,471</u>	Total project cost = \$223,491
	Total Request					
	Percent			65%	35%	Percentage calculated from total cost

FY25 Budget Narrative

The cost summary table below shows an explanation for each budget item for a one-year period. NCDIT will not charge an indirect fee for the Contractor. The cost for the developer in the summary below is based on an expert level .NET developer from NCDIT's convenience contracts.

The hours represent the time dedicated to this project from the developer, NCDIT staff, and L&S staff. The contractor that was hired on the FY23 grant is still working on this project and will continue to work on this project in the proposed maintenance window, if approved. In the case of the departure of the

contractor from this project, a new contractor will be hired at the same hourly rate. Additional NCDIT staff were included in this year's project as in-kind to support the contractor on developing novel approaches to application development to facilitate this project.

FY25 Cost Summary

Category	Expense	Units	Cost	ACCSP Request	State In-Kind	Explanation
Personnel	Contractor	1	\$143,520	\$143,520		One Analyst @ \$69/hr for 2,080 hrs (1 year)
	IT Section Chief	1			\$40,768	\$10,192/month for 4 months
	L&S Section Chief	1			\$13,602	\$6,801/month for 2 months
	IT Applications Systems Analyst II	2			\$45,600	\$7,600/month for 3 months
	Fisheries Economics Program Manager	1			\$34,422	Average salary of \$5,737/month for 6 months
Subtotal				\$143,520	<u>\$134,392</u>	
Fringe	Retirement, Social Security, Health Insurance				\$44,965	Fringe=25.02% of salary (\$33,625) plus \$7,557/year for health insurance (1 month insurance = \$630*18 months combined work=\$11,340)
Indirect						No indirect needed for NCDMF contractors
Subtotal				\$0	<u>\$44,965</u>	
Supplies	Computer	1	\$1,500	\$1,500		Replacement laptop for contractor, if needed
Subtotal				\$1,500	\$0	
	Column Totals			\$145,020	<u>\$179,357</u>	Total project cost = \$324,377
	Total Request					
	Percent			45%	55%	Percentage calculated from total cost

Attachment 2: Project History and Total Project Cost by Year

Year	Title	Cost	Results
2023	<i>North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of existing and future data</i>	\$145,020	Project completed in December 2024. Requirements document was created. SQL database has been built and populated with pilot survey data , a web-based interface has been created, new surveys and survey questions can be added and edited within the system. The commercial survey used as the pilot can be viewed in the system as a template.
2025	<i>FY25: North Carolina socioeconomic database construction for the management of existing and future data</i>	\$145,020	Expected to start in July 2025

Condensed Summary for Ranking for Maintenance Proposals

Proposal Type: *Maintenance*

Achieved Goals:

Goals of the FY23 project has been met; however, the full interface turned out to be more work than expected due to diverse survey designs across sectors resulting in maintenance proposals in FY25 and FY26. FY23 project completed in December 2024. Requirement document was created. SQL database has been built and populated with pilot survey data, a web-based interface has been created, new surveys and survey questions can be added and edited within the system. The commercial survey used as the pilot can be viewed in the system as a template. Development is steadily continuing on this project. FY25 project started in July 2025 to continue this work.

Data Delivery Plan:

A detailed plan is in place to deliver documentation, metadata, stored procedures, and database schema to ACCSP. New documentation on the new database will include data mapping tables that provide a definition of each variable. Any new stored procedures created during this project will include documentation on primary function, data tables being accessed, and corresponding variables within the procedure's SQL code. Documentation will be provided as part of the grant completion report. (Page 6)

Level of Funding:

This proposal is requesting the same amount as last year's proposal.

Properly Prepared:

This proposal follows the guidelines provided in the ACCSP Funding Decision Document.

Summary of Proposal for Ranking Purposes

Proposal Type: *Maintenance*

Primary Program Priority

Social and Economic: 100%

The NCFEP strives to assess and follow the economic performance of the State's marine resources. This goal includes, but is not limited to, understanding coastal communities that rely on the fishing industries, recreational and commercial fishermen, and the impact of all fishing industries on the State's economy through intra and interstate commerce. The program administers surveys to recreational fishermen, commercial fishermen, processors, and other stakeholders to achieve the goals of the Division. The project directly fulfills ACCSP's high-priority focus on socioeconomic data by centralizing trip-level and owner/operator socioeconomic information from North Carolina. (Page 3-5)

Data Delivery Plan:

A detailed plan is in place to deliver documentation, metadata, stored procedures, and database schema to ACCSP. New documentation on the new database will include data mapping tables that provide a definition of each variable. Any new stored procedures created during this project will include documentation on primary function, data tables being accessed, and corresponding variables within the procedure's SQL code. Documentation will be provided as part of the grant completion report. (Page 6)

Project Quality Factors

Multi-Partner/Regional impact including broad applications:

Although this project only covers data for North Carolina, many species within North Carolina are managed regionally. Regional management agencies such as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) would benefit from having more access to these fishery-dependent socioeconomic data. (Page 3-5)

Contains funding transition plan and/or justification for continuance:

The goals defined in this project should be completed within the grant cycle. (Page 7)

In-kind contribution:

55% (see cost table on Page 7-8)

Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness:

The project identified in this proposal will greatly improve data quality and timeliness by providing a more modernized format for the data with enhanced data entry/verification screens and workflows that will prepare North Carolina for future data reference and analysis. (Page 4)

Potential secondary module as a by-product:

None

Impact on stock assessment:

By organizing and standardizing socioeconomic data, the project enables more efficient access to information used in stock assessment processes. Accurate socioeconomic profiles of fishery

participants, expenditures, and effort provide context for understanding fishery dynamics, evaluating management alternatives, and informing bioeconomic models. With improved data quality and accessibility, assessment scientists and managers can better account for human dimensions in their analyses. (Page 3-5)

Impact on management:

The consolidation of socioeconomic data across multiple fisheries supports informed decision-making by providing a clearer picture of how regulations and fishery dynamics impact coastal communities and stakeholder economics. With improved access to data on income, expenditures, and participant demographics across sectors, managers can better evaluate the economic tradeoffs of management alternatives, ensure equitable outcomes, and increase transparency in the decision-making process. This system also improves the agency's responsiveness to ad-hoc policy questions and public information requests. (Pages 3-5)

Other Factors

Properly Prepared:

This proposal follows the guidelines provided in the ACCSP Funding Decision Document.

Merit:

Modernizing NCDMF's Socioeconomic Database and the front-end interface that allow data entry clerks and analysts to interact with the database is crucial to the success of socioeconomic data collection programs in North Carolina. (Page 5)

Jason Walsh

Cell: (525)269-9299 Email: Jason.Walsh@deq.nc.gov

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

EDUCATION

University of Rhode Island	Graduated: 2021
M.S., Environmental and Natural Resource Economics	
University of North Carolina (Wilmington, NC)	Graduated: 2015
B.A., Economics	
B.S., Environmental Science	
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (Port Elizabeth, South Africa)	January-May 2014
Moulay Ismail University (Meknes, Morocco)	January-May 2013

WORK EXPERIENCE

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries	Morehead City, North Carolina
- Fisheries economics program manager - Supervisor of social research scientist temporary staff - Support fishery managers in the development of fishery management plans - Complete fiscal notes in the rule development process - Leading PI to ongoing project identifying economic contribution of for-hire industry to North Carolina economy funded by ACFCMA - Leading PI to ongoing project on an update status of economic contribution of shellfish aquaculture industry to North Carolina economy funded by SK grant - Leading PI on ongoing project to create novel economic database for the NC fisheries economics program funded by ACCSP - Member of SAFMC SSC and ASMFC CESS	January 2022-Present
McArthur Environmental Consulting	Framingham, Massachusetts
Prepare documents for clients and local municipalities	December 2020-December 2021
Rhode Island Fish and Wildlife	Wakefield, Rhode Island
Field interview marine recreational anglers	July 2017-October 2017

RESEARCH

Research Assistant (Dr. Todd Guilfoos, Professor of Natural Resource Economics URI)	May 2017-May 2021
20 Hours/Week - Creating hedonic studies on the economic effect of dam removals in New England using statistical tools Stata and ArcGIS	

Student Trainee (USDA Economic Research Service)**June 2019-August 2019**

- 40 Hours/ Week
- Intern modelling nutrient runoff of farms from the agricultural resource management survey using the environmental policy integrated climate model software.

Research Assistant (Annette Bourbonniere)**September 2018-May 2019**

- 10 Hours/ Week
- A team member developing the model and performing analysis using R for a discrete choice study on the effect of removing earnings from insurance and social security payments for persons with spinal chord injuries

Research Consultant (Chris Brozyna)**December 2018-May 2019**

- 5 Hours/ Week
- A team member providing assistance during analysis and writing stages of an experimental economics study on TURFS (a rights based fishery management strategy)

Directed Independent Study (Dr. Peter Schuhmann, Professor of Economics at UNCW) July 2015-2016

- Used Contingent valuation methods and regression analysis to assess willingness to pay and willingness to return of tourists to Barbados

Directed Independent Study (Dr. Zachary Long, Professor of Ecology at UNCW) July-December 2014

- Studied macro algae at Fort Fisher recreation area to find how stability of benthic marine communities' consumers is influenced by the presence of invasive macro algae

PUBLICATIONS**A Hedonic Study of New England Dam Removals****September 2021**

- An analysis of dam removals heterogeneous effects on housing prices in New England
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0921800922002853>

TURF Wars: Group Dynamics in Resource Management**October 2019**

- Working paper at the Center for Growth and Opportunity on TURF as a fishery management tool.
- <https://www.thecgo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/working-paper-2019.013.pdf>

PRESENTATIONS**AAEA Conference Presentation****August 2018**

- Present preliminary results from first chapter of dissertation. A hedonic study on dam removals heterogeneous effect on housing prices.

Guest Lecturer**February 2019 & February 2020**

- Present results from first chapter of dissertation in an ecohydrology graduate course. A hedonic study on dam removals heterogeneous effect on housing prices. This also serves as an introduction to environmental economics to the masters of environmental management at URI.



Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N | Arlington, VA 22201

703.842.0780 | 703.842.0779 (fax) | www.accsp.org

Geoff White, Director
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

August 15, 2025

Dear Mr. White,

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Recreational Technical Committee (RTC) is pleased to submit the revised proposal titled, 'Pilot test of recreational released catch cards into the sampling design of the MRIP APAIS' for your review. This is a continuation of the previous year's proposal from the RTC offering a novel approach to compare release data from catch cards to existing data sources and to increase the numbers of lengths collected from released fish from the private/rental boat and shore fishing modes.

Please let us know if you have any questions or require further information about this request.

Sincerely,

Dawn Franco
Marine Biologist 2
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Coastal Resources Division
1 Conservation Way
Brunswick, GA 31520
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Research Statistician IV
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Fishing and Boating Services
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(410) 260-8284

Proposal for FY2026 ACCSP Funding

Applicant Name: ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee

Project Title: Pilot test of recreational released catch cards into the sampling design of the MRIP APAIS

Project Type: Maintenance

ACCSP Program Priorities: Catch and Effort

Principal Investigator: Dawn Franco, dawn.franco@dnr.ga.gov
Angela Giuliano, angela.giuliano@maryland.gov

Project Staff: Dave Martins, dave.martins@mass.gov
John Lake, john.lake@dem.ri.gov
Greg Wojcik, gregory.wojcik@ct.gov
Rachel Sysak, rachel.sysak@dec.ny.gov
Garry Glandon, garry.glandon@delaware.gov
Jeff Moore, jeffrey.n.moore@deq.nc.gov
Alex DiJohnson, alex.dijohnson@accsp.org
Trevor Scheffel, trevor.scheffel@accsp.org
Full-time, part-time, and seasonal staff

Requested Award Amount: \$180,509.71

Requested Award Period: May 1 – December 31, 2026

Submission Date: August 15, 2025

Highlighted text indicates substantial changes from the first submission
Underlined text identifies key details that meet ranking criteria

Objectives

This proposal is for a second year of a pilot project for calendar year 2026 offering use of a catch card as a supplementary sampling design to enhance the understanding of discard information in recreational fisheries along the Atlantic Coast. A second year of funding will allow the project to further refine the methods in order to ensure that they are optimized for recreational discard data collection. It will also allow for the expansion of the pilot project to additional states and collecting a second year of data for comparisons to existing data sources including the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS). Private/rental boat mode will be the main focus but collection from multiple modes will be possible at the discretion of participating state partners. This proposal will pilot a modified sampling design to the MRIP APAIS to collect information from randomly selected anglers about their discarded fish during a recreational fishing trip. The specific objectives include:

- Requesting prior to the start of a fishing trip that anglers record traditional discard information that is currently collected through the APAIS (e.g., species, count, hours fished, fishing area).
- Collecting additional fields relevant to discard mortality (e.g., depth and lengths of discarded fish). This would be beneficial for the private/rental boat mode which comprises the majority of recreational discards for several key species (Figure 1).
- Using the same stratified random sample design, or probability-based sampling, as the APAIS will allow comparison to existing APAIS discard data collection and explore if bias exists.
- Compare data collected via catch cards to existing headboat and dockside sampling or other data sources.
- Educate the recreational fishing community on the importance of accurate discard information in fisheries management and stock assessment.
- Educate the recreational fishing community on discard mortality, barotrauma and safe fish handling techniques.

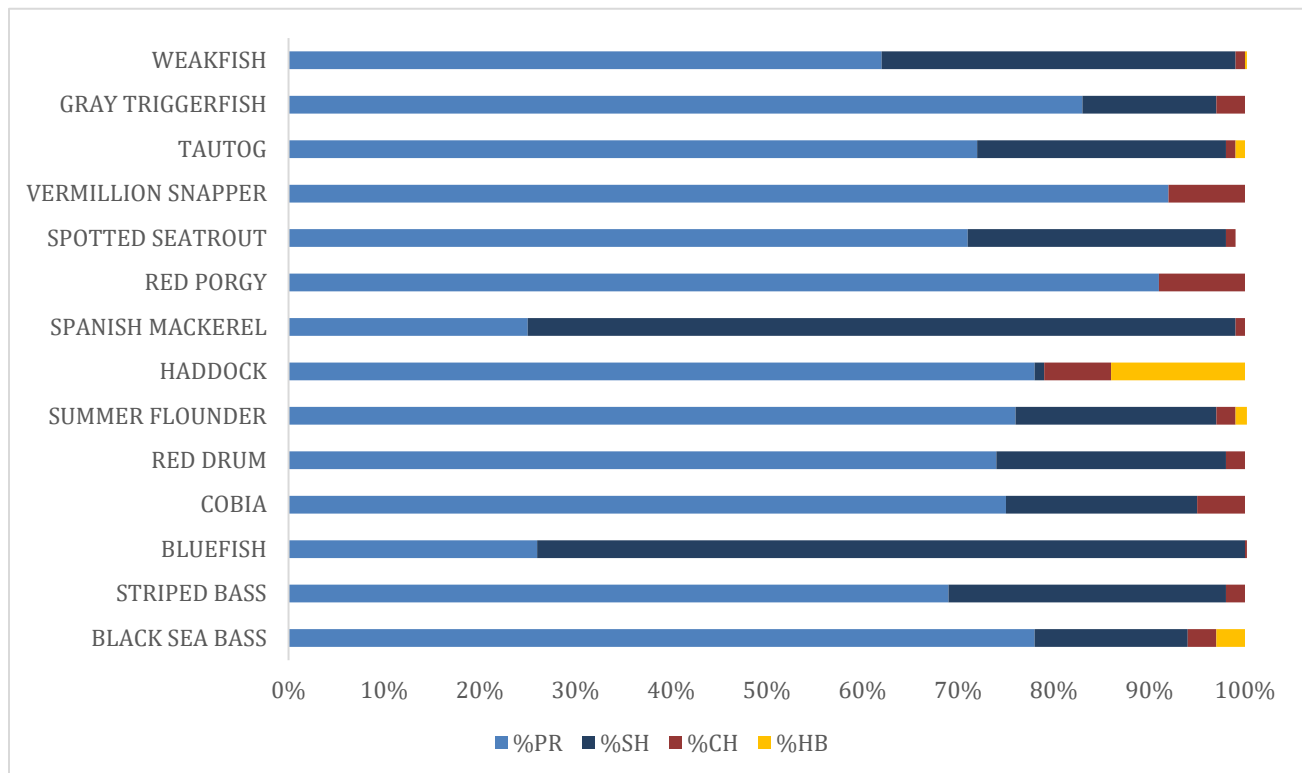


Figure 1. Percent discards of select species from ME to FL by mode, averaged for 2013 - 2022. PR=private/rental boat mode, SH=shore mode, CH=charter mode, and HB=headboat mode.

Need

In recent years, recreational fishing practices have shifted towards releasing a larger proportion of the estimated catch, rather than harvesting it. This shift is due to several reasons including but not limited to increasingly stringent regulations, such as shorter seasons, higher size limits and/or the implementation of slot limits, and smaller bag limits, as well as the growing popularity of catch and release angling. For example, on the Atlantic Coast from Maine through Florida, a significant number of striped bass are caught and released by recreational anglers compared to those that are harvested (Figure 2). Approximately 84% to 95% of the striped bass catch are released alive. Similar patterns are seen in other recreationally important fish species such as black sea bass and summer flounder (Figures 3 and 4). From 2000 through 2022, approximately 90% of black sea bass and summer flounder were released alive, compared to less than 40% at the beginning of the time series. In recent years (2000-2022), an average of approximately 85% of all striped bass, black sea bass, and summer flounder were released alive (Figure 5).

According to MRIP, the total number of live black sea bass discards along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida was 45.1 million fish in 2022 (Figure 3). Considering a 15% discard mortality rate, an estimated 6.8 million fish would be added to removals from the fishery in 2022. In the same year, black sea bass harvest was 4.9 million fish, which means discard mortality alone accounted for 58% of the total recreational removals (harvest plus dead discards).

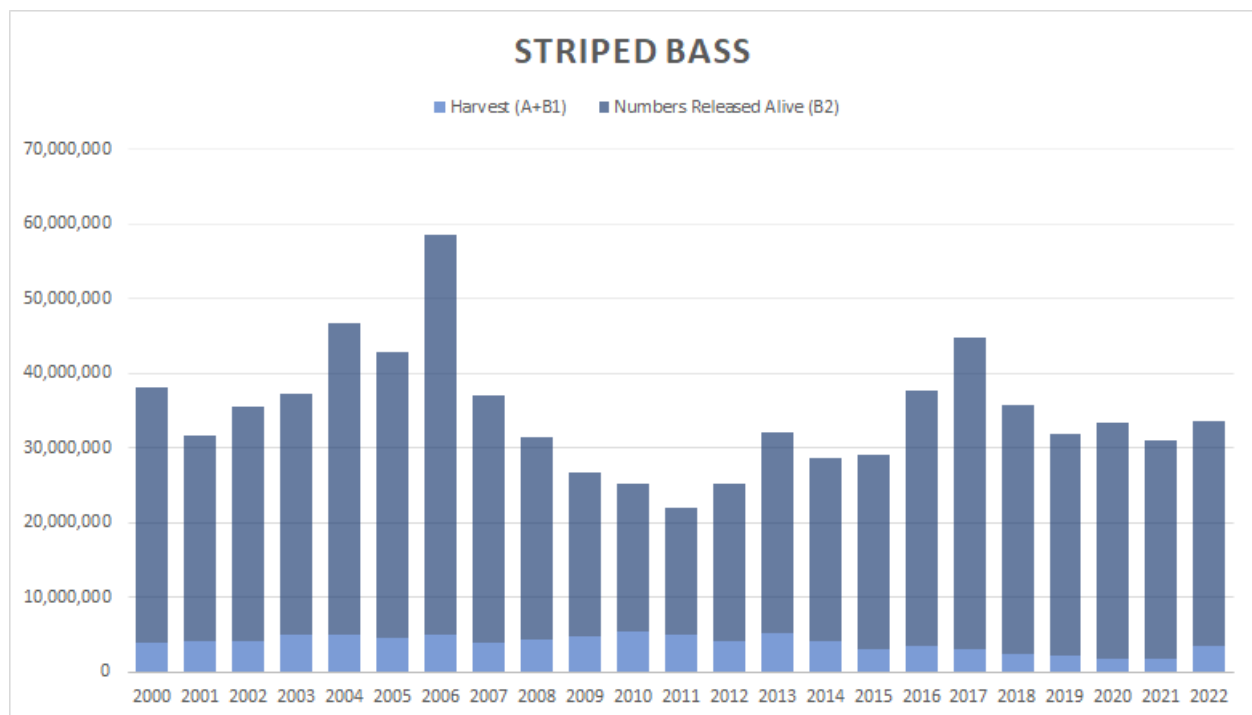


Figure 2. Catch trends, in number, of Striped Bass released from ME to FL, compared with harvest, illustrating released fish make up the majority of Striped Bass catch.

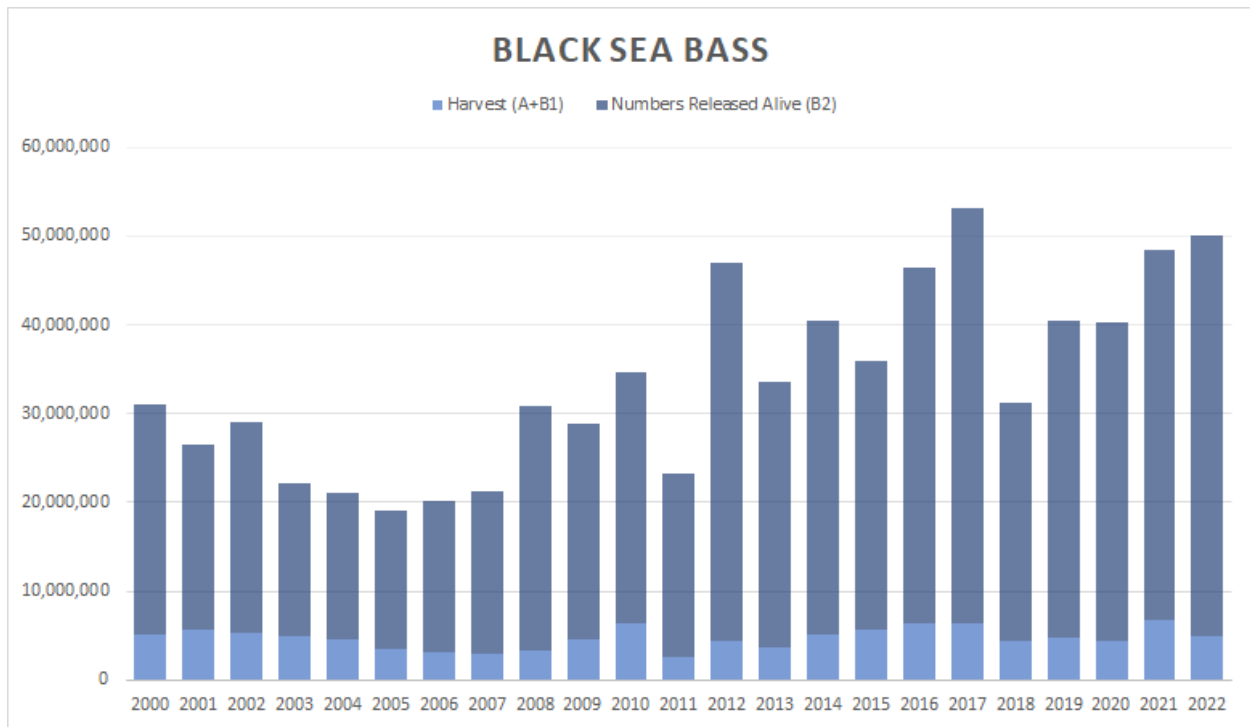


Figure 3. Catch trends, in number, of Black Sea Bass released from ME to FL, compared with harvest, illustrating released fish make up the majority of Black Sea Bass catch.

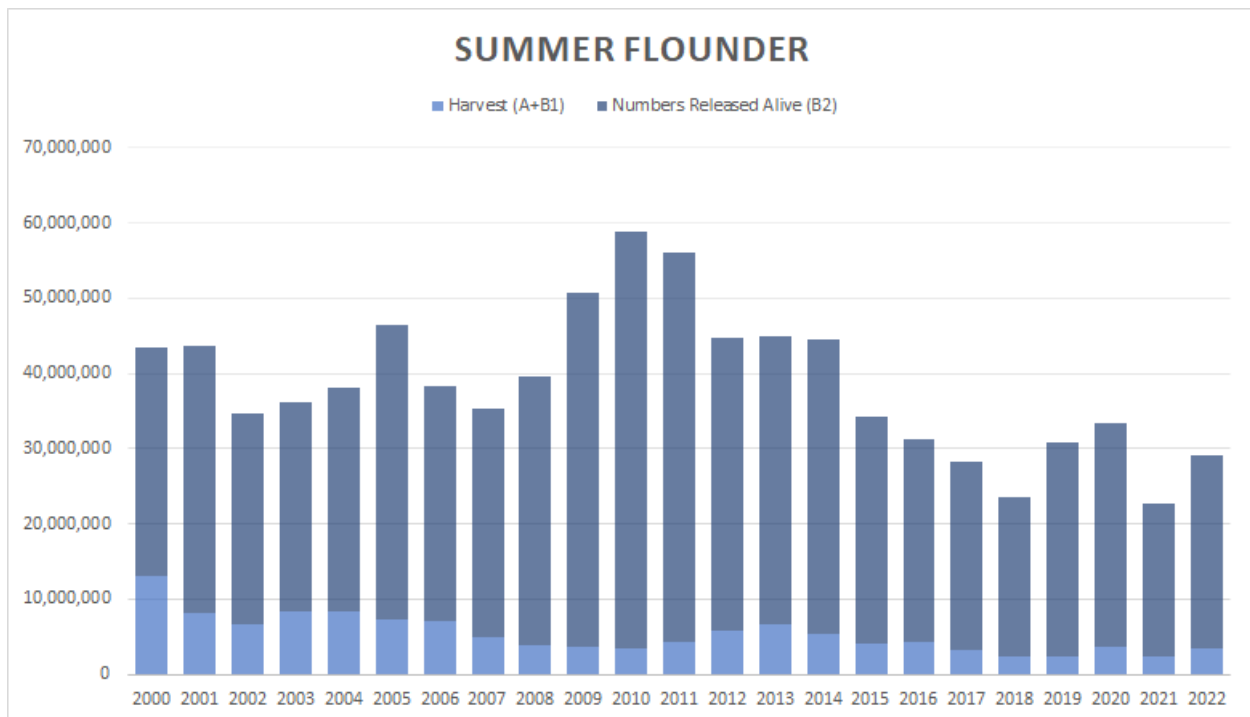


Figure 4. Catch trends, in number, of summer flounder released from ME to FL, compared with harvest, illustrating released fish make up the majority of summer flounder catch.

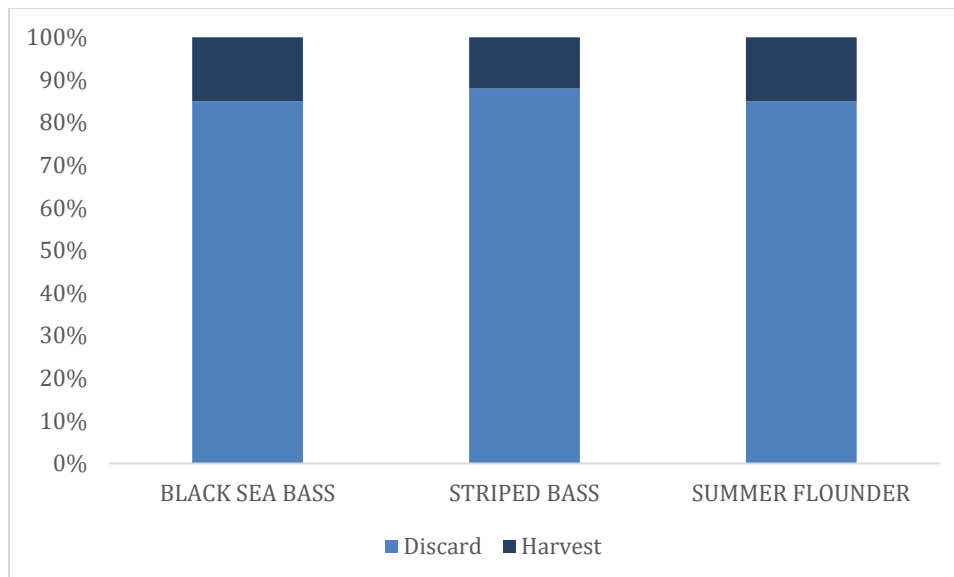


Figure 5. Percent of fish released, compared with harvest, averaged from 2000 to 2022 from ME to FL.

MRIP acknowledges that the accuracy and precision of information on released fish could be improved, especially since discarded fish represent an increasingly larger proportion of total removals from many fish populations.

The need for improved discard information in recreational fishing arises from several factors:

- **Regulatory requirements:** Recreational fishing regulations have become more stringent, with shorter seasons, higher size limits and/or the implementation of slot limits, and smaller bag limits. These regulations aim to protect fish populations and promote sustainable fishing practices. As a result, there is an increased number of fish being released.
- **Catch and release angling:** Catch and release has gained popularity among recreational anglers. Many anglers now prefer to release fish rather than harvest them. This shift in fishing practices is driven by a desire to conserve fish populations and promote their long-term sustainability.
- **High release rates:** A significant proportion of the estimated catch in recreational fishing may be released back into the water. For example, species like striped bass, black sea bass, and summer flounder have high rates of live releases, ranging from 84% to 95% of the catch. This indicates that a large number of fish are being released, and it is important to ensure accuracy of these data.
- **Discard mortality:** When fish are released after being caught, there is a risk of mortality. Factors such as handling stress, injuries from hooks or fishing gear, and post-release predation can contribute to the mortality of released fish. It is crucial that discard estimates are accurate so that the mortality associated with discards reflects the impact of catch and release practices on fish populations.
- **Data gaps:** The current monitoring and data collection systems for discards in recreational fishing are limited. The validated discard monitoring primarily focuses on the headboat fishery, while other fishing modes such as shore, private/rental, or charter boats have limited or no length data for discards. Using headboat data as a proxy for other fishing modes may not provide accurate length characterization due to differences in fishing methods. To improve discard estimates and mortality assessments, there is a need for more mode-specific data collection.

Currently, the only source of discard length data for the recreational fleet, available coastwide in the Atlantic and used in stock assessments, is limited to the headboat fishery. Trained APAIS observers ride along on headboats to observe and record information on all fish caught by a limited number of anglers, including the species caught, lengths, quantity, and disposition of released fish. This information is extremely valuable in stock assessment models to evaluate discard

mortality and total removals from a fishery, as well as the sizes of fish released in size- or age-based statistical models. There is a lack of directly observed discard quantity and length information for other fishing modes such as shore, private/rental, or charter boats in most states. In the absence of such data, headboat data is sometimes used as a proxy. However, applying headboat discard rates and size composition to other recreational fishery modes may not be entirely accurate due to differences in areas fished (offshore vs. inshore), depths fished (shallow vs. deep), and angler behavior (fishing method, hook type, bait type). The size composition of the fish population can vary between offshore and inshore areas. To obtain accurate characterization of each mode and estimate discard mortality, it is essential to use mode-specific data. Although some size information is available from external programs, such as state volunteer angler logbook or fish tagging programs, not all states have such programs for all species. This study will test a method for collecting quality discard information for states that do not have a logbook or tagging program using a standardized, random sampling design.

To address these needs, our proposed solution is to pilot test an updated sampling design that increases focus on discards and expands discard length data collection to other fishing modes besides headboat mode. This can be achieved through the use of catch cards to collect release information. By obtaining more accurate discard estimates and mortality data, fisheries managers can make informed decisions to ensure the sustainable management of fish populations in recreational fishing and provide valuable data that is currently unavailable to stock assessments.

Results and Benefits

Recent management actions for several recreationally important species have resulted in reduced seasons, adjusted minimum size limits, and reduced bag limits, highlighting the increasing numbers of fish being discarded and management's need for more information on this portion of the fishery. Stock assessment and management advice are likely to improve if better data can be collected about the quantity and size of released fish. By handing out catch cards before the trip begins, anglers would be notified ahead of time that they will be asked about their discards, offering them the opportunity to record discarded catch numbers and lengths while fishing. We can compare these data to the existing APAIS, hopefully helping to provide more accurate discard numbers (i.e., less rounding) and reporting of all species discarded (i.e., including all species rather than just managed species).

One of the largest uncertainties in stock assessments is the size composition of discards, particularly from the private boat fleet which contributes the largest proportion of the catch for many important recreational species (Figure 1). As noted previously, data on discard lengths from this fishing sector have been difficult to observe and assessments often use data from various logbook or volunteer angler surveys to fill this data gap or sometimes must use data from other sources, such as various tagging datasets or the MRIP headboat observations. While these data represent the best currently available data, there are questions about how representative they are of the private recreational fleet. This project presents an opportunity to collect important discard length data. Data collected in a randomized, statistically valid manner is considered one of the best ways to obtain a more representative sample of discard lengths from the private/rental boat sector. In addition, getting the data directly from mode specific anglers will ensure that the data most representative of their recreational fishing fleet is being used to describe fishing activities.

Anglers will be asked to record the species name for all fish released, whether the fish was released alive or not, and the lengths of discarded fish for any species that are managed (i.e. have a size or bag limit).

The catch card program would be voluntary and design aspects would focus on methods to reduce potential biases. Catch cards would be handed out to anglers at sites selected using the random survey design of the APAIS, with the second year of the project potentially focusing on strategies to increase card return rates. It is anticipated that this

method will result in a more representative sample of discard catch length information than may be obtained from a purely opt-in volunteer angler survey. Data will be collected at the individual fishing trip level so that these data can be better aligned with how data are collected in the APAIS.

The catch cards will also provide an opportunity to collect data needed for stock assessments that are not usually collected in the APAIS but are needed to improve estimates of discard mortality such as the depth fished. Combining depth fished by mode with studies on discard mortality at depth can provide more accurate estimates of discard mortality. Discard mortality rates are an important metric used to sustainably manage fish stocks.

Data Delivery Plan

Waterproof cards will include a unique identification number to prevent fraudulent submissions. Additionally, field interviewers will indicate on every card the control number and site number for where the card was distributed. The control number can be used to indicate the date and time interval when the card was handed out.

After anglers complete their trips and record their discarded catch data on the distributed paper catch cards, anglers can submit their catch card to the associated state partner by:

- Mail using pre-paid postcards,
- Return directly to the APAIS interviewer if still on site when the angler completes their trip,
- By taking a photo of the completed catch card and emailing it to a state-specific email address listed at the bottom of each catch card.

Data from catch cards will be processed and manually keyed into a section on the ACCSP Assignment Tracking Application (ATA) (Appendix B). The catch card section of the ACCSP ATA uses standardized data tables formatted across all fields to ensure state staff along the coast are entering data the same way. Unique fields for each card will be checked for quality assurance (QA) during the data entry process and quality control (QC) checks will be run periodically to review data issues, including outliers, after each submission via automated processes.

Anglers who return from their trip during the assigned APAIS interval will be asked to complete a full APAIS interview including the unavailable catch question. Completing interviews on site with anglers, whether given the card or not, will provide opportunity to use data from these overdrawn assignments for MRIP estimates, pending evaluation with the help of NOAA Fisheries MRIP staff. Completed interviews as part of overdrawn assignments will be uploaded to the ACCSP Assignment Tracking Application (ATA) using the same procedure as standard APAIS assignments (Appendix B). The total number of catch cards provided to anglers will be recorded to determine how many cards were returned for each assignment. This data will be used to assess non-response to gauge the rate of angler participation.

Approach

Assignments will be created using the same draw process as the APAIS to ensure a probability-based sampling design but will be treated as a separate draw of private/rental boat sites. In year 2, depending on return rates from year one, some alternative strategies may be needed to obtain a larger number of returned catch cards such as targeting higher pressure sites or specifically the 8am-2pm interval, or limiting the draw to one site clusters. These catch card assignments will be labeled as 'Overdrawn' assignments. In coordination with NOAA Fisheries MRIP staff, this pilot proposes to conduct overdrawn APAIS assignments as if the assignment is an actual APAIS assignment in order to

standardize approaches for eventual data analyses. Overdrawn assignments will not initially be a part of the existing MRIP estimation process in order to ensure that the project doesn't affect current interviewer productivity and ongoing efforts to improve PSEs along the Atlantic Coast. However, MRIP has indicated that overdrawn assignments could potentially be used in estimates, pending analyses after the sampling season if there are no significant biases between the catch card and regular APAIS assignments.

The number of overdrawn assignments will be predetermined in advance of the draw and will be state specific. The number of assignments per region was selected based on the expected average number of anglers given a card each day (5.24), return rate of catch cards (25%) obtained from a previous pilot project in Connecticut, and APAIS results from 2022 (e.g., number of 0-interview assignments, private/rental anglers sampled with released catch, and number released of specific managed species by region on the Atlantic (see Appendix C)). By utilizing some of the proposed alternative strategies listed earlier, we may be able to maximize card distribution in fewer assignments. The total assignment goal (435) by region/state is as follows with sampling months described in Table 1:

- North Atlantic: 195 assignments total, 60 in MA, 60 in RI, and 75 in CT
- Mid-Atlantic: 180 assignments total, 65 in NY, 50 in DE, and 65 in MD
- South Atlantic: 60 assignments total, 20 in NC and 40 in GA

Table 1. Months of sampling overdrawn APAIS assignments for the pilot project.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Massachusetts					X	X	X	X	X	X		
Rhode Island						X	X	X	X	X		
Connecticut					X	X	X	X	X	X		
New York					X	X	X	X	X	X		
Delaware					X	X	X	X	X	X		
Maryland					X	X	X	X	X	X		
North Carolina					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Georgia					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Catch cards will be printed by the ACCSP and distributed to anglers by APAIS field interviewers. Catch cards will be handed out mainly to private/rental boat anglers but interviewers may hand out cards to other modes at the discretion of participating state partners. In 2022, the majority (78%) of anglers interviewed started their fishing trip between the hours of 6am and noon (see Table 1 in Appendix C). Therefore, assignments will have a buffer time before the 6-hour APAIS sampling assignment where catch cards will be handed out for two common APAIS time intervals (0800-1400 and 1100-1700) to maximize potential of encountering anglers before they begin their trip. This will default to a 1-hour buffer time but could potentially be extended to 2- or 3-hour buffers depending on staff availability and assignment specifics. During this buffer time, interviews cannot be conducted as the purpose of the buffer is specifically for distributing catch cards to anglers beginning their fishing trips. During the APAIS assignment interval, field interviewers will continue to hand out catch cards to anglers departing on their trips but intercepts with anglers finishing their trip during the assignment interval will take precedence.

Anglers will be given cards as they are departing the access point to begin their fishing trip, along with a brief explanation from field staff on how to fill out the card and why the information is important. A small (golf) pencil will be provided as well as a tape measure. States can also opt to hand out additional items such as clipboards, stickers, or other outreach materials. The unit of measurement on the tape measure will include inches since that is the unit of measure most anglers are familiar with.

Data Collection

The 2025 catch card is shown in Appendix A. Anglers are requested to complete the top portion of the card with their trip information (fishing mode, target species, hours fished, area fished, depth fished, and trip end time). There is a box to indicate if they didn't release any fish on the trip. For any fish released on the trip, they are asked to list each individual fish in the table in the middle section, noting whether the fish was released alive or not and recording the lengths, rounded up to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ ", for any managed fish species (i.e. those with a bag and/or size limit). Any fish not recorded in the middle table, either because of angler preference or because the angler has filled all 20 lines of the table, can be recorded using a tally in the tally box at the bottom of the card.

Measuring Procedures

Anglers will be able to record up to 20 individual released fish measurements on the catch card in the order in which each fish is caught. That is, the fish are not to be measured based on size or every 'nth' individual. Should anglers release over 20 individual fish, additional fish can be recorded in the tally box at the bottom of the card to ensure that the number of all fish released on a trip are recorded.

Anglers are asked to measure the total length (TL) of each fish rounded up to the nearest quarter-inch to reduce error. This measurement was selected because 0.25 inches is equal to .635 cm, which is at least +/- 1 cm consistent with lengths reported in scientific fisheries literature. Cards will be returned to the participating state that distributed the card, either by mail, email, or to the field interviewer if they're still at the site. Field interviewers will fill in the location and control number on the card given to the angler and track the total number of cards distributed each day to determine response rate.

Since there is limited space on the card for instructions, a link (via QR code) is included to provide more detailed instructions as well as outreach and education materials about the project and safe release of fish. The website is https://www.accsp.org/release_project/. In addition to the QR code, instructions on half-sheets of paper will be printed and available to hand out to anglers or for use by field interviewers at the state's discretion.

Potential Analysis Approaches and Future Validation

Direct validation of angler reported discards through observation or video recording is not practical due to the number and size of private and rental recreational fishing vessels. There are, however, various approaches to compare data collected through this catch card pilot project to other data sources, such as headboat discard or volunteer angler logbook data. These comparisons could highlight potential biases in the discard data collected by various methods and elucidate whether the discard lengths collected are reasonable.

Additionally, an examination of differences in the number of discarded species reported between APAIS intercepts and catch cards tests the hypothesis that anglers are more likely to report greater species diversity via catch card including less valued (infrequently targeted) species, compared with the APAIS. Data can also be analyzed to evaluate if there are fewer instances of rounding the quantity of fish caught in catch card data.

One of the most important aspects of this catch card pilot project is the ability to collect length information on released fish to better describe the size composition of discarded catch. The composition of discard length frequencies from the catch cards can be compared with data sources external to APAIS such as volunteer angler logbook programs or fish tag and release data sets, or with the headboat discard data currently collected through APAIS to evaluate if differences exist.

In the future, a separate proposal could be developed to determine the efficacy of a catch card approach by directly observing shore or headboat anglers who simultaneously self-report their discards on the card as an alternative way to validate catch card data, Hawthorne effect notwithstanding. It would be interesting and important to examine whether catch card discard length data align with data from other programs as comparing the various data streams may tell us something about potential biases between the different data types (randomly distributed cards, opt-in data collection, fish tagging data sets, and APAIS headboat sampling).

Funding Transition Plan

This pilot project is intended to test several hypotheses in the initial years of conduct, including the methods of maximizing return rates. While the first year of the project is ongoing, return rates so far for southern states have been promising. Funding a second year of the project is necessary to further refine the methods used, provide an opportunity to expand the pilot to additional states, and to collect an additional year of data for comparisons to the APAIS and other data sources. An additional year will help us further understand the usefulness and success of the catch card as a method for collecting discard data. If this pilot proves to be successful and funding is available, the ability to continue or merge this methodology with the APAIS would instead be covered under the MRIP general survey's cooperative agreement on the Atlantic.

Outreach and Education

Educational outreach materials will be created to standardize data collection, explain the needs and benefits of the project and emphasize that the release cards are meant to complement MRIP data, not replace it. Primary program outreach will occur during initial contact a field interviewer has with an angler prior to the start of any fishing activity. At this stage, field interviewers will provide potential participating anglers with a brief overview of the project, the survey card, a measuring tape, and a pencil. The survey card, pencil, and measuring tape will ensure that anglers have the appropriate tools needed to collect the discard data. Informing anglers of the importance of the data they collect prior to beginning their fishing activity has potential to 1) motivate them to participate in the program through increased awareness, and 2) increase an angler's focus on discard information during that fishing trip, in turn encouraging more accurate data.

A [website](#) was created in the first year of the project that can be accessed by the angler using the QR code on the catch card. Instructions include detailed information on how to fill out the survey card, how to measure fish for this project, and how anglers can submit their data. The general information section also contains broad information about the purpose of the project, the importance of recreational discard information in fisheries management, and best practices for releasing fish (e.g., safe handling, circle hooks, descending devices). There is a wealth of knowledge online regarding best fish handling practices and barotrauma and educational videos and links for these are provided on the website as angler resources.

Small items such as clipboards, towels, hooks, etc. can be handed out with the card to incentivize and thank anglers for their participation. The incentives are not a required part of the project but can be used at the discretion of the participating state.

Geographic Location

Broadly, this project will cover the Atlantic coast from Maine through Georgia. During the first year of the pilot project, regional coverage was accomplished by Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut in the North, New York and Maryland in the Mid, and North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia in the South. In the second year, Delaware was added, and South Carolina opted out of the project.

Milestone Schedule

Date	Event
Jun 13, 2025	Proposal Submitted to ACCSP RFP
Jul-Aug, 2025	Pilot Partner Meetings
Aug 15, 2025	Revisions to Proposal Due
Sep 9-10, 2025	Full RTC Meeting (in person)
Nov-Dec, 2025	Pilot Partner Meetings
Jan, 2026	Deadline for card data entry and review 2025. Finalize Catch Card (if changes are needed), arrange for printing
Jan, 2026 - Mar, 2026	Pilot Partner Meetings and analysis of 2025 data
Mar, 2026	Overdrawn Assignment Allocation request to MRIP & Annual report for 2025
Apr, 2026	Training sessions for Pilot states, order supplies, ship to states
May, 2026	Pilot Project Conduct Year 2 begins (Table 1)
Jun 15, 2026	Deadline for card data entry and data review for May
Jun, 2026	Pilot Partner Meeting – check in on process
Jul 15, 2026	Deadline for card data entry and data review for Jun
Jul, 2026	Pilot Partner Meeting – Wave review (May-Jun)
Aug 15, 2026	Deadline for card data entry and data review for Jul
Aug, 2026	Pilot Partner Meeting – Mid Season review (May to July)
Sep 15, 2026	Deadline for card data entry and data review for Aug
Sep, 2026	Pilot Partner Meeting – Wave review (Jul-Aug)
Oct 15, 2026	Deadline for card data entry and data review for Sep
Nov 15, 2026	Deadline for card data entry and data review for Oct
Nov, 2026	Pilot Partner Meeting – Wave review (Sep-Oct)
Dec 15, 2026	Deadline for card data entry and data review for Nov
Dec 31, 2026	Deadline for final data review for May-Nov
Jan 1, 2027	Data available for analysis

Project Accomplishments Measurement

Project Goals	Metrics
Adequate card returns	- Goal of at least 10% return rate for completed catch cards
Discard length data collection	- 60 length measurements, at the region (South, Mid- and North Atlantic regions) and annual level, for commonly encountered and/or high priority species for use in stock assessments
Discard rate analyses	- Better understanding of potential recall/measurement bias to APAIS released catch by moving request for discards from after-trip to before-trip. Field staff will track and report how many cards are distributed. Interviewers could potentially distribute up to 13,000 catch cards.

Cost Summary (Budget)

Description	Calculation	Cost	In-kind
MASSACHUSETTS			
Personnel (a)			
Interviewers (seasonal)	60 assignments (9 hours) @ \$22.50/hour	\$ 12,150.00	\$ -
Data entry clerk (seasonal)	60 assignments (0.5 hours) @ \$22.50/hour	\$ 675.00	\$ -
Program Staff		\$ -	\$ 2,840.40
Fringe (b)			
Interviewer (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.0221 * personnel (a)	\$ 268.52	\$ -
Data entry clerk (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.0221 * personnel (a)	\$ 14.92	\$ -
Program Staff	Fringe = 0.3781 * personnel (a)	\$ -	\$ 1,073.96
Travel (c)			
Vehicle Mileage	60 assignments (70 miles roundtrip) @ \$0.69/mile	\$ 2,898.00	\$ -
Other expenses	Parking, tolls, etc.	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Supplies (d)			
Printing + Angler supplies	60 assignments w/ average anglers/assignment (30) for Pencils (\$0.50) and measuring tapes (\$1.00)	\$ 2,700.00	\$ -
Other (e)			
Other	Handout materials / reward	\$ 1,200.00	\$ -
Totals (c+d+e)		\$ 7,298.00	\$ -
Total direct charges			
Indirect charges (f)	Indirect (25.59% of Salary)	\$ 4,151.47	\$ 726.86
Sum of direct and indirect		\$ 24,557.90	\$ 4,641.21

Description	Calculation	Cost	In-kind
<u>RHODE ISLAND</u>			
Personnel (a)			
Interviewers	60 assignments (9 hours) @ \$22.00/hour	\$ 11,880.00	\$ -
Date entry	60 assignments (0.5 hours) @ \$22.00/hour	\$ 660.00	\$ -
Supervisor		\$ -	\$ 2,391.00
Fringe (b)			
Interviewer (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.10 * personnel (a)	\$ 1,188.00	\$ -
Data entry clerk (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.10 * personnel (a)	\$ 66.00	\$ -
Program Staff time	Fringe = 0.10 * personnel (a)	\$ -	\$ 239.10
Travel (c)			
Vehicle Mileage	60 assignments (60 miles roundtrip) @ \$0.69/mile	\$ 2,898.00	\$ -
Other expenses	Parking, Tolls, etc.	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Supplies (d)			
Angler supplies	60 assignments w/ average anglers/assignment (30) for Pencils (\$0.50) and measuring tapes (\$1.00)	\$ 2,700.00	\$ -
Other (e)			
Other		\$ -	\$ -
Totals (c+d+e)		\$ 6,098.00	\$ -
Total direct charges			
Indirect charges (f)	Indirect (22.32% of TDC)	\$ 3,557.36	\$ 533.67
Sum of direct and indirect		\$ 23,449.36	\$ 3,163.77

Description	Calculation	Cost	In-kind
<u>CONNECTICUT</u>			
Personnel (a)			
Interviewers	75 assignments (9 hours) @ \$16.00/hour	\$ 10,800.00	\$ -
Data entry clerk	75 assignments (0.5 hours) @ \$20.00/hour	\$ 750.00	\$ -
Supervisor		\$ -	\$ 4,454.20
Fringe (b)			
Interviewer (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.6722 * personnel (a)	\$ 7,259.76	\$ -
Data entry clerk (FTE)	Fringe = 0.9047 * personnel (a)	\$ 678.53	\$ -
Travel (c)			
Vehicle Mileage	75 assignments (50 miles roundtrip) @ \$0.69/mile	\$ 2,587.50	\$ -
Other expenses	Parking, tolls, etc.	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Supplies (d)			
Angler supplies	75 assignments w/ average anglers/assignment (30) for Pencils (\$0.50) and measuring tapes (\$1.00)	\$ 3,375.00	\$ -
Other (e)			
Other	Handout materials / reward	\$ 1,200.00	\$ -
Totals (c+d+e)		\$ 7,662.50	\$ -
Total direct charges			
Indirect charges (f)	Indirect (36.93% of personnel (a))	\$ 4,265.42	\$ 1,644.94
Sum of direct and indirect		\$ 31,416.20	\$ 6,099.14

Description	Calculation	Cost	In-kind
<u>NEW YORK</u>			
Personnel (a)			
Interviewers	65 assignments (9 hours) @ \$21.664/hour	\$ 12,673.44	\$ -
Data entry clerk	65 assignments (0.5 hours) @ \$21.664/hour	\$ 704.08	\$ -
Supervisor		\$ -	\$ 1,200.00
Fringe (b)			
Interviewer (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.10 * personnel (a)	\$ 1,267.34	\$ -
Data entry clerk (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.35 * personnel (a)	\$ 246.43	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ 420.00
Travel (c)			
Vehicle Mileage	65 assignments (75 miles roundtrip) @ \$0.69/mile	\$ 3,363.75	\$ -
Other expenses	Parking, tolls, etc.	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Supplies (d)			
Angler supplies	65 assignments w/ average anglers/assignment (30) for Pencils (\$0.50) and measuring tapes (\$1.00)	\$ 2,925.00	\$ -
Other (e)			
Other		\$ -	\$ -
Totals (c+d+e)		\$ 6,788.75	\$ -
Total direct charges			
Indirect charges (f)		\$ -	\$ -
Indirect (0.00% of TDC)			
Sum of direct and indirect		\$ 21,680.04	\$ 1,620.00

Description	Calculation	Cost	In-kind
<u>DELAWARE</u>			
Personnel (a)			
Interviewers	50 assignments (7 hours) @ \$18.00/hour	\$ 6,300.00	\$ -
Data entry clerk	50 assignments (0.5 hours) @ \$18.00/hour	\$ 450.00	\$ -
Supervisor		\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Fringe (b)			
Interviewer (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.10 * personnel (a)	\$ 630.00	\$ -
Data entry clerk (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.40 * personnel (a)	\$ 180.00	\$ -
Travel (c)			
Vehicle Mileage	50 assignments (50 miles roundtrip) @ \$0.69/mile	\$ 1,725.00	\$ -
Other expenses	Parking, tolls, etc.	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Supplies (d)			
Angler supplies	50 assignments w/ average anglers/assignment (30) for Pencils (\$0.50) and measuring tapes (\$1.00)	\$ 2,250.00	\$ -
Other (e)			
Other	Handout materials / reward	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Totals (c+d+e)		\$ 4,975.00	\$ -
Total direct charges			
Indirect charges (f)	Indirect (0.00% of TDC)	\$ -	\$ -
Sum of direct and indirect		\$ 12,535.00	\$ 1,000.00

Description	Calculation	Cost	In-kind
MARYLAND			
Personnel (a)			
Interviewers	65 assignments (8 hours) @ \$17.66/hour	\$ 10,892.70	\$ -
Data entry clerk	65 assignments (0.5 hours) @ \$19.26/hour	\$ 622.70	\$ -
Project Manager		\$ -	\$ 2,500.00
Fringe (b)			
Interviewer (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.10 * personnel (a)	\$ 1,089.27	\$ -
Data entry clerk (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.35 * personnel (a)	\$ 217.95	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ 875.00
Travel (c)			
Vehicle Mileage	65 assignments (50 miles roundtrip) @ \$0.69/mile	\$ 2,275.00	\$ -
Other expenses	Parking, tolls, etc.	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Supplies (d)			
Angler supplies	65 assignments w/ average anglers/assignment (30) for Pencils (\$0.50) and measuring tapes (\$1.00)	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -
Other (e)			
Other		\$ -	\$ -
Totals (c+d+e)		\$ 5,775.00	\$ -
Total direct charges			
Indirect charges (f)	Indirect (10.00% of TDC)	\$ 1,984.04	\$ 250.00
Sum of direct and indirect		\$ 20,581.66	\$ 3,625.00

Description	Calculation	Cost	In-kind
<u>NORTH CAROLINA</u>			
Personnel (a)			
Interviewers	20 assignments (8 hours) @ \$18.00/hour	\$ 2,880.00	\$ -
Data entry clerk	20 assignments (0.5 hours) @ \$18.00/hour	\$ 180.00	\$ -
Supervisor		\$ -	\$ 2,000.00
Fringe (b)			
Interviewer (seasonal)	Fringe = 0.10 * personnel (a)	\$ 288.00	\$ -
Data entry clerk (FTE)	Fringe = 0.53 * personnel (a)	\$ 95.40	\$ -
Supervisor	Fringe = 0.53 * personnel (a)	\$ -	\$ 1,060.00
Travel (c)			
Vehicle Mileage	20 assignments (50 miles roundtrip) @ \$0.69/mile	\$ 690.00	\$ -
Other expenses	Parking, tolls, etc.	\$ 100.00	\$ -
Supplies (d)			
Printing + Angler supplies	20 assignments w/ average anglers/assignment (30) for Pencils (\$0.50) and measuring tapes (\$1.00)	\$ 900.00	\$ -
Other (e)			
Other		\$ -	\$ -
	Incentives	\$ 400.00	
Totals (c+d+e)		\$ 2,090.00	\$ -
Total direct charges			
Indirect charges (f)	Indirect (10.00% of TDC)	\$ 658.02	\$ 518.00
Sum of direct and indirect		\$ 6,191.42	\$ 3,578.00

Description	Calculation	Cost	In-kind
<u>GEORGIA</u>			
Personnel (a)			
Interviewers (PTE)	20 assignments (9 hours) @ \$20.00/hour	\$ 3,600.00	\$ -
Interviewers (FTE)	20 assignments (9 hours) @ \$25.00/hour	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -
Data entry clerk	40 assignments (9 hours) @ \$20.00/hour	\$ 400.00	\$ -
Supervisor		\$ -	\$ 430.90
Fringe (b)			
Interviewers (PTE)	Fringe = 0.0145* personnel (a)	\$ 58.00	\$ -
Interviewers (FTE)	Fringe = 0.68114* personnel (a)	\$ 3,065.13	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ 293.50
Travel (c)			
Vehicle Mileage	40 assignments w/ average anglers/assignment (30) for Pencils (\$0.50) and measuring tapes (\$1.00)	\$ 1,380.00	\$ -
Other expenses	Parking, tolls, etc.	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Supplies (d)			
Printing + Angler supplies	40 assignments w/ average anglers/assignment (30) for Pencils (\$0.50) and measuring tapes (\$1.00)	\$ 1,800.00	\$ -
Other (e)			
Other		\$ -	\$ -
Totals (c+d+e)		\$ 3,680.00	\$ -
Total direct charges			
Indirect charges (f)	Indirect (0.00% of TDC)	\$ -	\$ -
Sum of direct and indirect		\$ 15,303.13	\$ 724.40

Description	Calculation	Cost	In-kind
<u>ASMFC</u>			
Personnel (a)			
Data coordinator(s)	Staff creation and maintenance of data collection structures and review and editing of data	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00
Fringe (b)			
Interviewers (PTE)	Fringe = 0.35* personnel (a)	\$ -	\$ 1,750.00
Travel (c)			
-	-	\$ -	\$ -
Supplies (d)			
Printing	Printing paper catch cards (435 assignment w/ avg anglers per assignment (30) @ \$0.30/sheet of write-in-rain paper)	\$ 3,915.00	\$ -
Other (e)			
Other	Pre-paid mailing for catch cards (435 assignments w/ avg anglers per assignment (30): \$1.60 per pre-paid expense), In-kind staff hours (DIA, database, APEX programming) for Catch-Card APAIS assignments	\$ 20,880.00	\$ -
Totals (c+d+e)		\$ 24,795.00	\$ -
Total direct charges			
Indirect charges (f)	Indirect (8.00% of personnel (a))	\$ -	\$ 540.00
Sum of direct and indirect		\$ 24,795.00	\$ 7,290.00

Budget Narrative

- a. **Personnel (\$80,117.92 Requested; \$21,816.50 In-Kind)**: Part-time, full-time, and sometimes a combination of employee types will be utilized to cover assignment completion. For the most part, full-time staff will be used to convert catch cards into electronic data via the ATA. Both assignment completion and data entry are estimates based on the number of assignments and therefore number of interviews/catch cards. In-kind contributions cover supervisor's time to cover project logistics (e.g., scheduling, QC and data review, etc.).
- b. **Fringe (\$16,613.23 Requested; \$5,711.56 In-Kind)**: Fringe for part-time and full-time staff are associated with personnel funds. Requested funds are to cover assignment completion and data entry while in-kind funds are associated with supervisor time.
- c. **Travel (\$21,417.25 Requested; \$0.00 In-Kind)**: Coast-wide mileage cost of \$0.69/mile for the individual state number of assignments. Most states also have an estimated amount to cover parking and tolls.
- d. **Supplies (\$23,565.00 Requested; \$0.00 In-Kind)**: Paper for catch cards (either by page or by box of write-in-rain paper), pencils, clipboards/clips and measuring tapes to collect released catch information and lengths. Estimates were based on the average number of anglers expected to encounter per assignment. The ASMFC portion of in-kind contribution is for the centralized printing of coastal catch cards.
- e. **Other (\$24,180.00 Requested; \$0.00 In-Kind)**: Pre-paid postage per estimated number of catch cards makes up the majority of the requested funds. Some states are also considering outreach materials. In-kind funds cover the continued development of database structures and updates to the existing dockside application via Harbor Light Software, used to conduct the APAIS to link catch cards to the APAIS. The latter was an estimate based on the hours required to develop, QC, and distribute application updates, both for ACCSP and Harbor Light Software staff.
- f. **Indirect (\$14,616.30 Requested; \$4,213.47 In-Kind)**: Indirect rates range from 0 to ~37% for state partners and ASMFC/ACCSP. Percentages are mostly applied to only personnel and fringe but sometimes also to the travel, supplies, and other expenses – this is dependent on state policies.

Summary of Proposal for Ranking

Proposal Type: Maintenance

Primary Program Priority:

Catch and Effort (100%)

- Proposal will provide data to investigate differences in angler responses using pre-trip recreational catch card versus current APAIS data collected after a fishing trip is completed. Data can be used to analyze if there are differences in species diversity or number of fish reported (i.e., rounding bias) when using a pre-trip catch card.
- New data source for discard lengths and average depth fished, using stratified random probability-based sampling design, that would be informative for calculating discard mortality for private boat fleet or shore anglers.

Data Delivery Plan

- Completed catch cards will be manually keyed into a section on the ACCSP ATA on a weekly basis. Completed interviews conducted as part of overdrawn assignments will be submitted and checked for errors using the same timeline as APAIS assignment data (Appendix B). Data will be available for NOAA Fisheries to evaluate potential use in MRIP estimates no later than January 2027.

Project Quality Factors:

Partners

- **Multi-Partner/Regional impact including broad applications** – Catch data will be collected in at least two representative states in each of the three subregions on the Atlantic Coast (North, Mid, and South) for the pilot project. There has been broad support for the project from the ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee, including state partners from Maine through Florida, regional Councils, NOAA Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and ASMFC members. All species will have released fish numbers and managed species will have released lengths collected.

Funding

- **Contains funding transition plan** – This proposal contains a transition to funding plan on p.10.
- **In-kind contribution** – 17.6% of this project is funded by the ASMFC, state, and NOAA Fisheries cooperative agreement for the conduct of the MRIP.

Data

- **Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness** – Recreational released catch cards provide a completely unique data stream into an already existing data set, as a part of the MRIP APAIS. Since the catch cards are collected as a part of the APAIS, the overdrawn catch card assignments follow the same timeline of weekly submission to the ACCSP, potential delivery to NOAA Fisheries every month as well. Since the APAIS relies on recall, the pre-trip catch cards offer the ability to work around recall bias, improving overall quality of the APAIS if implemented more broadly.
- **Impact on stock assessment** – Data on release lengths will be collected for managed species (i.e. those with bag and/or size limits). The ability to collect private/rental and shore discard information creates additional data sources

for the stock assessment process which has traditionally relied heavily on headboats only. At a minimum, this project will help stock assessments by increasing the overall sample sizes of discard lengths of managed species.

Appendix A: 2025 Example Catch Card

For detailed instructions, scan the QR Code:

12345678 Control # _____ Site # _____



Only record YOUR released fish on this trip, not the entire fishing group.

Primary Targeted Fish: _____ Fishing From: ☐ Boat ☐ Shore
Average Depth Fished (ft): _____ Hours Fished to Nearest 1/2 Hour: _____
Area Fished: ☐ Inshore (Bay, Sound, River) ☐ Ocean <3 Miles ☐ Ocean >3 Miles
Trip End Time (Return to Shore): _____ ☐ AM ☐ PM
I DID NOT RELEASE ANY FISH TODAY ☐

List every fish RELEASED on this trip and its condition with Y for Alive or N for Not Alive.

Only measure released fish that have a size or bag limit.

Record total length rounded up to the nearest 1/4 inch. →



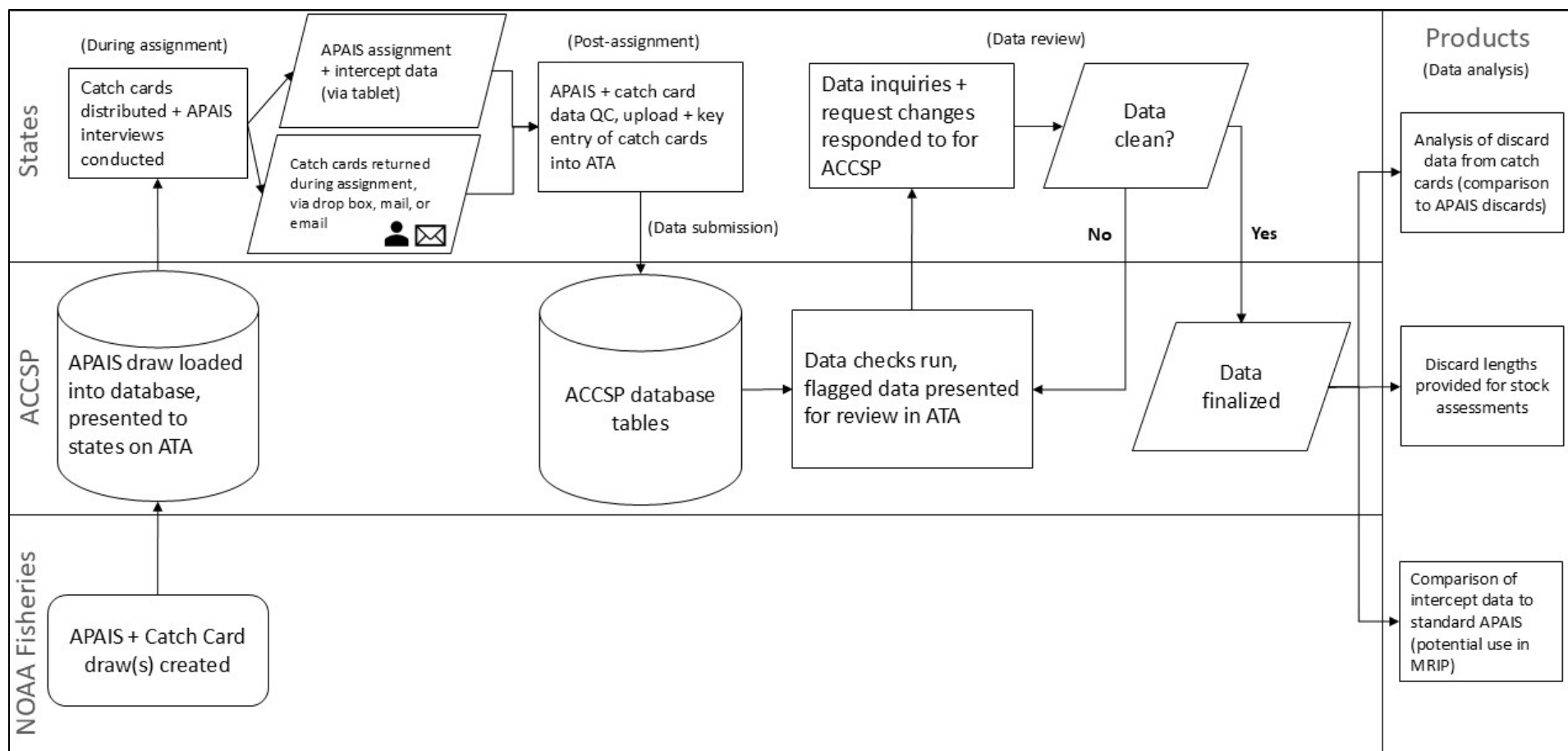
	Released Fish Species Name	Alive? (Y/N)	Total Length
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			

Counts of released fish NOT listed above

Released Fish Species Name	# Released Alive	# Released Dead

Return this postage paid card in the mail or take a picture and send to [cards@state.gov]

Appendix B: Data Flow Diagram



Appendix C: Determination of the Species of Interest and Calculation of the Number of Sampling Assignments Needed for the Released Catch Card Project

Determination of the Species of Interest for the Released Catch Card Project

Given the number of species an angler may encounter on the water and could potentially provide length information on, the Discards Subcommittee felt that it was important to focus on the species that would most benefit from the collection of discard length data. While information on non-managed species may be interesting, the subcommittee wanted to make sure the length data collected would make the most impact on species being managed and assessed by the various entities along the Atlantic coast.

To do this, a Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) query was initially done to identify species sampled on the Atlantic coast which had positive harvest values and where live releases (B2s) exceeded harvest (A+B1). Due to the high levels of discards, these species were thought to be ones where additional discard length information would likely be useful. Additional prioritization was chosen for those species with PSEs < 50% as those were assumed to be species that were more frequently encountered by the MRIP surveys. This analysis, however, still resulted in over 40 species being potentially identified as being of management importance.

To further refine this analysis, additional outreach was done to staff with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) as well as the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Fisheries Management Councils. Each was asked about the species they manage, specifically whether the species is primarily a recreationally caught species and whether or not the species is assessed using a length- or age-based assessment which would benefit from additional discard length data. Based on these answers, they were asked to select the ones that should be prioritized for the released catch card project.

The Discards Subcommittee reviewed the list of species provided in the initial analysis as well as submitted by the Commission and Councils. We first selected those that spanned multiple regions along the coast. Additional species were also selected that were regionally important (e.g., haddock in the North Atlantic, red drum in the South Atlantic). The South Atlantic species were further reduced so as not to overlap with those species that are already a focus of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Release app. In total, fourteen species were selected as the focus of this project.

Calculation of the Number of Sampling Assignments Needed for the Released Catch Card Project

After the species of interest for the project were determined, a couple of members from the ASMFC Assessment Science Committee were consulted on how many discard lengths would be needed for the data to be useful for assessment and management. Based on analysis conducted for the bluefish stock assessment, a sample size of approximately 30 sample lengths was suggested as a minimum. Specific assessment needs will vary by species, depending on the geographic scale of the assessment (e.g., regional vs. coastwide) and the time scale used for the length composition data (seasonal vs. annual), so a goal was set to collect 60 lengths per year to allow for the potential development of biannual length composition data. Within an assessment, the effective sample size, or number of sampling events, is calculated for length data. This is done to account for the individual fish lengths likely not being collected independently of each other, particularly given angler behavior and the possibility of an angler fishing on a single school of fish which are likely similar in size. While this analysis did estimate the number of catch cards we expected to be returned, which would equate to the number of angler trips we would expect to get data back from, the subcommittee decided to focus on the length target, rather than a catch card target, in the pilot as it was more easily achievable to reach the 60-length goal.

Initial number of sampling assignments were set at 50, 100, 150, and 200 assignments. However, from running the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS), we know that not all assignments will have anglers when the field interviewers are there. Based on 2022 data from the ACCSP Annual Report to MRIP, we estimated that approximately 36% of our assignments will be 0-intercept assignments coastwide. After accounting for that, we then had to calculate how many catch cards we may be able to hand out during APAIS assignments. While the APAIS design is focused on the time intervals when anglers will be completing their trips, we instead needed to determine when they usually leave on their private/rental boat trips. In the public MRIP trip dataset, there are fields for the time the intercept was collected as well as the number of hours the anglers were away from the dock. Using 2022 trip data from Maine to Florida, private/rental boat mode only, we calculated the one-hour time intervals that people leave for their fishing trips along the Atlantic coast and demonstrated that most trips (78%) leave in the 6 am-12 pm interval (Table 1). However, even sampling in the 8 am-2 pm interval would allow us to still intercept approximately 60% of the trips leaving in a day. These trips start data could also be aggregated to align with the APAIS sampling intervals and used to estimate the average number of eligible anglers we anticipate leaving on their trips per assignment (Table 2). Similar to before, we anticipate that we'll intercept the most anglers leaving for their trips during the 8 am-2 pm interval and the fewest during the 2 pm-8 pm interval (of the daytime intervals). As this project will mainly be conducted during the daytime intervals, an average of 5.24 anglers/assignment was calculated over the three intervals and was assumed to be representative of most assignments that would be conducted for the project.

Table 1. Frequency of raw APAIS fishing trips beginning within assignment intervals.

Interval	# Anglers Starting trip
00-59	29
100-159	27
200-259	75
300-359	163
400-459	531
500-559	1616
600-659	3448
700-759	4615
800-859	4839
900-959	3950
1000-1059	3280
1100-1159	2337
1200-1259	1688
1300-1359	1019
1400-1459	486
1500-1559	242
1600-1659	157
1700-1759	92
1800-1859	13
1900-1959	6
2000-2059	3
2100-2159	5
2200-2259	0
2300-2359	0

Total	28744
600-1200	22469
600-1200	78%
800-1400	17113
800-1400	60%
1100-1700	5929
1100-1700	21%
1400-2000	996
1400-2000	3.5%

Table 2. Number of raw APAIS fishing trips (interviews + eligible) per APAIS assignment with trips starting within 0800-1400, 1100-1700, and 1400-2000 intervals

800-1400		1100-1700		1400-2000	
AVG	5.11	AVG	3.08	AVG	2.29
MAX	45	MAX	30	MAX	13
SUM	17131	SUM	5931	SUM	996
ALL ELIG	25696.5	ALL ELIG	8896.5	ALL ELIG	1494
EST AVG ALL ELIG	7.67	EST AVG ALL ELIG	4.62	EST AVG ALL ELIG	3.44

Once we had an estimate of the approximate number of catch cards we may hand out to anglers during an assignment, we then had to make an assumption on how many catch cards we may have filled out and returned to us. Based on previous experience by Connecticut with their catch card project, we estimated this to be 25%. Since about 30% of private/rental boat anglers intercepted in 2021 and 2022 didn't report releasing any species to the APAIS field interviewers, that leaves around 45% of anglers who we assume either don't record the data or submit the card.

Since the card asks anglers to tally the total number of releases for all species but only record lengths for the fourteen prioritized species, it's possible that some of the cards returned will only have tally marks and no lengths due to the species caught. To determine how many of the returned cards may have lengths recorded for species of interest, the remaining calculations were done per species for each Atlantic coast subregion, as defined by MRIP. First, the percentage of angler intercepts that said they released the species of interest was calculated (Table 3). This gave us an estimate of the number of cards that may be returned with lengths for that particular species. Second, we calculated the average number of fish released by an individual angler for each prioritized species (Table 4). This gave us an estimate of approximately how many lengths we may collect from an angler who caught and released that species. By multiplying the number of cards, we expected back for each of the fourteen species by the average number of fish released for each species, we were able to estimate how many fish lengths we may be able to receive for each species in each subregion (Tables 5-7). In these tables, green cells indicate assignment totals which we estimate will provide 60 length samples for that region, yellow cells indicate assignment totals where we estimate we will provide 30-60 length samples for that region, and red cells indicate assignment totals where we estimate fewer than 30 length samples for that region. Black cells indicate species we don't expect to collect any sample lengths.

Based on these analyses, the various regions decided on a minimum number of overdrawn sample assignments to complete for their region. It is estimated to take 130-245 overdrawn assignments to reach the 60-length sample

minimum size for the most commonly encountered species in each region. In the second year, states may not have the flexibility to meet the previously assessed minimum number of overdrawn sample assignments. There will be 195 overdrawn catch card assignments in the North, 180 in the Mid, and 105 in the South Atlantic.

Table 3. The percentage of anglers who release one of the 14 species of interest. Note: Some 0% values are rounded and represent a very small percentage.

Species	North Atlantic	Mid-Atlantic	South Atlantic
Black Sea Bass	35%	25%	16%
Bluefish	8%	5%	7%
Haddock	3%	0%	0%
Spanish Mackerel	0%	1%	3%
Striped Bass	38%	17%	2%
Summer Flounder	11%	31%	0%
Tautog	11%	7%	0%
Weakfish	0%	2%	2%
Cobia	0%	1%	1%
Red Drum	0%	2%	19%
Spotted Sea Trout	0%	3%	22%
Gray Triggerfish	0%	0%	0%
Red Porgy	0%	0%	0%
Vermillion Snapper	0%	0%	1%

Table 4. The average number of releases per trip of the 14 species of interest.

Species	North Atlantic	Mid-Atlantic	South Atlantic
Black Sea Bass	5.6	6.3	5.2
Bluefish	2.7	3.1	2.9
Haddock	4.8	0.0	0.0
Spanish Mackerel	1.3	2.9	3.2
Striped Bass	4.9	4.6	2.9
Summer Flounder	3.0	4.1	2.0
Tautog	8.8	8.0	1.2
Weakfish	2.7	2.6	5.4
Cobia	0.0	1.7	1.5
Red Drum	0.0	3.2	3.1
Spotted Sea Trout	0.0	6.0	4.5
Gray Triggerfish	1.5	2.7	2.3
Red Porgy	0.0	0.0	4.4
Vermillion Snapper	0.0	0.0	4.2

Table 5. Estimated Number of Lengths Collected by Species of Interest in the North Atlantic region.

Time Slot	Number of Add On Assignments	Black Sea Bass	Bluefish	Haddock	Spanish Mackerel	Striped Bass	Summer Flounder	Tautog	Weakfish	Cobia	Red Drum	Spotted Sea Trout	Gray Triggerfish	Red Porgy	Vermilion Snapper
Avg over All Time Slots	50	82.1	9.2	5.2		77.2	14.1	40.3							
Avg over All Time Slots	100	164.2	18.3	10.4		154.4	28.2	80.6							
Avg over All Time Slots	150	246.3	27.5	15.6		231.6	42.2	120.9							
Avg over All Time Slots	200	328.5	36.7	20.8		308.8	56.3	161.2							
Avg over All Time Slots	300	492.7	55.0	31.2		463.2	84.5	241.8							

Table 6. Estimated Number of Lengths Collected by Species of Interest in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Time Slot	Number of Add On Assignments	Black Sea Bass	Bluefish	Haddock	Spanish Mackerel	Striped Bass	Summer Flounder	Tautog	Weakfish	Cobia	Red Drum	Spotted Sea Trout	Gray Triggerfish	Red Porgy	Vermilion Snapper
Avg over All Time Slots	50	64.8	7.0			32.2	52.3	23.8	2.6		2.5	7.2			
Avg over All Time Slots	100	129.6	14.1		1.5	64.5	104.6	47.7	5.2		5.1	14.5			
Avg over All Time Slots	150	194.3	21.1		2.3	96.7	157.0	71.5	7.8	1.3	7.6	21.7			
Avg over All Time Slots	200	259.1	28.1		3.1	129.0	209.3	95.4	10.4	1.8	10.2	28.9			
Avg over All Time Slots	300	388.7	42.2		4.6	193.5	313.9	143.1	15.6	2.7	15.3	43.4			

Table 7. Estimated Minimum Number of Lengths Collected by Species of Interest in the South Atlantic region.

Time Slot	Number of Add On Assignments	Over All 14 Spp.	Black Sea Bass	Bluefish	Haddock	Spanish Mackerel	Striped Bass	Summer Flounder	Tautog	Weakfish	Cobia	Red Drum	Spotted Sea Trout	Gray Triggerfish	Red Porgy	Vermilion Snapper
Avg over All Time Slots	50	99	34.0	8.8		4.3	1.9			4.8		24.0	42.3			1.4
Avg over All Time Slots	100	198	68.1	17.5		8.5	3.8			9.6	0.8	48.0	84.6			2.7
Avg over All Time Slots	120	239	82.2	21.2		10.3	4.6			11.6	1.0	58.0	102.2	0.6	0.6	3.3
Avg over All Time Slots	150	297	102.1	26.3		12.8	5.7			14.4	1.2	72.0	126.9	0.7	0.7	4.1
Avg over All Time Slots	200	395	136.2	35.0		17.0	7.6			19.2	1.6	96.1	169.2	0.9	1.0	5.4
Avg over All Time Slots	300	593	204.2	52.6		25.6	11.4			28.8	2.4	144.1	253.9	1.4	1.5	8.1

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Education

Savannah State University
Master of Science in Marine Sciences

Savannah, GA
May 2014

Old Dominion University
Bachelor of Science

Norfolk, VA
May 2002

Work experience

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division

Marine Biologist

August 2014 to present

- Coordinate and manage the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (AP AIS) and For Hire Telephone Survey (FHTS) for Georgia within the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)
- Georgia representative on several ASMFC committees including the Recreational Technical Committee, Atlantic Croaker Technical committee, Spot Plan Review Team, Electronic Monitoring Standards Working Group, and NOAA Transition Team
- Coordinate Red Snapper special data collection efforts during open seasons.
- Participation in other fisheries survey activities including otter trawl, eel trap, seine-net, gill-net, trammel-net, long-line, hook and line and habitat restoration
- Provide commercial and recreational data for, and completion of, ASMFC, SAFMC and SFR reports
- Panel member and data provider for Stock Assessment Data and Review (SEDAR) and ASMFC Stock Assessments
- Public liaison presenting fisheries dependent data results to educators, students, or general public
- Certified diver with GADNR CRD Dive Team

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division

Natural Resources Technician II

November 2007-August 2014

- Coordinate and execute Georgia's participation in the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (AP AIS) within the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)
- Participation other fisheries survey activities including Otter trawl, seine-net, gill-net, trammel-net, long-line, hook and line surveys and habitat restoration
- Public liaison for GADNR CRD and therefore knowledgeable of regulatory information that impacts the public
- Data entry and database management
- Presentation of fisheries dependent data to educators
- GADNR representative for Atlantic croaker technical committee (TC) and spot plan review team (PRT)
- Diver in training for GADNR CRD Dive Team
- Collection, processing, and ageing of Atlantic croaker *Micropogonias undulatus*

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division

Marine Technician I

April 2007-November 2007

- Participated in the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS)
- Participated in fisheries independent research, monitoring, and survey field sampling efforts

Technology, Skills and Certifications

- Proficient use of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Access),
- Familiar with ArcGIS, SQL, Oracle Databases, R, SAS, SPLUS, and SPSS
- Seamanship skills onboard small and large vessels, completed Boat U.S. Boating Safety Course for Georgia
- Identification, collection and processing biological samples of marine organisms commonly found in the South Atlantic Region (e.g., operculum, scales, otoliths, vertebrae, gonads, and fin clips)
- SCUBA, Nitrox, and DAN oxygen provider certified

Education

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan	2011
School of Natural Resources and Environment	
M.S. Aquatic Sciences: Resource Ecology and Management	
St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's City, Maryland	2005
B.A. Biology, <i>Magna cum laude</i>	
Concentration in Environmental Studies	

Research and Work Experience

Research Statistician IV, Analysis and Assessment Program, Fishing and Boating Services, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, February 2020-present

Research Statistician III, Analysis and Assessment Program, Fishing and Boating Services, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, January 1, 2016-February 11, 2020

Research Statistician II, Analysis and Assessment Program, Fishing and Boating Services, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, April 2014-December 31, 2016

- Conduct data analysis on various state and coastwide datasets for species managed in Maryland, including those managed through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). Data are analyzed using a variety of techniques from simple statistical analyses to more complex models, such as population dynamics models and fish tagging models. Write reports summarizing the results, present the results both internally and externally, and provide state and coastal fisheries management advice for both Maryland and other states through the ASMFC.
- Review new analysis methods based on literature and write new analysis codes as needed.
- Serve as the primary contact regarding recreational fishing surveys and data collection in Maryland tidal waters and serve as Maryland's representation to the ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee (current Chair).
- Serve as a consultant for biologists within the Fishing and Boating Services and periodically organize and lead staff trainings on data analysis.
- Have participated on ASMFC fishery management plan development teams for striped bass and cobia, including the analysis of bag and size limits and season analysis.
- Member of the ASMFC Red Drum Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Striped Bass Tagging Subcommittee, Weakfish Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Cobia Technical Committee (current Chair), and Cobia Plan Review Team. Also, a member of the Maryland Oyster Stock Assessment Committee.

Natural Resources Biologist II, Striped Bass Program, Fisheries Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, September 2008-April 2014

- Participated in the collection of biological data on striped bass in Maryland including a spawning stock gill net survey, juvenile seine survey, sampling pound net catches, and monitoring of the commercial and recreational fisheries in support of striped bass stock assessments.
- Supervised the trophy creel survey, sampling charter boat catches and interviewing recreational anglers with supervision over one seasonal biologist.
- Participated in the tagging of striped bass, using tagging models such as Program MARK and the Instantaneous Rates Catch and Release (IRCR) model, and serving as a representative from Maryland on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Striped Bass Tagging Subcommittee.
- Provided technical support to the striped bass program, including GIS mapping, statistical analysis of data, evaluation of the gill net selectivity model, and report writing.

Natural Resources Technician IV, Monitoring and Non-Tidal Assessment, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, February-September 2008

- Assisted with sampling streams across Maryland as part of the Maryland Biological Stream Survey. Data collected included water chemistry, physical habitat, and fish, macroinvertebrate, and herpetofauna data.
- Other duties included data entry, calibration of water quality sondes, and working with ArcGIS.

Aquatic Ecologist, CILER Summer Fellowship at NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab (GLERL), May-August 2007

Worked on a project with Dr. Stuart Ludsin and George Leshkevich to examine the influence of river plumes in the western basin of Lake Erie to the survival of larval yellow perch to recruitment. Duties included: using ArcGIS to determine the area covered by plumes between April and June based on satellite imagery; beginning work to determine the properties of the plumes using satellite and CTD data; processing water samples for water chemistry analysis and analyzing chlorophyll, suspended matter, and phosphorus concentrations; and some field work aboard the R/V Laurentian collecting zooplankton and larval fish as well as preserving stomach contents of predators.

Research Assistant, Institute for Fisheries Research and the University of Michigan, May-August 2006

GIS project mapping yellow perch catch in Lake Erie and lake trout in Lake Superior using data from the agencies along the lakes. Data manipulated in Microsoft Excel and Access for use in ArcGIS. Data were mapped to look for spatial patterns in catch by catch method, year, season, and age class and correlated with habitat data.

Computer and Statistical Skills

Microsoft Office Programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access), ArcGIS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), R, SAS, AD Model Builder, Program MARK, Stock Synthesis 3, National Fisheries Toolbox programs

Awards

2021 Maryland Department of Natural Resources Fishing and Boating Services Team of the Year (Access Point Angler Intercept Survey Team)

2017 Maryland Department of Natural Resources Fishing and Boating Services Employee of the Year

Teaching Experience

Graduate Student Instructor, NRE 409: Ecology of Fishes, School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan. Winter 2007.

Graduate Student Instructor, CHEM 125/126: General Chemistry Lab, Chemistry Department, University of Michigan. Fall 2006.

Teaching Assistant for Ecology and Evolution, St. Mary's College of Maryland. Spring 2004, Spring 2005.

Teaching Assistant for Principles of Biology I, St. Mary's College of Maryland. Fall 2002.

Presentations

Giuliano, A.M. Climate Effects on the Timing of Maryland Striped Bass Spawning Runs. 151st Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society, Baltimore, MD, November 6-10, 2021.

Giuliano, A.M., E.S. Rutherford, C. Riseng, M. Luttenton, and M.J. Wiley. Effects of Zebra Mussels on a Lake Michigan Tributary Fish Community. 137th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society, San Francisco, California, September 2-6, 2007.

Publications

Giuliano, A. 2023. Climate effects on the timing of Maryland Striped Bass spawning runs. *Marine and Coastal Fisheries: Dynamics, Management, and Ecosystem Science*, 15, e10274. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mcf2.10274>

Brown, S. C., Giuliano, A. M., & Versak, B. A. 2024. Female age at maturity and fecundity in Atlantic Striped Bass. *Marine and Coastal Fisheries: Dynamics, Management, and Ecosystem Science*, 16, e10280. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mcf2.10280>



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Trish Murphey, Chair | Jessica McCawley, Vice Chair
John Carmichael, Executive Director

August 15, 2025

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland St. Ste. 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

We are pleased to submit the proposal titled, “FY26: Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the *SAFMC Release* Citizen Science Project”. The proposal objectives are summarized below:

- Continue data collection through the *SAFMC Release* citizen science project on released shallow-water grouper (Black, Gag, Red, Scamp, Yellowfin and Yellowmouth Groupers; Red Hind; Rock Hind; Coney and Graysby) and Red Snapper in the South Atlantic
- Continue opportunistic strategies to recruit fishermen for the *SAFMC Release* citizen science project
- Enhance *SAFMC Release*’s participant retention and reactivation within the project

The proposed work will help address key research needs on released shallow water grouper and Red Snapper – characterizing the size of released fish and helping to better understand how many released fish survive. Data collection is done via the SciFish platform, using ACCSP data standards and making the data more easily accessible for assessment and management.

This proposal is being submitted as a first-year maintenance project. It will build on the work that will be done through the “FY25: Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the *SAFMC Release* Citizen Science Project” and work from the FY20-FY22 ACCSP funded SciFish projects.

This proposal has been revised based on the reviewers’ feedback. Committee members asked that we address whether the biological module was the appropriate primary priority as some members potentially saw this as a bycatch proposal. We have addressed this below and within the proposal where applicable.

The project PI and collaborators feel the primary priority for this proposal should be biological. While the focus of SAFMC Release is on released fish, the primary data collected are lengths of snapper grouper species, several of which are in the top 25% of the biological matrix. Keeping biological as the primary priority will be consistent with past ACCSP proposals that included SAFMC Release and were successfully funded (FY25 SAFMC Release proposal and FY20-FY22 SciFish proposals). The primary (biological) and secondary (bycatch) program priority percentages for this proposal have been adjusted slightly in response to the Committee’s feedback. In this submission, the bold text indicates sections that help with the ranking process and yellow highlighted text indicates changes from our initial submission.

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like any additional information.

Best,

Julia Byrd
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Applicant Names: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC)

Project Title: FY26: Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the *SAFMC Release* Citizen Science Project

Project Consultants: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) and Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR)

Project Type: Maintenance (first year)

Requested Award Amount: \$132,994

Requested Reward Period: One year upon receipt of funds

Submission Date: August 15, 2025

FY26 Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Proposal for the SAFMC

OBJECTIVES:

- Continue data collection through the *SAFMC Release* citizen science project on released shallow-water grouper (Black, Gag, Red, Scamp, Yellowfin and Yellowmouth Groupers; Red Hind; Rock Hind; Coney and Graysby) and Red Snapper in the South Atlantic
- Continue opportunistic strategies to recruit fishermen for the *SAFMC Release* citizen science project
- Enhance *SAFMC Release*'s participant retention and reactivation within the project

NEED:

Fishery managers consider the biology and sustainability of a fish stock in concert with socio-economic values of the resource and fishery when developing fishery management plans. Despite substantial efforts, perennial data gaps still exist. If addressed, new data would be useful in developing improved stock assessment models and associated management considerations.

Citizen science is growing in the United States and other countries (McKinley et al. 2017) and has been used for research, management, policy, and public engagement (Poisson et al. 2020). **A growing number of publications has shown that diverse citizen science projects can produce data on par with traditional scientific data when properly designed, implemented, and evaluated (McKinley et al. 2017, Kosmala et al. 2016, Freitag et al. 2016). Past studies have found that citizen science programs can provide timely and non-biased information on fisheries (Jiorle et al. 2016, Gundelund et al. 2021, Johnston et al. 2021, Bellquist et al. 2022, and Oremland et al. 2022).** Indeed, citizen science approaches are currently being investigated to address state and federal management needs including catch at size, shark depredation, biological data, and post release fishing mortality. Examples of this can be seen in recent efforts by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (SAFMC) [SAFMC Release](#) project, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries' Catch U Later project, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries' [Striped Bass Citizen Science Project](#), and Florida Atlantic University's [Shark Depredation Project](#). NOAA Fisheries recently published a technical memorandum that highlights examples of citizen science data being used in stock assessments and noted there is potential to increase and improve the use of citizen science within the Agency (Furnish et al. 2025). **ACCSP recognized the potential of citizen science to fill data gaps and developed the SciFish platform to support, develop, and administer this type of research.**

Discard mortality has been an increasing contributor to the total mortality experienced by many stocks and is a major source of mortality for Red Snapper as well as other species in the snapper-grouper complex (SEDAR 73, SEDAR 2021a). Importantly, released fish are not available for sampling by typical dockside monitoring programs. In the South Atlantic, observer coverage ranges from limited in commercial and for-hire fisheries to non-existent in private recreational fisheries. As such, there is often no or limited information available to characterize the size and fate of these losses for stock assessment modeling. Improving information on released fish is commonly highlighted in stock assessment research recommendations and is often a top priority in agency research plans. This project will focus on characterizing the size distribution of shallow-water grouper and Red

Snapper releases in the South Atlantic region and gathering information to help understand how many of these releases survive. In the ACCSP request for 2026 proposals, improved recreational fishery discard and release data as well as biological sampling for recreational fisheries separate from MRIP are the #3 and #5 recreational priorities, respectively. Additionally, Red Snapper, Gag Grouper, Red Grouper, and Scamp Grouper are in the top 25% of the biological priority matrix, and the snapper grouper hook and line fishery is in the top 25% of the bycatch matrix. Discard characterization and information on barotrauma mitigation practices are priorities in the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (SAFMC) Research and Monitoring Plan for 2023-2027 and for the SAFMC's Citizen Science Program.

The *SAFMC Release* project was developed through the SAFMC's Citizen Science Program. It provides a streamlined approach for fishermen to provide a photograph of released fish along with details such as length, release location and depth caught, condition, and use of barotrauma mitigation techniques. The project focuses on collecting data on the size of released fish and information that helps characterize how many released fish survive. *SAFMC Release* began as a pilot project in June 2019 partnering with recreational, for-hire, and commercial fishermen to gather information on released Scamp Grouper via the *SAFMC Release* mobile application. In August 2021, *SAFMC Release* transitioned to the ACCSP's SciFish mobile application/platform and expanded to collect information on all shallow-water grouper species. In April 2022, Red Snapper was added to the project.

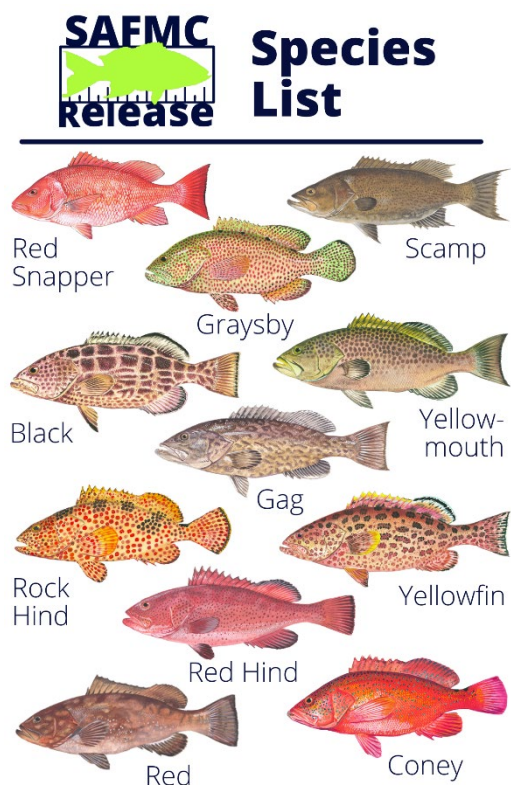


Figure 1. *SAFMC Release* Species List.

Recruitment for *SAFMC Release* has largely been through opportunistic outreach strategies (e.g., tackle shop visits, fishing seminars and expos, SAFMC-related meetings, online and media, etc.) and has been limited by capacity and resources (e.g., personnel, time, funding). Through collaborations

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with the SAFMC’s Best Fishing Practices initiative, Sea Grant, state agencies, and other partners, the project has reached broader audiences than Citizen Science Program staff could have done alone. In spring 2022, the Council collaborated with the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) to mail information to 10,000 NC recreational fishing license holders to recruit participants to the Catch U Later and *SAFMC Release* projects. In June 2023, the Council collaborated with Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FL FWC) on an email solicitation to Florida State Reef Fish Designees on the Atlantic Coast to encourage participation in FL FWC’s State Reef Fish Survey and recruit fishermen to the *SAFMC Release* project. The Council is currently collaborating with NOAA Fisheries, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) on a mailing to SC and GA recreational saltwater fishing license/permit holders to recruit participants to the *SAFMC Release* project. **A small pilot mailing was sent to a subset of SC and GA anglers in July 2025**, and a larger mailing is planned in 2026 as part of the FY25 ACCSP-funded proposal.

The number of project participants and data submissions within the *SAFMC Release* project has been growing over time. Each year, *SAFMC Release* develops Annual Data Summaries which are initially shared with project participants and then posted to the project webpage. *SAFMC Release* Annual Data Summaries are available at the following links: [SAFMC Release Data Summary 2021](#), [SAFMC Release Data Summary 2022](#), [SAFMC Release Data Summary 2023](#), and [SAFMC Release Data Summary 2024](#). Aggregate length composition for Red Snapper and aggregate release treatment by depth figures are provided below as an example of the data collected through the project over time (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

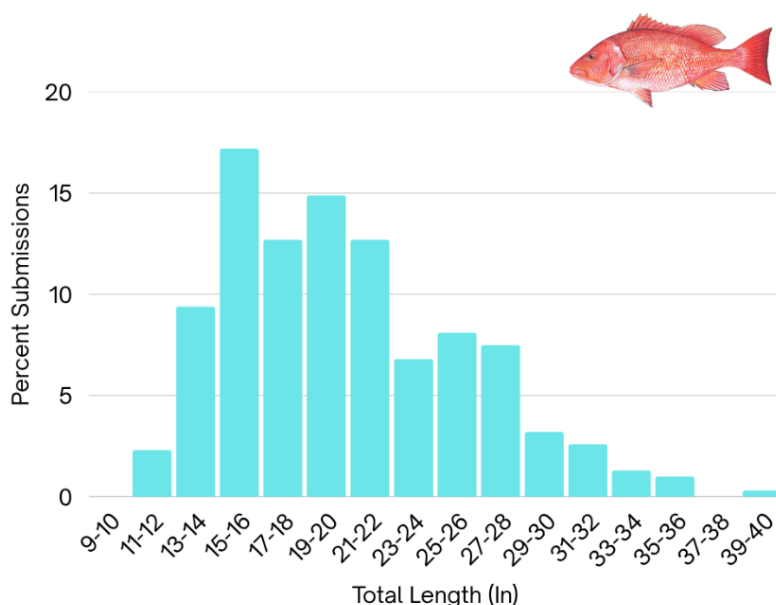


Figure 2. Red Snapper release length frequency logged through *SAFMC Release*, April 2022 – May 2025. Red Snapper was added to *SAFMC Release* in April 2022.

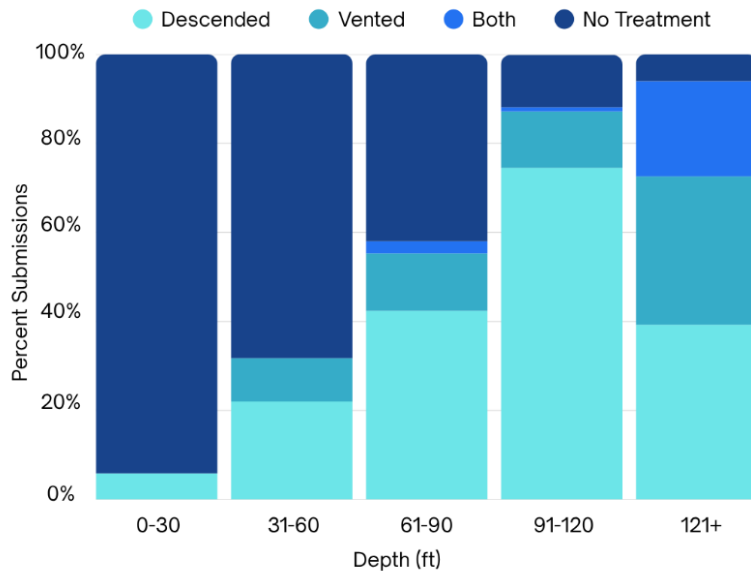


Figure 3. Release treatment by depth logged through *SAFMC Release*, April 2022 – May 2025.

In the recent SEDAR 90 (South Atlantic Red Snapper) Data Workshop (April 2025), *SAFMC Release* length data were recommended for use in the assessment by the SEDAR 90 Data Workshop Panel. *SAFMC Release* data were also considered in the development of release mortality estimates. Additionally, SEDAR 90 research recommendations include developing more opportunities (e.g., citizen science, catch cards) to collect release lengths from the recreational fleet and gathering more information on barotrauma mitigation technique usage rates – supporting the continuation and expansion of the *SAFMC Release* project.

When new participants sign up for *SAFMC Release*, they are asked to share where they heard about the project via an open-ended question. Based on these data, **in-person outreach (47%) and directed recruitment mailings in collaboration with state partners (NCDMF mailing – 17% and the FL FWC solicitation email – 10%)** have been critical recruitment strategies for the project to date (Figure 4).

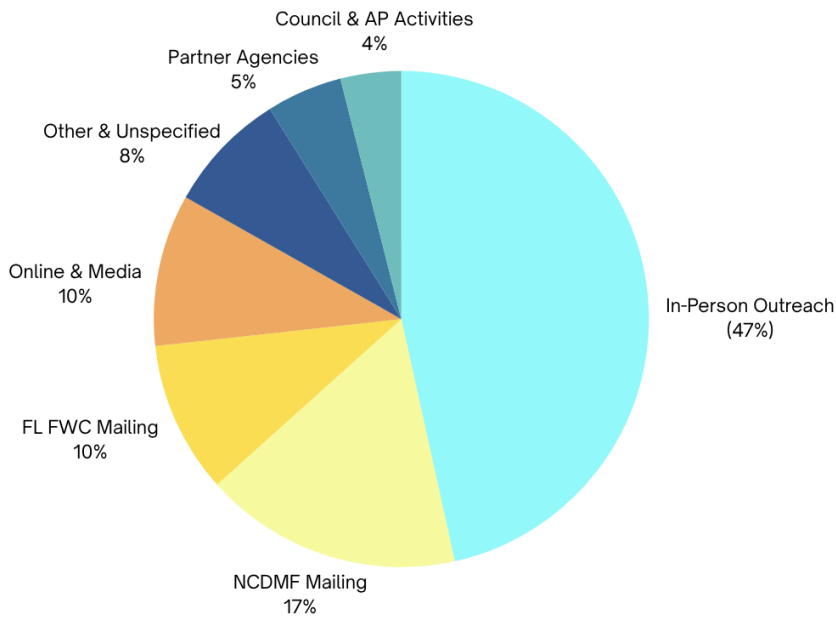


Figure 4. *SAFMC Release* participants by origin (January 2022 – May 2025).

Through *SAFMC Release* outreach efforts, staff have been able to build new and strengthen existing relationships with project participants and other stakeholders within the fishing community. However, participant recruitment and retention remain a significant challenge. **This proposal will support the continuation of opportunistic outreach strategies to assist with participant recruitment and relationship building within the fishing community, focusing on in-person outreach that has been critical for project participation.**

To help with participant retention, *SAFMC Release* launched a Participant Recognition Program (PRP) in spring 2023. When volunteers reach identified milestones, they receive recognition or awards from Sea Grant. Participant recognition programs are often beneficial to improve volunteer retention within citizen science projects (Robinson et al. 2021). Such programs have been shown to increase the quantity of data submissions and support retention by providing recurring volunteer engagement opportunities (Dickinson et al. 2012; Diekert et al. 2023). Thus, a recognition program is an important element of a retention strategy for the *SAFMC Release* project.

Programs such as Catch a Florida Memory (CAFM), in which anglers submit catch information to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to earn rewards, have had success in motivating continued participation by providing a variety of incentives for participants (J. Christopherson, personal communication, May 1, 2024). Of CAFM participants surveyed in 2023, 88% reported that earning prizes was ‘somewhat important’ or ‘very important’ motivation for participating in the program. Approximately 54% of respondents reported being ‘very satisfied’ with the prize packages they earn (internal CAFM data). Also cited as contributing to program success are goals that re-engage volunteers after reaching all available milestones (J. Christopherson, personal communication, May 1, 2024).

Due to SAFMC funding limitations and stipulations, *SAFMC Release* initially provided only public recognition (e.g., named in monthly newsletters or annual data summary) to participants who met PRP

milestones. In 2024, the Council partnered with Sea Grant, which adopted some of the PRP milestones ([2024 PRP milestones](#)). As participants meet these adopted milestones, they earn Sea Grant “recognition packets” and may win best fishing practices gear. However, Sea Grant can only provide best fishing practices-related items. As participants continue to meet milestones and accumulate a variety of best fishing practices gear, the motivation to earn these items is likely to wane. **The success demonstrated by programs such as CAFM indicates that incorporating a more substantial recognition program into *SAFMC Release*’s retention strategy can increase the quantity of data collected through the project, improve participant satisfaction, and support the long-term engagement of participants.**

The Council has continued the partnership with Sea Grant on the *SAFMC Release* [2025 PRP milestones](#) and is also collaborating with Sea Grant on a new initiative in 2025 – the [Sea Grant South Atlantic Release Rodeo](#). The Rodeo is a three-month challenge (May 1 – July 31, 2025) hosted by Sea Grant where South Atlantic fishermen can earn a chance to win Sea Grant giveaways by submitting entries in *SAFMC Release* that include photos that can be used for data validation. The South Atlantic Release Rodeo is working to increase participation in *SAFMC Release*, encourage *SAFMC Release* submissions with photos **that can be used for data validation**, and help get best fishing practices gear distributed to anglers. Results from the South Atlantic Release Rodeo will be used to inform future *SAFMC Release* recruitment and retention strategies, in particular to help evaluate if the use of periodic tournaments can help encourage project participation and increase submissions that can be used for data validation.

RESULTS & BENEFITS:

This project will continue to collect data on released fish via *SAFMC Release*, building on the work done through the FY20-FY22 ACCSP-funded SciFish projects and **that will be done via the FY25 ACCSP *SAFMC Release* project.** Observer funding for most fisheries along the Atlantic Coast has never been adequate. Many fisheries, such as the private recreational or the commercial snapper grouper hook and line, are challenging to sample through conventional observer techniques due to their small vessels which could present safety concerns, potential liability issues, and logistical challenges. Although a few specific fisheries are highlighted in this project, **the proportion of catch attributed to releases is increasing in many popular fisheries along the Atlantic Coast so the insights, tools, and best practices developed through this project may be beneficial to other partners.**

***SAFMC Release* will continue collecting biological information on the component of catch that is released, addressing the ACCSP FY26 Request for Proposal priority 1 and Recreational Technical Committee priority 3. *SAFMC Release* will continue to collect biological and fishery data that is independent of APAIS/MRIP, addressing Recreational Technical Committee priority 5.**

Additionally, as one of the initial projects in SciFish, *SAFMC Release* continues to help test the SciFish mobile app, project builder, and account creation portal. *SAFMC* staff work closely with ACCSP to address any issues that arise, helping to improve the platform which will benefit all partners who have or are interested in developing projects within SciFish.

The specific benefits to each data type and the rank of the target species within the biological and bycatch priority matrices included in the project are addressed below.

Bold text indicates text that helps with the ranking process.

Yellow highlighted text indicates changes from the original submission.

Primary Program Priority: Biological Sampling: 85%

The primary focus of the *SAFMC Release* project is to collect length data on released shallow water grouper (Black, Gag, Red, Scamp, Yellowfin and Yellowmouth Groupers; Red Hind; Rock Hind; Coney and Graysby) and Red Snapper. Through this proposal biological information from the commercial, for-hire, and recreational fisheries will continue to be collected through *SAFMC Release* for these species. Gag Grouper, Red Grouper, Scamp Grouper, and Red Snapper are in the top 25% of the ACCSP biological sampling priority matrix. All of these species are in the ‘inadequate sampling’ quadrants of the matrix and Red Snapper is in the ‘high priority, inadequate sampling’ quadrant. *SAFMC Release* data collection includes:

- Data collected for each trip: trip type (commercial, recreational, headboat, charter), date, state, user (ACCSP ID);
- Data collected for each fish released: species (user’s determination), length (based on ACCSP standards), location (state required, specific latitude/longitude optional), depth, time, fate (dead or alive release), hook type, hook location, use of barotrauma mitigation (descending device, venting, line cut), shark depredation, and photograph (to validate and evaluate species IDs and lengths); and
- Users may also file a ‘no fish released’ report to share information on harvested fish.

Secondary Module as a by-product: Bycatch: 15%

The snapper-grouper hook and line fleet is ranked in the top quartile of the ACCSP bycatch priority matrix (ranked 2nd out of 17 fleets). Information collected through *SAFMC Release* can help provide information on length of released shallow water grouper and Red Snapper, hook type and hooking location, and release treatment (e.g., use of barotrauma mitigation devices) to supplement the data available through observer coverage and discard logbooks to help characterize the bycatch within this fleet.

Stock Assessment and Management Benefits and Impact:

By continuing data collection on released fish through the *SAFMC Release* project, the positive impact of this project to both stock assessments and management could be substantial and realized. Stock assessments rely upon accurate information on total catch and removals from the stock and accurately assigning those removals to year classes. For fish that are landed, these requirements can be addressed through straightforward methods such as catch reporting or creel surveys to estimate removals and dockside sampling to collect length measurements and age samples. Surveying and dockside sampling approaches do not work when the fish are released on the water. Using the South Atlantic as an example, limited information is available to classify the size composition of released fish in the commercial snapper grouper hook and line fleet, the private recreational fleet, or the charter fleet. In some areas, fisheries observers are used to collect information on released fish, but observer coverage is limited due in part to high cost. Moreover, even if funding were available, logistics and liabilities remain a concern for some fisheries due to the small size of some commercial and most private recreational vessels as well as lack of safety gear requirements on private recreational vessels. Limited observer coverage is available for the headboat fleet and charter fleet (FL only), but changes in fleet size, targeted species, and behavior raise concerns about the validity of such data to characterize removals from other fishery sectors. This lack of information is a major source of stock assessment uncertainty, and assumptions must be made to assign released fish into length and thus age

classes.

In years past, the lack of accurate information on discarded fish was not a major assessment concern or source of uncertainty as landed fish generally accounted for the majority of stock removals. However, this is changing as regulations and fishing behavior are leading to increased discarding. The number and percentage of released fish has increased over the past decade as management has implemented accountability measures to shorten landings seasons when annual catch limits are exceeded. The most recent Red Grouper assessment (SEDAR 53, SEDAR 2017) indicated that over fifty percent of the fishing mortality experienced by Red Grouper is due to discard losses. Given that this stock was found to be overfished and overfishing was occurring, these discard removals are significant, and therefore the assumptions made regarding their size and composition are critical. In this instance, the length composition and selectivity for the discard losses was based on observer records from the headboat fishery and it was assumed these data were representative of all fishery sectors. As noted above, there are limited data to test this assumption so its impact on assessment uncertainty and bias is unknown. The most recent assessment of South Atlantic Gag Grouper (SEDAR 71, SEDAR 2021b) indicated the stock was overfished and overfishing was occurring. Although discards accounted for a small proportion of fishing mortality in the assessment, the restrictive management measures implemented in response to the assessment through SAFMC's Snapper Grouper Amendment 53 will increase the proportion of discards within the fishery. SEDAR 71 relied on limited headboat observer data to characterize the size of discards from the recreational fleet since no data were available from the charter and private recreational sectors. Having additional data sources to supplement these data will become increasingly important as the discards in the Gag fishery increase. In SEDAR 73, the most recent South Atlantic Red Snapper assessment, the stock was found to be overfished and undergoing overfishing. In recent years, discards have accounted for over 90% of removals so characterizing their size is critical. Length compositions and selectivity for discards were based on limited commercial, headboat, and charter (Florida only) observer data. Sampling recommendations in the report noted that it remains important to monitor discards year-round and any potential methodological or sampling improvements should be implemented if possible. Having additional information to help characterize the substantial discards would help address this critical need.

A similar lack of information exists to classify the depth where fish are captured and released as well as the use of barotrauma mitigation techniques, such as venting tools and descending devices. Fishing depth is positively correlated with release mortality rates for most species due to the impacts of barotrauma. However, it is challenging to estimate release mortality for use in a stock assessment without information on the depths at which fish are caught and when the species is impacted by barotrauma.

Small improvements in estimates of discard mortality, based on data rather than assumption, can result in large changes in the estimated removals from a fish stock. Based on the results of ACCSP-funded headboat observer studies, as cited in the FY2019 Recreational Technical Committee proposal, the Red Snapper release mortality was reduced from 37% to 28.5% due to the use of circle hooks. Applying this percentage change to the estimated 2018 MRIP discards reduced the discard losses to the population by 274,000 fish. This is a substantial reduction since the 2018 recreational annual catch limit was only 29,656 fish. The ability to accurately characterize discards could substantially improve stock assessments and management decisions.

The SAFMC's Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 29, which required a descending device be rigged and ready on-board any vessel fishing for or possessing snapper grouper species, was implemented in July 2020. Many stakeholders regarded this as a positive management action. However, more information is needed on when and where barotrauma mitigation techniques, like descending devices, are being used. When reviewing the SEDAR 73 (South Atlantic Red Snapper) assessment at their April 2021 meeting, the SAFMC's Science and Statistical Committee raised concerns about the level of descender device usage due to the lack of information on how widespread usage is in the fishery. This is of note since the assumed level has an impact on recommended catch levels -- highlighting the need for this data.

The *SAFMC Release* data were presented for consideration at the recent SEDAR 90 (South Atlantic Red Snapper) Data Workshop in April 2025 (Byrd et al. 2025). *SAFMC Release* and another citizen science project, MyFishCount (data available from 2017-2020), were the only Red Snapper release length data available for charter boats north of Florida and from the private recreational sector. *SAFMC Release* and MyFishCount Red Snapper release length data were both recommended for use in the assessment by the SEDAR 90 Data Workshop Panel. *SAFMC Release* data were also considered in the development of release mortality estimates for SEDAR 90. Additionally, SEDAR 90 Data Workshop research recommendations include developing more opportunities (e.g., citizen science, catch cards) to collect release lengths from the recreational fleet and gathering more information on barotrauma mitigation technique usage rates. These recommendations support the continuation and expansion of the *SAFMC Release* project. Additionally, *SAFMC Release* data will be presented for consideration at the South Atlantic Gag assessment which is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2026.

DATA DELIVERY PLAN:

The SciFish application for the *SAFMC Release* project will collect and deliver data directly to ACCSP through the SciFish API and will be stored in SAFIS. Data can be entered by fishermen when no internet connection is available and later uploaded to SAFIS when a connection becomes available.

APPROACH:

Task A: Continue and expand current *SAFMC Release* recruitment strategies

Roles of Collaborators

SAFMC

- Visit tackle shops in South Atlantic states (NC, SC, GA, and FL) to distribute *SAFMC Release* and Best Fishing Practices materials for project promotion and recruitment
- Participate in relevant fishing expos, seminars, and collaborations with fishing organizations to promote *SAFMC Release* and best fishing practices as well as recruit new project participants
- Collaborate with state partners to share information on *SAFMC Release* at events and via other outreach efforts and communication platforms, as appropriate
- Share *SAFMC Release* project information at Council related meetings and via Council communication platforms (e.g., South Atlantic Bite newsletter, social media)

- Explore collaborations with fishing clubs on a release focused **challenge** or release focused **challenges**
- Set up and monitor *SAFMC Release* project sign up forms
- Create user accounts and onboard new participants (sharing login details, training materials, add to *SAFMC Release* email list & Participant Recognition Program (PRP) if opt in, troubleshoot SciFish login/app issues)

SCDNR & GADNR

- Consult on participant recruitment strategies

Task B: *SAFMC Release* Participant Retention Strategies

Overview

- The *SAFMC Release* team will employ a multi-pronged approach to support year-round participant engagement with the project, including regular participant communications, development of data summaries, and the expansion of the PRP.
- To support engagement with the *SAFMC Release* project year-round, recognition program milestones will reward participants using multiple strategies. Figure 5 outlines the proposed strategies for milestones, associated rewards, and other forms of recognition.

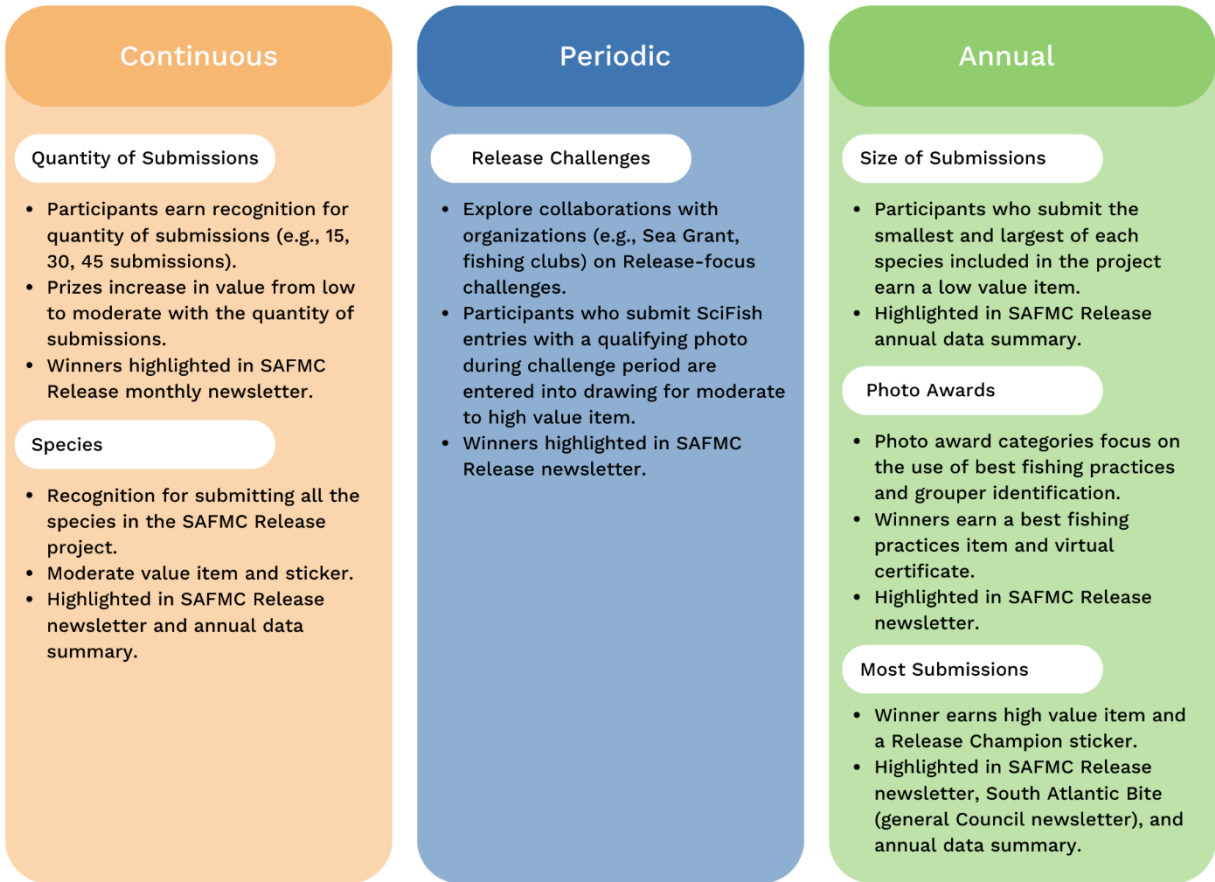


Figure 5. *SAFMC Release* proposed PRP milestones, rewards, and recognitions.

Bold text indicates text that helps with the ranking process.

Yellow highlighted text indicates changes from the original submission.

Roles of Collaborators

SAFMC

- Participant Communications
 - Distribute monthly e-newsletters to participants
 - Email and phone communication with participants to thank them for submissions, troubleshoot issues, etc.
- Annual Data Summary
 - Provide to participants and post to project webpage
 - Explore additional data summary options for participants
- Participant Recognition Program (PRP)
 - Monitor participant progress
 - Provide participant awards for PRP milestones

SCDNR & GADNR

- Consult on participant retention strategies

Task C: Data collection, QA/QC, and analysis

Roles of Collaborators

SAFMC

- Submit data automatically via app to SAFIS/Data Warehouse
- Provide QA/QC for data collected through project; edit/correct as necessary
- Share summary data with project partners
- Make data available for assessment and management, as necessary
- Continue to explore long term solutions for addressing QA/QC and validation needs of the data (e.g., photographic and species identification), considering volunteers and citizen science approaches
- Review success of recruitment and retention strategies and make recommendations for future efforts

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION:

The *SAFMC Release* project partners with fishermen to collect data on released fish in South Atlantic waters in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and the east coast of Florida through the Florida Keys. Project consultants include SCDNR and GADNR. Letters of support have been provided by Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FL FWC), **SCDNR, and North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF; see Appendix 1). Data collected through the project will be available for consideration in South Atlantic stock assessments and management.**

In addition to contributing data for consideration in stock assessments and management, this project will collect information on the effectiveness of various recruitment and retention strategies for *SAFMC Release*. With the growing interest in using citizen science as a tool to help supplement marine fisheries data collection, the information gained on volunteer recruitment and retention could be informative for other citizen science projects being pursued by partners along the Atlantic coast.

FUNDING TRANSITION PLAN:

Project PI's will be developing additional proposals and exploring other funding opportunities to help support additional years of funding for this project.

MILESTONE SCHEDULE:

Table 1. Milestone Schedule

Task	Month											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>SAFMC Release</i> Opportunistic Recruitment Outreach Strategies: Tackle shop outreach, seminars, fishing expos, etc.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
<i>SAFMC Release</i> Retention Strategies: Regular Communication, Newsletters, PRP coordination & implementation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Data Collection, QA/QC & Analysis	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Semi & Annual Report Writing						x					x	x

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS MEASUREMENTS:

Table 2. Project Accomplishments Measurements

Project Component	Deliverables
<i>SAFMC Release</i> Opportunistic Recruitment Outreach	Continue outreach to promote <i>SAFMC Release</i> in South Atlantic states with a target to visit tackle shops and collaborate on a seminar/outreach event at least once per state; new participants recruited to <i>SAFMC Release</i> via in-person and online outreach
<i>SAFMC Release</i> Retention Strategies	Monthly newsletters and annual data summary distributed to project participants; continuous, periodic, and annual milestones incorporated into Participant Recognition Program (PRP); increase number of participants submitting data and meeting PRP milestones
Data Collection, QA/QC & Analysis	Participants continue to submit data on target species using the ACCSP SciFish application; QA/QC completed; data available for management and assessment, as needed
Report Writing	Progress and final reports submitted

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FY26 COST SUMMARY (BUDGET):

Item	ACCSP Share	Partner Share	Total
PERSONNEL COSTS			
SAFMC Citizen Science Project Coordinator – 12 months	\$48,965		
<i>SAFMC Release</i> hourly position (part-time)	\$10,400		
SAFMC Personnel Julia Byrd, Citizen Science Program (10%)		\$9,942	
FRINGE			
SAFMC Citizen Science Project Coordinator – 12 months	\$28,268		
SAFMC Personnel Julia Byrd, Citizen Science Program (10%)		\$5,772	
SUPPLIES			
Promotional materials	\$4,000		
Participant Recognition Program incentives	\$15,000		
Software packages	\$3,300		
TRAVEL			
Travel to support outreach and promotional opportunities for <i>SAFMC Release</i>	\$5,714		
Indirect Costs (15% of non-contract costs)	\$17,347		
TOTAL	\$132,994	\$15,714	\$148,708
Percentage	89%	11%	100%

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FY26 BUDGET NARRATIVE:

Personnel (\$59,365): Personnel funds of \$48,965 will support 12 months of the SAFMC Citizen Science Project Coordinator position who leads daily project management for the *SAFMC Release* project. The remaining personnel funds (\$10,400) will be used by SAFMC to hire a part-time hourly at \$20/hour for 520 hours for the *SAFMC Release* project to help with account creation, coordination of the Participant Recognition Program, and QA/QC.

Fringe (\$28,268): Fringe funds will support 12 months of benefits for the SAFMC Citizen Science Project Coordinator position. Fringe benefits are charged at 58% of total compensation.

Supplies (\$22,300): Funds will be used to print promotional materials (e.g., wallet cards, rack cards, stickers, etc.) to promote and recruit users for *SAFMC Release*. Costs for promotional materials range from wallet cards (~\$0.05 each) to stickers (~\$1.50 each). Using an average cost of \$0.77 per item, \$4,000 will allow us to print ~5,195 items for distribution. The PRP will include low, medium, and high value items when participants meet identified milestones:

- Low value: \$10-\$20 (average \$15) purchases ~790 items for \$11,844
- Medium value: \$25-\$100 (average \$63) purchases ~12 items for \$756
- High value: \$200-\$600 (average \$400) purchases 6 items for \$2,400

Costs for software include an annual subscription to Wufoo (\$330) for account creation online forms and an upgrade to the shiny application to provide an additional tool for project participants to explore and query their data.

Travel (\$5,714): Travel by partners will be used to promote *SAFMC Release* by visiting tackle shops, fishing clubs and expos, and other related venues to allow for distribution of outreach and promotional materials. Funds are requested to support travel for staff members for 4 trips, approximately 3-4 days each. Costs are estimated for a total of 14 hotel nights at \$189/night (\$2,646), 16 days per diem at \$83/day (\$1,328), ~1200 miles at \$0.70/mile (\$840), and two airplane fares at ~\$450/ticket (\$900). Travel rate estimates are based on federal reimbursement and per diem rates.

Indirect (\$17,347): Indirect charges of 15% (per communication with the NOAA Fisheries SERO grants office) are applied to the non-contract budget items for a total of \$17,347.

FY25 COST SUMMARY (BUDGET):

Item	ACCSP Share	Partner Share	Total
PERSONNEL COSTS			
SAFMC Citizen Science Project Coordinator – 6 months	\$24,024		
<i>SAFMC Release</i> hourly position (part-time)	\$10,400		
SAFMC Personnel Julia Byrd, Citizen Science Program (10%)		\$9,700	
NOAA Personnel Drew Cathey, SEFSC (5%) Lauren Dolinger Few, S & T (~ 1 week)		\$3,950 \$3,400	
FRINGE			
SAFMC Citizen Science Project Coordinator – 6 months	\$14,294		
SAFMC Personnel Julia Byrd, Citizen Science Program (10%)		\$5,772	
CONTRACT			
NSAR recruitment mailing	\$54,363		
SUPPLIES			
Promotional materials	\$4,000		
Participant Recognition Program incentives	\$15,000		
Software packages	\$3,300		
TRAVEL			
Travel to support outreach and promotional opportunities for <i>SAFMC Release</i>	\$4,430		

Bold text indicates text that helps with the ranking process.

Yellow highlighted text indicates changes from the original submission.

Indirect Costs (10% of non-contract costs)	\$7,545		
TOTAL	\$137,356	\$22,822	\$160,187
Percentage	86%	14%	100%

FY25 BUDGET NARRATIVE:

Personnel (\$34,424): Personnel funds of \$24,024 will support 6 months of the SAFMC Citizen Science Project Coordinator position who leads daily project management for the *SAFMC Release* project. The remaining personnel funds (\$10,400) will be used by SAFMC to hire a part-time hourly at \$20/hour for 520 hours for the *SAFMC Release* project to help with account creation, coordination of the Participant Recognition Program, and QA/QC.

Fringe (\$14,294): Fringe funds will support 6 months of benefits for the SAFMC Citizen Science Project Coordinator position. Fringe benefits charged at 59.5% of total compensation.

Contractual (\$54,363): NOAA Fisheries will contract with Gallup to coordinate and implement the NSAR recruitment mailings to GA and SC. Target is to send 24,000 recruitment letters (12,000 to each state). Costs are estimated at ~\$2.27 per piece for \$54,363.

Supplies (\$22,300): Partners will utilize funds to print promotional materials (e.g., wallet cards, rack cards, stickers, etc.) to promote and recruit users for *SAFMC Release*. Cost for promotional materials range from wallet cards (~\$0.05 each) to stickers (~\$1.50 each). Using an average cost of \$0.77 per item, \$4,000 will allow us to print ~5,195 items for distribution. The PRP will include low, medium, and high value items when participants meet identified milestones. Cost for low value items range between \$10-\$20, medium value items range between \$25-\$100, and high value items range between \$200-\$600. Using an average cost of \$15 for low value items - \$13,000 will allow us to distribute ~860 items; an average of \$63 for medium value items - \$500 will allow us to distribute ~8 items; and an average of \$400 for high value items - \$1500 will allow us to distribute ~4 items. Costs for software include an annual subscription to Wufoo (\$330) for online forms for account creation and an upgrade to the shiny application to provide an additional tool for project participants to explore and query their data.

Travel (\$4,430): Travel by partners will be used to promote *SAFMC Release* by visiting tackle shops, fishing clubs and expos, and other related venues to allow for distribution of outreach and promotional materials. Funds are requested to support travel for staff members for 4 trips, approximately 3-4 days each. Costs are estimated for a total of 14 hotel nights at \$120/night (\$1,680), 16 days per diem at \$75/day (\$1,200), ~1200 miles at \$0.625/mile (\$750), and two airplane fares at ~\$400/ticket (\$800). Travel rate estimates are based on federal reimbursement and per diem rates.

Indirect (\$7,545): Indirect charges of 10% are applied to the non-contract budget items for a total of \$7,545. The contract with Gallup will be administered through NOAA Fisheries, so was excluded from the indirect calculations.

Table 3. Maintenance Project History

Fiscal Year	Title	Cost	Results
2025	FY25: Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the <i>SAFMC Release</i> Citizen Science Project	\$137,356	This project will continue data collection through the <i>SAFMC Release</i> citizen science project on released shallow water grouper and Red Snapper via the SciFish platform; will use license data from the National Saltwater Angler Registry to recruit private recreational fishermen from SC and GA for the <i>SAFMC Release</i> project via a solicitation mailing; continue opportunistic strategies to recruit fishermen to <i>SAFMC Release</i> (e.g., tackle shop visits, seminars, fishing expos, social media) and enhance participant retention and reactivation within the project. FY25 funding has not yet been allocated or received. ACCSP provided guidance that PI's should not start work on FY25 projects until funding is available. Although work has not started on the FY25 project, data collection, outreach, and volunteer engagement efforts are on-going for the <i>SAFMC Release</i> project.

Summary of Proposal for Ranking – Condensed Version

- **Achieved Goals:** The ‘FY25 Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the *SAFMC Release* Citizen Science Project’ will continue data collection through the *SAFMC Release* citizen science project on released shallow water grouper and Red Snapper via the SciFish platform; use license data from the National Saltwater Angler Registry to recruit private recreational fishermen from SC and GA for the *SAFMC Release* project via a solicitation mailing; continue opportunistic strategies to recruit fishermen to *SAFMC Release* (e.g., tackle shop visits, seminars, fishing expos, social media) and enhance participant retention and reactivation within the project.

FY25 funding has not been allocated or received yet. ACCSP provided guidance that PI’s should not start work on FY25 projects until funding is available. Although work has not started on the FY25 project, data collection, outreach, and volunteer engagement efforts are on-going for the *SAFMC Release* project. This proposal will build on the work that will be done through the FY25 *SAFMC Release* project.

- **Data Delivery Plan:** The SciFish application for the *SAFMC Release* project will collect and deliver data directly to ACCSP through the SciFish API and will be stored in SAFIS. Data can be entered by fishermen when no internet connection is available and later uploaded to SAFIS when a connection becomes available.
- **Level of Funding:** This is a Year 1 maintenance proposal. Funding for the FY26 proposal decreased from the FY25 proposal by approximately 3%.
- **Properly Prepared:** This proposal follows the guidelines under the ACCSP Funding Decision Process Document.
- **Merit:** This project supports the continuation of the *SAFMC Release* citizen science project that addresses key research needs on released shallow water grouper and Red Snapper – helping to characterize the size of released fish and helping better understand how many of those released fish survive. Biological information will be collected on released shallow water grouper and Red Snapper. Of these species, four (Gag Grouper, Red Grouper, Scamp Grouper, and Red Snapper) are in the top 25% of the ACCSP biological sampling priority matrix. Data collection is done via the SciFish platform, using ACCSP standards and making the data easily accessible for assessment and management. *SAFMC Release* data were recommended for use by the SEDAR 90 (South Atlantic Red Snapper) Data Workshop Panel and SEDAR 90 research recommendations include developing more opportunities (e.g., citizen science, catch cards) to collect release lengths from the recreational fleet and gathering more information on barotrauma mitigation technique usage rates – supporting the continuation and expansion of the *SAFMC Release* project. *SAFMC Release* data will be presented for consideration at the South Atlantic Gag assessment which is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2026. Additionally, this project will collect information on the effectiveness of various recruitment and retention

strategies for *SAFMC Release* which could be informative for other citizen science projects along the Atlantic coast.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL FOR RANKINGS:

Proposal Type: Maintenance

Primary Program Priority: Biological 85%

The primary focus of the *SAFMC Release* project is to collect length data on released shallow water grouper (Black, Gag, Red, Scamp, Yellowfin and Yellowmouth Groupers; Red Hind; Rock Hind; Coney and Graysby) and Red Snapper. Through this proposal biological information from the commercial, for-hire, and recreational fisheries will continue to be collected through *SAFMC Release* for these species. Gag Grouper, Red Grouper, Scamp Grouper, and Red Snapper are in the top 25% of the ACCSP biological sampling priority matrix. All of these species are in the ‘inadequate sampling’ quadrants and Red Snapper is in the ‘high priority, inadequate sampling’ quadrant. *SAFMC Release* data collection includes:

- Data collected for each trip: trip type (commercial, recreational, headboat, charter), date, user (ACCSP ID);
- Data collected for each fish released: species (user’s determination), length (based on ACCSP standards), location (state required, specific latitude/longitude optional), depth, time, fate (dead or alive release), hook type, hook location, use of barotrauma mitigation (descending device, venting, line cut), shark depredation, and photograph (to validate and evaluate species IDs and lengths); and
- Users may also file a ‘no fish released’ report to share information on harvested fish.

Data Delivery Plan:

The SciFish application for the *SAFMC Release* project will collect and deliver data directly to ACCSP through the SciFish API and will be stored in SAFIS. Data can be entered by fishermen when no internet connection is available and later uploaded to SAFIS when a connection becomes available.

Project Quality Factors:

- Multi-partner/Regional impact including broad applications:
The *SAFMC Release* project partners with fishermen to collect data on released fish in South Atlantic waters in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and the east coast of Florida through the Florida Keys. Project consultants include SCDNR and GADNR. Letters of support have been provided by FL FWC, SCDNR, and NCDMF. Data collected through the project will be available for consideration in South Atlantic stock assessments and management.

In addition to contributing data for consideration in stock assessments and management, this project will collect information on the effectiveness of various recruitment and retention strategies for *SAFMC Release*. With the growing interest in using citizen science as a tool to help supplement marine fisheries data collection, the information gained on volunteer recruitment and retention could be informative for other citizen science projects being pursued by partners along the Atlantic coast.

Additionally, as one of the initial projects in SciFish, *SAFMC Release* continues to help test the SciFish mobile app, project builder, and account creation portal. SAFMC staff work closely with ACCSP to address any issues that arise, helping to improve the platform which will benefit all partners who have or are interested in developing projects within SciFish.

- **Contains funding transition plan:**
Project PI's will be developing additional proposals and exploring other funding opportunities to help support additional years of funding for this project.
- **In-kind contribution: 11%**
- **Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness**
 - Provides improvement in data quality and quantity
 - There are currently no data available to assign released shallow water groupers and Red Snapper to length classes other than limited commercial and for-hire observer effort. *SAFMC Release* collects data on length of released shallow water grouper and Red Snapper for commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishermen.
 - There are limited data available to classify the depth where fish are captured and released and the use of barotrauma reduction techniques which are significantly correlated with release mortality rates. The data collected through *SAFMC Release* provides finer scale information on released fish which can help refine the overall release mortality rate applied for a stock assessment.

Potential secondary module as a by-product: **Bycatch (15%)**

The snapper-grouper hook and line fleet is ranked in the top quartile of the ACCSP bycatch priority matrix (ranked 2nd out of 17 fleets). Information collected through *SAFMC Release* can help provide information on length of released shallow water grouper and Red Snapper and release treatment (e.g., use of barotrauma mitigation devices) to supplement the data available through observer coverage and discard logbooks to help characterize the bycatch within this fleet.

Impact on stock assessment:

Stock assessment impacts available as a result of this project are significant. Assessments rely on accurate catch data for individual species, accurate assignments of catches to length and thus age classes, and accurate estimates of release mortality to develop total fishery removals. The number and percentage of released fish has increased over the past decade as management has implemented accountability measures to shorten landings seasons when annual catch limits are exceeded. One case in the South Atlantic region of particular interest is Red Snapper. Fishing mortality of recreational released Red Snapper exceeded all other sources of mortality (SEDAR 73). This highlights the importance of released fish and the need to accurately characterize the length or age of the released fish and treatment of released fish that can influence the release mortality rate. Limited data are available to classify the size composition of released fish in the

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Yellow highlighted text indicates changes from the original submission.

commercial snapper grouper hook and line fleet, the private recreational fleet, and the charter fleet. When the SAFMC's SSC reviewed recent stock assessments (SEDAR 73 – South Atlantic Red Snapper), the SSC raised concerns about the level of descender device usage due to lack of information on how widespread usage is in the fishery. *SAFMC Release* will provide data to help fill these data gaps on the length of fish released, frequency of recompression treatment, hook location, and depredation.

The *SAFMC Release* data were presented for consideration at the recent SEDAR 90 (South Atlantic Red Snapper) Data Workshop in April 2025. *SAFMC Release* Red Snapper release length data were recommended for use in the assessment by the SEDAR 90 Data Workshop Panel. *SAFMC Release* data are also being considered in the development of release mortality estimates for SEDAR 90. Additionally, SEDAR 90 Data Workshop research recommendations include developing more opportunities (e.g., citizen science, catch cards) to collect release lengths from the recreational fleet and gathering more information on barotrauma mitigation technique usage rates – supporting the continuation and expansion of the *SAFMC Release* project. *SAFMC Release* data will be presented for consideration at the South Atlantic Gag assessment which is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2026.

Impact on management:

Management impacts would be significant. In years past, the lack of accurate information on discarded fish was not a major management concern or source of uncertainty as landed fish generally accounted for the majority of stock removals. However, this is changing as regulations and fishing behavior are leading to increased discarding for many species within the South Atlantic. Management reference points (e.g., overfishing limit, allowable biological catch) are driven by stock assessment results – so improving information available to characterize the size of released fish in stock assessments has a substantial impact on management. Additionally, the Council has been discussing actions that could decrease the number of released fish and/or increase survivorship of released fish, within the snapper grouper fishery. Better understanding of the use of barotrauma mitigation techniques, such as those collected through *SAFMC Release*, could be incorporated into management strategy evaluations will help inform those discussions.

Other Factors:

- **Innovative**
Interest in using citizen science to help fill data gaps in marine fisheries has been growing in recent years. This project will support the continuation of the *SAFMC Release* citizen science project which is helping address key research priorities on released fish.
- **Properly prepared**
This proposal follows the guidelines under the ACCSP Funding Decision Process Document.
- **Merit**
This project supports the continuation of the *SAFMC Release* citizen science project that addresses key research needs on released shallow water grouper and Red Snapper –

helping to characterize the size of released fish and better understand how many of those released fish survive. Data collection is done via the SciFish platform, using ACCSP standards and making the data easily accessible for assessment and management. *SAFMC Release* data were recommended for use by the SEDAR 90 (South Atlantic Red Snapper) Data Workshop Panel and SEDAR 90 research recommendations include developing more opportunities (e.g., citizen science, catch cards) to collect release lengths from the recreational fleet and gathering more information on barotrauma mitigation technique usage rates – supporting the continuation and expansion of the *SAFMC Release* project. *SAFMC Release* data will be presented for consideration at the South Atlantic Gag assessment which is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2026. Additionally, this project will collect information on the effectiveness of various recruitment and retention strategies for *SAFMC Release* which could be informative for other citizen science projects along the Atlantic coast.

Appendix 1. Letters of Support



Florida Fish
and Wildlife
Conservation
Commission

Commissioners
Rodney Barreto
Chairman
Coral Gables

Steven Hudson
Vice Chairman
Fort Lauderdale

Preston Farrior
Tampa

Gary Lester
Oxford

Albert Maury
Coral Gables

Gary Nicklaus
Jupiter

Sonya Rood
St. Augustine

Office of the
Executive Director
Roger A. Young
Executive Director

Charles "Rett" Boyd
Assistant Executive Director

George Warthen
Chief Conservation Officer

Jessica Crawford
Chief of Staff

Division of Marine Fisheries
Management

Jessica McCawley
Director

850-487-0554

Managing fish and wildlife
resources for their long-term
well-being and the benefit
of people.

620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, Florida
32399-1600
Voice: 850-488-4676

Hearing/speech-impaired:
800-955-8771 (T)
800-955-8770 (V)

MyFWC.com

June 2, 2025

Julie DeFilippi Simpson
ACCSP Deputy Director
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistic Program
1050 N. Highland ST., Ste 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Ms. DeFilippi Simpson,

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is supportive of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) research proposal entitled, "Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the SAFMC Release Citizen Science Project" that has been submitted to the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program for FY26 funding.

This is a collaborative project in partnership with state agencies. Specifically, funding for this proposal will continue to expand recreational data collection for many South Atlantic reef fish species through the SAFMC Release citizen science application to recruit more private recreational fishermen for the SAFMC Release.

Recently, release length data from the SAFMC Release was recommended for incorporation into the SEDAR 90 (South Atlantic Red Snapper) assessment by the Data Workshop panel, which is a huge accomplishment for this project. FWC is supportive of the continuation of this project, especially the proposal's plan to enhance SAFMC Release volunteer recruitment and retention strategies.

Once funded for FY26, FWC will assist the project through coordinated information exchange as the project is executed as well as review of materials as needed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at

Jessica McCawley
Jessica.McCawley@myfwc.com

Sincerely,

Jessica McCawley



July 1, 2025

Attn: Geoffrey White

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland St., Ste 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. White,

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program recently issued a Request for Proposals to program partners and committees for FY26 funding. Please find this letter as confirmation that the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) is in support of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) proposal entitled, "Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the SAFMC Release Citizen Science Project."

The proposal objectives, which represent the first year of a maintenance project, will build on the work currently being implemented with FY25 awarded funds. It will specifically continue and expand data collection efforts for many South Atlantic reef fishes through the SAFMC Release citizen science application. SCDNR supports these efforts to continue to encourage voluntary fisheries dependent data submissions from the recreational sector for use in fisheries management decisions.

Once funded, SCDNR will directly assist with the execution of the project through coordinated information exchange. Actions will include collaboration on ideas to gain more participants and improve retention.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at (843) 953-9313.

Sincerely,


Amy Dukes
Regional Fisheries Manager


Elizabeth Gooding
Fisheries Statistics Section Manager



JOSH STEIN
Governor

D. REID WILSON
Secretary

KATHY B. RAWLS
Director

June 13, 2025

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to express the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries' (NCDMF) support for the proposal titled "Enhancing Recruitment and Retention for the SAFMC Release Citizen Science Project".

NCDMF is committed to our mission to ensure sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats for the benefit and health of the people of North Carolina. Our marine resources provide significant recreational and economic benefits to both residents and visitors of our state. In 2022, an estimated 20 million recreational saltwater fishing trips supported over 12,300 jobs and resulted in sales topping \$1.6 billion. NCDMF is continuously seeking opportunities to enhance and refine recreational fisheries data collection to improve our management of these important marine resources.

Improving the availability and quality of recreational discard data has been identified by many agencies, councils, and organizations as a top research priority. The discard mortality experienced by many stocks has continued to increase, which has been a challenge to quantify using established data collection methodologies. NCDMF recognizes the potential of citizen science to improve discard data and has collaborated with ACCSP and SAMFC to develop the SciFish platform to encourage these efforts.

At the recent SEDAR 90 (South Atlantic Red Snapper) Data Workshop, the panel recommended using SAFMC Release length data as part of the stock assessment process. The continued maintenance and fine-tuning of the SAFMC Release Citizen Science Project are essential to that goal. This proposal builds upon ongoing efforts to enhance outreach, participation, and retention of SAFMC Release. The lessons learned will be extremely beneficial to NCDMF as we launch our own outreach and education efforts in preparation of the new state mandated harvest reporting legislation, which take effect December 1, 2025.

On behalf of NCDMF, it is my pleasure to fully support the "Enhancing Recruitment and Retention for the SAFMC Release Citizen Science Project" proposal and recommend that the proposal be funded.

Sincerely,

Kathy Rawls
NC Division of Marine Fisheries Director
(252) 515-5520
Kathy.Rawls@deq.nc.gov

State of North Carolina | Division of Marine Fisheries
3441 Arendell Street | P.O. Box 769 | Morehead City, North Carolina 28557
252-515-5500

JULIA ISOBEL BYRD

1489 Littlerock Blvd.
Charleston, SC 29412
Hometown: Asheville, NC

Work: (843)302-8439
Cell: (828)215-1414
Email: julia.byrd@safmc.net

EDUCATION: UNIVERSITY OF CHARLESTON, SC, Charleston, SC
-**Masters of Environmental Studies**, December 2004

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY, Winston-Salem, NC
-**Bachelor of Science in Biology**, Minor in **Environmental Studies**, May 2000

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Citizen Science Program Manager, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC)
Charleston, SC, March 2019 – present

Adjunct faculty at the College of Charleston
Charleston, SC, 2020 to present

Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) Coordinator, SAFMC
Charleston, SC, August 2012 – February 2019

Wildlife Biologist III, Office of Fisheries Management, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Charleston, SC, August 2005 – August 2012

MARMAP hourly, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Charleston, SC, April 2005 – August 2005

Intern, In-Water Sea Turtle Abundance Study, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Charleston, SC, May 2003 – August 2003 and May 2004 – September 2004

Education Coordinator, Conservation International
Washington, DC, January 2002 – July 2002

SELECT GRANT PROPOSALS FUNDED as PI or co-PI:

FY2025. Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the *SAFMC Release* Citizen Science Project. Julia Byrd (SAFMC), Drew Cathey (NOAA Fisheries) and Lauren Dolinger Few (NOAA Fisheries). Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. \$137,356.

FY2024. Expansion of the FISHstory Citizen Science Project. Julia Byrd (SAFMC) and Dr. Jie Caio (NC State University). Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. \$123,068.

FY2023. Expansion of the FISHstory Citizen Science Project. Julia Byrd (SAFMC) and Dr. Jie Caio (NC State University). Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. \$121,076.

FY2022. SAFIS Expansion of the SciFish Customizable Fisheries Citizen Science Data Collection Application. Julia Byrd (SAFMC) and Dr. Andrew Cathey (NC Division of Marine Fisheries). Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. \$116,182.

FY2021. SAFIS Expansion of Customizable Fisheries Citizen Science Data Collection Application. Julia Byrd (SAFMC). Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. \$114,792.

FY2020. SAFIS Expansion of “*SAFMC Release*” and “*NC DMF Catch U Later*” Discard Reporting Applications. Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. \$118,500.

FY2019. The FISHstory Project - Documenting historical catch and length estimates from historic photos in the for-hire sector using electronic data collection and imagery analysis platforms and crowdsourcing approaches. Julia Byrd

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Yellow highlighted text indicates changes from the original submission.

(SAFMC) and Amber VonHarten (SAFMC). NOAA-Fisheries Information Systems. \$75,000.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- Byrd, J. W.R. Collier, and A. Iberle. 2022. Designing the FISHstory project to support fisheries management. *Fisheries*: 44 (11): 492-498.
- Oremland, L., A. Furnish, J. Byrd, and R. Cody. 2022. How fishery managers can harness the power of the crowd: Using citizen science and non-traditional data sources in fisheries management. *Fisheries*: 44 (11): 459-462.
- Bonney, R., J. Byrd, J. T. Carmichael, L. Cunningham, L. Oremland, J. Shirk, and A. Von Harten. 2021. Sea Change: Using Citizen Science to Inform Fisheries Management. *BioScience*: 71(5): 519-530.
- Brown, S.K., M. Shivani, R. Koenke, D. Agnew, J. Byrd, M. Cryer, C. Dichmont, D. Die, W. Michaels, J. Rive, H. Sparholt, and J. Weiberg. 2020. Patterns and practices in fisheries assessment peer review systems. *Marine Policy*: 117,103880.
- SEDAR. 2015. SEDAR Procedural Workshop 7: Data Best Practices. SEDAR, North Charleston, SC. 151pp. (editor).

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS:

- Byrd, J. and J. Simpson. 2024. SciFish Platform & Policies. NOAA Enterprise Data Management Workshop. (Oral presentation.)
- Byrd, J., C. Collier, and M. Withers. 2023. Supporting Fisheries with Citizen Science: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Approach. NOAA Central Library Seminar Series. (Oral presentation).
- Byrd, J. C. Collier, and A. Iberle. 2022. FISHstory, using citizen science to describe historic catches. SAFMC Seminar Series. (Oral presentation).
- Byrd, J. A. Iberle, C. Collier, D. Cathey, J. Simpson, F. Karp, B. Spain, K. Knowlton, and M. Bucko. 2021. Development of the SciFish Application, a customizable citizen science project builder. American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting. (Oral presentation).
- Byrd, J. C. Collier, and A. Iberle. 2020. The SAFMC's Citizen Science Program: Designing a program to support fisheries science and management decision making. American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting (held virtually). (Oral presentation).
- Byrd, J., J. Carmichael, and J. Neer. 2017. The Importance of Peer Review in SEDAR Stock Assessments. American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL. (Oral presentation).
- Carmichael, J., A. VonHarten, and J. Byrd. 2016. Efforts to Develop a South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Citizen Science Program. NOAA Fisheries Quantitative Ecology and Socioeconomics Training Program Webinar Series. (Webinar presentation).
- VonHarten, A. and J. Byrd. 2016. Building a Fishery Citizen Science Program in the U.S. South Atlantic to Improve Management and Policy. 4th International Marine Conservation Congress. (Oral presentation and helped facilitate focus group).

SELECTED TRAININGS:

- Management Assistance Team (MAT) Leader as Communicator Training
- Smithsonian's Communication & Facilitation Skills for Conservation Managers Course
- Technology of Participation (TOP) Facilitation Methods
- NOAA Coastal Service Center Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings
- Well's National Estuarine Research Reserve Coastal Training Program Collaborative Learning Workshop
- NOAA Coastal Service Center Project Design and Evaluation Workshop
- NOAA Coastal Service Center Public Issues and Conflict Management Workshop
- University of Maryland's Communicating Science Effectively Workshop
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Basic Stock Assessment Workshop
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Maximum Likelihood Modeling Workshop

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:

- Association for Advancing Participatory Sciences
- American Fisheries Society
- SC Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
- ACCSP Operations Committee (2015-present)

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Yellow highlighted text indicates changes from the original submission.

**Proposal for funding made to the
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201**

**FY26: Comprehensive Outreach and Pilot Observer Program for
New York, New Jersey and Delaware State Waters Gillnet Fisheries**

Submitted By:
John Maniscalco
New York Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Marine Resources
123 Kings Park Blvd.
Kings Park, NY 11754
john.maniscalco@dec.ny.gov

Applicant Name: New York Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Marine Resources

Project Title: Comprehensive Outreach and Pilot Observer Program for
New York, New Jersey and Delaware State Waters Gillnet
Fisheries

Project Type: New Project

Requested Award Amount: **\$289,029.49**

Requested Award Period: One year after receipt of funds

Program Priority: Primary: Bycatch/Species
Interactions (70%)
Secondary: Catch and Effort 30%)

Date Submitted: June 13, 2025

Project Supervisor: John Maniscalco (NY) john.maniscalco@dec.ny.gov

Co-Principal Investigators: Jeffery Brust (NJ) Jeffrey.Brust@dep.nj.gov

John Clark (DE) john.clark@delaware.gov

Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine
Program:
Scott Curatolo-Wagemann sw224@cornell.edu
Tara McClintock taf4@cornell.edu

Also: Heather Corbett (NJ), Richard Wong
(DE), Ian Park (DE), and Jesse Hornstein (NY)

Project Staff: Cornell Cooperative Ext Marine Program:
Alex Mercado, ajm425@cornell.edu
Michael Bowen, mb2735@cornell.edu

Objectives:

- Conduct a **multi-state** outreach program for state waters gillnet fishermen to present data needs and recruit voluntary participants for a pilot observer program. Develop an understanding from both Industry and the States' perspective of the feasibility, costs, pros, and cons of alternative observer platforms: onboard, shadow-vessel and drone based (or other video) formats.
- **Implement a pilot observer program for the gillnet fisheries within New York (NY), New Jersey (NJ), and Delaware (DE) state waters for evaluation and proof of concept for above methods.**
- Begin collecting bycatch and gear interaction data for Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act requirements. Focus on sturgeon, sea turtles, cetaceans and pinnipeds.
- Utilize data to better understand gillnet fishing effort in state waters including time, space, quantity, mesh size, duration and target species.
- Collect biological data on landed and discarded catch of high priority species.
- Contribute current data to inform fishery specific estimates of take for protected species to support a multi-state Incidental Take Permit (ITP).
- Assess the viability of a multi-state observer program for state waters monitoring for gillnet and potentially other commercial gear types.

Needs:

The States of New York, New Jersey and Delaware are currently pursuing an ITP for interactions that may be occurring between their commercial fisheries and species listed under the Endangered Species Act, including but not limited to sea turtle and sturgeon species. **Mid-Atlantic Gillnet is a high priority gear type in the ACCSP's Bycatch Sampling Matrix due to its interaction with protected species and need for more data on discards. It is a gear type common to the State waters fisheries of all three states. Current data on state waters gillnet fisheries is needed to better quantify the level of interaction that occurs with protected species.**

Observer programs have been a required monitoring component in Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) developed by other states as part of their ITP application. None of the states listed above currently have observer programs dedicated to their state water's fisheries and lack the authority to require commercial fisheries to take observers onboard. **In addition to collecting data needed to inform estimates of take, this project would serve as a pilot for future programs encompassing gillnets and additional gear types.**

Many species/fisheries managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and its State and Federal partners are lacking sufficient data on the size distribution of landed and discarded catch and the magnitude of discards. Sampling of regional gillnet fisheries through observation of catch and discards can fill in some of those gaps among Mid Atlantic States.

As noted above, the States of New York, New Jersey and Delaware are currently pursuing an ITP for their state waters commercial fisheries. The process will take multiple years and if reductions in take of protected species are required, they could impact the livelihoods of

commercial fishermen. Dedicated outreach is necessary to inform the commercial fishing industry of the States' pursuit of an ITP and increase voluntary cooperation with the proposed observer program. This outreach effort is intended to provide transparency and multiple opportunities for fishery participants to engage in the process. It also provides the States and their cooperators an opportunity to pilot an observer program, including the feasibility of formats other than onboard observers, and gather feedback for future planning purposes.

Results and Benefits:

This project will provide results and benefits directly applicable to the Ranking Guide for New Projects. The proposed project directly addresses the high priority goals of the RFP by developing and implementing improvements in:

- **Bycatch/Species Interactions**
- **Catch (including discards), effort, and landings data (including licensing, permit and vessel registration data.)**
- **Biological data**

The benefits of this outreach and observer program include improvements to: data collection; regulatory compliance; conservation efforts; scientific research; and industry relations and transparency.

Increased Data Collection: This regional project will collect data on catch (landings and discards), effort and interactions with protected species in the Mid Atlantic gillnet fisheries that occur in the state waters of New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. **Observations will occur on NY, NJ, and DE inshore gillnet vessels targeting the following species: Bluefish, Monkfish, Striped bass, Weakfish, dogfish, skate, American shad, Atlantic croaker, Spot, and Atlantic menhaden.**

Current data on gillnet fisheries (effort in space and time, gear characteristics) in State waters will be used to help quantify interactions with protected species and identify fair and effective mitigation measures, if necessary, as required by the HCP. **The data will be important inputs into a predictive analytical model currently being developed by the three states to estimate take of protected species.**

In addition to data on protected species interactions, **observer sampling of gillnet trips will yield biological data (primarily length and weight) on landed and discarded catch.** Sampling the state waters' gillnet fisheries of New York, New Jersey, and Delaware is likely to **generate data on a large number of ACCSP Biological Review Panel's (BRP) top priority species such as bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*), American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), river herring (*Alosa spp.*), Atlantic menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*), Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus maculatus*), black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*), scup (*Stenotomus chrysops*) and horseshoe crab (*Limulus polyphemus*) in addition to striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*).** Although not ranked highly by the BRP, data on discards of Atlantic croaker via an observer program was listed as a high priority in the 2017 Atlantic Croaker Benchmark Stock Assessment. Similarly, the 2016 Benchmark Assessment for Weakfish identified increasing observer coverage to identify the magnitude of discards for all commercial gears. Croaker and weakfish are caught and landed by gillnet fishermen in the region of this program.

Mid-Atlantic Gillnet is the top priority gear type in ACCSP's Bycatch Sampling Matrix. Observer sampling of this gear across 3 states will yield data on catch rates of bycatch/species interactions, primarily protected species such as sturgeon and sea turtles, along with high quality location data, fishing duration, and gear specifics for each haul. Observer coverage and data collection on a haul-by-haul basis is an improvement over self-reported harvester data that includes only coarse spatial information (Statistical areas for example) for the entire trip. That data will be used to estimate take of protected species in state waters gillnet fisheries as part of a tri-state regional conservation plan. Bycatch data on other species, including the top priority species listed above, would be recorded by Observers. Data collected on these non-target species would include count, group weights, and individual lengths whenever possible.

Once biological data is provided to ACCSP and made available to partners this data will be used to inform future assessments and management decisions. Data on all these species is needed and catch data (including discards) combined with gear and effort details collected by direct observation could be utilized in a number of ways in the future.

Regulatory Compliance: A significant element of the proposed project is to increase self-reporting among fishermen within the inshore gillnet fisheries. Self-reported rates of protected species interactions can be evaluated before and after the program and against the observer data to determine its future usefulness. It is hoped that educating and informing fishermen as to the importance of this data and how it could be used in management decisions will increase compliance by industry members.

Conservation Efforts: By improving communication pathways between management and industry, this project will provide opportunities to improve conservation efforts and outcomes in relation to priority fisheries and protected species. Gaining a more detailed understanding of species interactions with fisheries in state waters will allow the States to develop targeted conservation approaches (e.g. bycatch reduction methods and technologies) sufficient to meet the needs of an HCP, that can be recommended for the fisheries.

Scientific Research: In addition to providing data of use for assessing a number of stocks, increased observer coverage will help management identify pressing scientific research needs in the inshore gillnet fisheries, both through observed interactions and through discussions with industry members. CCE has a long history of conducting cooperative research, much of which is inspired or directly developed in collaboration with the industry. Utilizing local knowledge and understanding of region-specific fishery needs within the industry helps identify and inspire meaningful and grounded scientific research.

Industry Relations and Transparency: The outreach portion of this project will inform commercial fishery participants of ongoing efforts by New York, New Jersey and Delaware to secure an ITP for its commercial fisheries, providing transparency for those likely to be impacted. It will provide an opportunity to encourage self-reporting of protected species interactions, and it should also increase participation in a voluntary observer program and provide the States with better data on which to base decisions. Finally, industry participants will

help shape any future observer programs, a potential requirement of the HCP. This grant may also demonstrate the efficacy of voluntary compliance with observer requirements and self-reporting catch of protected species.

Data Delivery Plan: Data will be collected in accordance with ACCSP Data Standards- Standard Measurements for Gear Types/ Gear Data Elements for gillnet fisheries and will be made available to the ACCSP and its state partners in a timely manner. CCE and project state partners will coordinate with ACCSP to receive project data in an accessible file type and uploaded to the data warehouse to complete data delivery. Upon completion of data delivery, all data will be made available to assessment scientists so that it may be included in individual species' stock assessments.

Approach: The NYSDEC, NJDEP, DNREC, and CCE will follow the approach outlined below involving personnel, outreach, data collection, and analysis.

Personnel: To support field operations for this project, the NYDEC, DNREC, and NJDEP will contract with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County's Marine Fisheries Program. Staff assigned to project activities are currently certified or will undergo comprehensive training in vessel safety, fisheries data collection, species identification, data entry and QA/QC procedures and standardized protocols for at-sea operations. All personnel involved in at-sea activities will be equipped with appropriate field gear, including safety equipment (PFD, Survival suit, and personal EPIRB), foul weather gear and electronic data collection tools to ensure safe and effective performance in the field.

Outreach: An extensive outreach program will be an important component of a successful launch of the multi-state pilot observer program. Project partners will coordinate a comprehensive outreach plan in efforts to educate and notify fishers of current conservation and management needs and observer program goals. CCE along with state partners will engage the gillnet fishing industry by fostering open communication from program start. This project will create opportunities for stakeholder involvement through in-person and virtual meetings at primary ports within the three states in addition to attending local fishery management council meetings. A minimum of 3 in-person meetings will occur per state for a total of 9 outreach meetings for the project. CCE and state partners will coordinate appropriate location based on fishing activity. Stressing the importance of shared responsibility in fisheries conservation, this project will engage with industry throughout the region to support and strengthen science-based decision making for long-term resource health.

Successful completion of this project will be reliant on precise coordination and communication with commercial gillnet fishermen in New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. CCE will continue to complete this extensive education and outreach plan throughout the entirety of this project. This important component of the project will lead to more involvement and voluntary participation from the industry to achieve project goals.

Outreach Strategies

1. Education and Awareness

- Develop brochures, infographics for protected species ID, fact sheets and

meeting announcements

- Informational mailing to all fishermen currently reporting the use of gillnet gear inshore
- Initial dockside visits in a program announcement effort and recruitment for industry input meetings
- Host in-person/virtual industry input meetings in major ports of NY, NJ and DE

2. Stakeholder Engagement

- Organize dockside listening sessions and share common practices and concerns
- Recruit observer program industry participants
- Quarterly electronic program newsletter to maintain and bolster industry participation

4. Digital Tools

- Develop a dedicated outreach website
- Responsible use of social media outreach

5. Partnerships

- Partner with fishermen, fishing industry businesses, NY, NJ, DE marine natural resource agencies, ACCSP, NOAA fisheries managers and academic institutions.

Outreach efforts will also include identifying and evaluating alternatives to onboard observations such as drone usage, electronic monitoring and shadow vessels. This project will begin the conversations and develop a feasibility document utilizing industry and resource agency input and a cost/benefit analysis for alternate methods of fishery dependent at-sea data collection.

Data Collection:

The at-sea observer program for this project will occur from March of 2026 through November 2026. This proposed project will strive for a minimum of 2% observer coverage overall as a pilot program. The number of trips was determined by the average number of gillnet trips reported in state waters per year in the last 5 years. A minimum of 50 gillnet fishing trips will be observed for the project. Additional trips will be performed based on participation and coordination.

State	Average Annual Effort (Trips/Year)	% coverage	Number of Trips for Pilot Study
New York	1,000	2	20
New Jersey	800	2	16
Delaware	685	2	14

This coverage rate aligns with regional fisheries data standards and represents a minimum threshold for generating representative bycatch and discard information. Observer trip targets will be based on a five-year average of effort data, used as a proxy for estimating the number of commercial trips expected each week.

Number of Observed Trips per Week by State

New York – target of 1 trip per week minimum from May through November until 20 observed trips are reached

New Jersey – target of 1 trip every two weeks minimum from April through October until 16 observed trips are reached

Delaware – 1 trip every two weeks minimum from March through September until 14 observed trips are reached.

While conducting the at-sea sampling, CCE will collect both effort data (location, soak time, gear specifics) and biological data such as length and total sample weight of target species and discards, and reason(s) for discarding catch. CCE staff will follow NEFOP protocols for at-sea biological sampling and sub-sampling of high-volume catches.

Data Collection for Protected Species

Protected species data collection will follow NEFOP protocols. At minimum, species will be identified and size estimated prior to being released as quickly as possible. Following consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service and agreement on acceptable handling practices, more comprehensive data could be collected, including species, length, weight, and health condition (dead/alive/injury incurred). Those species regularly PIT tagged would be scanned and documented and digital photos taken. All protected species interactions will be recorded, and any additional permissions/collection permits needed from NOAA's protected species branch will be pursued. CCE staff hold Protected Species Sampling Certification through AIS and have attended the Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop and have experience in taking proper samples and reporting protected species interactions while working on commercial fishing vessels. The ability to collect more comprehensive data on protected species does not change the scope of this proposal or the utility the project has for the development of a multi-state conservation plan. Interactions with gear combined with high quality spatial and effort data is needed to estimate and monitor take but the additional biological information will increase our understanding of the impacts of interactions on protected species.

Fishing Industry Recruitment and Random Selection

Through initial outreach mailing efforts and follow-up phone calls with fishermen expressing reluctance, CCE will maintain a list of voluntary participants within each state. Random selection will occur from the pool of voluntary participants per state. Each week, observers will be assigned to trips selected at random from the pre-registered pool of volunteer fishers. These volunteers will be identified in advance through outreach efforts and agreements to participate in the program. Once enrolled, each fisher will be assigned a random number and included in the selection pool for their state. Weekly selections will use a stratified random sampling approach to ensure geographic and gear-type representation. However, for the pilot program, working with as many different voluntary participants as possible will be prioritized over a sampling scheme weighted solely by fishing effort in time and space. Selected fishers will be contacted in advance

to coordinate observation, and project staff will maintain close communication to confirm trip plans. If a selected volunteer is not fishing during the designated week, an alternate from the same pool will be selected.

This project will be mindful not to duplicate federal at-sea monitoring efforts by direct communication and verification that all trips are occurring on state permitted vessels within state waters only.

Analysis:

All data collected through this proposed project will be entered, quality assured, encrypted, and backed up into a Microsoft SQL Server by CCE staff. In addition to all data being made available to ACCSP and its partners, data will be analyzed using software such as Microsoft Excel, R, and ArcGIS. Statistical analyses will be completed to describe bycatch and discard levels and summarize protected species interactions spatially, temporally, by gear characteristics, target species and to find correlations with factors such as oceanographic or other environmental conditions. Self-reporting of discarded catch will be compared with observed discards and with pre-pilot rates of discard reporting.

For development of the HCP, data collected on fishery interactions with sturgeon, sea turtles, and other protected species will be provided to the States to be used as inputs, in addition to the NEFOP dataset, into a predictive analytical model used to estimate take of these species.

Protected species interactions documented by the pilot observer program will be compared to rates of interactions in the NEFOP dataset for like trips (consideration of gear type, mesh size, distance from shore or depth, etc.).

Regulatory discards are a primary concern in NY, NJ, and DE gillnet fisheries as outlined in the Bycatch Sampling Priority Matrix. The data collected on regulatory discards of each target species will be analyzed to determine how current management may drive discards and explore more adaptive, less wasteful alternatives.

Geographic Location: This project will be conducted at major commercial fishing ports in New York, New Jersey and Delaware. These ports will include Montauk, East Hampton, Shinnecock, Mattituck, Greenport, Islip (NY); Cape May, Barnegat Light, Point Pleasant (NJ); Lewes, Bowers Beach, Cedar Creek (DE). Additional ports will be incorporated into the project based on participant feedback and industry input.

Milestone Schedule:

[illegible]

Data Entry and Quality Control				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Analyze data										X	X	X
Report writing										X	X	X

The schedule above is the ideal and assumes funding is available prior to the start of the traditional year. If funding was delayed, outreach and sampling would start as soon as appropriate and wrap around to the following year in order to capture important early season fisheries.

Project Accomplishments Measurement:

Goal	Metric
Assemble multi-state database of gillnet fishermen for information transfer and participation	100% Contact made through email and phone calls
Perform outreach meetings	A minimum of 3 per state = 9 total outreach meetings
At-sea sampling	2 % coverage of state gillnet fisheries
Data analysis	Analysis and modeling of protected species interactions for ITP, percentage of biological sampling targets met, data meets ACCSP and NMFS standards
Report writing	Report submitted to ACCSP

Cost Summary (Budget):

Personnel Costs	ACCSP Share	In-Kind (CCE Covered Fringe Benefits)	Total
CCE Fisheries Director (5% of salary)	\$5,495.04	\$3,485.50	\$8,980.54
CCE Fisheries Manager (23% of salary)	\$18,000.00	\$11,417.40	\$29,417.40
CCE Fisheries Specialist 1 (40% of salary)	\$28,895.00	\$18,328.10	\$47,223.10
CCE Fisheries Specialist 2 (40% of salary)	\$28,895.00	\$18,328.10	\$47,223.10
CCE Fisheries Technician 1 (100% of salary)	\$42,640.00	\$27,046.55	\$69,686.55
CCE Fisheries Technician 2 (100% of salary)	\$42,640.00	\$27,046.55	\$69,686.55
CCE Administrative Assistant (2% of salary)	\$1,200.00	\$761.16	\$1,961.16
State Partners Fisheries Personnel (12.5%)		\$35,600.00	
Worker's Compensation	\$1,677.65	\$0	\$1,677.65
Unemployment Insurance	\$4,194.13	\$0	\$4,194.13
Total Personnel	\$173,636.82	\$142,013.36	\$280,050.18
Additional Costs by Item	ACCSP Share	In-Kind	Total
Travel to Multi-State Ports for Outreach and At-Sea Observations	\$11,220.00		
3-Electronic Measuring Boards & Tablets	\$15,000.00		
3-Bluetooth Scales	\$1,200.00		
3-Electronic Board Annual Licenses	\$1,125.00		
Outreach Printing and Publishing	\$1,500.00		
Office Supplies	\$500.00		
At-Sea Sampling and Safety Gear	\$4,200.00		
2-Laptop Computers	\$3,600.00		
Vehicle Lease Cost	\$7,200.00		
Insurance Costs	\$5,000.00		
Communications	\$1,800.00		
Meals – Travel & At-Sea	\$2,500.00		
Total Additional Costs	\$54,845.00		\$54,845.00

Indirect	ACCSP Share	In-Kind	Total
Total Direct Charges:	\$228,481.82		
Indirect Charge (15% de minimis)	\$34,272.27		\$34,272.27
Total	\$262,754.09		
ASMFC ACCSP Indirect (10%)	\$26,275.40		\$26,275.40
Total Indirect	\$60,547.67		\$60,547.67

	ACCSP Share	In-Kind	Project Value
Total Charges	\$289,029.49	\$142,013.36	\$431,104.85
Percentage	67%	33%	

COST DETAILS:

Description of budget categories and expenses for this project

Salary (\$173,636.82)

Most persons spend a fraction of their time working on this grant in a team effort. A pilot observer program across a three-state region will require staffing flexibility. The annual salaries for personnel and the percentage of their time spent on this project are as follows:

From ACCSP:

1. **CCE Fisheries Director:** CCE Fisheries Program Director, Scott Curatolo-Wagemann will oversee the project and will be responsible for management and execution of this program. Approximately 5% of annual salary (\$105,830) equals **\$5,495.04**
2. **Fisheries Manager:** Fisheries manager Tara McClintock will lead the data collection and at-sea components of the project and will be responsible for management and execution of these elements. McClintock will also have primary responsibility for the program's design and implementation, report writing and publication of results. McClintock will directly supervise all CCE employees, prepare reports, manuscripts, and presentations. The Fisheries Manager will present at regional Fisheries Management Council meetings and Protected Resources meetings. Approximately 23% of annual salary (\$79,726) equals **\$18,000.00**
3. **Fisheries Specialist II:** Fisheries specialists Alex Mercado will be responsible for coordination of fishermen and will serve as a primary fisheries observer. Specialists will be responsible for outreach activities (website, social media and newsletter) and

workshop coordination. Specialists will also coordinate ordering, maintenance and inspection of scientific and safety equipment, mobilization and de-mobilization of all at-sea gear, on board performance of at-sea research, and data entry. Approximately 40% of annual salary (\$72,238) equals **\$28,895.00**

4. **Fisheries Specialist II:** Fisheries specialist Michael Bowen will be responsible for coordination of fishermen and will serve as the primary fisheries observer. Specialists will be responsible for outreach activities (website, social media and newsletter) and workshop coordination. Specialists will also coordinate ordering, maintenance and inspection of scientific and safety equipment, mobilization and de-mobilization of all at-sea gear, on board performance of at-sea research, and data entry. Approximately 40% of annual salary (\$72,238) equals **\$28,895.00**
5. **Fisheries Technician:** The Fisheries technician will develop outreach materials and be responsible for contacting all permitted inshore gillnet fishermen from NY, NJ and DE by email and phone. Other responsibilities include, website development, social media posts, initial database construction and data entry. Fisheries technician will provide additional staffing support during at-sea monitoring activities and data collection. Approximately 100% of annual salary (\$42,640) equals **\$42,640**
6. **Fisheries Technician:** The Fisheries technician will develop outreach materials and be responsible for contacting all permitted inshore gillnet fishermen from NY, NJ and DE by email and phone. Other responsibilities include, website development, social media posts, initial database construction and data entry. Fisheries technician will provide additional staffing support during at-sea monitoring activities and data collection. Approximately 100% of annual salary (\$42,640) equals **\$42,640**
7. **Administrative Assistant:** The CCE Admin Assistant will provide support for accounts payable, website updates, travel requests and newsletter dissemination. Approximately 2% of annual salary (\$52,000) equals **\$1,200**
8. **Workers Compensation:** Required for all CCE salaries equals **\$1,677.65**
9. **Unemployment Insurance:** Required for all CCE salaries equals **\$4,194.13**

CCE has over 50 years of experience working cooperatively with commercial fishermen, including on small gillnet vessels, in the Greater Atlantic Region and have built a valuable rapport with these fishermen. CCE staff have completed several cooperative research projects, working on commercial fishing vessels and following the same protocols and procedures used by the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP). Additionally, multiple CCE staff have Standards of Training and Certification of Watch Keeping (STCW) from Northeast Maritime Institute. This will allow for efficient, accurate, and safe at-sea data collection.

From CCE as in-kind: (\$106,413.36)

Fringe benefits paid for by Cornell (63.43% of employee salaries)

Travel - (\$11,220)

- **Mileage expenses (9,600 miles x .70/mile):** Mileage expenses (9,600 miles x .70/mile) for project staff to travel from the CCE office in Riverhead, New York to ports in New York, New Jersey, and Delaware for at-sea activities and outreach. The project will require at minimum of seven round trips from Riverhead New York to New Jersey (~500 miles round trip, 3,500 miles total); eight round trips from Riverhead to Delaware (~550 miles round trip, 4,400 miles total); and 20 round trips from Riverhead to New York Ports (~85 miles round trip, 1,700 miles total). **(\$6,720.00)**
- **Hotel:** 30 days lodging for NJ & DE at-sea observations to complete two days of observer coverage per week. \$150/stay **(\$4,500.00)**

Equipment - (\$17,325)

- a. Purchase **3 Big Fin electronic Measuring Boards** for this project at a cost of \$5,000 each **(\$15,000)**. **Big Fin Electronic DCS5 Measuring Board Set Up (\$5,000):** Micro control box (\$650), 100cm Measurement Deck (\$916), Micro Battery Kit (\$270.50), 100cm Linear Sensor Kit (\$1,113.50), Micro Nose Stop (\$120), Measurement Stylus Pen (\$75), Rail Mount Kit (\$735), Carry Handle (\$55), Samsung Galaxy Tab (\$675), Extended Warranty (\$750)
- Purchase of annual **software license** for the electronic measuring boards ($\$375 \times 3 = \$1,125.00$).
- **3-Bluetooth scales** will be used to integrate with the electronic measuring board ($\$400/\text{scale} \times 3 = \$1,200$)

Supplies - (\$9,800)

- **Office Supplies** for printer ink, pens, pencils, paper. **(\$500)**
- **Sampling Gear and Safety Gear** for boots, bibs, clip boards, Rite-In-The Rain® waterproof paper, PFD's, personal EPIRBs, 3-survival suits, valet life raft **(\$4,200)**
- **Printing & Publishing** for flyers and handouts, mailings, Project advertisement and articles in Fishing industry publications. **(\$1,500)**
- **Computers** - Panasonic Toughbook or Dell Rugged for use with electronic measuring boards and data entry QA/QC and analysis. ($\$1,800 \times 2 = \$3,600$)

Other - (\$16,500)

- **Vehicle Lease** - A truck will be leased for this project at \$600 per month **(\$7,200)**
- **Communications** - cost of monthly cellphone service plan and internet hotspot **(\$1,800)**
- **Meals - Travel/At-Sea** - \$50 per day over 50 days **(\$2,500)**
- **Liability/at-sea insurance** – CCE holds a current Maritime Employers Liability (MEL) policy that offers necessary coverage for CCE Marine Program staff to conduct on-board at-sea research **(\$5,000)**

Total Direct Charges - \$228,481.82

Indirect Charges - (\$60,547.67)

CCE indirect are calculated using the federal de minimis rate of 15% = **\$34,272.27**

ACCSP/ASMFC indirect charge for funding administration to CCE 10% = **\$26,275.40**

Note: While New York State is the applicant, it is preferable that funds be provided directly to Cornell Cooperative Extension rather than pass through the state. As per Geoff White, this is permissible, but ASMFC/ACCSP would require a 10% indirect rate to administer these funds.

Total Project Cost - \$289,029.49

In-Kind Contribution- (\$142,013.36)

CCE- Fringe benefits paid for by Cornell (65.81% of employee salaries) = **\$106,413.36**

State partners from NY, NJ, and DE are prepared to offer project guidance and expertise as in-kind match. Resource managers for the different states can offer **in-kind** match on different levels depending on funding sources as follows:

NYDEC – New York cannot provide specific **in-kind** match, in part because involved staff are federally funded, but John Maniscalco will commit 20 hours/month to support this project when attending industry meetings, coordinating with the other States and Cornell, reviewing data analysis, and helping to develop materials.

DNREC- John Clark of DNREC will commit 20 hours per month providing project insight, outreach, and gillnet fishery information. Effort contribution plus fringe benefits = **\$18,600**

NJDEP - Jeffrey Brust of NJDEP will commit 10 hours per month providing project insight, outreach and industry information. Effort contribution plus fringe benefits = **\$10,700.**

NJDEP will also commit 10 hours per month from designated Field Biologist. Effort contribution plus fringe benefits = **\$6,300**

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL FOR RANKING

Proposal Type: New

Primary Program Priority: Bycatch/Species Interactions (70%)

- Protected species interactions and regulatory discards will be collected from the NY, NJ, and DE state gillnet fisheries. This will be completed through a pilot observer program with a focus on sturgeon, sea turtles, cetaceans and pinnipeds. This effort will assist in developing ITP metrics needed for all project states.
- The Mid-Atlantic Gillnet Fleet is in the top quartile of the FY26 ACCSP Bycatch Sampling Priority Matrix. This proposal will focus a multi-state effort on this identified gear type to determine bycatch interactions within the state waters of NY, NJ, and DE.
- Several of our target and bycatch species, including black sea bass, Atlantic menhaden, American Shad, river herring and bluefish are high priority species in the FY26 Biological Sampling Priority Matrix contained in the ACCSP RFP. See Results and Benefits section for a more complete species listing.

Data Delivery Plan: Data will be made available to the ACCSP and its state partners in a timely manner and appropriate format. This will be done as soon as the data is entered and quality assured by CCE, but no longer than a month following the completion of an observed trip. CCE has abundant experience in data management and quality assurance procedures. CCE and project partners will coordinate with state partners to have this data available upon request. Additionally, data will be available so that it may be included in individual species' stock assessments.

Multi-Partner/Regional Impact: The regional scope of this project is substantial, involving coordination between three state agencies (NYDEC, DNREC, NJDEP) and CCE, and covering over 4,333 miles of coastline. Collectively, the project has potential to interact with the 250 commercial fishermen present between these three states, and to fill much needed data gaps that exist within the gillnet fishery.

Funding Transition Plan: This multistate pilot effort, carried out by Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) in collaboration with Delaware, New York, and New Jersey, is designed to evaluate the practicality of establishing a comprehensive at-sea observer program for state-managed gillnet fisheries. While initially focused on one year of implementation, the nature of fisheries and the need for representative data across seasons and gear types suggest that additional years of data collection, inclusive of more gear types, will be necessary to fully assess future program needs. Alternative observation formats (shadow vessel, drones, etc) may also become a larger portion of future funding requests, depending on what is learned during the first year+ of the proposed pilot.

The project is therefore envisioned as a multi-year initiative, beginning with a one-year pilot and potentially continuing for up to two additional years in the pilot phase to maintain program momentum and expand coverage. During this time, the team will refine operational procedures, build a trained observer workforce, and generate a core dataset to inform protected and target species management and long-term fishery monitoring strategies.

At the end of the pilot period, partner agencies will jointly assess the viability of scaling up to a

full regional observer program. To support long-term continuity, the project team will explore additional funding sources beyond the pilot phase – such as federal conservation funding programs or state-level initiatives – to ensure sustainable program development and ongoing coverage. This phased approach will allow the program to evolve based on lessons learned, while maintaining consistent field operations and minimizing disruption between funding cycles.

In-Kind Contribution: The in-kind contribution for this project is 33%. This is generated from the CCE fringe benefits package and state agency contributions.

Improvement in Data Quality/Quantity/Timeliness: This pilot project will enhance data collection in state-managed gillnet fisheries by expanding observer coverage across Delaware, New York, and New Jersey. Increased rates of self-reporting of discarded catch will directly improve data quality. Standardized protocols and digital tools will improve the consistency and accuracy of data. A regional effort such as proposed increases the volume and representativeness of data collected, supporting more informed fishery management decisions.

Potential Secondary Module: Additional modules supported by this project include Catch and Effort, and Social and Economic data. Accurate catch and effort data is a primary goal of any observer program. It is anticipated that socio-economic information will be obtained through outreach with the industry.

Impact on Stock Assessment: This project will provide high quality, comprehensive fisheries-dependent data which is essential to effective and successful fisheries stock assessments and management. This pilot project will provide much needed observer coverage in the NY, NJ, and DE gillnet fleets. Catch, bycatch, and discard data, **including counts, lengths, and weights,** gathered by CCE staff will be used to inform assessments for species managed by the ASMFC, MAFMC, and NEFMC. Additionally, data from this program will be imperative to develop a multi-state HCP for protected species. By filling critical data gaps in observer coverage and fisheries-dependent sampling, it will improve future assessments for various species.

Innovative: Observer programs typically employ trained individuals placed on fishing vessels. While this method allows for direct on-board observation, this approach has the potential to be disruptive to fishing operations. To minimize disruption to fishing operations, this proposal will explore the potential to use shadow vessels, drones, onboard video systems and other innovative technologies to accomplish program goals.

Properly Prepared: This proposal meets the requirements outlined in the proposal guidelines.

Merit: This proposed project is essential to provide much-needed observer coverage in the NY, NJ, and DE state water gillnet fisheries, that are part of the Mid-Atlantic gillnet fleet. In the Bycatch Sampling Priority Matrix, this fleet was deemed the highest priority **due to the likelihood** of regulatory discards and protected species interactions. This project will obtain high quality fisheries-dependent data directly on board these vessels through a comprehensive observer program. This will include data on landed and discard catch, and protected species interactions. Additionally, extensive outreach at all major ports in NY, NJ, and DE will be conducted to inform commercial gillnet fishermen about this project and to collect stakeholder input. From this data, analyses will be performed to advise the development of a multi-state HCP.

This project will share the data with the ACCSP and its state partners, to be incorporated into fisheries stock assessments.

Appendix A: Curriculum Vitae for Principal Investigators

John Maniscalco

123 Kings Park Blvd. Nissequogue River Park, Kings Park, NY 11754

john.maniscalco@dec.ny.gov

(631) 444-0437

Professional History

2017 – present	Bureau Chief, Marine Fisheries	NYS DEC
2010 – 2017	Unit Leader, Marine Finfish	NYS DEC
2006 - 2010	Biologist, Crustaceans	NYS DEC
2001 - 2003	Aquarist	WCS NYA

NYS DEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

WCS NYA – Wildlife Conservation Society New York Aquarium

Education

2006	Master of Science	Marine Environmental Science	Stony Brook University
	<i>MS Advisor: Dr. David O. Conover</i>		
1999	Bachelor of Arts	Env. and Evol. Biology	Dartmouth College

Synergistic Activity

Chair, Delaware River Basin Fish and Wildlife Management Cooperative

Policy Committee (2021-2022), Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee (2014-2016), Black Sea Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment Working Group (2016)

Member, ASMFC Commissioner (proxy) for New York (2022-present), Golden Tilefish Research Track Assessment Working Group (2022–2024), Delaware River Basin Fish and Wildlife Management Cooperative Policy Committee (2021-present), MAFMC MC for Blue and Golden Tilefish (2018-present), ASMFC (and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Monitoring Committee MAFMC MC) Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee (2010-2020), ASMFC (and MAFMC MC) Bluefish Technical Committee (2010-2017), Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Recreational Technical Committee (2011-2017), ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee (2006-2010)

Collaborations

2023–2025	M.S. Graduate Committee Member	Cornell University
2024–present	Ph.D. Dissertation Committee Outside Scholar	Stony Brook University

Presentations & Publications

Maniscalco, John (2019). Fish on the move – one manager’s perspective. Presented at NY AFS Plenary Session, Poughkeepsie, NY.

Chang, H.Y., Pendleton, R., Kenney, G., McKown, K., Eakin, W., Maniscalco, J., and Chen, Y. (2024). Spatiotemporal dynamics of spawning habitat distribution of American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*) in the Hudson River Estuary under multi stressors. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. 00:1-14.

Jeffrey C. Brust

Bureau Chief, NJDEP Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Marine Fisheries
(609) 748-2020 jeffrey.brust@dep.nj.gov

EDUCATION

University of Florida – Graduate Certificate in Quantitative Fisheries Science, 2016.

Virginia Institute of Marine Science, College of William and Mary – MA Fisheries Science, 1996.

University of Miami – BS Marine Biology, 1992.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

NJ DEP Fish and Wildlife – Bureau Chief (12/2017 to present)

Direct operations of the Bureau of Marine Fisheries, consisting of a staff of 25 with a \$5M annual budget. Directs staff in planning, development, and implementation of programs to monitor important marine resources and commercial and recreational fisheries of the state. Represents the Division on state and regional management committees. Recommends and implements fisheries management measures based on sound scientific data and stakeholder input that ensure sustainability and maintain compliance with state and federal fishery management plans.

NJ DEP Fish and Wildlife – Research Scientist (4/2004 to 11/2017)

Provide technical and analytical support to management of marine fisheries resources of New Jersey and the Atlantic coast. Contribute to regional fisheries stock assessments; conduct analyses to support state-specific management measures; summarize and present results for different levels of audience; provide oversight and training to staff in fisheries data analysis and population modeling.

ENTRIX, Inc. – Senior Staff Biologist (12/02 to 4/2004)

Provide analytical and logistical support to identify environmental solutions to industrial activities, including Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA); prepare Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); evaluate environmental consequences of power plant impingement and entrainment.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission - Statistics Specialist (1/97 – 12/02)

Development and coordination of regional and coastwide fisheries research initiatives, such as regional survey design and implementation, data compilation and standardization, and training programs for state agency personnel.

Virginia Institute of Marine Science - Graduate Research Assistant (8/93 - 12/96)

Assist ongoing population research studies, including development and execution of research strategies, collection and analysis of biological data, maintenance of sampling gear, and training and oversight of research assistants.

Alaskan Observers, Inc. - Domestic Fisheries Observer (6/92 - 9/92; 3/93 - 6/93)

Collection and interpretation of commercial fishing effort and harvest information, and timely submission of trip reports.

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Co-developer and co-instructor, ASMFC Intermediate Stock Assessment Training Course (three-part series, conducted 2011-2012 and 2016-2017)

Co-instructor, ASMFC Data Poor Modeling Workshop (2012)

Contractor, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership - Sustainability profiles for English sole (2012), Greenland Halibut (2012), and Orange Roughy (2014).

Contractor, Seven Holdings – Sustainability profile for flathead mullet (2015)

Contractor, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission – Chairman of SEDAR peer review for red drum stock assessment (2016)
Contractor, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership and Monterey Bay Aquarium - Sustainability profiles for seven US South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico grouper species (2018).
Meeting co-chairman, American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting held August 2018 in Atlantic City, NJ

AWARDS and CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Fisheries Professional, American Fisheries Society (2000 - 2017)
ASMFC Annual Award of Excellence for Scientific and Technical Contribution (2015)
AFS Northeast Division Past President's Award (2019)

SELECTED ASMFC STOCK ASSESSMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

American Eel – 2014, 2017 (chair)
Atlantic Menhaden – 2010, 2012, 2019, 2020, 2022
Black Sea Bass – 2009, 2012, 2016, 2019
Horseshoe Crab – 1998, 2009
Summer Flounder – 2005, 2007, 2013, 2019
Tautog – 2005, 2001, 2015 (chair)
Weakfish – 2006, 2009 (chair), 2016 (chair)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Anstead, K.A. and 31 co-authors. 2021. The Path to an Ecosystem Approach for Forage Fish Management: A Case Study of Atlantic Menhaden. *Frontiers in Marine Science*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/marine-science/articles/10.3389/fmars.2021.607657>

DePiper, G., Gaichas, S., Muffley, B., Ardini, G., Brust, J., Coakley, J., Dancy, K., Elliott, G. W., Leaning, D. C., Lipton, D., McNamee, J., Perretti, C., Rootes-Murdy, K., and Wilberg, M. J. 2021. Learning by doing: collaborative conceptual modelling as a path forward in ecosystem-based management. – *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, doi:10.1093/icesjms/fsab054.

Kasper, Jacob M., Brust, Jeffrey, Caskenette, Amanda, McNamee, Jason, Vokoun, Jason C., and Schultz, Eric T. 2020. Using Harvest Slot Limits to Promote Stock Recovery and Broaden Age Structure in Marine Recreational Fisheries: a case study. https://opencommons.uconn.edu/eeb_articles/48

McGowan, Conor P. and 11 co-authors. 2011. Multispecies Modeling for Adaptive Management of Horseshoe Crabs and Red Knots in the Delaware Bay. *Natural Resource Modeling* 24(1): 117-156.

Experience

Fisheries Section Administrator

2011- Present Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, Dover, DE

- Administer two managers and a staff of 20+ fisheries scientists, fisheries technicians and support personnel. Represent Delaware on regional and national fisheries management organizations, including the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Ensure Delaware's compliance with Fishery Management Plans. Write fishery regulations and guide the regulations through the approval process. Coordinate meetings of the Delaware's Advisory Council on Tidal Finfisheries, Shellfish Advisory Council, and Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing Funding.

Environmental Scientist 4

1989- 2011 Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, Dover, DE

- Principal investigator on the following projects: impoundment-estuarine interactions, white perch management plan for the Delaware Basin, fish habitat considerations for Delaware's tidal tributaries, amount and disposition of discarded striped bass in Delaware's spring striped bass gill net fishery, American eel monitoring, weakfish tagging trials, Atlantic menhaden monitoring, and striped bass feeding habits. As principal investigator, responsible for researching and writing project proposals, estimating project budget, managing all project logistics, supervising and conducting all field work, compiling and analyzing collected data, writing reports and articles detailing the results of the project, and giving presentations about the projects.

Education

State University of NY-Stony Brook Stony Brook, NY

9/75 – 5/79

B.S. Biology

Texas A&M University College Station, TX

1/85 – 12/86

M. Agriculture Fisheries Science

Reports/Publications

Clark, John H., W.O. Watanabe, D.H. Ernst, R.I. Wicklund, and B.L. Olla. 1990. Effect of feeding rate on growth and feed conversion of Florida red tilapia reared in floating marine cages. *Journal of the World Aquaculture Society* 21(1):16-24.

Wade O. Watanabe, **John H. Clark**, J.B. Dunham, R.I. Wicklund, B.L. Olla. 1990. Culture of Florida red tilapia in marine cages: the effect of stocking density and dietary protein on growth. *Aquaculture* 90: 123-134.

Clark, John, H. 1995. Modified water level management in Delaware's coastal impoundments to accommodate nutrient and organism exchange. Pages D-70 – D78 in W. Whitman, editor. *Waterfowl habitat restoration, enhancement and management in the Atlantic Flyway*. Atlantic Waterfowl Council, Third Edition, Dover, Delaware.

Clark, John H. 2001. Anadromous species investigations. Federal Aid in Fisheries Restoration Project F-47-R-10. Job Number 1 - VI: White Perch Management Plan for the Delaware Basin. Final Report. Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, Dover, DE. 74 p.

Clark, John H. 2009. The American eel fishery in Delaware: recent landings trends and characteristics of the exploited eel population. Pages 229 - 240 in J. M Casselman and D. K. Cairns, editors. *Eels at the edge: science status and conservation concerns*. American Fisheries Society, Symposium 58, Bethesda, Maryland.

Clark, John H. and D. M. Kahn. 2009. Amount and disposition of striped bass discarded in Delaware's spring striped bass gill-net fishery during 2002 and 2003: effects of regulations and fishing strategies. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* 29: 576 – 585.

Scott Curatolo-Wagemann

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk
County 423 Griffing Avenue, Suite 100
Riverhead, New York 11901

Tel: (631) 727-7850 x.318
Cell Phone: (631) 278-4260
Email:
sw224@cornell.edu

A. PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION:

Southampton College of Long Island University	Marine Science Biology	B.S.	1994
State University of New York- Stony Brook	Environmental Management	M.P.S.	2010

B. APPOINTMENTS:

2024-present: Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission- New York State Governor's Appointee
proxy 2021-present: Responsible Offshore Science Alliance Research Advisor
2020-present: New York Seafood Direct Marketing Task Force
2020-present: Long Island Sound Marine Debris Action Plan-Abandoned and Lost Fishing/Aquaculture Gear Working Group
2019-present: New York State Fisheries Technical Working Group
2019-present: Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan
2018-present: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council- Advisory Panel for spiny dogfish
2015-present: NOAA, National Marine Fisheries- Advisory Panel for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) Workshops
1999-present: Senior Extension Resource Educator, Fisheries and Stormwater Specialist Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Riverhead, NY 11901

C. PRODUCTS: Significant Products

Conservation Gear Technology- Quantifying Bycatch Reduction Benefits of an Excluder in the Small Mesh Fisheries of the Northeast with Focus on Red Hake (NOAA-Saltonstall-Kennedy Program). June 28, 2004. **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Emerson Hasbrouck, Kristin Gerbino, Michael Bowen, Tara McClintock, Alex Mercado, Amanda Dauman, Tyler Guterres, Illusion Rivera
Reducing Marine Debris by Removing Derelict Lobster Gear from Long Island Sound-II (NFWF-Long Island Sound Future Funds). April 5, 2024. **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Emerson Hasbrouck, Kristin Gerbino, Michael Bowen, Tara McClintock, Alex Mercado, Amanda Dauman, Tyler Guterres, Illusion Rivera
Continuation of "Choose Local F.I.S.H." Marketing and Education Campaign to Promote Locally Caught and Grown Seafood on Long Island. (USDA- Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program). February 28, 2023. Emerson Hasbrouck, **Scott Curatolo- Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Alex Mercado, Amanda Dauman, Richard Guterres, Michael Bowen
New York Fleet Wide Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting and Education Initiative (NFWF-Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Grant Program 2020). November 2022. **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Emerson Hasbrouck, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Alex Mercado, Amanda Dauman
Increasing Twine Thickness and Mesh Size to Reduce Skate Bycatch in Monkfish Sink Gillnets (RSA- Monkfish 2018). October 2022. Emerson Hasbrouck, **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Alex Mercado, Amanda Dauman
Advancing Bycatch Reduction Technology in New England Small Mesh Fisheries. (NOAA-Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program 2019). April 2022. Emerson Hasbrouck, **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Alex Mercado, Amanda Dauman
Implementing a Bycatch Avoidance Communication Network in RI, MA, NJ, NY. (NFWF-Fisheries Innovation Fund 2019. February 28, 2021. Emerson Hasbrouck, **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Daniel Kuehn, Amanda Dauman
Reducing Discard Mortality in the NY Recreational Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery. (NFWF-Fisheries Innovation Fund 2019. February 28, 2021. Emerson Hasbrouck, **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Daniel Kuehn, Kaitlyn Boyle, Alex Mercado
Fine Scale Genetic Population Structure of Monkfish (MAFMC Research Set Aside Program 2016). March 25, 2021. Emerson Hasbrouck, I. Wirgin, John Scotti, **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Daniel Kuehn
Determining Mesh Selectivity and Optimum Mesh Size to Harvest Three Commercially Important Mid- Atlantic Species (MAFMC/ASMFC). March 1, 2018. Emerson Hasbrouck-Principal Investigator; **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, John Scotti, Tara Froehlich, Kristin Gerbino, Daniel Kuehn, Patrick Sullivan.

D. SYNERGISTIC ACTIVITIES:

1. Stakeholder Engagement: Engage with fishermen, fishing associations, industry representatives, and other relevant stakeholders to foster dialogue, understand their perspectives, and build trust and collaboration.

2. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Work together with the fishing industry to collect accurate and comprehensive data on fish stocks, fishing effort, and ecological indicators. This collaborative approach enhances the quality and reliability of the data, enabling informed decision-making.
3. **Scientific Research and Monitoring:** Collaborate with the fishing industry to support scientific research initiatives, including stock assessments, ecosystem monitoring, and studies on fishing gear technology. By combining industry knowledge with scientific expertise, a more comprehensive understanding of the ecosystem and its dynamics can be achieved.
4. **Adaptive Management:** Jointly develop and implement adaptive management strategies that incorporate feedback from fishermen. This iterative process allows for continuous evaluation and adjustment of fisheries management measures based on real-time observations and stakeholder input.
5. **Compliance and Enforcement:** Collaborate with the fishing industry to promote compliance with fishing regulations and foster a culture of responsible fishing practices. Encourage industry-led initiatives for self-regulation, monitoring, and reporting to improve compliance rates and reduce illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities.
6. **Innovation and Technology:** Partner with the fishing industry to explore innovative and sustainable fishing technologies, gear modifications, and fishing practices. This collaboration can lead to the development and adoption of more selective and eco- friendly fishing methods, minimizing bycatch and ecosystem impacts.
7. **Education and Capacity Building:** Collaboratively develop training programs, workshops, and educational materials to enhance the industry's understanding of sustainable fishing practices, ecosystem conservation, and compliance with regulations. This empowers fishermen with the knowledge and skills necessary for responsible resource management.
8. **Market-based Approaches:** Collaborate with the fishing industry to promote and certify sustainable fishing practices,

facilitating access to markets that prioritize sustainable seafood. These partnerships can create economic incentives for the industry to adopt sustainable practices while meeting consumer demand for environmentally friendly products.

By engaging in these synergistic activities, individuals working collaboratively with the fishing industry in fisheries management can foster a cooperative and inclusive approach that supports the long-term sustainability of fish stocks, preserves marine ecosystems, and ensures the viability of the fishing industry.

E. COLLABORATORS & OTHER AFFILIATIONS:

Collaborators Over the Last 48 Months: J. Abrams (Gershow Recycling); M. Albino (NYSDEC); D. Aripotch (F/V Caitlin & Mairead); J. Best (NYSDEC); J. Bourque (NYSDEC); B. Brady (Long Island Commercial Fishing Association); A. Clemetson (NY SeaGrant); M. Ciaramella (NY SeaGrant); C. Coyne (Sea-Trade Consulting); S. Crosby (The Maritime Aquarium); J. Davis (CT DEEP); N. Delanoy (F/V Laura Lee); Doll (F/V Christine & Jennifer); M. Early (Covanta Energy); R. Enever (FishTek); K. Fullam (New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets) J. German (F/V Suzanne Marie); N. Grant (Ct SeaGrant); R. Harrington (F/V Spirit); H. Hart (Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council); E. Hasbrouck (CCE); J. Hoey (National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center); D. Hudson (The Remote Ecologist); G. Kenney (NYSDEC); M. King (F/V Timtarah); J. Knight (Superior Trawl); W. Lucey (Save the Sound); M. McClintock (F/V Bulldog); K. McKowan (NYSDEC); C. McCandless (NOAA Apex Predators Program); J. Maniscalco (NYSDEC); Milliken (National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center); On the Water Magazine; M. Passerotti (NOAA Apex Predators Program); W. Richter (NYSDEC); E. Rodman (F/V Veronica Ann); C. Roebuck (F/V Karen Elizabeth); P. Ruhle Jr (F/V Sea Breeze Too); E. Reid (NEFMC); M. Sclafani (CCE); C. Scott (NYSDEC); J. Scotti (CCE); C. Scheetz (Project Oceanology); S. Sethi (Alaska Pacific University); J. Sulikowski (Univ. of New England); P. Sullivan (Cornell Univ., College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Dept. of Natural Resources); V. Vecchio (NOAA); I. Wirgin, (NYU, School of Medicine)

Tara McClintock
Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Suffolk
Marine Program
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Work Experience

Fisheries Program Manager, Marine Program

1997 – Present Cornell University Cooperative Extension

- Provide direct responsibility and oversight for field operations of fisheries research demonstration projects
- Provide technology transfer and training for electronic trip reporting for for-hire and commercial fishing fleets of NY
- Conduct field applied research projects for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NOAA NMFS
- Developed and implemented a biological sampling program in Fulton Fish Market, NY.
- Provide dockside educational opportunities for the fishing industry on topics such as: fisheries management; life history of important species; gear modification and selectivity; changes in regulations, permits, exemptions, etc.
- Developed a network of commercial and recreational fishers throughout Long Island to sample striped bass.
- Participation in NYSDEC/NMFS fish tagging projects.
- Attend organizational meetings with NYSDEC, NMFS, ASMFC, ACCSP and other government agencies to make sure that educational and contractual goals are attained.
- Coordination and interaction with The Long Island Commercial Fisherman's Association (LICFA) and other fishing industry organizations educational program delivery.

Recent Research Experience

1. 2024- Present - Transitioning NY For-hire and Commercial Fleets to Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting- Tech Transfer and Education Initiative-National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
2. 2022-2024- Sampling of Striped Bass from NY's Marine Waters for PCB's and PFAS- NYSDEC
3. 2022 –Present- A Collaborative Research Assessment and Outreach Program for Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) within the Longfin Squid Fishery of the Greater Atlantic Region-NOAA's Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program (BREP)
4. 2021-Present-South Fork Wind Farm Export Cable Bottom Trawl Survey -East Hampton Town - Orsted
5. 2020-Present – Testing Alternate Frequency Pinger in Monkfish Gillnet Fishery – Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant
6. 2018-2023 -LI Sound Derelict Lobster Gear Removal- NOAA Marine Debris Program & NFWF LIS Futures Fund
7. 2018-2021- Increasing Twine Thickness and Mesh Size to Reduce Skate Bycatch in Monkfish Gillnets- Monkfish RSA Program
8. 2012-2017 - Butterfish/River Herring, Yellowtail and Windowpane Flounder Bycatch Avoidance Network Projects – NFWF/BREP
9. 2015-2017 Temporal Stability of the Genetic Population Structure of Monkfish- NOAA/NEFMC/Monkfish RSA Program

Education

1991-1995 Southampton College of Long Island University, Southampton, New York

- Bachelor of Science – Biology / Psychology

Certifications

- IACUC Training- Module 1 and Introduction to Fish – July 2022
- Protected Species Sampling Training Certification – by AIS, Inc. – March 2022
- Basic Training per STCW Certification – Northeast Maritime Institute – October 2021
- Advanced PADI Diver-Divers Way- 1995

**Proposal for funding made to the
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201**

**FY26: Fishery Dependent Sampling of Federal and State Permitted
Vessels and Electronic Reporting Initiatives in New York**

Submitted By:
Jesse Hornstein
New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation
Division of Marine Resources
123 Kings Park Blvd.
Kings Park, NY 11754

Applicant Name: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Marine Resources

Project Title: Fishery Dependent Sampling of Federal and State Permitted Vessels and Electronic Reporting Initiatives in New York

Project Type: New Project

Requested Award Amount: \$302,608.70

Requested Award Period: One year after receipt of funds

Primary Program Priorities: Primary-Biological Sampling; Secondary-Catch and Effort

Date Submitted: June 13, 2025

Project Supervisor: Jesse Hornstein

Principal Investigators: Jesse Hornstein, John Maniscalco, Maureen Davidson, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Emerson Hasbrouck, Cornell Cooperative Extension-Marine Program, ech12@cornell.edu

Scott Curatolo-Wagemann, Cornell Cooperative Extension-Marine Program, sw224@cornell.edu

Project Staff: Tara McClintock, taf4@cornell.edu Cornell Cooperative Extension- Marine Program, Fisheries Manager

Kristin Gerbino, kk334@cornell.edu ; Alex Mercado, ajm425@cornell.edu; Amanda Dauman, am1357@cornell.edu: Cornell Cooperative Extension-Marine Program, Fisheries Specialists

Michael Bowen, mb2735@cornell.edu, Cornell Cooperative Extension- Marine Program, Fisheries Coordinator

Tyler Guteres, rg699@cornell.edu Cornell Cooperative Extension- Marine Program, Fisheries Technician

Project Partner: NOAA, Northeast Fishery Science Center

Objectives:

The overall objective of this project is to supplement, complement, and expand federal and New York State fishery dependent data with commercial biological sampling and electronic reporting. Data will be collected from state and federally licensed fishermen and dealers. The data will be reviewed, processed, and entered into appropriate databases to be made available for use by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Mid-Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council (MAFMC), New England Marine Fisheries Council (NEFMC), and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). These data serve as inputs in a variety of studies, including biological analyses and stock assessments, regulatory impact analyses, quota allocations and monitoring, economic profitability profiles, trade and import tariff decisions, allocation of grant funds among states, identification of ecological interactions among species, and documentation of vessel fishing histories.

To meet our objectives, we propose to complete the following:

- Collect fishery dependent information dockside and other locations to fill gaps in declining biological sample collections.
- Collect lengths, weights, and age samples for various species including high priority species in the top 25% of the ACCSP biological sampling matrix such as black sea bass, blueline and golden tilefish, American lobster, Spanish mackerel, Atlantic halibut, ocean pout, grey triggerfish, cobia, American eel, winter flounder, shortfin squid, scup, and bluefish.
- Establish biological sampling priorities and targets with ACCSP, NMFS, and DEC to ensure sampling goals meet necessary thresholds to fill critical data gaps and improve assessment outputs.
- Expand electronic reporting goals for New York State, by providing training and support for electronic reporting requirements and compliance for dealers, the for-hire, and commercial fishing industries. Support and training will also be provided for any food fish licensees voluntarily adopting electronic reporting.

Need:

Biological sampling of the catch provides important basic data for stock assessments. Among the basic biological information that fisheries scientists need to assess fish stocks are the age structure of the stock and the relation between fish length and age (Walace et al., 1997). Just as important are the age and length selectivity of fish removals by fishing gears (Kilduff et al., 2009). Total age estimates are a key input in analytical age-based stock assessment models (NRCC, 2024).

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recently reviewed commercial port sampling in the northeast and concluded that the low overall number of samples was alarming and is a critical issue for stock assessments (MAFMC-SSC, 2023). They noted that the current sampling program has experienced severe cutbacks in the number of sampling events and numbers of length and age samples since 2017. They also noted that increased costs and reduced budgets, among other factors, have caused significant declines in the numbers of samples taken. The SSC suggested several ways to revisit the efficacy of sampling programs, including close collaboration with various state focused programs. The SSC highlighted that less sampling means greater uncertainty and ultimately lower Acceptable Biological Catch values (ABCs) (MAFMC- SSC, 2023).

The Northeast Regional Coordinating Council (NRCC) also recently reviewed the Northeast Port Biological Sampling Program (NEPBSP) (NRCC, 2024). They noted that there has been a significant reduction in biological sampling from an average of 221,558 lengths annually from FY 2017 through FY2019 to 64,690 lengths in 2023, a 71% reduction. There has also been an associated reduction in age samples. Although this large reduction is for the NOAA funded NEPBSP program, it includes samples for ASMFC managed and co-managed species (e.g. black seabass, bluefish, etc.) and has a direct impact on ASMFC management. Further, ASMFC required biological sampling relies on NEPBSP for filling needed samples for some species (e.g. black seabass, scup and others) rather than state specific sampling requirements as required for solely ASMFC managed species. There is thus a direct impact to ASMFC managed species as well as MAFMC managed species, NEFMC managed species, and co-managed species. The NRCC (2024) concluded that there has been a marked decline in biological samples from the relatively stable base period of FY 2017 – FY 2019 and that this decline has been prevalent across all sampled species and impacted species managed by the three management bodies (ASMFC, MAFMC, NEFMC) by a similar magnitude. NY state currently collects sufficient samples to satisfy its ASMFC-FMP required sampling. However, not all species have minimum sampling requirements and some ASMFC species rely on NEPBSP sampling to provide commercial age and length information (which as stated above has been significantly reduced).

The NRCC (2024) review of biological sampling also highlighted that reductions in sampling will impede future efforts to address issues such as climate change, stock movements, or exclusion from wind energy areas, and that the implications of reduced port sampling are not fully known. The NRCC further mentions that the decline in sampling threatens to undermine the integrity of analytic stock assessments used to assess stocks managed by ASMFC, MAFMC, and NEFMC. The NRCC (2024) review suggests that supplemental sampling by the states would help address these issues and further identifies New York as a “key state” where supplemental sampling would be beneficial.

In order to pursue and encourage expansion of state programs for biological sampling, the NEFSC and GARFO have put together a proposal for greater state and federal coordination of commercial landings sampling (NRCC, 2025). In support of this effort, the following have occurred:

- 2024 NRCC formally expressed interest in enhanced coordination among state and federal agencies collecting biological data from commercial landings.
- August 2024 ASMFC state directors endorsed the concept of organizing a regional workshop to exchange information about sampling of commercial fisheries landings among state and federal programs, and to explore opportunities for greater collaboration to improve the efficiency of regional resources.
- February – March 2025 ASMFC state directors provided agency contacts to organize and participate in the proposed workshop.
- NEFSC is currently working with state agency contacts to organize and schedule this workshop to help move forward the effort to have the states more involved in commercial landings sampling.

Also, the current ACCSP request for proposals for FY 2026 lists improvements in biological data as the highest priority. Within biological sampling, the biological priority matrix lists 25 species that are in the top quartile of the matrix. Of those 25 listed species, we anticipate that we can sample 16 from the New York commercial fishing industry. We will focus sampling efforts on 14 of the 16 that are higher priority and not adequately sampled as outlined in the biological priority matrix. The other species on the biological priority matrix are not landed in NY. Although not the primary focus of our sampling, we will also sample species that are of lower priority as opportunities present themselves.

The NOAA Fisheries Electronic Technology Policy Directive on Electronic Technologies (ET) and Fishery-Dependent Data Collection (2019) encourages the consideration of ET to complement and/or improve existing fishery-dependent data collection programs to achieve the most cost effective and sustainable approach that ensures alignment of management goals, data needs, funding sources, and regulations. To achieve this directive, NOAA Fisheries encourages all fishery stakeholders to consider implementing ET options, where appropriate, to meet science, management, and compliance data needs.

According to NOAA Fisheries Electronic Technology Implementation Plan (2021), the vision of ET for 2021-2025 is ensuring data content, quality, integrity, and traceability requires that all fishery-dependent data collection programs fully transition to electronic data collection and processing systems. Many of the regional data collection programs have already transitioned to electronic data collections including seafood dealer reporting and biological sampling. Use of eVTR is recommended in this vision for a number of important reasons including One Stop Reporting for dual-permitted entities; integration with Pre-Trip Notification System for Universal Trip Identifier generation and transmission; and developing a modernized eVTR

database model that has the flexibility to address a wide range of requirements including: customized logbooks, better support of One Stop Reporting requirements, and the ability to more quickly adapt to ever changing reporting requirements. Data collection programs which continue to utilize paper-based data collection can be costly and lack the flexibility to adapt to highly dynamic fishery management and monitoring needs. The demand for more timely and frequent data has increased in response to required state and federal fisheries quota monitoring, and the need for more efficiently integrated regional fishery-dependent data streams will allow for informed management decisions (NOAA Fisheries Technology Implementation Plan, 2021).

DEC has already invested significant time, effort and resources implementing a mandatory reporting system for NY state dealers and for-hire vessels. However, there is still a lag in compliance by some dealers. By broadening our outreach efforts and including individualized training, we anticipate being able to have 100% dealer electronic reporting. The electronic reporting for the for-hire fleet is a relatively new requirement. As such, many for-hire captains are still becoming aware of the requirements and are trying to learn how to transition to electronic reporting. As with dealers, by broadening our outreach efforts and including individualized training, we will be able to have more captains comply with electronic reporting. DEC has also developed an electronic reporting system for harvesters. Although it is not mandatory, New York continues to encourage harvesters to transition from paper reporting to electronic reporting. As with dealers and the for-hire fleet, by broadening our outreach efforts and including individualized training, we will be able to have more harvesters become comfortable with, and transitioning to, electronic reporting.

Results and Benefits:

This project will provide results and benefits directly applicable to the Ranking Guide for New Projects. The proposed project directly addresses the high priority goals of the RFP by developing and implementing improvements in:

- Biological data
- Catch, effort, and landings data (including licensing permit and vessel registration data.)
- Discard of commercial fishing operations through outreach on electronic reporting, and improved reporting from the fishing industry.
- Economic data generated from dealer reports

A large component of the project will be for biological sampling of commercial species landed in New York. The upper quartile of the biological sampling matrix will be the primary focus of biological sampling. We will be able to sample 16 species of the 25 priority species listed in the matrix, as these 16 are landed in NY. The other 9 are not landed in NY. Of the 16 species that are landed in New York, 14 will be the priority as these are not adequately sampled. See Table 1. As mentioned above, the sampling requirements for some of these species are also required in the FMP for those species. However, the sampling requirement

for those species, rather than requiring state specific sample goals, the FMP simply states that “biological samples for the commercial fishery are collected through the NEFSC weighout system”. As pointed out above under Need, there has been a significant reduction in all samples collected through that program as evaluated by the NRCC. In fact, the NRCC (2024) specifically pointed out that the reduction in samples from the baseline was 58.1% for ASMFC managed species. There has been a significant reduction in ACCSP required biological samples that will be addressed by this project. Samples will also be collected for species not in the priority list as time and opportunity allow. See Table 2. **Based on previous successful port biological sampling programs conducted by CCE, we anticipate that we can collect a total of around 5,000 individual lengths and 1,200 otolith pairs for aging (see Approach below).**

Support for the proposed project will allow New York to expand, improve, and fill critical data gaps in biological sampling of fisheries landed in New York. **Improvements in biological sampling will provide information crucial to assessing these species. The biological sampling plan described in this proposal will ensure that data collected are sound and representative of federal and state fisheries. Since all priority species are managed on a regional basis, all data collected on these species will have broad reaching regional benefits. Collecting high quality, comprehensive fisheries biological data is essential to successful fisheries assessment and management. Biological samples will be representative of state and federal fisheries and will provide catch at age data for species managed by ASMFC, MAFMC and NEFMC. These samples will help meet ASMFC required sampling and will help to address the significant reduction in NMFS-sponsored sampling in the Greater Atlantic region. This project can help address the issues identified above by the MAFMC SSC and the NRCC and increase overall sampling of commercial fisheries.**

Black Sea Bass	Blueline Tilefish
Golden Tilefish	Atlantic Halibut
Spanish Mackerel	Northern Shortfin Squid
American Lobster	Grey Triggerfish
Ocean Pout	Scup
Cobia	Bluefish
American Eel	
Winter Flounder	

Table 1. Priority species to be sampled in NY

Summer Flounder	Red Hake
Longfin Squid	Windowpane Flounder
Butterfish	Yellowtail Flounder

Spiny Dogfish	Tautog
Striped Bass	Skates (various)
Weakfish	Horseshoe crab
Silver Hake	Atlantic menhaden

Table 2. Additional species to be sampled in NY

In addition, this project will expand electronic reporting of fishery dependent data from commercial and for-hire fishers and dealers. Based on our various other successful electronic reporting programs implemented in recent years (detailed below), we estimate that with the program described in this proposal, we can transition at least 50 individuals to electronic reporting and reach/train/re-train at least 50 additional harvesters/for-hire/dealers. Also, our experience allows us to estimate the staff that will be needed to successfully implement this program.

This will bring the State fishery dependent data collection program up to ACCSP electronic reporting standards. The electronic reporting program proposed here will provide complete data coverage for most state licensed commercial fishermen, for-hire permit holders, and all food fish dealers at the trip level. Further, it will facilitate the collection and processing of data from marine bait fisheries and bring those fisheries up to ACCSP standards while concurrently providing more complete and accurate landings information for bait fisheries. The electronic reporting program proposed here will process data collected from only New York State permitted fishermen and dealers. The program will provide an extensive hands-on one-on-one training in electronic reporting for harvesters, dealers, and for-hire operators.

The value of electronic logbook data is the improvement in accuracy and timeliness of data. Moving away from paper-based logbook systems will significantly reduce data entry and transcription errors. This reduces time spent on contacting fishermen to correct errors. The established electronic reporting programs include a number of automated data audits designed to restrict the entry of erroneous or incomplete data, which greatly improves overall data quality compared to paper reports. The NY data to be collected electronically though this project can be uploaded and made directly available to ACCSP's database as a complete dataset. The adoption of electronic logbooks makes it practical to collect and record more detailed catch by area and can improve the quality of stock assessments and the outcomes of management for managed species. Collecting data in this format makes it more usable and can have increased benefits for management and decision-making for quota monitored species such as summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, striped bass, bluefish, spiny dogfish, longfin squid, horseshoe crabs and Atlantic menhaden. There is also the potential for the data to be used to understand and track migration and range shifts as

climate change affects populations of certain species such as black sea bass. This new capability allows the industry to contribute more directly to the quality and utility of NOAA Fisheries' science.

Data for harvests of fish, lobster, crabs and other seafood species will continue to be collected at the trip level from dealers and fishermen, and include, either through direct reporting by the entity engaged in the activity, or through subsequent data processing, all ACCSP standard data elements.

The major benefits of this proposal include:

- Support of New York's fishery data collection programs bringing them up to full ACCSP standards through a 2-ticket dealer/VTR reporting system.
- Expanded identification of all entities engaged in the harvest and landings of marine species in New York.
- Expansion of a uniform dockside biological sampling program across New York fisheries (including federal vessels) that satisfies ASMFC/ACCSP guidelines as well as MAFMC, NEFMC and NMFS sampling needs to help inform stock assessments.
- Expanded electronic self-reporting programs for seafood dealers and fishermen.

New York fisheries data collected through the proposed activities will contribute to and improve stock assessments, fishery management plans, and the development of quotas for quota managed species. Fisheries data collected and processed ensures adherence to ACCSP reporting standards and ASMFC compliance and will improve the overall quality of fisheries data. Since all priority species are managed on a regional basis, all data collected on these species will have broad reaching regional benefits. Collecting high quality, comprehensive fisheries data is essential to successful fisheries assessment and management. The state relies on comprehensive reporting by dealers, harvesters and for-hire captains and electronic reporting facilitates this. These reports provide data for fisheries management programs including quota monitoring, resource assessment, license tracking, and resource allocation. This comprehensive and timely data allows DEC to establish responsive management programs which is encouraged by the fishing industry. Additionally, once in the ACCSP data warehouse, the catch and effort and biological sampling data provided by NY can be utilized by other partners and stock assessment scientists for regional scientific assessment of important fish populations. Although the work outlined in this proposal is specific to NY, it can also provide many benefits to regional partners. These benefits include increased coordination between state and federal program partners, increased technical assistance, as well as the sharing of data collection methodology and troubleshooting techniques.

Data Delivery Plan: Currently, in New York approximately 34% of the commercial fishers submit fishing data directly into SAFIS eTRIPS. About 48% of the for-hire fleet submit fishing data directly into SAFIS eTRIPS. Electronically reported data are being uploaded instantaneously into the ACCSP databases. **The training made available through this program will hasten the availability of fishery dependent data to ACCSP and its state partners.**

At this time, vessel trip report data submitted to DEC on paper are entered into a DEC proprietary database by data entry clerks. Twice a year the stored and processed data are uploaded into the ACCSP database. Any reduction in the amount of paper handling and data transcription from paper reports will minimize errors and reduce delays in the deliverance of data to ACCSP.

Length frequency data for federal vessels will be uploaded directly by CCE to the NEFSC. During biological sampling we will be using the same electronic measuring boards and software (Biological Information Systems) as NEFSC sampling, which will facilitate direct upload to NEFSC. We have already had discussions with NEFSC to verify direct upload. Length frequency data from state vessels will be incorporated into the DEC state sampling database and then uploaded to ACCSP. We are coordinating with the NEFSC Age and Growth Program to age the otolith samples collected in this project. That age data will be directly incorporated by NEFSC with the length frequency data. Any age samples worked up locally by CCE and/or DEC will be integrated into ACCSP and NEFSC databases. Both DEC and CCE has abundant experience in data management and quality assurance procedures. CCE and project partners will coordinate with state partners to have this data available upon request. Additionally, all data will be available so that it may be included in individual species stock assessments.

Approach:

Biological Sampling

We propose here to develop and implement a dockside biological sampling program that will supplement and greatly expand the presently reduced (see above) biological sampling program of federal commercial vessels landing food fish and squid in New York. This will help to fill gaps in declining biological sampling over recent years and will provide additional needed data on the length and age structure of landings. This sampling program will also supplement the DEC state vessel sampling program that addresses ASMFC FMP-required biological sampling.

Sampling will be carried out with established sampling protocols set up for port biological sampling within the NMFS Northeast Region and by DEC for state vessels. **We have expressed support from NMFS for this project and their willingness to be a partner in the project (see the attached Letter of Support from NMFS for this project). Their support includes the**

ability to use the NMFS port sampling data collection system to directly upload data to NMFS and will provide for data quality and auditing. NMFS will also be providing some of the needed sampling equipment as well as software to communicate with the NMFS system. Species that will be sampled in New York are shown in Table 1 for Priority Species and in Table 2 for Additional Species (tables are above). We will also be able to accommodate additional special sampling requests by NMFS and DEC as they arise during the project period. **The sampling targets for numbers of samples by species/market category will be established with the NMFS Northeast Fishery Science Center and DEC and will be coordinated with CCE, NMFS and DEC. Based on the results of prior projects, we estimate that this project will generate up to 5,000 individual lengths and 1,200 otolith pairs and a number of scales for aging.** The NMFS sampling standard of 50 lengths and 10 otolith pairs or 30 lengths and 10 otolith pairs, depending on species, will be maintained for this project. We will also maintain the ASMFC-required sampling standards, which vary species by species. NMFS no longer uses scales for aging – only otoliths. **We have a commitment from the NMFS NEFSC Age and Growth Program to age 1,200 otolith pairs at no cost to the project (E. Robillard, pers. comm.).** However, they cannot age all of the species listed in Tables 1 and 2. We will coordinate with DEC about any required scale samples. We will build in the ability for CCE to help age scales for this project by assisting NYSDEC aging capabilities. Note that some species in Tables 1 and 2 are not able to be aged (e.g. squid, lobster) or do not require aging since their assessment is not age-based (e.g. windowpane flounder). **CCE has conducted extensive dockside and market biological sampling programs in the past for NYSDEC and for NMFS. Based on the species to be sampled and the sampling goals mentioned above, our experience allows us to estimate the staff needed to successfully implement this program.**

Biological sampling will be conducted wherever the fish are available. CCE has a long history of working collaboratively with the fishing industry on a large range of issues including sampling programs. We are confident that we can access fish and meet sampling goals. Fish will be sampled at the following locations: aboard vessels dockside; unloading docks; refrigerated storage facilities; dealers and processors; wholesalers; and distribution/holding facilities. Additionally, we will make monthly sampling visits to the New Fulton Fish Market in the Bronx – the largest wholesale fish market in the US. Much of the fish landed in NY is shipped into Fulton and we have sampled there for previous projects. During all sampling events we will link the fish sampled to a vessel trip report (VTR), state or federal, to identify the vessel and fishing location. Sampling will be carried out throughout the year from all ports of landing in NY for the commercial fleet. Samples will be collected in accordance with NMFS/ACCSP standards.

All sampling will be conducted by trained and experienced CCE personnel. Aging of scales, as needed, will also be performed by trained and experienced CCE personnel. **We will use sampling equipment standardized by NMFS as part of the NMFS port sampling data collection system: Big Fin Scientific Data Collection System 5 Fish and Field electronic**

measuring board and Galaxy Tab Active 3 tablet driven by Biological Information System software. This system facilitates sampling by recording lengths and directly linking to hard parts collected via a barcoding system. Collected data will be directly uploaded to NMFS and DEC/ACCSP.

We will also collect some individual fish weights with lengths. This will be done on a subset of samples as time allows. **We will coordinate with NMFS NEFSC and DEC to identify which species have a need for individual fish weights. This information will be used to help inform stock assessment models by providing more accurate length-weight and mean weight-at-age relationships.**

Electronic Reporting

Since 2019, CCE has been funded for three electronic monitoring projects, designed to help fishermen transition from paper to electronic reporting. In all three of these projects CCE has provided workshops and individualized training not only to demonstrate how to report, but also as a means to incentivize training, provide free reporting platforms, in the form of free iPads.

In 2019, Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program (CCE), in coordination with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), implemented an electronic vessel trip report (eVTR) training program that has improved trip reporting for New York's state-licensed commercial fisheries compared to the paper-based reporting system. CCE distributed 30 free iPads to fishermen and conducted personalized training sessions with these fishermen as an incentive to switch from paper to electronic reporting using the eTRIPS/mobile app. CCE also conducted a series of four group outreach and training sessions and distributed training materials to fishermen which allowed CCE to successfully reach 286 NY fishermen and industry members and greatly increase the number of trip reports submitted electronically.

Building on the success of this project, in 2020, CCE, coordinated with prior project partners ACCSP and NYSDEC, as well as NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO), the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and implemented a new electronic vessel trip report (eVTR) training program. This project focused on assisting fisherman with federal permits transitioning from paper-based reporting to mandatory electronic reporting (November 10, 2021), as well as incentivize the switch to electronic reporting for NY state fishermen for which electronic reporting is not mandatory, but preferred. CCE distributed 60 free iPads and conducted one-on-one training sessions for fishermen as they successfully transitioned from paper to electronic reporting using both the NOAA Fish Online and eTRIPS/mobile apps. CCE also conducted a series of 8 group training sessions and distributed training materials to fishermen, which allowed CCE to successfully reach 244 NY fishermen and significantly increase the

number of vessel trip reports submitted electronically. This project has taken significant steps toward expanding and modernizing New York's fishery-dependent data collection process, leading to improved timeliness and data quality needed for informed fisheries management decisions.

Currently, CCE, with continued coordination with NYSDEC, ACCSP, and inclusion of the NY Marine Resources Advisory Council (MRAC), and Electronic Technology (ET) specialists, was awarded a project to prepare the NY state for-hire fishing fleet for anticipated mandatory electronic VTR reporting that went into effect in January of 2025. This project will also improve voluntary electronic VTR adoption rates for the NY state commercial fleet with a goal of achieving 50% electronic reporting rates. CCE will provide support, training, education and outreach for a total of 340 for-hire and commercial fishermen at 15 group training workshops across Long Island as well as at one-on-one training sessions and during weekly "office hours". CCE will outfit the fleet with the technology needed to adopt and support electronic reporting of fisheries-dependent data using ACCSP's eTRIPS/mobile application. This is in the form of 188 iPads to be distributed to NY's for-hire and commercial fleet to incentivize and ensure successful adoption of electronic vessel trip reporting. This technology transfer and extensive training program will result in more timely, accurate and inclusive data collection and overall improved fishery management and conservation for New York State.

Over the course of the three projects, CCE will have distributed 278 iPads to industry members to help modernize fishery-dependent data. Providing an iPad to fishermen provides an incentive to report electronically but also helps CCE facilitate training. By providing the iPad, staff only need to be familiar with one platform when conducting training for multiple fishermen. Training and guides that cover step-by-step instructions on how to report electronically can be more easily communicated and shared when it is done on one type of device. The requirements of eTRIPS/Mobile - version 2 require specific versions of their respective operating systems. It may be that personal devices may not be able to meet these requirements, and by giving out free iPads, CCE can be sure that a fisherman has access to a platform that can be used to report electronically. CCE certainly helps those industry members who feel more comfortable using their own phones/tablets/computers, provided they meet the requirements for the eTrips application.

The inclusion of funds to purchase iPads for this proposal will continue CCE's ability to provide these incentives to switch to electronic reporting, while we continue to hold workshops and trainings for eVTR.

There are several components to the electronic reporting portion of this proposal:

Training Sessions (group and one-on-one)

To facilitate the shift from a paper-based system to an electronic-based data collection system on a large scale, CCE will coordinate with NY fishermen and dealers, DEC, and

ACCSP for a series of extensive training workshops at various ports to engage and educate dealers and fishermen about the use and benefits of the user-friendly programs. Training for the for-hire and commercial fleets, as well as food fish dealers, will be conducted in both group settings and in one-on-one trainings to demonstrate the use and handling of the provided equipment and web application. CCE will provide initial and on-going training and support in the use of eTRIPS to advance the initiatives of the ET Implementation Plan. To incentivize the use of electronic reporting, CCE will provide 50 iPads to fishermen who voluntarily switch from paper to electronic reporting.

CCE will arrange for monthly group outreach and education training sessions to be conducted at various locations across Long Island. Training presentations will be held at libraries and public facilities that are in coastal communities and are close to fishing ports from New York City to Montauk. This will include ports with high party/charter fishing activity including Captree, Montauk, Port Jefferson, Freeport, Orient, Brooklyn, and commercial ports in Montauk and Shinnecock. Trainings will also be held at the CCE facility in Riverhead, NY and DEC Division of Marine Resources Headquarters in King's Park, NY. Training can also be held during scheduled captain's meetings for local fishing associations. Training presentations will include background, DEC reporting requirements, App installation, logging in, setting up "favorites", starting trip, entering trip details (including gear, effort, catch, offloading catch), sign and submit, gear field definitions, special reporting requirement (striped bass, blackfish), did not fish reports, installing updates, help desk info, CCE staff contact info, and office hours info. DEC has special reporting requirements for striped bass and tautog (blackfish). Fishermen are allocated a certain number of tags for these species based on their fishing history. All striped bass and tautog are required to be tagged prior to sale and commercial fishermen must individually report each fish with the tag number and weight of each fish into the eVTR system. CCE will coordinate and publicize group training sessions with DEC, ACCSP, ASMFC, the New York State Marine Resources Advisory Council (MRAC) and project partners. CCE has created and conducted these presentations for previous NFWF-funded projects which provides efficiency and cost savings to the proposed project.

As stated above, CCE will coordinate with ACCSP in conducting this project. We will work with fishermen/dealers to establish SAFIS accounts, if needed. We will also promote the use of the SAFIS Helpdesk to all individuals that are trained in this program as an additional means of support.

On an as-needed basis, CCE staff will be available to conduct more personalized, one-on-one training sessions to address the unique needs of each fisherman to ensure full competency with use of eTRIPS. CCE staff will conduct these meetings either in-person, by phone or by Zoom. Following all trainings, CCE aims to have all participants be fully competent in entering and exporting VTR data. A follow-up survey will be developed to gauge the success of the training sessions as well as identify any further needs.

Technical Support

CCE will continue to provide technical support to the fishing industry as any electronic reporting changes and updates are implemented. CCE will coordinate with harvesters, for-hire businesses, and seafood dealers to ensure data quality and educate on proper procedures to correct submission errors. CCE will communicate with ACCSP for the latest updates to software and identify any issues that occur. CCE will provide continued technical support to all fishermen and dealers on an as needed basis for the project duration. CCE will offer personal support over the phone or by conducting Zoom video meetings to fully educate new users.

“Office Hours”

CCE will schedule “office hours” once per week for 2 hours per session. **This is a scheduled time for fishermen to ask any relevant questions regarding electronic reporting procedures to ensure confidence and accuracy in their reports.** Office hours will be held in person as well as by phone and Zoom online conferencing. This will allow CCE staff to see the reporting screen for more accurate suggestions. It is expected that “office hours” will be held once per week but if increased need arises, CCE staff will accommodate the need. Office hours also help support those fishermen unable to attend in-person meetings.

Education and Outreach

Education and outreach are an essential component of this program. CCE will educate the NY stakeholders on the importance of accurate fishery-dependent data for the sustainable management of marine resources. Much of the information needed for successful resource management is self-reported by fishermen. The industry will be educated on the issues of why data needs to accurately reflect the fisheries, the importance of accurate and timely scientific data, and how to accurately supply the needed information. This project will be actively marketed to food fish dealers and the entire NY for-hire and commercial fishing communities. Information detailing the project will be posted on the CCE website, social media outlets and published in local NY papers. Project info and advertisements promoting the training sessions will be supplied to The Fisherman, On The Water, The National Fisherman, and Commercial Fisheries News magazines as well as local publications including the Montauk Sun and East Hampton Star. Informational flyers will be distributed at bait and tackle shops, docks and gear suppliers. The CCE website and Facebook pages will be used to communicate project activities to the general public and the fishing industry. The series of outreach and education training workshops will be vigorously promoted using the named outlets as well as a group mailing to all NY state party/charter and food fish permit holders. Through the outreach component, CCE will address the need for increased awareness of improving the best available data to maintain sustainable fish stocks. We will also work with DEC, MRAC and ACCSP staff on a coordinated outreach strategy. **At the conclusion of the project, an informational Fact Sheet will be produced and targeted to the fishing industry and fisheries managers in other**

states. This Fact Sheet will contain details and results of the current project, lessons learned, and suggested practices that can facilitate industry wide electronic transmission of VTRs with the goal of enhancing transferability of our results and encouraging other states to adopt successful electronic reporting programs in their area.

Geographic Location:

Fishery dependent data will be collected at commercial fishing ports within the State of New York. Monthly visits to the Fulton Fish Market Cooperative in the Bronx will supplement the samples collected at commercial fishing docks. Electronic reporting trainings and outreach will take place not only in fishing ports but at a variety of locations throughout Long Island, NY that will be easily accessible to fishermen and dealers.

Milestone Schedule:

Activity	Month											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Establish biological sampling priorities	X											
Collect biological samples	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Electronic reporting initiatives	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Analyze data										X	X	X
Report writing										X	X	X

Project Accomplishments Measurement:

Goal	Metric
Establish biological sampling priorities	Meaningful targets for each species.
Biological sample collection	Number of individual fish measured, and age samples collected and processed, by species
Data entry/analysis	Percentage of biological sampling targets met, data meets ACCSP and NMFS standards

Report writing	Report submitted to ACCSP
Electronic reporting initiatives	Increase in the number of harvesters, dealers and for-hire captains reporting electronically

Cost Summary (Budget):

Personnel: \$185,451.36

Fringe Benefits: PROVIDED AS **IN-KIND** NOT CHARGED TO THIS PROJECT
(\$114,762.73)

Travel: \$7,350.00

Equipment: \$10,720.00

Supplies: \$27,495.00

Contractual:

Other: \$8,200

Total Direct Charges: \$239,216.36

Indirect Charges: \$35,882.45 (CCE)

CCE Charges: \$275,098.82

ACCSP 10% Administrative: \$27,509.88

Total Project Cost: \$302,608.70

**Requested Budget FY 2025
(January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026)**

PERSONNEL COSTS:

Item	ACCSP Share	In-Kind (CCE Covered Fringe Benefits)	Total
Co-Principal Investigator (14.18% of annual salary)	\$15,009.60	\$9,520.59	\$24,530.19
Co-Principal Investigator (14.18% of annual salary)	\$15,009.60	\$9,520.59	\$24,530.19

Fisheries Manager (37% of annual salary)	\$29,820.74	\$18,915.30	\$48,736.04
Fisheries Specialist 1 (46% of annual salary)	\$26,487.02	\$16,800.72	\$43,287.74
Fisheries Specialist 2 (32% of annual salary)	\$22,956.53	\$14,561.33	\$37,517.86
Fisheries Specialist 3 (32% of annual salary)	\$22,956.53	\$14,561.33	\$37,517.86
Fisheries Coordinator (44% of annual salary)	\$28,669.14	\$18,184.84	\$46,853.98
Fisheries Technician (44% of annual salary)	\$18,819	\$11,936.89	\$30,755.89
Administrative Assistant (2% of annual salary)	\$1,200	\$761.16	\$1,961.16
Worker's Compensation/Unemployment Insurance	\$4,523.20		
Total Personnel	\$185,451.36	\$114,762.73	\$300,214.10

TRAVEL:

Item	ACCSP Share	In-Kind	Total
Travel Mileage	\$3,150		\$3,150
Lodging	\$4,200		\$4,200
Total Supply	\$7,350		\$7,350.00

EQUIPMENT & SUPPLY:

Item	ACCSP Share	In-Kind	Total
Bluetooth Scale	\$5,000		\$5,000
Big Fin Electronic Board	\$5,000		\$5,000
Big Fin Data Subscription	\$720		\$720
Outreach printing	\$1,000		\$1,000
Office Supplies	\$500		\$500
Portable Label Printer	\$120		\$120
Sampling gear	\$1,000		\$1,000
Computer (laptop)	\$2,000		\$2,000
iPads w/covers	\$22,875		\$22,875

Total Equipment & Supply	\$38,215.00		\$38,215.00

OTHER:

Item	ACCSP Share	In-Kind	Total
Vehicle Lease	\$7,200		\$7,200
Communications	\$1,000		\$1,000
Total Other	\$8,200.00		\$8,200.00

INDIRECT

Item	ACCSP Share	In-Kind	Total
Total Direct Charges: \$239,216.36			
Indirect Charge (15% de minimis)	\$35,882.45		\$35,882.45
Project Total: \$271,813.12			
ASMFC ACCSP Indirect (10%)	\$27,509.88		\$27,509.88
Total Indirect	\$63,392.34		\$63,392.34

TOTAL:

Item	ACCSP Share	In-Kind	Project Total
Total Charges	\$302,608.70	\$114,762.73	\$417,371.43
Percentage	72%	28%	

COST DETAILS:

Description of Budget categories and expenses for this project.

a. Salary

Each person spends a fraction of their time working on this grant in a team effort. The annual salaries for personnel and the percentage of their time spent on this project are as follows:

From ACCSP:

- a. **Co-Principal Investigators:** 14.18% each, of salary for one year (\$105,830) = \$15,009.60 x 2=\$30,019.20. Will be responsible for overall program development, management, and execution, report submission, staff supervision, publication of results, and fiscal oversight.

- b. **Fisheries Manager:** Approximately 37% of annual salary (\$79,726) equals \$29,820.74. Port sampling: Arrange for the collection of fishery-dependent information (dockside, Fulton Fish Market Cooperative, and other locations). Oversee collections of lengths, weights, and age samples for species sampled. QA/QC of data entry.
eVTR program: fleet recruitment; distributing and tracking iPads; preparing and conducting eVTR outreach and training workshops; coordinating activities with fishing associations, NYSDEC, ACCSP, and MRAC; conducting “office hours”, continued technical support for fishermen; website communication; outreach; agreement processing; advertising and promotion in press and social media; mailings; and report writing.
- c. **Fisheries Specialist I:** Approximately 46% of annual salary (\$57,548) equals \$26,487.02. Port sampling: Arrange for the collection of fishery-dependent information (dockside, Fulton Fish Market Cooperative, and other locations). Oversee collections of lengths, weights, age samples for species sampled. QA/QC of data entry.
eVTR program: fleet recruitment; distributing and tracking iPads; preparing and conducting outreach and training workshops; coordinating activities with fishing associations, NYSDEC, ACCSP, and MRAC; installment of application; conducting “office hours”, continued technical support for fishermen; website communication; outreach; agreement processing; advertising and promotion in press and social media; mailings; and report writing.
- d. **Fisheries Specialist II:** Approximately 32% of annual salary (\$72,238) equals \$22,956.53. Port side sampling: Field visits for fishery-dependent information (dockside, Fulton Fish Market Cooperative, and other locations). Collections of lengths and weights. Collection and processing of age samples for species sampled. Data Entry.
eVTR program: will be responsible for assisting in trainings and “office hours”; tabulation of results; promotion and advertising; assistance with report writing.
- e. **Fisheries Specialist III:** Approximately 32% of annual salary (\$72,238) equals \$22,956.53. Port side sampling: Field visits for fishery-dependent information (dockside, Fulton Fish Market Cooperative, and other locations). Collections of lengths and weights. Collection and processing of age samples for species sampled. Data Entry.
eVTR program: will be responsible for assisting in trainings and “office hours”; tabulation of results; promotion and advertising; assistance with report writing.
- f. **Fisheries Coordinator:** Approximately 44% of annual salary (\$64,958) equals \$28,669.14. Port side sampling: Field visits for fishery-dependent information (dockside, Fulton Fish Market Cooperative, and other locations). Collections of

lengths and weights. Collection and processing of age samples for species sampled. Data Entry.

eVTR program: will be responsible for assisting in trainings and “office hours”; tabulation of results; promotion and advertising; assistance with report writing.

- g. **Fisheries Technician:** Approximately 44% of annual salary (\$42,640) equals \$18,819. Port side sampling: Field visits for fishery-dependent information (dockside, Fulton Fish Market Cooperative, and other locations). Collections of lengths and weights. Collection and processing of age samples for species sampled. Data Entry.

eVTR program: will be responsible for assisting in trainings and “office hours”; tabulation of results; promotion and advertising; assistance with report writing.

- h. **Administrative Assistant:** Approximately 2% of annual salary (\$52,000) equals \$1,200. Will be responsible for general project support and administrative duties including ordering supplies, proofreading, mailing, printing, copying, assistance with report preparation, accounts payable, website updates, travel requests and newsletter dissemination

- i. **Workers Compensation and Unemployment Insurance:** \$4,523.20

From CCE as **in-kind:**

- i. **Fringe benefits paid for by Cornell and provided as in-kind (63.43 % of employee salaries)= \$114,762.73**

Annual fringe benefits rates for all employees include the following:

	FY 2025
July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025	Federal Funds
Health Insurance	40.30%
Retirement	11.01%
Social Security	5.43%
Worker's Compensation	5.47%
Employee Benefit Funds	0.82%
Dental Insurance	0.21%
Unemployment Benefits	0.08%
Vision Benefits	0.04%
Survivor's Benefits	0.07%
Total Rate	63.43%

b. Travel

\$3,150 used for mileage at 70 cents per mile. Mileage will include trips to commercial docks and dealers, as well as monthly travel to the Fulton Fish Market Cooperative.

\$4,200 will be used for 2 hotel rooms, @\$175/per night,
each month when staff visit the Fulton Fish Market
Cooperative

c. Equipment

- a. A Bluetooth scale will be used to integrate with the electronic measuring board (\$5,000).

b. Big Fin Electronic DCS5 Measuring Board Set Up (\$5,000): Micro control box (\$650), 100cm Measurement Deck (\$916), Micro Battery Kit (\$270.50), 100cm Linear Sensor Kit (\$1,113.50), Micro Nose Stop (\$120), Measurement Stylus Pen (\$75), Rail Mount Kit (\$735), Carry Handle (\$55), Samsung Galaxy Tab (\$675), Extended Warranty (\$750)

- c. License Subscription for Measuring Board (\$720)

d. Supplies

- a. **Office Supplies** for printer ink, pens, pencils, paper. (\$500)
- b. **Sampling Gear** for boots, bibs, traditional measuring boards, clip boards (\$1,000)
- c. **Printing** for flyers and handouts electronic reporting (\$1,000)
- d. **Computer laptop** for use with electronic measuring boards and electronic reporting meetings (\$2,000)
- e. **iPads with covers** for electronic reporting as incentives (50 units @ \$457.50 each=\$22,875)

e. Contractual

No contractual

f. Construction

No construction

g. Other

- a. Vehicle Lease- A truck will be leased for this project at \$600 per month=\$7,200
- b. Communications- cost of monthly cellphone service plan (\$1,000)

h. Total Direct Charges

\$239,216.36

i. Indirect charges.

Indirect charges are only calculated using the federal de minimis rate of 15% on direct charges= \$35,882.45

Also, there is an ASMFC/ACCSP indirect of 10%. The intention is that funds will go to CCE from ASMFC rather than through NY. This indirect rate was provided by Geoff White. \$27,509.88.

Funding Transition Plan:

New York continues to work towards expanding its Fishery Dependent Sampling program. The Program recently gained an additional staff member which will improve sampling of species required by ASMFC management plans. As more staff are hired, our goal is to increase port sampling efforts. We anticipate that the program will continue to grow and, in the future, will be big enough to handle robust port and market sampling components.

While additional staff for the Program is dependent on state funding, it is the goal of NEFSC to support state port sampling efforts as outlined in the attached letter of support. Furthermore, the state and federal meeting in September, will improve coordination with other state and federal sampling programs which will create efficiencies for the New York Program. Improved coordination and support will require fewer resources for New York to take on additional sampling responsibilities in the future.

In the meantime, funding provided through ACCSP will support both state and federal biological sampling programs. Additionally, while New York continues to build on electronic reporting initiatives, the support provided through ACCSP will help us transition a greater number of permit holders to electronic reporting than we could without the support.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL FOR RANKING

Proposal Type: New

Primary Program Priority: Biological Sampling (65%) and Catch and Effort (35%)

- **Collect fishery dependent information dockside and other locations to fill gaps in declining biological sample collections.**
- **Collect lengths, weights, and age samples for various species including high priority species in the top 25% of the ACCSP biological sampling matrix such as black sea bass, blueline and golden tilefish, American lobster, Spanish mackerel, Atlantic halibut, ocean pout, grey triggerfish, cobia, American eel, winter flounder, shortfin squid, scup, and bluefish.**
- **Establish biological sampling priorities and targets with ACCSP, NMFS, and DEC to ensure sampling goals meet necessary thresholds to fill critical data gaps and improve assessment outputs.**
- **Expand electronic reporting goals for New York State, by providing training and support for electronic reporting requirements and compliance for dealers, the for-hire, and commercial fishing industries. Support and training will also be provided for any food fish licensees voluntarily adopting electronic reporting.**

Data Delivery Plan:

Currently, in New York approximately 34% of the commercial fishers submit fishing data directly into SAFIS eTRIPS. About 48% of the for-hire fleet submit fishing data directly into SAFIS eTRIPS. Electronically reported data are being uploaded instantaneously into the ACCSP databases. The training made available through this program will hasten the availability of fishery dependent data to ACCSP and its state partners.

At this time, vessel trip report data submitted to DEC on paper are entered into a DEC proprietary database by data entry clerks. Twice a year the stored and processed data are uploaded into the ACCSP database. Any reduction in the amount of paper handling and data transcription from paper reports will minimize errors and reduce delays in the deliverance of data to ACCSP.

Length frequency data for federal vessels will be uploaded directly by CCE to the NEFSC. During biological sampling we will be using the same electronic measuring boards and software (Biological Information Systems) as NEFSC sampling, which will facilitate direct upload to NEFSC. We have already had discussions with NEFSC to verify direct upload. Length frequency data from state vessels will be incorporated into the DEC state sampling database and then uploaded to ACCSP. We are coordinating with the NEFSC Age and Growth Program to age the otolith samples collected in this project. That age data will be directly incorporated by NEFSC with the length frequency data. Any age samples worked up locally by CCE and/or DEC will be integrated into ACCSP and NEFSC databases. Both

DEC and CCE has abundant experience in data management and quality assurance procedures. CCE and project partners will coordinate with state partners to have this data available upon request. Additionally, all data will be available so that it may be included in individual species stock assessments.

Multi-Partner/Regional Impact:

Data collected through the proposed activities will fill data gaps in fishery dependent sampling programs which will improve stock assessments and management of these fisheries. This will have broad reaching regional benefits for all users and managers of these resources. Other benefits include increased coordination between state and federal program partners, increased technical assistance, as well as the sharing of data collection methodology and troubleshooting techniques. This project will be a partnership with ACCSP, ASMFC, DEC, NMFS and CCE. Since all priority species are managed on a regional basis, all data collected on these species will have broad reaching regional benefits.

Funding Transition Plan:

New York continues to work towards expanding its Fishery Dependent Sampling program. The Program recently gained an additional staff member which will improve sampling of species required by ASMFC management plans. As more staff are hired, our goal is to increase port sampling efforts. We anticipate that the program will continue to grow and, in the future, will be big enough to handle robust port and market sampling components. While additional staff for the Program is dependent on state funding, it is the goal of NEFSC to support state port sampling efforts as outlined in the attached letter of support. Furthermore, the state and federal meeting in September, will improve coordination with other state and federal sampling programs which will create efficiencies for the New York Program. Improved coordination and support will require fewer resources for New York to take on additional sampling responsibilities in the future. In the meantime, funding provided through ACCSP will support both state and federal biological sampling programs. Additionally, while New York continues to build on electronic reporting initiatives, the support provided through ACCSP will help us transition a greater number of permit holders to electronic reporting than we could without the support.

In-Kind Contribution: The in-kind contribution for this project is (27%). This is generated from:

- Fringe benefits paid for by Cornell (65.81% of employee salaries) = \$80,975.87
- New York staff will support this study through project supervision, staff time to participate in data collection and entry, and compliance monitoring.
- NMFS will provide tablet computers, BLISS software (and training), bar coded coin envelopes for hard parts and possibly Big Fin electronic measuring boards (subject to available funding).
- NMFS NEFSC Age and Growth Program will age 1,200 pairs of otoliths at no cost to this project.

Improvement in Data Quality/Quantity/Timeliness

Biological data will be made available in a timely manner through direct upload of federal samples to NEFSC using Biological Information System software, and state samples from New York to ACCSP. Based on previous sampling programs, it is anticipated that this project will generate up to 5,000 additional measurements and 1,200 hard parts for aging. Aging will be accomplished by the NMFS NEFSC Age and Growth Program.

The value of electronic logbook data is the improvement in accuracy and timeliness of data. Moving away from paper-based logbook systems will significantly reduce data entry and transcription errors. This reduces time spent on contacting fishermen to correct errors. The established electronic reporting programs include a number of automated data audits designed to restrict the entry of erroneous or incomplete data, which greatly improves overall data quality compared to paper reports. The NY data to be collected electronically though this project can be uploaded and made directly available to ACCSP's database as a complete dataset. The adoption of electronic logbooks makes it practical to collect and record more detailed catch by area and can improve the quality of stock assessments and the outcomes of management for managed species.

Potential Secondary Module:

Additional modules supported by this project include species interactions and social and economic data. It is anticipated that discard data collection will be improved through outreach on electronic reporting, and improved reporting from the fishing industry. Additionally, economic data will be generated from dealer reports.

Impact on Stock Assessment and Management:

This project will provide high quality, comprehensive fisheries biological data which is essential to successful fisheries assessment and management. Biological samples will be representative of state and federal fisheries and will provide catch at age data for species managed by ASMFC, MAFMC and NEFMC. By filling critical data gaps in biological sampling, it will improve future assessments for various species.

LITERATURE CITED:

Kilduff, P., J. Carmichael, R. Latour. 2009. Guide to Fisheries Science and Stock Assessments. T. Berger, Ed. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. 66 pp.

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) - Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). 2023. Report of the September 2023 SSC Meeting. 22 pp.

National Marine Fisheries Service Policy on Electronic Technologies and Fishery-Dependent Data Collection (04-115). 2019.

National Marine Fisheries Service Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office and Northeast Fishery Science Center Electronic Technologies Implementation Plan. 2021. 43pp.

Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC). 2024. Meeting Briefing Book. Spring 2024 Meeting and Fall 2024 Meeting.

Northeast Region Coordinating Council (NRCC). 2025. Meeting Briefing Book. Spring 2025 Meeting.

Robillard, E. Personal Communication. June 11, 2025

Wallace, R., W. Hosking, S. Szedlmayer. 1997. Fisheries Management for Fishermen. Second Edition. Auburn Univ. Marine Extension. 56 pp.

Appendix A: Curriculum Vitae for Principal Investigators

Jesse Hornstein, NYSDEC, 123 Kings Park Blvd, Kings Park, NY 11754
jesse.hornstein@dec.ny.gov , (631)-444-0714

Education

M.S. Marine Science, 2010
Stony Brook University (Stony Brook, NY)

B.A. Environmental Studies, 2006
Stony Brook University (Stony Brook, NY)

Experience

Marine Biologist 2, April 2018-Present
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Kings Park, NY)

- Manage New York's commercial fishing quotas.
- Serve on various ASMFC Management Boards as a proxy to New York's Administrative Commissioner.
- Oversee the NYS DEC marine fishery dependent sampling programs.
- Administer the NYS DEC Division of Marine Resources response to fish kills including coordinating with partners, and collecting/synthesizing information on reported fish kills.
- Serve on the ASMFC Striped Bass Plan Review Team.
- Serve as an alternate member of the Atlantic Large Whale and Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction teams for New York.
- Oversee New York's Artificial Reefs and Marine Waterway Access programs.

Marine Biologist 1, February 2014-April 2018
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (East Setauket, NY)

- Managed New York's Western Long Island juvenile striped bass seine survey, striped bass trawl survey, striped bass fish market sampling, striped bass cooperative angler program, and a juvenile American eel fyke net survey.
- Served as New York's representative on the ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee and the Atlantic Menhaden Plan Development Team.
- Served as the Fish Kill Coordinator for the NYS DEC Division of Marine Resources, which included responding to and collecting/synthesizing information on reported fish kills.
- Operated and maintained a 21' vessel and associated sampling gears/equipment.
- Collected fishery dependent (fish market sampling) and fishery independent data, which included collecting striped bass/Atlantic menhaden scales for aging, tagging striped bass, recording environmental conditions, identifying marine/estuarine species and taking biological measurements of various species.
- Entered, analyzed/synthesized data, and wrote reports for ASMFC and grant reporting requirements.

Fish and Wildlife Technician 1, May 2010-February 2014, February 2007-August 2007
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (East Setauket, NY)

- Collected biological and environmental data from the field.
- Entered and analyzed fishery and environmental data.
- Created biological/environmental assessment maps with ArcGIS.
- Assisted with Atlantic surfclam population assessments and aging of surfclam shells.
- Co-authored technical reports.

Graduate Assistant, August 2007-August 2010

School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (Stony Brook, NY)

- Designed and conducted studies (energy balance, growth, immune function) to understand how temperature stress impacts the physiology of the Atlantic surfclam, *Spisula solidissima*.
- Utilized biochemical, immunological, and histological laboratory techniques to monitor the health of the surfclam population.
- Statistically analyzed experimental and environmental data.

Research Assistant, May 2009-January 2010; Research Aide, September 2005-December 2006;

Internship, June 2005-August 2005

Functional Ecology Research and Training Laboratory (Stony Brook, NY)

- Processed hard clams in the laboratory to monitor their spawning condition.
- Assisted with field sample collections and preparation of water samples for chlorophyll analysis.
- Processed benthic core samples for enumeration and taxonomic classification of benthic infauna.
- Entered/organized data and maintained laboratory equipment.

Teaching Assistant, August 2009-May 2010, August 2007-May 2008

School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (Stony Brook, NY)

- Led two undergraduate biology laboratory classes.
- Prepared quizzes, graded reports/quizzes, and held office hours for several courses: Environmental Problem Solving, Long Island Sound: Science and Use, and Diseases of Aquatic Organisms

Publications

- Anadón, J.D., Piñero, O., Ruhi, A., **Hornstein, J.**, Waldman, J. (2024) Decoupled shifts of dominant and rarer fish species as a response to warming and extreme events in a large estuary. Ecosphere 15(7).
- **Hornstein, J.**, Pales Espinosa, E., Cerrato, R.M., Lwiza, K., Allam, B. (2018). The influence of temperature stress on the physiology of the Atlantic surfclam, *Spisula solidissima*. Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology, Part A 222: 66-73.
- Doall, M.H., Padilla, D.K., Lobue, C.P., Clapp, C., Webb, A.R., **Hornstein, J.** (2008). Evaluating Northern Quahog (=hard clam, *Mercenaria mercenaria* L.) restoration: Are transplanted clams spawning and reconditioning? Journal of Shellfish Research 27(5): 1069-1080.

Technical Reports

- **Hornstein, J.** (2019). Artificial reef usage in New York: An analysis of aerial survey data from 1995-2016. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. 17 pp.
- O'Dwyer, J.L., **Hornstein, J.** (2013). 2012 Atlantic Ocean surfclam population assessment survey. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. 68 pp.
- Dahl, S.F., **Hornstein, J.** (2010). 2008 Atlantic Ocean surfclam population assessment survey. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. 69 pp.
- Davidson, M., Pales Espinosa, E., Monsen, P., Perretti, C., **Hornstein, J.** (2007). 2006 Atlantic Ocean surfclam population assessment survey. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. 75 pp.

Computer Skills

- MS Access, Excel, PowerPoint, and Word, SigmaStat, ArcGIS, Survey 123, and R.

Certifications

- PADI Open Water Scuba Certification; CPR/First Aid/AED Certified; New York State Safe Boater Certification

MAUREEN C. DAVIDSON

Division of Marine Resources, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

123 Kings Park Blvd, Kings Park, New York | 631-444-0483 | maureen.davidson@dec.ny.gov

EMPLOYMENT

BIOLOGIST 3 MARINE

2018 - PRESENT

Division of Marine Resources

Kings Park, New York

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

- Participate as a state administrative representative on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Seek equitable allocations of important marine species from NOAA Fisheries and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; and advocate for NYS commercial fishermen and recreational anglers; and represent the best interests of New York State.
- Oversee the activities and functions in the DEC Marine Permit Office, a license issuing office that issues fishing licenses to commercial fishermen, party and charter boat operators, recreational lobster harvesters and other harvesters of marine animals
- Oversee the activities and functions in the DEC Fishery Data Management Unit, an office that collects, processes, and manages fishery data collected from state fishermen.
- Maintain support for staff providing GIS and data management assistance to the Division of Marine Resources.
- Collaborate with DEC and NY Office of Information Technology Services staff on the development of a new database system that will integrate the data needs and functions of the Marine Permit Office, the Fisheries Data Management Unit and the Commercial Fisheries Management Unit.

BIOLOGIST 2 MARINE

2014 - 2018

Division of Marine Resources

East Setauket, New York

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

- Provided oversight of all activities and operations in the DEC Marine Permit Office, a license issuing office that issues fishing licenses to commercial fishermen, party and charter boat operators, and recreational lobster harvesters.
- Supervised office staff members, including a biologist, an environmental program specialist, and two clerks.
- Developed guidelines and procedures to ensure that licenses and permits are issued properly and fairly and in accordance with the Environmental Conservation Law and New York State regulations.
- Provided review and approval of DEC Licenses to Collect and Possess that allow scientists, researchers, and teachers to collect marine organisms for scientific or educational purposes.
- Served as the Division regulatory coordinator, managing the rule making process for the Division of Marine Resources and working cooperatively with DEC staff to draft rule makings and properly proceed through the rule making process.

BIOLOGIST 2 MARINE

2008 - 2014

Bureau of Marine Resources

East Setauket, New York

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

- Administered New York State commercial fishery quota management programs for summer flounder, bluefish, black sea bass and scup.
- Developed annual quota management strategies in consultation with the New York State fishing industry.
- Served as the Bureau regulatory coordinator, managing the rule making process for the Bureau of Marine Resources and working cooperatively with DEC staff to draft rule makings and properly proceed through the rule making process.

BIOLOGIST 1 MARINE

1987 - 2008

Bureau of Marine Resources

East Setauket, New York

Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

- Conducted population surveys of the Atlantic surfclam in New York State marine waters. Prepared reports evaluating population data, age structure, and size distribution of the surfclam population. Presented survey results to surfclam fishery participants and the public.
- Represented DEC at Surfclam/Ocean Quahog Management Advisory Board meetings and worked cooperatively with surfclam harvesters and processors in the drafting of surfclam management measures.
- Drafted fishery management plans for the mechanical harvest of the Atlantic surfclam in New York State waters of the Atlantic Ocean and Long Island Sound.

EDUCATION

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Marine Environmental Sciences

School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (SOMAS)

Stony Brook, New York

Stony Brook University

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Biology

Southampton College, Long Island University Southampton, New York

John Maniscalco

123 Kings Park Blvd. Nissequogue River Park, Kings Park, NY 11754

john.maniscalco@dec.ny.gov

(631) 444-0437

Professional History

2017 – present	Bureau Chief, Marine Fisheries	NYS DEC
2010 – 2017	Unit Leader, Marine Finfish	NYS DEC
2006 - 2010	Biologist, Crustaceans	NYS DEC
2001 - 2003	Aquarist	WCS NYA

NYS DEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

WCS NYA – Wildlife Conservation Society New York Aquarium

Educational History

2006	Master of Science	Marine Environmental Science	Stony Brook University
	<i>MS Advisor: Dr. David O. Conover</i>		
1999	Bachelor of Arts	Env. and Evol. Biology	Dartmouth College

Synergistic Activity

Chair, Delaware River Basin Fish and Wildlife Management Cooperative Policy Committee (2021-2022), Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee (2014-2016), Black Sea Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment Working Group (2016)

Member, ASMFC Commissioner (proxy) for New York (2022-present), Golden Tilefish Research Track Assessment Working Group (2022–2024), Delaware River Basin Fish and Wildlife Management Cooperative Policy Committee (2021-present), MAFMC MC for Blue and Golden Tilefish (2018-present), ASMFC (and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Monitoring Committee MAFMC MC) Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee (2010-2020), ASMFC (and MAFMC MC) Bluefish Technical Committee (2010-2017), Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Recreational Technical Committee (2011-2017), ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee (2006-2010)

Collaborations

2023–2025	M.S. Graduate Committee Member	Cornell University
2024–present	Ph.D. Dissertation Committee Outside Scholar	Stony Brook University

Presentations & Publications

Maniscalco, John (2019). Fish on the move – one manager’s perspective. Presented at NY AFS Plenary Session, Poughkeepsie, NY.

Chang, H.Y., Pendleton, R., Kenney, G., McKown, K., Eakin, W., Maniscalco, J., and Chen, Y. (2024). Spatiotemporal dynamics of spawning habitat distribution of American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*) in the Hudson River Estuary under multi stressors. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. 00:1-14.

EMERSON C. HASBROUCK, JR.

Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County - Marine Program
423 Griffing Avenue, Suite 100 Riverhead, NY 11901
631-965-1422 (cell), ech12@cornell.edu

EDUCATION

Master of Science Degree in Marine Environmental Sciences, State University of NY/Stony Brook, NY
Bachelor of Science Degree in Marine Science, Southampton College, Long Island University

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Governor's Appointee Commissioner for NY 2014 – Present**

Appointed by the Governor to represent the people of New York in the sustainable management of Atlantic coast marine fisheries. Work with all ASMFC Commissioners to develop Fishery Management Plans that: Rebuild, maintain, fairly allocate and promote Atlantic coastal fisheries; Provide effective stewardship of marine resources through strong partnerships; Make decisions based on sound science; Balance resource conservation with the economic successes of coastal communities.

**Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County - Marine Program
Riverhead, NY**

Senior Natural Resources Specialist 1988 – 2008 and 2013- Present

Plan, develop and implement an extension program with the NY and the Mid-Atlantic and Southern New England fishing industries relative to cooperative demonstration fisheries research, fisheries data, fisheries management and fisheries economic development. Plan, develop and implement effective fishery cooperative research, data and biological sampling programs to satisfy regulatory requirements and to quantify New York and regional fisheries and harvested resources. Provide fishermen with information necessary to positively interact with local, state, regional, national and international regulatory regimes. Assist fishermen in organizational development and in understanding fisheries management principles and goals. Plan, develop and implement economic development programs for the fishing industry to improve profitability and competitiveness. Conduct applied cooperative research and implementation programs and demonstration projects with the fishing industry that help address critical fisheries, fisheries management and natural resource issues. Secure funding sources for extension programming activities. Many of these activities are carried out in cooperation with, and aboard, commercial fishing vessels. Develop, oversee and manage budgets.

**Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County - Marine Program
Riverhead, NY**

Marine Program Director 2009 – 2013

Responsible for all administrative, fiscal and program components of the Cornell Marine Program. Supervise over 35 professional and support employees located at five separate facilities. Responsible for providing in-depth program leadership for the planning, coordination, implementation, management and evaluation for the entire CCE Marine Program. Responsible for fiscal management of the Marine Program budgets, totaling over \$2.5 million annually, and provide leadership in obtaining grant funding for the Marine Program. Supervise a large and diverse professional staff that conducts research and provides educational opportunities regarding fisheries resources, habitat restoration, water quality protection, pollution control and environmental preservation in support of the vital marine related industries and natural resources of Long Island.

QUALIFICATIONS

I have been involved in fisheries research and fisheries issues in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions for well over 35 years. I have conducted numerous cooperative fisheries research projects with fishermen from Massachusetts to N. Carolina. I have a thorough working knowledge of fisheries throughout these regions as well as an understanding of the problems, issues, dynamics and politics of the fisheries and their underlying fishery resources. My work has been with commercial and recreational fisheries and I have earned the respect and cooperation of both groups with the goal of sustainable harvest and management of our marine resources. I have developed close relationships with fishermen and fishery managers from North Carolina to Maine and have often assisted these groups to seek common ground and interact with each other. I also have considerable experience working with fisheries agencies such as: the NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation; the Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils; The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Reisman, H.R. and E. Hasbrouck. 2024. The Marine Fishes and Fisheries of New York. 296pp. Cornell Univ. Press.

Curatolo-Wagemann, E. Hasbrouck, K. Gerbino, P. Sullivan, M. Bowen, T. McClintock, A. Mercado, A. Dauman, T. Guteres, I. Rivera. 2024. Quantifying Bycatch Reduction Benefits of an Excluder in the Small Mesh Fisheries of the Northeast With a Focus on Red Hake. NOAA S-K Program. Final Report.

Hasbrouck, E., S. Curatolo-Wagemann, P. Sullivan, T. McClintock, K. Gerbino, A. Mercado, A. Dauman, P. Duckworth. 2022. Increasing Twine Thickness and Mesh Size to Reduce Skate Bycatch in Monkfish Sink Gillnets. NMFS Monkfish RSA Program – Final Report.

Hasbrouck, E., I. Wirgin, S. Curatolo-Wagemann, T. McClintock, K. Gerbino, J. Scotti, D. Kuehn. 2021. Fine Scale Genetic Population Structure of Monkfish. Final Report NOAA Grant NA16NMF4540109, Monkfish RSA Program.

Hasbrouck, E., S. Curatolo-Wagemann, J. Scotti, T. Froehlich, K. Gerbino, D. Kuehn, P. Sullivan. 2019. Evaluation of Conservation Gear Technology to Reduce Black Sea Bass Bycatch in the Small Mesh Longfin Squid Fishery. NOAA S-K Program. Final Report.

Hasbrouck, E., S. Curatolo-Wagemann, T. Froehlich, K. Gerbino, D. Kuehn, P. Sullivan. 2018. Determining Mesh Selectivity and Optimum Mesh Size to Harvest Three Commercially Important Mid- Atlantic Species. MAFMC. Final Report.

Hasbrouck, E., J. Scotti, S. Curatolo-Wagemann, T. Froehlich, K. Gerbino, D. Kuehn. 2016. Small Mesh Fishery Bycatch Reduction in the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Windowpane Stock Area. Final Report. NEFMC Groundfish Research Program Through the Northeast Consortium.

Morson, J.M., E. Bochenek, E. Powell, E. Hasbrouck, J. Gius, C. Cotton, K. Gerbino, T. Froehlich. 2015. Estimating the Sex Composition of the Summer Flounder Catch using Fishery Independent Data. Marine and Coastal Fisheries, 7:1, 393-408.

Hasbrouck, E., J. Scotti, T. Froehlich, K. Gerbino, J. Costanzo, P. Sullivan. 2015. Evaluation of the Large Mesh Belly Panel in Small Mesh Fisheries as a Method to Reduce Yellowtail Flounder Bycatch on Cultivator Shoals. Final report to the Northeast Cooperative Research Program. February 2015

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Hasbrouck, E., J. Scotti, T. Froehlich, K. Gerbino, P. Sullivan. 2013. A Method to Reduce Winter Flounder Retention Through the Use of Avoidance Gear Adaptations in the Small Mesh Trawl Fishery Within the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Winter Flounder Stock Area. Final Report - Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation. NOAA Award NA09NMF4720414

Morson, J., E. Bochenek, E. Powell, E. Robillard, E. Hasbrouck, J. Gius, K. Gerbino, T. Froehlich, E. G. Hasbrouck. 2013. Sex Ratio and Age-at-length of Summer Flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*) from Recreational and Commercial Landings. NMFS- SARC 57 Working Paper.

McHugh, J.L. and E. Hasbrouck, 1990. Fishery Management in New York Bight: Experience Under the Magnuson Act. Fisheries Research, 8:205-221

Scott Curatolo-Wagemann

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423 Griffing Avenue, Suite 100
Riverhead, New York 11901

Tel: (631) 727-7850 x.318
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A. PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION:

Southampton College of Long Island University
State University of New York- Stony Brook

Marine Science Biology
Environmental Management

B.S. 1994
M.P.S. 2010

B. APPOINTMENTS:

2024-present: Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission- New York State Governor's
Appointee proxy 2021-present: Responsible Offshore Science Alliance Research Advisor

2020-present: New York Seafood Direct Marketing Task Force

2020-present: Long Island Sound Marine Debris Action Plan-Abandoned and Lost Fishing/Aquaculture Gear
Working Group 2019-present: New York State Fisheries Technical Working Group

2019-present: Mid-Atlantic Marine Debris Action Plan

2018-present: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council- Advisory Panel for spiny dogfish

2015-present: NOAA, National Marine Fisheries- Advisory Panel for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Southeast
Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) Workshops

1999-present: Senior Extension Resource Educator, Fisheries and Stormwater Specialist Cornell University Cooperative
Extension, Riverhead, NY 11901

C. PRODUCTS: Significant Products

Conservation Gear Technology- Quantifying Bycatch Reduction Benefits of an Excluder in the Small Mesh Fisheries of the
Northeast with Focus on Red Hake (NOAA-Saltonstall-Kennedy Program). June 28, 2004. **Scott Curatolo-
Wagemann**, Emerson Hasbrouck, Kristin Gerbino, Michael Bowen, Tara McClintock, Alex Mercado, Amanda Dauman,
Tyler Guterres, Illusion Rivera Reducing Marine Debris by Removing Derelict Lobster Gear from Long Island Sound-II
(NFWF-Long Island Sound Future Funds). April 5, 2024. **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Emerson Hasbrouck, Kristin
Gerbino, Michael Bowen, Tara McClintock, Alex Mercado, Amanda Dauman, Tyler Guterres, Illusion Rivera

Continuation of "Choose Local F.I.S.H." Marketing and Education Campaign to Promote Locally Caught and Grown
Seafood on Long Island. (USDA- Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program). February 28, 2023. Emerson
Hasbrouck, **Scott Curatolo- Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Alex Mercado, Amanda Dauman, Richard
Guterres, Michael Bowen

New York Fleet Wide Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting and Education Initiative (NFWF-Electronic Monitoring and
Reporting Grant Program 2020). November 2022. **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Emerson Hasbrouck, Tara McClintock,
Kristin Gerbino, Alex Mercado, Amanda Dauman

Increasing Twine Thickness and Mesh Size to Reduce Skate Bycatch in Monkfish Sink Gillnets (RSA- Monkfish 2018).
October 2022. Emerson Hasbrouck, **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Alex Mercado,
Amanda Dauman

Advancing Bycatch Reduction Technology in New England Small Mesh Fisheries. (NOAA-Bycatch Reduction Engineering
Program 2019). April 2022. Emerson Hasbrouck, **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Alex
Mercado, Amanda Dauman

Implementing a Bycatch Avoidance Communication Network in RI, MA, NJ, NY. (NFWF-Fisheries Innovation Fund
2019). February 28, 2021. Emerson Hasbrouck, **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Daniel
Kuehn, Amanda Dauman

Reducing Discard Mortality in the NY Recreational Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery. (NFWF-Fisheries Innovation Fund 2019.
February 28, 2021. Emerson Hasbrouck, **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Daniel Kuehn,
Kaitlyn Boyle, Alex Mercado

Fine Scale Genetic Population Structure of Monkfish (MAFMC Research Set Aside Program 2016). March 25, 2021.
Emerson Hasbrouck, I. Wirgin, John Scotti, **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, Tara McClintock, Kristin Gerbino, Daniel Kuehn

Determining Mesh Selectivity and Optimum Mesh Size to Harvest Three Commercially Important Mid- Atlantic Species (MAFMC/ASMFC). March 1, 2018. Emerson Hasbrouck-Principal Investigator; **Scott Curatolo-Wagemann**, John Scotti, Tara Froehlich, Kristin Gerbino, Daniel Kuehn, Patrick Sullivan.

D. SYNERGISTIC ACTIVITIES:

1. Stakeholder Engagement: Engage with fishermen, fishing associations, industry representatives, and other relevant stakeholders to foster dialogue, understand their perspectives, and build trust and collaboration.
2. Data Collection and Analysis: Work together with the fishing industry to collect accurate and comprehensive data on fish stocks, fishing effort, and ecological indicators. This collaborative approach enhances the quality and reliability of the data, enabling informed decision-making.
3. Scientific Research and Monitoring: Collaborate with the fishing industry to support scientific research initiatives, including stock assessments, ecosystem monitoring, and studies on fishing gear technology. By combining industry knowledge with scientific expertise, a more comprehensive understanding of the ecosystem and its dynamics can be achieved.
4. Adaptive Management: Jointly develop and implement adaptive management strategies that incorporate feedback from fishermen. This iterative process allows for continuous evaluation and adjustment of fisheries management measures based on real-time observations and stakeholder input.
5. Compliance and Enforcement: Collaborate with the fishing industry to promote compliance with fishing regulations and foster a culture of responsible fishing practices. Encourage industry-led initiatives for self-regulation, monitoring, and reporting to improve compliance rates and reduce illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities.
6. Innovation and Technology: Partner with the fishing industry to explore innovative and sustainable fishing technologies, gear modifications, and fishing practices. This collaboration can lead to the development and adoption of more selective and eco- friendly fishing methods, minimizing bycatch and ecosystem impacts.
7. Education and Capacity Building: Collaboratively develop training programs, workshops, and educational materials to enhance the industry's understanding of sustainable fishing practices, ecosystem conservation, and compliance with regulations. This empowers fishermen with the knowledge and skills necessary for responsible resource management.
8. Market-based Approaches: Collaborate with the fishing industry to promote and certify sustainable fishing practices, facilitating access to markets that prioritize sustainable seafood. These partnerships can create economic incentives for the industry to adopt sustainable practices while meeting consumer demand for environmentally friendly products.

By engaging in these synergistic activities, individuals working collaboratively with the fishing industry in fisheries management can foster a cooperative and inclusive approach that supports the long-term sustainability of fish stocks, preserves marine ecosystems, and ensures the viability of the fishing industry.

E. COLLABORATORS & OTHER AFFILIATIONS:

Collaborators Over the Last 48 Months: J. Abrams (Gershow Recycling); M. Albino (NYSDEC); D. Aripotch (F/V Caitlin & Mairead); J. Best (NYSDEC); J. Bourque (NYSDEC); B. Brady (Long Island Commercial Fishing Association); A. Clemetson (NY SeaGrant); M. Ciaramella (NY SeaGrant); C. Coyne (Sea-Trade Consulting); S. Crosby (The Maritime Aquarium); J. Davis (CT DEEP); N. Delanoy (F/V Laura Lee); Doll (F/V Christine & Jennifer); M. Early (Covanta Energy); R. Enever (FishTek); K. Fullam (New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets) J. German (F/V Suzanne Marie); N. Grant (Ct SeaGrant); R. Harrington (F/V Spirit); H. Hart (Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council); E. Hasbrouck (CCE); J. Hoey (National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center); D. Hudson (The Remote Ecologist); G. Kenney (NYSDEC); M. King (F/V Timtarah); J. Knight (Superior Trawl); W. Lucey (Save the Sound); M. McClintock (F/V Bulldog); K. McKowan (NYSDEC); C. McCandless (NOAA Apex Predators Program); J. Maniscalco (NYSDEC); Milliken (National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center); On the Water Magazine; M. Passerotti (NOAA Apex Predators Program); W. Richter (NYSDEC); E. Rodman (F/V Veronica Ann); C. Roebuck (F/V Karen Elizabeth); P. Ruhle Jr (F/V Sea Breeze Too); E. Reid (NEFMC); M. Sclafani (CCE); C. Scott (NYSDEC); J. Scotti (CCE); C. Scheetz (Project Oceanology); S. Sethi (Alaska Pacific University); J. Sulikowski (Univ. of New England); P. Sullivan (Cornell Univ., College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Dept. of Natural Resources); V. Vecchio (NOAA); I. Wirgin, (NYU, School of Medicine)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

June 12, 2025

Emerson Hasbrouck
Cornell University Cooperative Extension
Marine Program
423 Griffing Ave., Suite 100
Riverhead, N.Y. 11901

Dear Emerson;

This letter is intended to convey support from the NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Fisheries Science Center for your proposal to the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) to augment port biological sampling of landed commercial catch in New York. Our commitment is to partner with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) and the Cornell University Cooperative Extension program to facilitate biological sampling of catch from New York using the NOAA Fisheries Port Sampling data collection system. Use of this NOAA Fisheries Port Sampling data collection system facilitates: 1) confidentiality of collect data required under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, 2) data quality and auditing especially focused on sample meta-data critical to matching biological samples with Vessel Trip Records, and 3) timely entry of the data into NOAA Fisheries and ACCSP managed databases where data can be readily accessed by personnel conducting both federal and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) stock assessments.

If your proposal is funded, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center will:

- Provide tablet computer(s) that conform to NOAA security standards for the purpose of collecting and transmitting biological fisheries data to National Marine Fisheries Service managed databases
- Provide access to and training for the BLISS software used in an integrated system with electronic measuring boards and/or electronic balances
- Provide bar coded coin envelopes for the purpose of collecting otoliths and other bony structures
- Subject to available funding, provide up to two Big Fin electronic measuring boards for use by Cornell University samplers working in conjunction with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation

Thank you for your interest in support biological sampling of landed commercial catch in New York.

Sincerely;

Russell W. Brown
Special Projects Coordinator



**Proposal for funding made to the
Coordinating Council and the Operations Committee Atlantic Coastal Cooperative
Statistics Program 1050 N. Highland St., Ste. 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201**

**FY26: Catch, Effort, and Biological Data Collection for North Carolina and Florida
Fisheries Dependent Data**

Submitted By:
Lawrence Beerkircher and David Gloeckner
NOAA-Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center
75 Virginia Beach Drive Miami FL 33149
lawrence.r.beerkircher@noaa.gov
david.gloeckner@noaa.gov

Applicant Name: NOAA-Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission

Project Title: FY26: Catch, Effort, and Biological Data Collection for North Carolina and Florida Fisheries Dependent Data

Project Type: New

Requested Award Amount: \$345,223

Requested Award Period: FY 2026 (January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026)

Primary Program Priority: Biological Sampling and Commercial and Recreational Catch and Effort

Date Submitted: 8/15/2025

Project Supervisor: David Gloeckner, Supervisory Mathematical Statistician,
NMFS/SEFSC
david.gloeckner@noaa.gov

Principal Investigator(s): Lawrence Beerkircher, Supervisory Fish Biologist,
NMFS/SEFSC
lawrence.beerkircher@noaa.gov

Rob Cheshire, Fish Biologist,
NMFS/SEFSC
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Olivia Wilms, Research Administrator II,
FL Fish and Wildlife Commission
Olivia.Wilms@myfwc.com

Craig LaVine, Research Associate,
FL Fish and Wildlife Commission
Craig.Lavine@myfwc.com

Jason Rock, Fisheries Management Section Chief,
NC Division of Marine Fisheries
Jason.Rock@deq.nc.gov

Brandi Salmon, License and Statistics Section Chief,
NC Division of Marine Fisheries
Brandi.Salmon@deq.nc.gov

Project Staff:

Jasmine Silvennoinen, Biological Scientist,
FL Fish and Wildlife Commission
jasmine.silvennoinen@myfwc.com

TBD – Northern NC contracted port agent

TBD – Central/Southern NC port agent

TBD – NC headboat port agent

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Proposal for the NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Fisheries Science Center 2026

Objectives:

- Shift staffing approach that ensures commercial and headboat port agent coverage for northern and central North Carolina and southern Florida which provides effort and biological samples needed for stock assessments and quota monitoring (1 headboat port agent in NC, 1 commercial port agent in northern NC, 1 commercial port agent in central and southern NC, 1 headboat port agent in south Florida).
- Develop data feed of headboat biosampling and logbook data from SEFSC to ACCSP and continue development of the feed to ACCSP of commercial biosample data.

Need:

Port agents play a critical role in the implementation of The Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS). They monitor headboat activity to validate reporting of trips and collect biological samples critical to quota monitoring. These efforts also provide valuable information for stock assessments. SRHS estimates of landings and discards are expanded for any trips documented by port agents but not reported. Fish weights collected by port agents are used to convert the estimated SRHS catch in numbers to weight, the common unit for annual catch limits. The lengths and otoliths collected by port agents inform the size and age-structure of the SRHS removals as well as more general life history parameters used in stock assessment models (e.g. growth curves). The SRHS data collected on fish sex are used in developing the sex ratio at age used in stock assessments. The dockside interactions port agents have with vessel operators and crew is critical to the continued high compliance rates for the headboat fleet. The SRHS program has 3 critical areas in the Atlantic region that will not have coverage in 2026. The SRHS also lost the Recreational Fisheries Monitoring Branch (RFMB) chief position to retirement and shifting NMFS priorities make it unlikely that position will be rehired, so there is a need for one of the contracted port agents to also provide program support.

Port agents also play a critical role in the implementation of the Trip Interview Program (TIP) which provides length and age composition of commercial catches of federally managed species

in support of the SEDAR process. The Atlantic region of the Catch Validation and Bio-sampling Branch (CVBB) at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) recently lost 3 of 8 commercial port agents to early retirement. These positions are not expected to be rehired. Some states have agreed to supplement their existing commercial port agent responsibilities. However, northern NC currently does not have a port agent or cooperator with the capacity to assist in commercial sampling. This region is important because data collected informs both the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic region stock assessments and quota monitoring. In addition, the increased program support responsibilities of the central NC SRHS port agent limit the ability to make the 4-hour drive to northern NC to sample the limited number of headboats in that area. A port agent trained to sample commercial and headboat locations could cover both sectors to maximize efficiency.

Results and Benefits:

Collecting high quality, comprehensive fisheries data is essential to successful fisheries assessment and management. This project allows for the continuation of commercial and headboat port agent coverage in the Southeast U.S. Atlantic. Maintaining the capacity to complete dockside effort validation, collect biological samples and interact with stakeholders has many benefits. The estimation of total landings for SRHS depends on knowledge of vessel effort and the bias and uncertainty in the estimates would increase without this information. The biological samples from the relatively small SRHS sector have been the primary source of recreational size and age information for almost all stock assessments in the Southeast US. The continued collection of spatially unbiased commercial samples also reduces the uncertainty and potential bias in stock assessments. Quota management also benefits from more accurate data and spatially unbiased dockside sampling. In-season changes in fish sizes related to fishing behavior changes due to management are better captured with adequate dockside sampling and reduce potential bias in converting numbers to weight.

Without funding, the SEFSC will lose biosampling in three important south Atlantic coast areas that in some specific cases make up large amounts of samples for certain species. For example, in SEDAR 78 (South Atlantic Spanish Mackerel) the only commercial gear type with enough samples for length and age compositions was gillnet (Fitzpatrick 2021). The Northern NC Port Agent area accounted for 1,081 gillnet Spanish mackerel samples in TIP for the most recent year of complete data (2023) which was 63% of all South Atlantic gillnet samples for this species. For SEDAR 92 (South Atlantic Blueline Tilefish), length composition data were produced for the area of Cape Hatteras to the North Carolina-Virginia border (Pawluk 2024). In 2023 all TIP samples in that stratum were collected by the Northern NC Port Agent. In SEDAR 96 (SE Yellowtail Snapper) the Southeast Florida subregion made up 35% of all headboat samples collected in 2023 (Cheshire et al. 2024) and the South Florida Port Agent collected 83% of the samples in that year/subregion. For several important south Atlantic species, the Central NC and South FL Port Agents combined made up very high proportions of total headboat samples: vermilion snapper 54%, gray snapper 48%, black sea bass 73%, gray triggerfish 71%, mutton snapper 43%, and king mackerel 45%.

Data Delivery Plan:

The biological and headboat activity data collected by headboat port agents will be uploaded to the SEFSC Oracle Cloud platform. The headboat landings, discards, and trip information are entered into the VESL application by the vessel operators. The biological and trip

data collected by commercial port agents will be entered into the TIP system via the ACCSP data transfer portal developed by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF). All data are coded weekly, checked for errors and submitted to be entered into the NCDMF database monthly. Following a second round of quality control checks the data is submitted to the ACCSP database and made available in TIP format. These data are prepared by SEFSC analysts for SEDAR stock assessments, quota monitoring, and research projects. The biological structures collected by the port agents are sent to SEFSC ageing labs to be archived for use in informing the age composition of removals from commercial, headboats and often other recreational fleets.

At the project's conclusion, these data products will be housed at SEFSC and made available to scientists working on subsequent phases of the research program. These products will also be made available to scientists of ACCSP Partner Programs, following NOAA Fisheries guidelines regarding confidential data. We will also share the data directly with ACCSP, leveraging a current project and future proposed work to transfer data directly from SEFSC Oracle Cloud to ACCSP as part of the ACCSP catch, effort, and biosample modules.

Approach:

Each headboat port agent will evaluate headboat activity by contacting the vessel operations point of contact, monitoring vessel AIS, personal observation, or other methods daily. This information will be used to provide quality control over trip type reporting and trip reporting. The port agents will upload headboat activity reports to the SEFSC Oracle Cloud tables. The port agents will intercept vessels as assigned and collect fish measurements, otoliths, spines, and other biological information as defined in the headboat port agent manual. Port agents are instructed to measure all fish on a stringer or in a basket from individual anglers as they depart the vessel. They are instructed to subsample stringers/baskets with less common but important species (focus species lists are provided). This sampling design ensures less-common species are sampled in adequate numbers while common species are typically measured in adequate numbers as they are plentiful on stringers/baskets with the less common species. On many SE Florida headboat trips all retained fish are able to be sampled. Port agents will be issued BigFin measuring boards that connect through Bluetooth to Android tablets. The port agents will proof the data and upload to the SEFSC Oracle Cloud tables. All these protocols are contained in the 2024 Port Agent Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

In addition to headboat data, the northern NC port agent will also collect commercial data by intercepting commercial trips as they unload at industry sites in Dare County NC (primarily Wanchese and Hatteras). Bio profile information such as length, weight, sex will be collected from randomly selected fish during the offload; and the captains will be interviewed regarding trip details such as trip length, area fished, and gear used. After collection, trip and biological data will be recorded in Program 438/439 and translated into TIP format via the ACCSP portal. All these protocols are contained in the [User's Guide for the TIP \(version 8.0\)](#) and NCDMF program documentation for Programs 438 (Offshore Live Bottom Fishery) and 439 (Coastal Pelagics Fishery). In addition to the TIP data collection, the northern NC port agent will provide the SEFSC

with a weekly report on commercial and recreational fisheries trends and conditions.

Funding will allow for continued sampling of a number of southeast species that appear in the upper 25% of the [2026 ACCSP bio-sampling priority matrix](#). Table 1 shows the CY2024 percentage that biosamples from the two areas covered in this proposal (NC and SFL for headboat, NC only for commercial) make up compared to all samples from NC, SC, and FL east coast. Several species made up 30% or more of the entire 2024 South Atlantic sampling production for both commercial and headboat: black sea bass, cobia, Gag, and gray triggerfish.

Table 1. 2024 Sampling percentages (vs total south Atlantic samples) for commercial (North Carolina) and headboat (North Carolina and Southern Florida).

COMMON NAME	PERCENT_NC_COMM	PERCENT_NC/SFL_HB
Black sea bass (<i>Centropristis strata</i>)	81.5	31.8
Bluefish (<i>Pomatomus saltatrix</i>)	11	75.8
Blueline tilefish (<i>Caulolatilus microps</i>)	70.2	0
Cobia (<i>Rachycentron canadum</i>)	76.9	34.5
Gag (<i>Mycteroperca microlepis</i>)	49.1	63.6
Gray triggerfish (<i>Balistes capriscus</i>)	40.5	68.2
Red grouper (<i>Epinephelus morio</i>)	63.6	12.5
Red porgy (<i>Pagrus pagrus</i>)	50.5	8.3
Red snapper (<i>Lutjanus campechanus</i>)	21	18.3
Scamp (<i>Mycteroperca phenax</i>)	57.1	1.4
Snowy grouper (<i>Hyporthodus niveatus</i>)	67.5	1.3
Spanish mackerel (<i>Scomberomorus maculatus</i>)	63.5	22.8

This approach of the proposal has changed since the initial submission that was provided on June 13th 2025. Initially, the use of a federal contract was proposed to cover commercial and headboat sampling in NC by acquiring 2 contract employees located in North Carolina, directly supported and directed by SEFSC staff, and funding passed through to the Florida Fish and Wildlife commission (FWC) would cover the support and direction of an FWC sampler in the Southeast Florida area. In the updated approach, an additional sampler was proposed for NC, and staff from NCDMF and FWC were brought in as project Principal Investigators (PIs). While the SEFSC has a long history of working with FWC on headboat dockside sampling, inclusion of their staff more directly into the proposal planning (and if funded, project execution) will likely create efficiencies and inform evolving coordination of State-Federal biosampling activities. Bringing NC DMF staff on as PIs brings invaluable infrastructure support for the contract employees, as well as PIs with strong experience with local industry. The proposed use of an existing NC DMF contract provides an economic efficiency that allows for the inclusion of an additional NC port

sampler.

Funding transition plan: SEFSC is optimistic that the budgetary constraints that have resulted in (or will result in) the loss of coverage in the three areas described above will be temporary in nature. The SEFSC Fisheries Statistics Division (FSD) is evaluating internal reorganization strategies that will result in overall Port Agent operational efficiencies. Emerging electronic reporting and automation projects housed within the FSD may free up funds for dockside sampling, and other activities, in the areas proposed here. The SEFSC also plans to more fully engage with our State partners in planning and coordinating biosampling activities (beyond what is already supported via the ACCSP Biological Review Panel).

Geographic Location:

The project will be administered out of the NOAA-Fisheries Office in Miami, FL. The scope of the project covers all of NC and the southeastern (Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties) area of Florida.

Program Accomplishment Measurement Metrics:

The success of the project will be measured by the following metrics:

- Quality controlled headboat and commercial biosample data, and headboat logbook data available to ACCSP.
- Successful coverage of both the headboat and commercial fisheries in NC and south FL
- Evaluation of TIPS software applicability for capturing headboat biosample data.

Goal	Metric 1	Metric 2
Biological Samples	Successful implementation of biological sampling for FMP species across commercial and headboat sectors	Evaluation of TIPS for headboat biosample data entry
Headboat Effort Validation	Increase Coverage of Headboat Activity	Representative coverage of headboat activity
Weekly reports on fishery Trends and Conditions	Number of Trends Reports	
Data Feed to ACCSP	Successful implementation of data feed for ACCSP to access headboat and commercial sample data, and headboat logbook data	Commercial and headboat biosample data reporting through ACCSP

Table 2. Milestone Schedule

[illegible]

Requested Budget FY 26 (January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026)

PERSONNEL COSTS:

Item	ACCSP Share	Direct Partner Share	Total
Northern NC Port Agent, commercial and headboat biosampling (NC Temp Solutions Staff 100%)	\$56,970	\$0	\$56,970
Central/Southern NC Port Agent, headboat biosampling (NC Temp Solutions Staff 100%)	\$56,970	\$0	\$56,970
Headboat Port Agent biosampling support for whole state (NC Temp Solutions Staff 100%)	\$56,970	\$0	\$56,970
Southeast FL Port Agent, headboat biosampling (FWC staff 100%)	\$45,225	\$0	\$45,225
Southeast FL Port Agent, headboat biosampling (FWC staff OT 100%)	\$675	\$0	\$675
B. Salmon, Environmental Program Supervisor II (PI)- (NC DMF FTE 5%)	\$0	\$4,081	\$4,081
J. Rock, Environmental Program Supervisor II (PI)- (NC DMF FTE 5%)	\$0	\$4,142	\$4,142
L. Beerkircher, Supervisory Fish Biologist (Lead PI) -(Federal FTE 10%)	\$0	\$18,291	\$18,291
R. Cheshire, Fish Biologist (PI)-(Federal FTE 5%)	\$0	\$5,652	\$5,652
C. LaVine, Research Assistant (PI)-(FWC FTE 10%)	\$0	\$5,061	\$5,061
O. Wilms, Research Administrator II (PI)-(FWC FTE 5%)	\$0	\$3,825	\$3,825
Fringe Benefits for Federal Employees (33% of salary)	\$0	\$8,132	\$8,132
Fringe benefits for NC DMF Staff (24.04% retirement, \$8,095 medical, 6.75% FICA)	\$0	\$3,416	\$3,416
Fringe benefits for FWC Staff (26% of salary)	\$0	\$2,399	\$2,399
Fringe benefits for Southeast FL Port Agent (26% of salary)	\$11,583	\$0	\$11,583
Indirect Charge, FWC MTDC (30.59% of FWC request)	\$18,815	\$0	\$18,815
Indirect Charge SEFSC overhead (13% on total requested ACCSP funds)	\$39,716	\$0	\$39,716
Total Personnel	\$286,924	\$54,999	\$341,923

EQUIPMENT & SUPPLY:

Item	ACCSP Share	Direct Partner Share	Total
4 BigFin electronic fish measuring boards @ \$2,665 each	\$0	\$10,660	\$10,660
3 NC Samsung tablets @ \$400 each	\$1,200	\$0	\$1,200
4 Doran Scales @1,872 each	\$0	\$7,488	\$7,488
3 Dell laptops @ \$1,833 each	\$5,499	\$0	\$5,499
Fedex shipping of age structures	\$100	\$300	\$400
General Sampling Supplies	\$700	\$2,000	\$2,700
Office supplies	\$0	\$750	\$750
Telephone & Fax Usage	\$1,800	\$0	\$1,800
Vehicle Usage and Travel	\$49,000	\$0	\$49,000
Total Supply	\$58,299	\$21,198	\$79,497

TOTAL:

Item	ACCSP Share	Direct Partner Share	Total
Total Direct Charges	\$282,692	\$76,197	\$362,889
Total Indirect charges	\$58,531	\$0	\$58,531
Grand Total	\$345,223	\$76,197	\$421,420
Percentage	82%	18%	

COST DETAILS:**Description of Budget categories and expenses for this project.****a. Salary****From Partners as match:**

- i. **Beerkircher, SEFSC Lead PI:** 10% of annual salary (\$182,914) = \$18,291. Overall project coordination.
- ii. **Cheshire, SEFSC PI:** 5% of annual salary (\$113,047) = \$5,652. Survey advice specific to headboat sampling operations.
- iii. **Salmon, NC DMF PI:** 5% of annual salary (\$81,620)=\$4,081. Oversight and support of NC DMF contract sampling staff.
- iv. **Rock, NC DMF PI:** 5% of annual salary (\$82,840)=\$4,142. Oversight and support of NC DMF contract sampling staff.
- v. **LaVine, FWC PI:** 10% of annual salary (\$50,610)=\$5,061. Oversight and support of FWC sampling staff.
- vi. **Wilms, FWC PI:** 5% of annual salary

(\$76,500)=\$3,825. Oversight and support of FWC sampling staff.

b. Fringe benefits

i. Federal PI Employees

100% of fringe (33% of salary=\$8,132 as match)

ii. NC DMF PI Employees

100% of fringe (30.79% of salary + medical=\$3,416 as match)

iii. FWC PI Employees

(100% of fringe (26% of salary=\$2,399 as match)

iv. SE FL Port Agent:

100% of fringe (26% of salary=\$11,583)

ii. NC Port Agents:

Cost of benefits and overhead are contractually protected business information; the information given below in Section f includes these amounts.

c. Travel

The request for funding includes fuel and maintenance for an FWC vehicle for the Florida Port Agent (\$3,000), mileage for Northern NC, Central/Southern, and Headboat Port Agent at \$15,000 each annually. (\$45,000 total), and travel for the SE Florida Port Agent to travel to a yearly FWC training (\$1,000). Total of \$49,000.

d. Equipment

From ACCSP:

i. 3 Dell laptops for NC samplers @\$1,833/each=\$5,499

ii. 3 Samsung tablets for NC samplers @\$400/each=\$1,200

iii. Telephones: 3 mobile phones @40/month plus \$120 for phone=\$1,800

From SEFSC:

iv. Electronic Measuring Boards: 4 BigFin boards @ \$2,665/each=\$10,660

v. Scales: 4 doran scales @\$1,872/each=\$7,488

e. Supplies

From ACCSP:

i. General sampling supplies for FWC Port Agent: coin envelopes, vials, plastic bags, gloves, field clothing, Fedex shipping of age structures=\$700.

From SEFSC:

ii. General sampling supplies for Contracted Port Agents: coin envelopes, vials, plastic bags, gloves, UPS shipping of age structures=\$2,000.

iii. Office supplies for NC Port Agents: paper, pens, ink/toner=\$750

f. Contractual

Each of the four port agents will work full time on the project. The three NC port agents will be contracted through Temporary Solutions (NC Office of State Human Resources).

The FL port agent will be funded through a grant to FWC. The coordination, supervision, and administrative role for the NC port agents will be filled by appropriate

DMF supervisors who will coordinate with a designated SEFSC point of contact. The annual salaries for contract personnel and the percentage of their time spent on this project are as follows:

From ACCSP:

i. Northern NC Commercial Port Agent:

100% of annual contractual salary, fees, and benefits (\$56,970).

Dockside commercial biosampling, primarily Dare County NC.

ii. Central-Southern Commercial Port Agent:

100% of annual contractual salary, fees, and benefits (\$56,970).

Dockside commercial biosampling, central and southern coastal counties NC.

iii. NC Headboat Port Agent:

100% of annual contractual salary, fees, and benefits (\$56,970).

Dockside headboat biosampling and support, NC.

iv. Southeast Florida Headboat Port Agent:

100% of annual salary and fees (\$45,900 salary/overtime, \$18,815 fees = \$64,715). Dockside headboat biosampling in southeastern FL.

g. Construction

There will be no construction as part of this grant.

h. Other

There is nothing in this category

i. Total Direct Charges

This is the sum of all direct charges to the grant, listed above.

j. Indirect charges.

Request includes 30.59% MTDC FWC indirect charge (\$18,815) and an SEFSC indirect charge of 13% of incoming funding (\$37,716). Total indirect charges are \$58,531.

REFERENCES

Cheshire, Robin T., Kenneth Brennan, Matthew E. Green, Ariel Poholek and Jasmine Silvennoinen. 2024. Headboat Data for Yellowtail Snapper in the Southeast U.S. Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. SEDAR96-WP-02. SEDAR, North Charleston, SC. 57 pp.

Fitzpatrick, Eric. 2021. General recreational and commercial age and length composition weighting for Southeast U.S. Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus maculatus*). SEDAR78-WP05. SEDAR, North Charleston, SC. 17 pp.

Pawluk, Micki. 2024. South Atlantic Blueline Tilefish (*Caulolatilus microps*) Length Compositions for Commercial Longline Landings North of Cape Hatteras. SEDAR92-WP-05. SEDAR, North Charleston, SC. 8 pp.

Summary of Proposal for Ranking

Proposal Type: New

Primary Program Priority: Catch and Effort (50%), Biological (50%)

- Effort validation for 100% of headboat activity used in expanding catch for missing trips.
- Biological sampling of headboat catch for lengths, weights, otoliths, spines. Other biological information will be collected as requested based on assessment research priorities (e.g. DNA, sex, etc.).
- Commercial sampling of coastal fisheries lengths, weights, otoliths, spines. Other biological information will be collected as requested based on assessment research priorities (e.g. DNA, sex, etc.).
- Priority Species: Both SEFSC dockside sampling programs (commercial, recreational headboat) collect biological data on the highest priority species (Black Sea Bass, Blueline Tilefish, Spanish Mackerel, Gray Triggerfish) and many others in the ACCSP Biological Sampling Priority Matrix for FY26.

Project Quality Factors:

Partners

- **Multi-Partner/Regional impact including broad applications** –To collect and manage commercial and recreational catch/effort and biological data in NC and FL. This sampling augments existing SEFSC sampling to provide adequate spatial coverage in the South Atlantic region as well as for species that are managed coastwide. The state of NC will provide a port agent office in northern NC and the FL port agent will be supervised by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) through a grant to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC). The data collected will be used in coastwide and regional stock assessments, therefore benefitting multiple Atlantic states and regions.

Funding

- **Contains funding transition plan** – This proposal contains a transition to funding plan on page 5. Significant changes in operations within the SEFSC may leverage resumption of SEFSC funding of the work proposed here in future years.
- **In-kind contribution-** 16% of this project is funded by the SEFSC.

Data

- **Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness** – The uncertainty estimates in the SRHS landings and discards is based primarily on the compliance information derived from port agent reports of vessel activity. Full spatial coverage of headboat vessels in the Southeast Atlantic allows for the monitoring of compliance in the census. Assumptions about compliance in areas lacking port agents would reduce the confidence in the estimates. Full spatial coverage of biological samples reduces spatial bias in the size and age compositions used in stock assessments. For many species, the SRHS biological samples provide the majority of the information available for the recreational sector. The primary species caught in each area are typically collected in large enough numbers for adequate mean weights and composition data. The increased sampling the additional port agents provide ensure that less common FMP species are adequately sampled for these purposes. Port agents typically enter the activity and biological data weekly so that it is

available for calculation of landings estimates in weight before the landings estimates are due for each wave.

- **Potential secondary module as a by-product** – The biological data collected by the SRHS has been used in over 50 life history manuscripts and continues to be a resource for scientific investigation. Port agents routinely collect additional samples as requested (e.g. DNA samples for red snapper and cobia).
- **Impact on stock assessment-** Data collected in this program is regularly used for many southeast stock assessments. The data collected also contributes to other regions' stock assessments or jointly managed species.

Lawrence Ronald Beerkircher

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Curriculum Vitae

Education:

May 2000: M.S. Marine Biology/Coastal Zone Management, Nova Southeastern University, Davie Florida

December 1996: B.S. (with Highest Distinction) Fisheries and Aquaculture, University of Rhode Island, Kingston RI

Experience:

National Marine Fisheries Service, Miami, Florida (2010-Present). Supervisory Fisheries Biologist (ZP-IV) Chief, Catch Validation and Biosampling Branch. Responsible for the coordination of the Federal Port Agents in the southeast as well as supervising the staff of the Pelagic Observer program. Supervisor: Dr. David Gloeckner, 305-361-4482

National Marine Fisheries Service, Miami, Florida (2006-2010). Research Fisheries Biologist (ZP-III) Coordinator of the Pelagic Observer Program. Duties include coordination of observer deployments with commercial fishermen and observers, training of observers in pelagic fish species and sex identification, and sea safety training. Responsible for debriefing of observers and maintenance and quality control of observer database. Produce technical memoranda (program data summaries) for publication as required. Produce both white and grey literature as time permits. Supervisors: Dr. Clay Porch 305-361-4232, Guy Davenport (retired, current email available upon request)

National Marine Fisheries Service, Miami, Florida (2001-2006). Research Fisheries Biologist (GS11) with the Pelagic Observer Program. Duties include coordination of observer deployments with commercial fishermen and observers, training of observers in pelagic fish species and sex identification, and sea safety training. Responsible for debriefing of observers and maintenance and quality control of observer database. Produce technical memoranda (program data summaries) for publication as required by supervisor. Produce both white and grey literature as time permits. Supervisor: Dennis Lee (retired, current email available upon request)

National Marine Fisheries Service, Miami, Florida (Aug 1998-2001). Biological Technician (GS6) with the Pelagic Observer Program. Duties include at-sea deployment on commercial fishing vessels, communication with fishermen during program operations, administrative support, processing of biological samples collected by the program, and maintenance of a database of the samples. In addition, responsibilities include data QC and database validation of domestic longline dealer reports. Supervisor: Dennis Lee (retired, current email available upon request)

South Florida Aquaculture, Florida City, Florida (Jan 1997- July 1998; July 1998 – Dec 2001 consultant) Commercial fish culture operation, duties include all aspects of fish systems maintenance, product harvest, and delivery. Develop/oversee water quality monitoring program, diagnose and treat disease, research new species and technology for future use at the facility. Identify and remove/control exotic vegetation on the property. Job site outdoors adjacent to the Everglades National Park.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Environmental Research Lab, Narragansett R.I. (May- Dec 1996) (Employed as part of a research fellowship with the University of Rhode Island's Partnership for a Coastal Environment program). Maintenance of shellfish broodstock for use in toxicity tests, spawning and larviculture of these shellfish, and culture of various algae species. Set up and assist experiments dealing with generational transfer of phototoxic PAHs in shellfish, locate and review scientific literature.

Achievements, Memberships, and Training:

2011 NMFS Employee of the Year Award (Supervisor Category), 2011 Department of Commerce Bronze Medal Award, 2004 Department of Commerce Bronze Medal Award, 2000 Nova Southeastern University Distinguished Student of the Year (Oceanography), 1996 URI L. Robert Crandall Scholarship, 1996 URI Durfee Scholarship. Member, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. CPR certification (American Red Cross), fishery observer certification (National Marine Fisheries Service), marine safety instructor certification (Alaska Marine Safety Education Association), associate fisheries scientist certification (American Fisheries Society). Attended sea turtle handling/gear removal trainings 7/26/01, 6/5/02, and 5/27/03.

Dr. David Robert Gloeckner
1806 N. 41st Avenue
Hollywood, FL 33021
Mobile: 954-593-5456
Day Phone: 305-361-4257
Email: david.gloeckner@noaa.gov

EDUCATION

May 2009 Ph.D. Coastal Resources Management, East Carolina University,
Greenville NC

May 2002 M.S. Biology, East Carolina University, Greenville NC

May 1996 B.S. Zoology, Ohio State University, Columbus OH

WORK EXPERIENCE

Supervisory Mathematical Statistician-National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center 10/2019 - Present

I manage the financial and personnel resources of the Fisheries Statistics Division, supervising the work of 70 employees and contractors in our Recreational and Commercial Catch Monitoring Programs, Commercial Fishing Catch and Effort Reporting Programs, and in our Survey Design and Data Management Program. I am responsible for oversight of the Southeast Fisheries Science Center's landings and catch-effort data acquisition, processing, and analysis, which requires coordination between many federal, state, and commission partners. Supervisor: Dr. John Walter, 305-365-4114/Mobile: 305-608-5883

Supervisory Survey Statistician-National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center 7/2010 – 10/2019

I managed the financial and personnel resources of the Fisheries Monitoring Branch, supervising 23 employees and contractors responsible for the Southeast Fisheries Science Center's landings and catch-effort data acquisition, processing, and analysis, which requires coordination between many federal, state, and commission partners. Supervisor: Dr. Steve Turner (retired, current email available upon request)

Fishery Biologist-National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center 7/2003 – 7/2010

My primary responsibilities were the coordination of our dockside sampling program from NC to TX, and quota monitoring of commercial fishing catches in the US South Atlantic. My responsibilities as sampling coordinator involved day to day database maintenance and quality control of sampling data, as well as directing the sampling effort to maximize efficiency in the allocation of resources. Supervisor: Dr. Steve Turner (retired, current email available upon request)

Marine Fisheries Biologist 1-North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries 5/2003 - 7/2003

Supervised four biological technicians conducting a gill-net survey in the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers to obtain abundance information to inform fisheries managers. I was also responsible for supervising fish house sampling of long-haul seine catches to derive size composition of catches to inform stock assessment models. Supervisor: Katy West (retired, current email available upon request)

Fisheries Reporting Specialist-National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office 7/1998 - 5/2003

I was responsible for the collection, summary, data entry and transmission to the NEFSC at Woods Hole of complex natural resource data collected from fisheries in NC. This position was responsible for tracking the reporting compliance and checking the accuracy of reports from those seafood dealers that held federal permits for the sale of Scup, Black Sea Bass and Summer Flounder. Supervisor: Greg Power (retired, current email available upon request)

Fisheries Research Technician-Ohio State University (Aquatic Ecology Laboratory) 4/1997 - 7/1998

Worked as a technician on a collaborative project with the Ohio Division of Wildlife, exploring the abiotic and biotic factors affecting the fecundity and recruitment of Black and White Crappie in temperate Ohio reservoirs. Supervisors: Konrad Dabrowski (retired) and Bo Bunnell (current email available upon request)

Fisheries Observer-Alaskan Observers Inc. 12/1996 - 4/1997

Worked as a field biologist, collecting catch, effort, and size composition of the catch for the National Marine Fisheries Service. Supervisor: Dave Erick (retired, current email available upon request)

ACHIEVEMENTS and TRAINING

2015 U.S. Department of Commerce Bronze Medal Award, 2014 National Atmospheric Administration Administrator's Award, 2001 National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office Richard Denzler Award for outstanding port agent. Proficient with various statistical packages including SAS, SPSS, Systat, Sigmaplot. Proficient with the use of SQL and SQL+ for data extraction, manipulation and management of ORACLE databases. Proficient with the Microsoft Office suite of software including Excel, Word and Access. Member of Golden Key National Honor Society.

Robin T. Cheshire

National Marine Fisheries Service, Beaufort Laboratory 101 Pivers Island Road,
Beaufort, NC, 28516

Phone: (252) 342-0532

E-mail: Rob.Cheshire@noaa.gov

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1999 – MS in Zoology with Statistics Minor, North Carolina State University. Advisor, James Rice. Thesis title: Investigating size-selective processes in larval Atlantic menhaden survival using patterns of growth and variability.

1996 – B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Science (Magna Cum Laude), North Carolina State University.

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

04/10/2022 to current – Fish Biologist, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Recreational Fisheries Monitoring Branch, Beaufort, NC. FTE (40 hours/week), ZP-0482-3, salary: \$113,047. Main duties and accomplishments:

- Database manager for the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS) including all aspects of data collection, storage, and dissemination.
- Served as NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center representative on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Citizen Science Operations Committee
- Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission's Return Em' Right committee member to promote use of descending devices
- Analyzed and summarized SRHS data for use in stock assessments
- Lead automation of workflow for routine data extractions and preparation of recreational for stock assessments

08/01/2010 to 4/10/2022 – Operations Research Analyst, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Sustainable Fisheries Branch, Beaufort, NC. FTE (40 hours/week), ZP-1515-3, salary: \$100,739. (Recently reclassified as Fish Biologist) Main duties and accomplishments:

- Served as lead stock assessment analyst within the Sustainable Fisheries Branch at Beaufort, NC. (2021 Snowy Grouper, 2022 Spanish Mackerel)
- Conducted data mining and statistical analyses of fisheries data for input into stock assessment analyses. Mentored new data analysts in software, analysis, and presentations. Provided survey and analytical support for the Southeast Region Fisheries Survey. Represented SEFSC at technical meetings of resource management agencies.
- Co-author on several collaborative peer reviewed articles including recent studies of gray triggerfish movement related to hurricanes. Worked in collaboration with assessment lead analysts to complete many assessment reports using Latex typesetting code
- Collaborated in updates of the R package FishGraph. Maintained distribution of package and responded to issues with usage.

2/1/99 to 11/02/03 – Biological Science Technician (Fish), National Ocean Service, Beaufort, NC. FTE (40 hours/week), GS-0404-8/9, salary: \$35,061. Main duties: Participated in all phases of fisheries surveys related to habitat use in Everglades National Park, FL and Poplar Island, Chesapeake Bay including data collection, sample processing, data management, statistical analysis, recommending improvements to future survey

designs, and report preparation.

09/01/92 to 01/31/99 – Hourly Technician/Research Assistantship, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC. Main duties: Support research related to the South Atlantic Bight Recruitment Experiment while completing graduate degree.

HONORS AND AWARDS

2013 and 2018 – NMFS Time off award

2000 to 2002, 2006 to 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 – NMFS performance cash award

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

2014 – 2020 – Kayak for the Warriors kayak race, Pine Knoll Shores, NC, race safety coordinator. Town event that raises money for wounded veterans. In combination with silent auction and golf tournament this event raises about \$75K annually.

PUBLICATIONS

- Siegfried, K.I., J.K. Craig, R.T. Cheshire, M. Karnauskas, and P.G.R. Jodice. 2024. Long-term Trends in Abundance and Potential Drivers for Eight Species of Coastal Birds in the U.S. South Atlantic. *Regional Studies in Mar. Sci.*, 80, pp. .
- Bacheler N.M., T. Michelot, R.T. Cheshire, K.W. Shertzer. 2019. Fine-scale movement patterns and behavioral states of gray triggerfish *Balistes capriscus* determined from acoustic telemetry and hidden Markov models. *Fish. Res.*, 215 (2019), pp. 76-89.
- Bacheler, N.M., K.W. Shertzer, R.T. Cheshire, J. MacMahan. 2019. Tropical storms influence the movement behavior of a demersal oceanic fish species. *Sci Rep* 9, 1481 (2019).
- Fitzpatrick, Eric E., E. H. Williams, K. W. Shertzer, K. I. Siegfried, J. K. Craig, R.T. Cheshire, G.T. Kellison, K. E. Fitzpatrick and K. Brennan. 2017. The NMFS Southeast Region Headboat Survey: History, Methodology, and Data Integrity. *Mar Fish Rev.*, 79 (1): 1-27.
- Schueller A.M, E.H. Williams, R.T. Cheshire. 2014. A proposed, tested, and applied adjustment to account for bias in growth parameter estimates due to selectivity. *Fish. Res.*, 158 (2014), pp. 26-39.
- Powell, A. B. and G. Thayer, M. Lacroix, and R.T. Cheshire. 2007. Juvenile and small resident fishes of Florida Bay, a critical habitat in the Everglades National Park, Florida. Seattle, WA, NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA Professional Paper NMFS, 6.
- Powell, A.B., R.T. Cheshire, E.H. Laban, J. Colvocoresses, P. O'Donnell, and M. Davidian. 2004. Growth, mortality, and hatchdate distributions of larval and juvenile spotted seatrout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*) in Florida Bay, Everglades National Park. *Fishery Bulletin*, 102(1), pp. 142-155.

BRANDI N. SALMON

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Address 4912 Merrimon Rd, Beaufort NC 28516

EDUCATION

University of North Carolina at Wilmington

Bachelor of Science

-Marine Biology

Bachelor of Science

-Environmental Studies

KEY SKILLS

- Project Management
- Budget Planning
- Supervision
- Leadership
- Collaboration
- Prioritization

EXPERIENCE

Environmental Program Manager II/License and Statistics Section Chief

Full-Time (40 hours)

NC Division of Marine Fisheries

June 2020 – Current

- Responsible for coordination, organization, management, supervision, recruitment, and administration of over 60 employees among four different research programs within the License and Statistics Section and other high priority projects for the Division.
- Provide guidance and leadership to direct and indirect staff on establishing priorities, project and work planning, developing new research projects, obtaining grant funding, and providing feedback bi-annually on staff performance and goal setting.
- Assess and evaluate Standard Operating Procedures and administrative processes to modify and improve practices that will ensure Program, Section, and Division objectives are achieved.
- Work with Division Director and upper management to update strategic plans, policies, and procedures annually and develop legislative requests to accomplish research needs and initiatives.
- Coordinate data collection and analysis of summary statistics for compilation into briefings for senior leadership decision-making.
- Oversee the management of the Section budget that includes over \$3 million in state and federal funds.
- Responsible for project planning by developing timelines/deadlines, writing grants and acquiring funding, managing budgets, creating and assessing priorities, delegating tasks to staff, scheduling meetings, documenting conversations and decisions, collaborating with internal staff and with other agencies/stakeholders, and maintaining an organized electronic filing structure.
- Communicate research and present briefings to various internal and external audiences and serve on state and federal councils, advisory panels, committees, workgroups, and teams by attending meetings and contributing to conversations and deliberations.

Conservation Biologist I/Quota Monitoring Biologist

Full-Time (40 hours)

NC Division of Marine Fisheries

November 2018 – May 2020

- Responsible for management and administration of the Quota Monitoring Program under the Commercial Trip Ticket Program within the License and Statistics Section.
- Ensure all relevant commercial fisheries data were collected, entered, and analyzed and quotas were closely monitored.
- Develop and implement disaster and economic relief programs by conducting research, submitting spending plans, collaborating with state and federal staff and stakeholders, and completing final reports.

Marine Fisheries Technician II/Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Field Sampler

Full-Time (40 hours)

NC Division of Marine Fisheries

November 2018 – May 2020

- Conduct MRIP surveys with recreational anglers at boat ramps, docks, marinas, beaches, and piers and collect biological and trip information on recreational catch.
- Explain scientific and fisheries management concepts to diverse audiences while out in the field and at outreach events.

Jason E. Rock
Division of Marine Fisheries
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
Phone: (252) 515-5533
Email: Jason.Rock@deq.nc.gov

Education

2009 – M.S. Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

2002 – B.S. Biology, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA.

Professional Experience

July 2024 – Present. Fisheries Management Section Chief, NC Division of Marine Fisheries

- Responsible for coordination, organization, management, supervision, recruitment, and administration of over 80 employees in six different offices for the Fisheries Management Section.
- Work with the Division Director and upper management to update strategic plans, policies, and procedures and develop legislative requests to accomplish research needs and initiatives.
- Responsible for project planning by developing timelines/deadlines, writing grants and acquiring funds, managing budgets, creating and assessing priorities, delegating tasks to staff, scheduling meetings, documenting conversations and decisions, collaborating with internal staff and with other agencies and stakeholders, and maintaining an organized file structure.
- Communicate research and present briefings to various internal and external audiences and serve on state and federal councils, advisory panels, committees, workgroups, and teams.

July 2018 – July 2024. Marine Fisheries Biologist Supervisor, NC Division of Marine Fisheries

- Project management, survey design, statistical analyses, report writing, grant writing, and fishery management plan development and implementation.
- Oversee staff, manage budgets, analyze data, and compile reports for all sampling programs in the Central District Field Office.
- Blue Crab biologist for North Carolina and responsible for annual update of the traffic light stock assessment and FMP development (ended March 2020)
- Federal and regional responsibilities include being the NC representative on the NEAMAP Survey Technical Committee and the ACCSP Biological Review Panel.

April 2013 – June 2018. Marine Fisheries Biologist Supervisor, NC Division of Marine Fisheries

- Project management, survey design, statistical analyses, report writing, grant writing, and fishery management plan development and implementation.
- Oversee staff, manage budgets, analyze data, and compile reports for all sampling programs in the Pamlico Field Office.
- Blue Crab biologist for North Carolina and responsible for annual update of the traffic light stock assessment and FMP development
- Federal and regional responsibilities include NC representative on the: SEAMAP Coastal Survey Work Group, NEAMAP Operations Committee, and NEAMAP Trawl Technical Committee.

August 2011 – March 2013. Marine Fisheries Biologist II, NC Division of Marine Fisheries

- Project management, survey design, statistical analyses, report writing, and fishery management plan development and implementation.
- Atlantic Croaker and Striped Mullet biologist for North Carolina
- Federal and regional responsibilities include NC representative on the: ASMFC Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee, ASMFC American Eel Technical Committee, SEAMAP Coastal Survey Work Group, NEAMAP Operations Committee, and NEAMAP Trawl Technical Committee.

May 2010 – August 2011. Marine Fisheries Biologist I, NC Division of Marine Fisheries

- Project management, survey design, statistical analyses, report writing, and fishery management plan development and implementation.

- Biologist responsible for Pamlico Sound Survey, Pamlico and Neuse Watershed Gill Net Survey, Striped Mullet Electroshock Survey, Estuarine Juvenile Trawl Survey, Commercial Long Haul Seine Fishery Survey
- NC representative on NEAMAP Trawl Technical Committee and SEAMAP Coastal Survey Work Group.

February 2008 – April 2010. Marine Fisheries Technician II, NC Division of Marine Fisheries

- Field tagging of finfish species using internal anchor tags, otolith removal and gonad staging
- Data management and quality control and inshore small boat operation and maintenance
- Use, upkeep, and maintenance of YSI, PIT tag scanners, and gill nets.

September 2006 – December 2007. Biological Scientist II, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, Fish and Wildlife Health Program

- Database management, data analysis, and preparation of reports using SAS and MS Office
- Fish health and fish kill investigations
- Participation in semi-annual offshore research cruises (10-15 days) using 65-foot balloon trawl
- Fish necropsy including taking and processing tissue samples for histological examination, parasite identification, and mercury concentration

June 2003 - August 2004. Fisheries Technician, Mote Marine Laboratory, Center for Fisheries Enhancement, Marine Stock Enhancement Program

- Construction and maintenance of closed salt and freshwater recirculating aquaculture systems for common snook, red drum, red snapper, and tilapia.
- Field and laboratory tagging of several fish species using CWT, PIT, VIE, acoustic, and dart tags.
- Inshore and offshore small boat operations and boat trailering.
- Use, upkeep, and maintenance of YSI, PIT tag scanners, acoustic tracking devices, trammel nets, gill nets, otter trawls, plankton tows, seines, and electrofishing.

Publications

Burton, Michael L., R.C. Munoz, J.A. Quinlan, M.W. Nelson, N.M. Bachele, B.J. Runde, S.M. Binion-Rock, G.T. Kellison, J.W. Smith, R.W. Laney, G.R. Sedberry, J.W. Morley, S.J. Poland, R. Brodie, L. Gentry, K. Gore, **J.E. Rock**, M. Johnson, M. Reichert, J. Flowers, and C. Collier. (2023). A climate vulnerability assessment for fish and invertebrates in the United States South Atlantic large marine ecosystem. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SEFSC-768. <https://doi.org/10.25923/f90h-1z90>

Schlenker LS, Stewart C, **Rock J**, Heck N, Morley JW (2023) Environmental and climate variability drive population size of annual penaeid shrimp in a large lagoonal estuary. PLoS ONE 18(5): e0285498. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0285498>

Li, Y., L.M. Lee, and **J.E. Rock**. 2019. Modeling population dynamics and nonstationary processes of difficult-to-age fishery species with a hierarchical Bayesian two-stage model. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, 12: 2199-2214.

Binion-Rock, S.M., J.A. Buckel, **J.E. Rock**, K.H. West, and L.M. Paramore. 2019. Importance of Sample Gear in the Identification of Trophic Guilds and Forage Species in a Large Lagoonal Estuary. Marine and Coastal Fisheries: Dynamics, Management, and Ecosystem Science, 11:393-413.

Bradley, C.E., J.A. Rice, D.D. Aday, J.E. Hightower, **J.E. Rock**, and K.L. Lincoln. 2018. Juvenile and adult Striped Bass mortality and distribution in an unrecovered coastal population. North American Journal of Fisheries Management, 38(1): 104-119. <https://afspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/nafm.10036>

Lee, L.M. and **J.E. Rock**. 2018. The forgotten need for spatial persistence in catch data from fixed-station surveys. Fishery Bulletin, 116(1): 69-74.

Olivia Wilms

St. Petersburg, FL | 904.707.9005 | Olivia.Wilms@myfwc.com

Professional Experiences

Research Administrator II, FWC-FWRI

December 2024 - Present Leads the Fisheries Dependent Monitoring subsection within Marine Fisheries Research.

- Supervises 11 direct reports with a collective team of over 100 staff.
- Oversees 5 long-term fisheries monitoring programs with the addition of at least 3 new projects in 2026.
- Manages budgets and spending for federal grants and state budgets totaling close to \$10 million.

Government Operations Consultant II, FWC-FWRI

April 2024 – December 2024 Improving the daily operation of state-wide research conducted within the Fisheries Dependent Monitoring sub-section with administrative skills learned during my previous professional experiences and fisheries knowledge gained during my education experience.

- Significantly decreased the amount of funds returned at the end of each grant by properly monitoring expenditure and communication with PIs to ensure that all needs of the project were addressed.
- Reduced turn-around time on key submissions like reports, budgets, and invoices to outside granting agencies by creating higher internal efficiencies and expediting the approval process
- Work with other FWRI sections to increase the efficiency of FDM procedures and align our methods with agency standards.

Board Member, Kids' Chance of Florida Board of Directors

Jan 2024 – Present Philanthropy position supporting students facing hardships through parental employment accidents, where I am responsible for representing the organization at conferences and ensuring smooth internal operations.

- First previous scholarship recipient elected to the board of directors for the Florida organization.
- Taking the initiative to incorporate a student vision into committee work to increase outreach and engagement.
- Inspired an individual to personally donate annually toward the scholarship fund after sharing my personal testimony of the organization.

Oil Spill Grant Specialist V, FWC-FWRI

Oct 2023 – April 2024 Supporting scientists state-wide with information gained during my master's education, where I am responsible for providing daily support to primary investigators and budget trackers which includes corresponding with granting agencies, budget monitoring, and amendment or new award requests.

- Confidently supported 37 different research projects totaling over

\$62 million in state grant revenue.

- Overhauled grant records to ensure proper monitoring while streamlining grant maintenance tasks.

National Student Ambassador, Kids' Chance of America

Feb 2023 – Present Personal position to support an organization in which I was a scholarship recipient of through undergraduate and graduate school. I am responsible for sharing my story during public outreach to ensure better promotion of the organization and provide key insights on how to better utilize resources to provide further student support for more scholarships.

- Ensured the continued support of many sponsors and donors by attending several conferences to create an interpersonal connection between people and the organization.
- Reinforced the importance of continued support from sponsors and donors by attending personal meetings, resulting in the continued support from several insurance providers and further discussion of exclusive opportunities for scholarship recipients.

Education

Master of Business Administration, University of North Florida

- Anticipated Graduation: Summer 2028

Master of Science in Marine Science, Nova Southeastern University

- Graduation Date: June 2023
- GPA: 3.90
 - Thesis Title: An Ecological Assessment of the Meso/Bathypelagic Fish Genus *Cyclothone* (Gonostomatidae; Stomiiformes) in the Gulf of Mexico, Putatively the Most Abundant Fishes of the World Ocean
- Committee: Dr. Tracey Sutton (major advisor), Dr. Rosanna Milligan, Dr. Mathew Johnston
 - Received over \$15,000 in merit and academic scholarships.
 - Important courses include scientific communications, biostatistics, and various marine biology and oceanography courses.

Bachelor of Science in Marine Science with Psychology Minor, Jacksonville University

- Graduation Date: April 2020
- GPA: 3.81
- Outstanding Student of the Year in Marine Science (2020)
 - Academic Excellence Award in Marine Science (2020)
 - Green Key – Top 1% of students (2019 – 2020)
 - ICUF Presidential Fellow (2018 – 2020)
 - Received over \$100,000 in merit and academic scholarships.
 - Important courses include honors leadership, honors computer science, oral presentation, and various marine biology and oceanography courses.

Craig LaVine
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
Fish & Wildlife Research Institute
Fisheries Dependent Monitoring
100 8th Avenue SE
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 687-6888
Craig.Lavine@myfwc.com

Education

University of Florida – B.S. December 1996

- Major: Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
- Minor: Zoology, Business Administration

Professional History

- Research Associate, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), supervise four staff and oversee FWC's participation in the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS). I also contributed to the design and implementation of the Florida State Headboat Survey, which I continue to oversee, including one field staff member. 2023-present
- Research Associate, FWC, Supervised four field staff and managed FWC's participation in The Southeast Region For-Hire Intercept Survey (SEFHIS). SEFHIS was the dockside validation component of the Gulf Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting program (SEFHIER). 2021-2023
- Biological Scientist II, FWC, Worked as port sampler for Southeast Region Headboat Survey. Duties included meeting headboats at the dock to take biological samples from the catch, as well as monitoring vessels' daily fishing reports for accuracy and vessel compliance. 2004-2021
- OPS Biological Scientist II, FWC, Started my career as a field sampler for the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey (MRFSS). I was soon promoted to regional coordinator of the MRFSS survey, where I made schedules, edited sampler data, and conducted a charter boat telephone survey. 1999-2004

Skills and Certificates

- Expert at Gulf fish identification and collection of biological samples, including otoliths, gonads, scales, and spines
- Certified Open Water I Scuba Diver-N.A.U.I.
- Coast Guard Auxiliary Safe Boating Certification
- National Marine Fisheries Service Certified North Atlantic Groundfish Observer



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Division of Marine Fisheries

Office 401.423.1920 | Fax 401.423.1925 | dem.ri.gov/marine

Fort Wetherill Marine Laboratory
3 Fort Wetherill Road, Jamestown, RI 02835

Coastal Fisheries Laboratory
1231 Succotash Road, Wakefield, RI 02879



August 8, 2025

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland St. Ste. 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear ACCSP,

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management is pleased to submit the following proposal for the FY26 ACCSP Request for Proposals titled “Black Sea Bass (*Centropristis striata*) Age and Growth Data Collection to Address Stock Assessment Needs”.

Please note that the highlighted text in the budget table and budget narrative addresses reviewer feedback that requested to provide what each staff member is going to be doing and provide percentages of salary.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Regards,

Nicole Lengyel Costa

Nicole Lengyel Costa

Proposal for funding made to the
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

**FY26: Black Sea Bass (*Centropristis striata*) Age and Growth Data Collection to Address Stock
Assessment Needs**

Total Cost: \$64,993.65

Submitted By:
Nicole Lengyel Costa
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Division of Marine Fisheries
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Jamestown, RI 02835
nicole.lengyel@dem.ri.gov

Hannah Verkamp
Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation
P.O. Box 278
Saunderstown, RI 02874
hverkamp@cfrfoundation.org

Applicant Name: Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Project Title: Black Sea Bass (*Centropristis striata*) Age and Growth Data Collection to Address Stock Assessment Needs

Project Type: New Project

Requested Award Amount: \$64,993.65

Requested Award Period: One year upon receipt of funds.

Program Priority: Biological (100%)

Date Submitted: August 8, 2025

Principal Investigator: Nicole Lengyel Costa, RIDEM, nicole.lengyel@dem.ri.gov

Project Staff: Julia Livermore, RIDEM
Alex Denisevich, RIDEM/ASMFC
Rich Balouskus, RIDEM
Hannah Verkamp, CFRF
Elizabeth Soranno, CFRF
Dr. David Bethoney, CFRF

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Proposal for the State of Rhode Island

Objective:

The goal of this proposed project is to collect biological (age and growth) data on black sea bass from Rhode Island to contribute to the stock assessment to improve age-structured models for northern black sea bass.

This project will address a recognized research need to expand biological data collection programs to support estimation of fishery length and age composition for black sea bass (ASMFC, 2023). The project will leverage and unite existing fishery-dependent and -independent studies to collect black sea bass specimens across broad spatial and temporal ranges throughout Rhode Island.

Specific objectives of the project include:

- Improve the quantity of age and growth data collected on northern stock black sea bass, thereby supporting the stock assessment and sustainable management of the stock.
- Establish a biological sampling program that will lay the foundation for improved assessment of black sea bass that leverages existing studies using a combination of fishery-independent (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Fish Pot Survey) and -dependent (Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) Black Sea Bass Research Fleet) sampling sources.
- Transmit black sea bass biological data to ACCSP and communicate results with stock assessment scientists and other relevant stakeholders.

Need:

Black sea bass is an important fishery species targeted commercially and recreationally along the east coast of the United States. As asserted in the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Biological Review Panel's biological sampling priority matrix, black sea bass is identified as a top priority species for data collection, receiving the highest total priority ranking for inadequate biological sampling (ACCSP, 2025). In recent decades, the distribution and center of biomass of black sea bass has experienced a northward shift, likely due to climate change (Bell et al. 2014). As a result, there has been a lack of adequate biological data collection for northern Atlantic black sea bass in particular, which is an issue of regional importance as this highly valuable stock supports an increasingly important fishery in these regions (ASMFC, 2023).

The black sea bass stock is divided into two subunits north and south of Hudson Canyon, and the majority of landings for the northern subunit occur in Rhode Island (ASMFC, 2023). However, only 20% of the portside sampling lengths used in the stock assessment come from this state. Consequently, there is a critical need to increase biological data collection for black sea bass not only across its northern extent, but also specifically in undersampled states, and to supplement traditional data sources through other means. Recognizing this need, the most recent black sea bass Research Track stock assessment report

included “Enhanced port sampling or similar programs to bolster the data that support estimation of fishery length and age compositions” as a high priority research recommendation (ASMFC, 2023).

Fishery-dependent data has become an important source of information that is used for many stock assessments and is a cost-effective approach to collect large amounts of information. To increase the fishery-dependent data collection on black sea bass in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern New England regions, and with support from the ACCSP, the CFRF and the RIDEM established the Black Sea Bass Research Fleet in 2016 (Heimann et al., 2023). The goal of the Black Sea Bass Research Fleet (hereafter ‘Research Fleet’) is to advance fishery-dependent data for black sea bass to help improve stock assessments using modern technology and a fishing vessel Research Fleet approach. The Research Fleet comprises citizen scientist fishermen representing multiple gear types (fish pot, lobster-crab traps, rod-and-reel, gillnet, trawl, and aquaculture gear) who collect fishery, size composition, and disposition data on their black sea bass catch using a custom data collection application (Heimann et al., 2023). Historically, the Research Fleet was leveraged to collect whole fish specimens that were used for biological data collection (e.g. diet, sex and maturity, and age and growth data) by the RIDEM and Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences. However, specimen and associated data collection were opportunistic and periodic, as there was no long-term, dedicated funding to support these efforts.

The Research Fleet has become a vetted source of fishery dependent data for the black sea bass stock assessment, contributing to age-length keys (ALKs) and discards-at-length estimations in the most recent Research Track stock assessment (ASMFC, 2023). Upon receiving the maximum allowed years of funding through ACCSP, the CFRF has received alternative funding to continue the Research Fleet’s fishery, size composition, and disposition data collection through at least 2029. However, there is still no dedicated funding to support biological data collection, such as age and growth information, on whole fish specimens. Age and growth data are essential to stock assessments and improve understanding of recruitment, age-specific exploitation, population age distribution, cohort tracking, and more. Ensuring that such data are collected with appropriate spatial and temporal coverage is also of utmost importance to ensure results are reflective of both the fishery and population at large.

Despite their advantages, fishery-dependent data sources, such as the Research Fleet, can result in spatial and temporal biases, as fishermen fish in areas and at times where they believe they are most likely to encounter fish of a certain size (Howard et al., 2023). Fishery-independent data sources are able to overcome such limitations through systematic sampling and, when used together, the two types of data can provide a more comprehensive view of a population’s dynamics. One source of fishery-independent data on black sea bass in Rhode Island is the annual RIDEM ventless fish pot survey in Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island Sound, RI, which could also be leveraged to collect targeted age and growth data.

This project seeks to leverage and unite fishery-dependent and -independent data sources to collect age and growth data on black sea bass specimens collected by the CFRF Research Fleet and RIDEM Fish Pot Survey to contribute to the stock assessment and ultimately improve age-structured models for black sea bass. Ultimately, the proposed project will help fulfill ACCSP’s mission of collecting timely, dependable, and accessible marine fisheries data and will directly address a high priority research recommendation for

black sea bass to enhance sampling programs to bolster data that support fishery length and age composition (ASMFC, 2023).

Results and Benefits:

This project will result in improved quality and quantity of age-at-length data for black sea bass in the northern region. These data will be used to inform the stock assessment and management of this data-poor species. Coordination with the NOAA stock assessment scientists for black sea bass will help address current gaps and sampling deficiencies in ALKs used in the stock assessment for the northern region.

This project also demonstrates a feasible and cost-effective approach for collaborating with the commercial fishery to collect commercial samples, and working with a state agency to collect fishery-independent data. Improved collaboration helps build trust between fishermen, scientists, and managers while improving the accuracy and credibility of the stock assessment and management plan for the black sea bass stock.

This project addresses a species in the upper quartile of the FY26 Biological Review Panel's biological sampling priority matrix, highlighting the need for additional biological data. It also addresses the following research priorities for black sea bass (ASMFC, 2023):

- Development of a reliable index beyond existing surveys
- Use of industry study fleet data
- Sex change, sex ratios, and spawning
- Spatial patterns in growth, recruitment, and mortality

Data Delivery Plan: Biological data will be transmitted to ACCSP via RIDEM. RIDEM is currently working with ACCSP to establish a direct data feed for biological data to the data warehouse.

Approach:

Commercial Sampling Effort

The PIs for this project are working in close cooperation with the lead fisheries stock assessment scientist for black sea bass at NOAA, Dr. Emily Liljestrand. Over the time series used in the black sea bass stock assessment, the only two commercial sources of age-at-length data for the northern region are from the NOAA portside sampling programs and the CFRF Research Fleet. The Research Fleet collected biological samples under alternate funding from 2016 to 2021. Dr. Liljestrand has stated that the CFRF data were useful for filling in gaps in the ALKs developed solely with data from the NOAA portside sampling programs and in some years comprised ~30% of the total commercial sample size in the northern region. It is expected that in future years, the number of samples coming from the NOAA portside sampling programs, and aged by NOAA fisheries will be reduced. With this expected reduction in sampling effort by NOAA, Dr. Liljestrand's analysis of assessment data has identified a target number of 400 commercial samples per year from the Research Fleet as being sufficient for still achieving the minimum number of age-at-length samples needed for the northern region commercial for the black sea bass assessment.

CFRF Commercial Specimen Collection and Delivery

Participant Research Fleet fishermen opportunistically collect fishery (e.g. gear, location, effort, etc.), size, and disposition data on black sea bass at sea using a Samsung Tab A tablet equipped with the On Deck Data application (app), a custom app designed by the CFRF. The app records and stores data at sea and uploads it to an online database owned and managed by the CFRF via Wi-Fi. For the purposes of this project, Rhode Island-based participants will still use the app to collect typical data associated with the Research Fleet on their catch, including fish that will be brought in as laboratory specimens. These fish will be tagged externally using a plastic ziptag with a unique identification number. The app will be updated to include the option to designate a sampled fish as a laboratory specimen and to prompt participants to enter the unique identifier associated with that fish. Fish will be kept on ice until they return to port, at which time specimens will either be picked up at the dock by CFRF staff or delivered to the CFRF office. Research Fleet participants will be asked to complete sampling sessions that include up to 25 additional tagged specimens for age and growth data collection at a time. Over the course of one year, the Research Fleet will aim to complete 16 sessions that include specimen collection for a total of 400 fish collected (25 fish/session * 16 sessions = 400 fish). Participants will be provided with an additional sampling stipend each month they collect laboratory specimens to acknowledge the additional workload for this effort beyond typical Research Fleet data collection. Tagged fish will be kept in the CFRF freezer, and once per month CFRF staff will deliver all specimens to the RI DEM office for processing. CFRF will share all metadata collected by On Deck Data associated with the laboratory specimens with RI DEM at the time of specimen delivery.

Fishery Independent Sampling Effort

Dr. Liljestrand also analyzed fishery-independent data used in the black sea bass assessment to identify the need for additional sampling. In the northern region, fishery-independent age-at-length data is supplied by the NOAAABTS, NEAMAP survey, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MADMF), and RIDEM. Over 90% of the data used in the stock assessment is from the NOAAABTS, NEAMAP survey, and MADMF. RIDEM does currently contribute a limited amount of FI samples collected opportunistically from the RIDEM trawl survey, but has the ability to collect additional FI samples from the RIDEM fish pot survey. The [RIDEM ventless fish pot survey](#) began in 2021 and is designed to capture scup, tautog, and black sea bass. A target number of 100 samples per year has been determined as adequate for ensuring comprehensive spatial and temporal sample coverage in future years for the northern region.

RIDEM FI Specimen Collection and Delivery

The RIDEM ventless fish pot survey operates in Rhode Island Sound and Narragansett Bay, RI from May through October annually. Unvented Black Sea Bass Pots (43.5" L, 23" W, and 16" H) are set in five pot trawls at eight randomly selected stations and four fixed stations each month. All trawls target structured bottom. These traps are baited with clam bellies and fished for a one-night soak. Black sea bass samples will be collected from the survey and put on ice until returning to the RIDEM laboratory for either immediate processing or freezing. Sample collection will be distributed both spatially and temporally.

RIDEM will coordinate with Dr. Liljestrand to prioritize length bins to sample in an effort to fill any existing ALK gaps.

Sample Processing

All commercial and FI samples will be processed at the RIDEM laboratory. Each sample will have length, weight (from CFRF samples only), sex, and maturity recorded. Otoliths will be removed, cleaned, dried, and stored for further processing. When processed, otoliths will be mounted in epoxy resin and sectioned using an Isomet low speed saw. Sectioned otoliths will be mounted to microscope slides with mounting media and aged using a Leica stereomicroscope with transmitted light.

All agers contributing data to the black sea bass assessment attend the same quality control and quality assurance ageing workshop annually. This will provide Dr. Liljestrand with precision and bias estimates across labs to inform the stock assessment.

Geographic Location: This project will be conducted by RIDEM DMF staff out of Jamestown, RI and CFRF staff out of Kingston, RI. Samples will be collected at sea on board a RIDEM research vessel or dockside from CFRF research fleet vessels.

Milestone Schedule:

Activity	Month											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
RIDEM Sample Collection	X	X	X	X	X	X						
CFRF Research Fleet Sample Collection	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Sample work-up	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Ageing Structure Processing				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ageing									X	X	X	
Data Submission												X

Project Accomplishments Measurement:

Goal	Metric
RIDEM Sample Collection	RIDEM staff collect samples from the fishery-independent fish pot survey
CFRF Research Fleet Sample Collection	CFRF staff collect samples from the black sea bass Research Fleet
Sample work-up	Length, weight, sex, maturity, and ageing structures collected
Ageing Structure Processing	Otoliths mounted and sectioned
Ageing	Otoliths aged
Data Submission	Age data submitted to ACCSP and NOAA

Cost Summary (Budget):

Budget Category	Federal ACCSP	In-Kind	Total
a. Salary			
Deputy Chief J. Livermore (2.5%)	\$ -	\$ 2,860.09	\$ 2,860.09
Principal Biologist R. Balouskus (6%/1%)	\$ 5,568.68	\$ 928.11	\$ 6,496.79
Principal Biologist N. Lengyel Costa (2.5%)	\$ 2,505.43	\$ -	\$ 2,505.43
RIDEM Seasonal Intern (10%)	\$ -	\$ 1,410.50	\$ 1,410.50
b. Fringe			
Deputy Chief J. Livermore (2.5%)	\$ -	\$ 2,069.18	\$ 2,069.18
Principal Biologist R. Balouskus (6%/1%)	\$ 2,646.81	\$ 441.14	\$ 3,087.95
Principal Biologist N. Lengyel Costa (2.5%)	\$ 1,185.45	\$ -	\$ 1,185.45
c. Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
d. Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
e. Supplies	\$ 600.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,100.00
f. Contractual	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<i>ASMFC</i>			
Fisheries Specialist Salary (18%)	\$ 13,963.14	\$ -	\$ 13,963.14
Fisheries Specialist Fringe (18%)	\$ 5,186.88	\$ -	\$ 5,186.88
Indirect (12%)	\$ 2,298.00	\$ -	\$ 2,298.00
<i>CFRF</i>			
Executive Director Salary	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 3,200.00
Research Biologists Salary	\$ 7,090.00	\$ -	\$ 7,090.00
Business Manager Salary	\$ 604.00	\$ -	\$ 604.00
Fringe	\$ 929.00	\$ 160.00	\$ 1,089.00
Travel	\$ 900.00	\$ -	\$ 900.00
Supplies	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Research Fleet Stipends	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -	\$ 4,000.00
Indirect (20.23%)	\$ 3,261.68	\$ 356.05	\$ 3,617.73
g. Construction	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
h. Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
i. Total Direct	\$ 53,339.07	\$ 10,325.06	\$ 63,664.13
j. RIDEM Indirect Charges (21.85%)	\$ 11,654.59	\$ 2,256.03	\$ 13,910.61
k. Total	\$ 64,993.65	\$ 12,581.08	\$ 77,574.74
l. Percentage	84%	16%	

Budget Narrative:

Description of budget categories and expenses for this project

Overall in-kind: 16% of the overall budget is being provided as in-kind contribution.

a. Salary:**From ACCSP:**

- i. **RIDEM Principal Biologist Rich Balouskus:** 6% funded position to aid in the dissection of 500 fish. Approximately five fish can be dissected per hour requiring a total of 100 hours or 14.2 working days of staff time; 6% of salary (\$92,811.26) for one year = \$5,568.68.
- ii. **RIDEM Principal Biologist Nicole Lengyel Costa:** 2.5% funded position to age 500 fish. It will take approximately 6 working days of staff time; 2.5% of salary (\$100,217.21) for one year = \$2,505.43.

In-Kind:

- i. **RIDEM Deputy Chief:** 2.5% funded to provide project oversight and staff management; 2.5% salary (\$114,403.40) for one year = \$2,860.09.
- ii. **RIDEM Principal Biologist Rich Balouskus:** 1% to provide shipboard processing of black sea bass during fish pot survey; 1% of salary (\$92,811.26) for one year = \$928.11.
- iii. **Intern:** 10% funded seasonal intern to assist on the project. Approximately 10% of six-month salary (\$14,105) = \$1,410.50.

b. Fringe:

Annual fringe benefit rates for employees vary depending upon the employee's pay rate and what the employee chooses for health care. This may include the following:

Retirement 24%

Deferred Compensation 0.4%

FICA 6.2%

Medicare 1.45%

Health care \$21,937/year

Dental \$1,132/year

Vision \$165/year

Assessed Fringe 4.25%

Retiree Health 6.75%

From ACCSP:

- i. **RIDEM Principal Biologist Rich Balouskus:** Total annual fringe benefits for the Principal Biologist are \$44,113.52. Fringe benefits for 6% of their time are \$2,646.81.

- ii. **RIDEM Principal Biologist Nicole Lengyel Costa:** Total annual fringe benefits for the Principal Biologist are \$47,417.92. Fringe benefits for 2.5% of their time are \$1,185.45.

In-Kind:

- i. **RIDEM Deputy Chief:** Total annual fringe benefits for the Deputy Chief are \$82,767.05. Fringe benefits for 2.5% of their time are \$2,069.18.
- ii. **RIDEM Principal Biologist Rich Balouskus:** Total annual fringe benefits for the Principal Biologist are \$ 44,113.52. Fringe benefits for 1% of their time are \$441.14.

c. **Travel:** Travel is not being requested by RIDEM but is being requested by CFRF. Therefore, the only travel requested is included under the Contractual category of this budget.

d. **Equipment:** No equipment is included in this budget.

e. **Supplies:**

From ACCSP: Supplies for RIDEM include two diamond wafering blades at \$300 each for sectioning otoliths, total = \$600. Supplies requested by CFRF are included under the Contractual category of this budget.

In-Kind: Supplies from RIDEM include glass vials for storing otoliths, epoxy/resin for mounting otoliths, cutting fluid used in the low speed saw for otolith sectioning, microscope slides used for mounting sectioned otoliths, flotex used for mounting sectioned otoliths, and slide boxes for storing sectioned otoliths. Total = \$500.

f. **Contractual:**

From ACCSP:

- i. **ASMFC Fisheries Specialist Salary:** 18% funded position to aid in the dissection of 500 fish and sectioning of 500 otoliths. Approximately five fish can be dissected per hour requiring a total of 100 hours or 14.2 working days of staff time. Approximately 20 otoliths can be sectioned per day requiring 25 days to process 500 otoliths; 18% of salary (\$77,573) for one year = \$13,963.14.
- ii. **ASMFC Fisheries Specialist Fringe:** Total annual fringe benefits for the ASMFC Fisheries Specialist are \$28,816. Fringe benefits for 18% of their time are \$5,186.88.
- iii. **ASMFC Indirect:** ASMFC charges an indirect rate of 12% for their contractual role for the Fisheries Specialist. The 12% indirect cost for 18% of the Fisheries Specialist salary and fringe is \$2,298.
- iv. **CFRF Executive Director Salary:** D. Bethoney, CFRF Executive Director, will oversee the project's administration, team communication/coordination, field

research, and outreach aspects. He will also directly assist with reports, outreach material development, and communication of project progress and results to the team and fishing industry. 1.0% of salary (\$160,000) for one year = \$1,600.

- v. **CFRF Research Biologists Salary:** The CFRF Research Scientists will be the primary individuals responsible for the fleet organization, maintenance, and support, as well as data management, communication, and analysis. They will also support the Executive Director in project oversight tasks. 10% of salary (\$70,900) for one year = \$7,090.
- vi. **CFRF Business Manager Salary:** T. Winneg, CFRF Business Manager, will carry out all the finance-related aspects of the project, including research budget tracking, invoice processing, administrative support tasks, and purchasing supplies. 1% of their salary (\$60,400) for one year = \$604.
- vii. **CFRF Fringe:** Includes a percentage of personnel costs for payroll taxes and worker's compensation insurance prorated in accordance with the percentage of salary paid from the program. 10% of personnel costs (\$9,294) based on 2023 benefits and historical analysis for one year = \$929.
- viii. **CFRF Travel:** Travel costs for project staff to travel to RI DEM to deliver fish (proposed 12 trips between Kingston, RI (CFRF) and Jamestown, RI (RI DEM) * ~31 miles * \$0.70/mile = \$260) and to meet fishermen at docks for sample pickup and technical support (proposed 20 trips between Kingston, RI and Pt. Judith docks * ~18.3 miles * \$0.70/mile = \$256). Additional travel costs for project staff to travel to NOAA management track stock assessment meetings (proposed at 1 trip between Kingston, RI and Woods Hole, MA (NOAA): mileage ~176 miles * \$0.70/mile = \$123, per diem = 1.5 days x \$86 = \$129, lodging = \$132, Total = \$384). Total requested for all travel for one year = \$900.
- ix. **CFRF Supplies:** Includes \$750 for the costs of at-sea research supplies, including fish tags, sharpies, bags, coolers, and ice for transporting fish. Includes \$250 for supplies for meetings and outreach materials, including mailings, binders, and posters. Total requested for all supplies for one year = \$1,000.
- x. **Research Fleet Stipends:** Research Fleet vessels will be asked to complete data and sample collection beyond what is currently completed for the Black Sea Bass Research Fleet project. Specimen collection sessions will include sampling, tagging, and bringing in 25 additional individual black sea bass for ageing purposes. Research Fleet vessels will be provided a \$250 stipend each time 25 specimens are processed and brought in, for a total of up to 400 fish over 12 months. Collecting 25 fish/session will require 16 sessions to achieve 400 total fish. Stipends of \$250/session for 16 sessions = a total of \$4,000.
- xi. **CFRF Indirect:** CFRF charges an indirect rate of 20.23% to cover costs associated with the general operations of the CFRF, including accounting services, legal services, maintenance of office space, liability insurance, payroll fees, phone/fax lines, internet service, board member participation, etc. 20.23% of total CFRF direct costs (\$16,123) is \$3,261.68.

In-Kind:

- i. **CFRF Executive Director Salary:** This project will overlap the FY24 Earmark Black Sea Bass Research Fleet funding. One goal of that funding is to investigate the long-term feasibility of including additional data parameters in Research Fleet sampling. Time spent on the BSB Research Fleet, including evaluating how long-term age and growth data collection can be incorporated, will contribute to the goals on this project. 1.0% of salary (\$160,000) for one year = \$1,600.
- ii. **CFRF Fringe:** Includes a percentage of personnel costs for payroll taxes and worker's compensation insurance prorated in accordance with the percentage of salary paid from the program. 10% of in-kind personnel costs (\$1,600) based on 2023 benefits and historical analysis for one year = \$160.
- iii. **CFRF Indirect:** CFRF charges an indirect rate of 20.23% to cover costs associated with the general operations of the CFRF, including accounting services, legal services, maintenance of office space, liability insurance, payroll fees, phone/fax lines, internet service, board member participation, etc. 20.23% of total CFRF in-kind costs (\$1,760) is \$356.05.

g. **Construction:** No construction is included in this budget.

h. **Other:** No other costs are included in this budget.

i. **Total Direct:** Includes \$12,506.37 to RIDEM, \$21,448.02 to ASMFC, and \$19,384.68 to CFRF. Total direct costs requested from ACCSP are \$53,339.07.

j. **RIDEM Indirect:** RIDEM charges an indirect rate of 21.85% to all salary, fringe, supplies, and contractual costs. 21.85% of total direct costs (\$53,339.07) is \$11,654.59.

k. Total:

- i. The total requested amount from ACCSP includes \$53,339.07 in direct costs and \$11,654.59 for RIDEM indirect. Total requested amount = \$64,993.65.
- ii. The total amount of in-kind is \$12,581.08.
- iii. Total project costs = \$64,993.65 requested + \$12,581.08 in-kind = \$77,574.74.

l. Percentage:

- i. The total requested amount from ACCSP (\$64,993.65) divided by the total project cost (\$77,574.74) = 84% requested from ACCSP.
- ii. The total amount of in-kind (\$12,581.08) divided by the total project cost (\$77,574.74) = 16% in-kind.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL FOR RANKING

Proposal Type: New

Primary Program Priority: Biological (100%). This project will be collecting data identified as a stock assessment research need for black sea bass, a species in the top quartile of the FY26 Biological Matrix.

Data Delivery Plan: Data will be submitted to ACCSP annually. RIDEM and ACCSP are currently working on upgrading the data load process between both agencies.

Multi-Partner/Regional Impact: This project is a collaboration between RIDEM, CFRF and NOAA. The project will collect biological data critical for the northern region in the black sea bass stock assessment. Therefore, all the state in the northern region, and the stock assessment as a whole, will benefit from this data.

Contains Funding Transition Plan: This is a one-year project. If alternate funds cannot be identified by the FY27 ACCSP RFP, this project may be submitted as a maintenance project.

In-Kind Contribution: In-kind contribution for this project is 16% as stated in the budget table.

Improvement in Data Quality/Quantity/Timeliness: This project will be improving data quantity and quality by collecting age-at-length data for the northern region of the black sea bass stock assessment. This data will be even more critical as NOAA port-side sampling and NOAA bottom trawl survey efforts decrease in subsequent years.

Impact on Stock Assessment: This project is collecting data for the black sea bass stock assessment and addressing stock assessment research needs.

Impact on Management: The data collected in the project will increase our knowledge about the age-at-length composition of black sea bass in the northern region. It may allow for different modeling approaches (e.g., sex-based modeling) that could impact overall commercial quotas for all states in the stock unit.

Innovative: This project is collaborative and cost-effective effort to address a multitude of research needs for a species that is inadequately sampled. Our approach is combining fisheries-dependent and fisheries-independent data to satisfy multiple needs. We are also working directly with the NOAA stock assessment scientist to ensure gaps and needs for age-at-length data are addressed.

Properly Prepared: This proposal followed the guidelines of the FY26 Request for Proposals and Funding Decision document.

Merit: This project is addressing a critical stock assessment need for and undersampled species, black sea bass.

References:

- ASMFC, 2023. Report of the Black Sea Bass (*Centropristis striata*) Research Track Stock Assessment Working Group. November 20, 2023.
- ACCSP, 2025. Biological Sampling Priority Matrix. March, 2025. Available at: https://www.accsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Attachment_VI_BRP_Matrix_Presentation_FY2026.pdf
- Bell RJ, Richardson DE, Hare JA, Lynch PD, Fratantoni PS. Disentangling the effects of climate, abundance, and size on the distribution of marine fish: an example based on four stocks from the Northeast US shelf. ICES J Mar Sci. 2014; fsu217. doi: 10.1093/icesjms/fsu217
- Heimann, T., Verkamp, H., McNamee, J., Bethoney, N.D. Mobilizing the fishing industry to address data gaps created by shifting species distribution. Front. Mar. Sci. 2023; 10, 1043676. doi: [10.3389/fmars.2023.1043676](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2023.1043676)
- Howard, R.A., Ciannelli, L., Wakefield, W.W., Haltuch, M.A. Comparing fishery-independent and fishery-dependent data for analysis of the distributions of Oregon shelf groundfishes. Fish. Res. 2023; 258, 106553. doi: [10.1016/j.fishres.2022.106553](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2022.106553)

Appendix A: Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae for Principal Investigators

Nicole Lengyel Costa

nicole.lengyel@dem.ri.gov

401-423-1940

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

RI Department of Environmental Management, Jamestown, RI, 05/10/09 – Present

Principal Biologist (Marine)

University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography, Narragansett, RI, Feb. 2004 – 05/09/09

Laboratory Technician/Marine Research Assistant I

RI Department of Environmental Management, Providence, RI, June 2005 -August 2005

Seasonal Policy Intern

EDUCATION

University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

PhD, Marine Affairs – September 2022 - Present

University of Rhode Island, Graduate School of Oceanography, Narragansett, RI

Master of Science Degree, Biological Oceanography - May 2013

University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

Bachelor of Science Degree, Biological Sciences - December 2005

The School for Field Studies (Boston University), Queensland, Australia

Rainforest Studies – September 2004 – December 2004

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Fishery Management Plans and Stock Assessments:
 - ASMFC Addendum II to Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass (2024), ASMFC Addendum I to Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass (2023), ASMFC Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass (2022), ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Stock Assessment Update (2024), ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Stock Assessment Update (2022), ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment (2018), ASMFC Addendum I to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden (2022), ASMFC Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden (2017), NEFSC Bluefish Benchmark Stock Assessment (2015), ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment (2013).
- Age and Growth:
 - 2024 Report of the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Fish Ageing Workshop (March 2024), 2023 Report of the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Fish Ageing Workshop (March 2023), Summary of the 2020-2021 Tautog Ageing Sample Exchange (September 2021), A Practical

Handbook for Determining the Ages of Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Coast Fishes (November 2020), 2019 Report of the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Fish Ageing Workshop (March 2019), 2018 Report of the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Fish Ageing Workshop (March 2018), 2017 Report of the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Fish Ageing Workshop (May 2017), Report of the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Fish Ageing Workshop (March 2016), Atlantic Menhaden Ageing Workshop Report (June 2015), Proceedings of the 2013 Black Sea Bass Ageing Workshop (December 2013), Tautog Ageing Workshop Report (May 2012)

- Schiano, S., Nessler, G., Collie, J., **Lengyel Costa, N.L.**, Drew, K., Latour, R.J., McNamee, J., Schueller, A., & Wilberg M.J. (2025). Trends in Atlantic Striped Bass Growth in the Mid-Atlantic, U.S.A. *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society*, 154:3, 262 – 277.
- Remick, A., & **Lengyel Costa, N.** (2024, January 9). Pilot observer program for Rhode Island State Waters Gillnet Fishery [Poster Presentation]. American Fisheries Society Southern New England Chapter, Storrs, CT.
- Smith, B. E., Collie, J. S., & **Lengyel, N. L.** (2014). Fish trophic engineering: Ecological effects of the invasive ascidian *Didemnum vexillum* (Georges Bank, northwestern Atlantic). *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology*, 461, 489–498.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jembe.2014.09.009>
- Smith, B., Collie, J., & **Lengyel, N.** (2013). Effects of chronic bottom fishing on the benthic epifauna and diets of demersal fishes on northern Georges Bank. *Marine Ecology Progress Series*, 472, 199–217. <https://doi.org/10.3354/meps10031>
- **Lengyel, N.**, Collie, J. S., & Valentine, P. C. (2009). The invasive colonial ascidian *Didemnum vexillum* on Georges Bank — Ecological effects and genetic identification. *Aquatic Invasions*, 4(1), 143–152. <https://doi.org/10.3391/ai.2009.4.1.15>

Hannah Verkamp
Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation
P.O. Box 278 Saunderstown, RI
401-515-4892, hverkamp@cfrfoundation.org

Education:

University of New England
M.S. Marine Science 2017-2019
Thesis: The nonlethal assessment of reproductive parameters in sharks: Case studies on blacktip (*Carcharhinus limbatus*) and white (*Carcharodon carcharias*) sharks.

Relevant Work Experience:

Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation
Senior Research Associate February 2024 - Present
Research Biologist February 2021 - February 2024

Research project management position working collaboratively with the Rhode Island fishing industry as well as state and federal fisheries management bodies. Responsible for management of the Black Sea Bass Research Fleet and associated extension projects, bay scallop research projects, and supervising assistant research biologist. Also responsible for managing outreach activities for all of the organization's funded research projects, including tracking deliverables and reporting to funding agencies

Relevant Publications:

Verkamp, H.J., Soranno, E., and Bethoney, N.D. (In review). Characterizing the composition of commercial black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*) catch and discards in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern New England regions. In Revision: *Frontiers in Marine Science*.

Verkamp, H.J., Heimann, T., McNamee, J., Jones, A. and Bethoney, N.D. 2023. An overview of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Black Sea Bass Research Fleet. 2023 Black Sea Bass Research Track Stock Assessment Working Paper. Available at: <https://apps-nefsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/saw/sasi.php>.

Heimann, T., **Verkamp, H.J.**, McNamee, J., and Bethoney, N.D. 2023 Mobilizing the fishing industry to address data gaps created by shifting species distribution. *Frontiers in Marine Science*. 10:1043676.

Verkamp, H.J., Nooj, J., Helt, W., Ruddick, K., Gerber-Williams, A., McManus, M.C., and Bethoney, N.D. 2022. Scoping bay scallop restoration in Rhode Island: a synthesis of knowledge and recommendations for future efforts. *Journal of Shellfish Research* 41(2):153–171

Relevant Presentations:

Verkamp, H.J., McNamee, J., and Bethoney, N.D. 2024. Empowering fishermen to fill data gaps for a rapidly changing fishery: The Black Sea Bass Research Fleet. World Fisheries Congress. Seattle, WA. Poster.

Verkamp, H.J., Huntsberger, C., and Bethoney, N.D. 2023. Augmenting an offshore wind farm monitoring survey to incorporate biological condition monitoring. Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society. Grand Rapids, MI. Poster.

Verkamp, H.J., Heimann, T., McNamee, J., and Bethoney, N.D. 2021. Using a fishery-dependent research fleet approach to characterize the composition of black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*) discards in the Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic fishery. Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society. Baltimore, MD. Oral.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

(617) 626-1520 | www.mass.gov/marinefisheries



MAURA T. HEALEY
Governor

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Lt. Governor

REBECCA L. TEPPER
Secretary

THOMAS K. O'SHEA
Commissioner

DANIEL J. MCKIERNAN
Director

Geoff White, Director
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22204

August 15, 2025

Dear Mr. White,

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is pleased to submit the revised new proposal titled "*Electronic Reporting Transition for Massachusetts Harvesters*" for your review. We believe this proposal is critical to successfully transitioning the Massachusetts harvesters to 100% electronic reporting in 2027. Ultimately, the work proposed here should result in improved data quality and data that become available to data consumers in a timelier manner.

DMF acknowledges the potential impacts this proposal has on the Harbor Light Software help desk that supports eTRIPS applications as well as potential issues regarding traffic to SAFIS applications. This electronic reporting transition could double Harbor Light's user base and undoubtedly will increase support call volume even with DMF handling as much of the support as possible. ACCSP has reviewed the proposal and indicated the growth does not cause undue burden to ongoing application maintenance and support. Appendix B of the proposal includes the letter from ACCSP regarding the potential impact.

Please address questions jointly to Anna Webb and Nick Buchan of the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries.

Sincerely,

Anna Webb
anna.webb@mass.gov

Nick Buchan
Nick.buchan@mass.gov

Enclosures: ACCSP Proposal: "*Electronic Reporting Transition for Massachusetts Harvesters*"

Appendix A: Principal Investigators' Curricula Vitae

Appendix B: ACCSP letter regarding potential impact to existing systems

Proposal for Funding made to:
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
Operations and Advisory Committees
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22204

Electronic Reporting Transition for Massachusetts Harvesters

Submitted by:

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
30 Emerson Avenue
Gloucester, MA 01930

Applicant Name: Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Project Title: Electronic Reporting Transition for Massachusetts Harvesters

Project Type: New Project

Principal Investigators: Anna Webb, Nick Buchan

Requested Award Amount: \$101,433

Requested Award Period: For one year, beginning after the receipt of funds, expected September 2026 – August 2027

Date Submitted: August 15, 2025

Objective:

Within the scope of the project, the following objectives and deliverables will be met:

- Successfully transition all eligible commercial harvesters in Massachusetts to electronic trip-level reporting by March 1, 2027.
- Provide an extensive repertoire of training materials to end users including but not limited to video content, user guides, in-person training, etc.
- Implement an enhanced real-time ticket-based auditing tool for error resolution.
- Reduce reliance on historic paper storage needs through a scanning and shredding program.

Need:

Starting in 2010, all Massachusetts commercial harvesters began submitting monthly, comprehensive, standardized trip-level data for all wild commercial trips conducted under the authority of their commercial permits to the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF). In 2011, all cultured harvest was added to the reporting requirements. Those individuals holding a federal permit with reporting requirements to NOAA Fisheries are exempt from reporting to DMF for those activities occurring on their federally permitted vessel. This 2010 change eliminated annual species and gear-specific catch reports that were collected for years, some since the late 1960s, and has enhanced the agency's capabilities to monitor catch and effort information in all Massachusetts commercial fisheries. It also meets the interstate standards promoted by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) through the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP).

Trip-level reports are currently submitted to DMF via paper or through Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) eTRIPS web and mobile applications. The trips submitted on paper require substantial review, data entry, and processing, resulting in a significant workload for staff. The process includes initial quality control measures, scanning and maintaining over 10,000 files yearly, and data entry of, on average, 61,000 trips per year. Post-processing of entered data includes additional quality control measures on entered data and tracking error resolution, contacting harvesters, data loading, and monitoring harvester compliance. Staffing the data entry role has also evolved over time and with changes to available funding. In 2021, DMF shifted from utilizing one to three temporary employees to hiring a permanent full-time employee of which 75% of their time was expected to be spent on data entry. An additional short-term temporary employee is often hired in the later winter months for three to five months at a time to assist finalizing a year's data entry, though due to lack of available funding, DMF was unable to hire such an employee in the winter of 2025. There is a steep learning curve to data entry and the high rate of turnover in this position often requires substantial additional workload closely supervising staff during their short tenure.

DMF has offered optional electronic reporting to harvesters since 2010, and the percentage of harvesters choosing electronic reporting has steadily increased over time (**Figure 1**). Mobile applications have been approved in Massachusetts since 2019 and can be used while onboard a vessel during a fishing trip and as such, work offline storing data to be submitted once re-connected to internet service. In 2024, over 50% of the 6,300 harvesters reporting to the state chose this method, our highest voluntary participation to date. However, only 41% of the positive trips submitted by Massachusetts harvesters were entered electronically in 2024. The remainder of electronically reporting harvesters primarily reported did not fish reports or did not follow through on their electronic selection and submitted paper instead. Thus, the data entry burden from paper reports on staff remains significant.

ACCSP Funding Proposal: Massachusetts Electronic Reporting Transition for Massachusetts Harvesters

Sections of the proposal identified to help with the ranking process are highlighted in green with a summary on page 13.

Sections of the proposal changed in the final submission are highlighted in yellow.

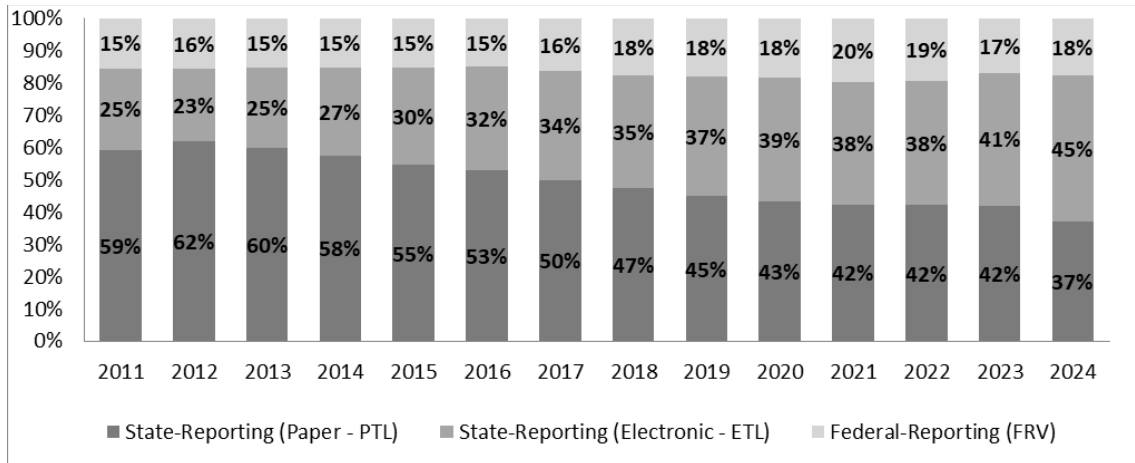


Figure 1. Percentage of commercial harvesters with reporting requirements and their selected reporting method, 2011-2024.

Both paper and electronic reporting have benefits and flaws. For paper reporting, the benefits include multiple rounds of review prior to loading data into the database for final storage. This review process catches most errors leading to cleaner data available for data consumers upon loading to the database. However, as described above, this review, entry, and load process is a high-effort process that persists on continuously reduced funds. Furthermore, the burden of data entry is not evenly distributed throughout the year. DMF requires trip level reports for a given month be submitted by the 15th of the following month, and all due reports must be submitted prior to renewing the permit for the next year. Upon renewal, three years of reports are checked for reporting compliance which can further delay a permit's renewal. In Massachusetts, those who hold 'limited entry' permits or endorsements must renew by February 28th or they forfeit their permit. Non-limited entry permits can renew at any time. Despite the monthly submission requirement, reports are often late due to the lack of an enforcement mechanism which results in harvesters waiting until they finish their season or renew the permit to submit their reports (**Figure 2**).

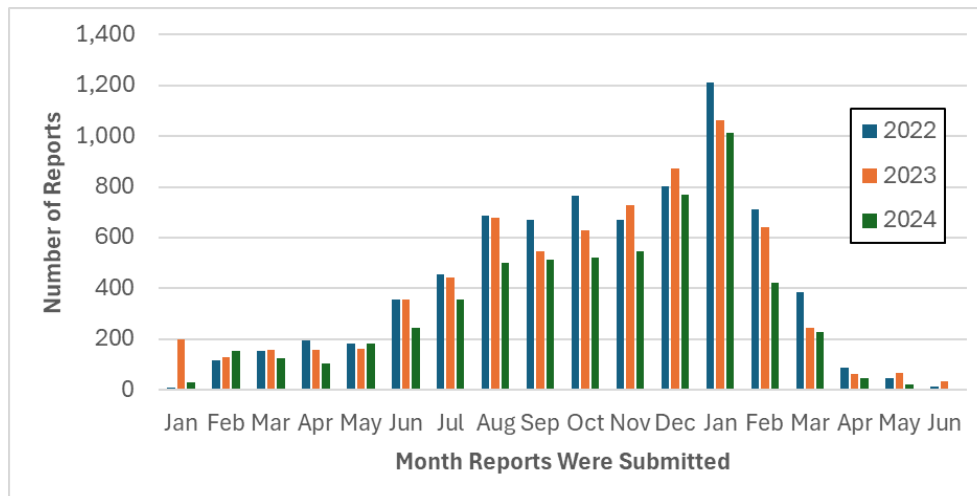


Figure 2. Number of paper reports that included trips to be entered submitted to DMF by month for 2022-2024 across the calendar year and the six months of the following year. Paper reports solely reporting 'did not fish' are not included here.

Layered with the delay in receiving reports is the data entry schedule, which over time, has forced a year's data entry to begin in mid to late July as the previous year is being finalized through June. This results in the data entry for a given year occurring between July of the reporting year and June of the following year, with an uptick between January and June. This also causes substantial delays between trip date and contact with the harvesters regarding questions on any given trip report. This bottleneck can be further exacerbated by any unexpected issues that arise during peak entry periods, funding lapses, or staff needing to direct their time to other projects for periods of time. Together, these issues cause a given year's harvester data to be unavailable to consumers until late summer of the following year. Such data consumers include stock assessment scientists, technical committees, fishery management plan coordinators, and state fishery managers, and these delays can cascade to further management delays or the use of less current data.

While electronically submitted trips have some of these same compliance enforcement issues and harvesters are still waiting to submit until the end of the year, reported trips are available in the SAFIS databases sooner than paper reporting as they are loaded directly upon submission. Most reports must be entered prior to the limited entry and striped bass permit renewal deadline of February 28th, thus, these electronically submitted data are available sooner than data submitted on paper.

For many years, the initial data quality of electronically submitted Massachusetts reports was inferior in comparison to data loaded from paper reports as electronic reports lacked the thorough staff review applied to paper reports prior to entry. Moreover, with the high volume of paper report processing, quality control, and data entry taking up much of the staff time, they are limited in their capacity to review electronically submitted data resulting in many errors propagated forward in time. Several large-scale audits, particularly of fixed gear, have been conducted to improve data quality, but errors persisted. Audits are conducted via database-driven methods, and the output requires further processing before sending to each harvester for feedback. This process is intensive and reliant on staff with significant database querying ability, often taking place up to a year or more after the initial trip occurred. Errors identified in this post-hoc audit are often repeated over multiple trips due to the lack of timely resolution; the corrections needed are expansive and may exist over multiple years.

In the summer of 2025 however, partners will be able to utilize a new data validation tool provided by ACCSP which should greatly improve the initial data quality of electronically submitted reports. This tool will provide feedback to fishers immediately upon entering a value that is outside of normal parameters. DMF did not push a full transition to electronic reporting prior to the implementation of this tool due to the extensive errors described above. In combination with the proposed improved post-hoc auditing capacity, improving the quality of data upon entry provides an opportunity for DMF to move forward with 100% electronic reporting and confidence in managing the post-transition workload.

Lastly, harvesters in Massachusetts may have permits from other federal and state jurisdictions requiring different trip-level reporting elements. A project called 'one stop reporting' (OSR) is underway that will provide harvesters with an opportunity to complete requirements from any governmental agency in a single trip report. Electronic reporting for all participating partners is necessary for OSR to be adopted. Massachusetts harvesters participating in fisheries that require additional separate reports to other jurisdictions such as bluefin tuna reports required by the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) and the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) would benefit from this streamlined approach.

Results and Benefits:

DMF originally gave harvesters flexibility in their choice of reporting method due to ongoing technological limitations in the available programs and known issues with data quality as well as to acknowledge the industry's lackluster support of the new technology in the early 2010s. In the following 15 years, technology has improved within the applications, and further improvements are expected in the coming years. Now, easy-to-use mobile and web versions of the free SAFIS eTRIPS applications exist for users, and the technology is positioned well to support a full electronic reporting transition.

Electronic reporting carries benefits to all harvesters that includes real-time access to their own trip information, the potential to improve the reporting experience for those who also hold permits in other jurisdictions through OSR, provides opportunities to reduce confusion found on paper reporting forms that are not gear specific, and improves data quality and timeliness for DMF, the harvesters themselves, and data consumers.

This transition plan comes after numerous successful implementations of electronic reporting programs in the Northeast region and aligns DMF with neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions. DMF successfully moved to 100% electronic reporting for dealers in January 2020 while the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) seafood dealers have been 100% electronically reporting since 2005. GARFO vessel trip reporting became 100% electronic in the fall of 2021 and Maine followed suit with 100% electronic harvester reporting for their lobster fleet (~6,000 harvesters) in 2023. Other offices such as SERO and HMS are also working through the regulatory process to implement electronic reporting requirements.

More efficient real-time data auditing programs will be developed within the scope of this project to identify and rectify errors in electronically submitted reports. This tool is expected to improve communication with harvesters and provide more real-time feedback shortly after trips are entered. Previous communication with harvesters has shown that errors are often a result of lack of training or awareness of available resources. Prompt communication regarding errors will reduce the frustration of harvesters about difficulties using reporting applications by including account set up and additional application training.

Ideally such a program prevents most errors from continuing to propagate forward ultimately improving data quality long term. Errors flagged by this application will exist outside of validations available in SAFIS applications and address nuanced trip reporting issues that are specific to fisheries and gear types. Additionally, errors flagged by ACCSP validations may be disregarded by harvesters, and this application will allow such issues to be revisited when necessary. In combination with the SAFIS front end data validations implemented in 2025, this tool should make electronically submitted data equal or better quality than paper-reported data shortly after entry into the database.

Ultimately, this program is expected to improve and streamline the reporting experience for the harvesters and for DMF staff. Data will become available to consumers sooner, and the quality of data will improve. While the transition may be difficult for some individuals, DMF will provide resources and support to smooth the transition.

Data Delivery Plan:

All data will be submitted to and stored at ACCSP following established protocols immediately upon submitting trips.

Approach:

DMF is recommending a full transition to electronic harvester reporting for all trips submitted on or after March 1, 2027. The rollout of such a program demands a thoughtful and clear process, and this timeline allows DMF to establish a transition plan that will work for all fisheries and all harvesters. Technology has been embraced by more industry members over the last 15 years. Most harvesters have far more exposure to electronic applications in 2025 than they had in 2010, and many more are likely to expect this transition and embrace the change. This shift in perception coupled with a clearly defined exemption program should make for a smooth transition in 2027. The implementation timeline will give DMF time to apply and refine available tools to meet our goal.

Objective 1: Successfully transition all eligible commercial harvesters in Massachusetts to electronic trip-level reporting

DMF chose the March 1, 2027 implementation date to accommodate paper reporting for the 2026 calendar year. Harvesters cannot renew their commercial fishing permit unless they are compliant with trip-level reporting requirements. By allowing paper through February 28, 2027, which is the limited entry permit and striped bass permit renewal deadline, this allows most harvesters to complete paper reports for 2026 before transitioning.

The new reporting program will have a clearly defined process to apply for an exemption to electronic reporting. Similar programs in other jurisdictions include exemptions based on age and/or disability, and DMF expects to mirror these programs. Any information, medical or otherwise, shared with DMF for these purposes will be kept strictly confidential and no details will be saved in any files. Additional reasons for exemptions may be identified and will be addressed on an ad hoc basis. The exemption applications will begin to be accepted in late 2026. Those harvesters awarded an exemption will continue to report to DMF on paper. Total exemptions are expected to be less than 5% of the total harvesters.

A lack of hardware will not qualify someone for an exemption. Harvesters will be expected to supply their own hardware, and any device, such as a smartphone, tablet, or computer with a modern internet browser, with available hard drive space to run the application and the ability to connect to an internet service will suffice. We expect to begin outreach for this transition prior to this award thus giving ample time to harvesters to acquire the hardware necessary to electronically report if they do not already have it. Approved reporting applications are currently all free to users.

Outreach regarding this program will ramp up during this proposed work with a heavy focus on the 2027 permit renewal cycle beginning in late 2026. Email drip campaigns and targeted mailings will be completed to remind all harvesters of the pending transition. Staff funded through this award will travel throughout the state to meetings to speak with any harvesters in attendance. Additional printed materials will be developed to include with permit renewal mailings and emails. Social media will be utilized to further advertise the transition plan.

Upon the 100% electronic reporting requirement taking effect, the current data entry staff will transition to primarily reviewing electronically submitted data and secondarily entering any exempted paper reports. This role will use the newly developed auditing processes to identify issues, contacting harvesters, and follow up on corrections made to the reports. These staff will be thoroughly trained on the new tools and have opportunities to provide feedback during development. This new role is well suited to the current data entry staff who have years of experience interpreting paper reports and contacting harvesters regarding reporting errors as well as providing customer support for the electronic applications.

Objective 2: Provide an extensive repertoire of training materials to end users including but not limited to video content, user guides, in-person training, etc.

Currently, staff spend a significant amount of time working with harvesters to tailor their reporting experience to their activities. Staff will continue to provide phone and email support during business hours to all harvesters reporting to DMF during and post transition to electronic reporting. Additionally, there is a 24/7 Harbor Light Software (Harbor Light) help desk available for eTRIPS application users. DMF acknowledges that this project will undoubtedly increase the volume of calls to this help desk and traffic to ACCSP applications. ACCSP has provided a letter regarding these concerns and is enclosed as Appendix B.

Currently used instructional materials will be refreshed during the lead up period to implementation of the program. A series of instructional videos will be developed for nuanced reporting scenarios identified as difficult for harvesters to report. Examples include trips with multiple areas fished, proper reporting of trap gear effort, and/or multiple species catch reports. Additional videos will be made available when needed to support data quality and training.

Lastly, in-person support including in-person training events throughout the Commonwealth and in office 'office-hours' will be scheduled during 2027 to offer additional opportunities for harvesters to receive hands-on support. These training sessions will include a general overview of electronic reporting tools and provide 1:1 counseling for any harvester requesting the support. DMF expects to hold at least one event in the Gloucester and New Bedford DMF facilities as well as one offsite location.

Objective 3: Implement an enhanced real-time ticket-based auditing tool for error resolution.

Improving the auditing tools available to staff to handle increased electronically submitted trips will allow for more real-time communication back to harvesters regarding questions and issues. Development is expected to be completed in-house within the Microsoft platform with built-in connections to DMF's Oracle data warehouse. As time allows, staff will meet with other ACCSP partners to discuss available tools and code to better understand how other partners address data quality. Lessons learned will be incorporated into products built for DMF. Staff time will primarily be spent developing a dashboard and output that feeds into a ticket system for staff reviewing data quality to use to identify trips in question.

Objective 4: Reduce reliance on historic paper storage needs through a scanning and shredding program.

DMF will procure scanning and shredding services as part of this proposed work to address a long-standing issue with paper report storage. All shredding will adhere to Massachusetts record retention policies. Future paper storage is expected to be minimal after this program is implemented.

Geographic Location:

Work will be conducted in Massachusetts.

Milestone Schedule:

Task	Month												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Objective 1					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Objective 2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Objective 3	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Objective 4							X	X	X	X	X	X	
Report writing						X	X					X	X

Project Accomplishments Measurement:

Project Goal	Measure of Accomplishment
Transition all harvesters without a documented exemption to electronic trip-level reporting	Prepare and execute an exemption application program; the remaining approximately 3,000 paper-reporting harvesters are notified and supported through the transition and beyond
Hold three in-person training opportunities at locations distributed throughout the Commonwealth beginning in early 2027	Events occur within the expected timeframe
Hold public office hours in the DMF buildings regularly through 2027	Events are advertised and shared broadly to harvesters
Update existing training materials	Materials are available to all users prior to March 1, 2027
Real-time auditing tool is developed with iterative feedback from internal staff users	Tool is robust and easy to use for internal staff users
Auditing tool promotes more timely feedback to harvesters entering data	Harvesters receive feedback on errors within four to six weeks of entering a trip
Paper storage footprint is drastically reduced	Scanning and shredding events occur reducing the paper storage footprint by at least 50% for 2028

Cost Summary:

Description		Calculation	In-kind	Requested
(a) Personnel			\$8,855	\$56,018
Anna Webb (Program Manager VI)		8% of time @ ~ 3 hrs/wk for 12 months	\$8,855	
Environmental Analyst II		25% of time @ ~ 10 hrs/wk for 12 months		\$27,258
Environmental Analyst I		12.5% of time @ ~ 5 hrs/wk for 12 months		\$9,749
Receiving Teller II		25% of time @ ~ 10 hrs/wk for 12 months		\$19,011
(b) Fringe			\$3,348	\$21,180
35.60% MA Fringe rate		Applied to personnel	\$3,152	\$19,942
2.21% MA Payroll rate		Applied to personnel	\$196	\$1,238
(c) Travel			\$0	\$1,020
Hotel stays for in-person trainings		3 staff x 2 nights x \$170/night		\$1,020
(e) Supplies			\$0	\$1,700
General Office		Mailing materials (paper/envelopes)		\$500
Tablets		2 x \$600		\$1,200
(h) Other			\$0	\$7,180
Scanning and shredding services		Services estimated at \$3000 for one-time event		\$3,000
Outreach handouts		Print ~2,000 training guides		\$500
Postage		Postcard notices 3,000 x \$0.56		\$1,680
Room rental for 1 training		Estimated at \$500 for one event not at DMF offices		\$500
Catering for 3 trainings		Refreshments/snacks for in-person trainings (3 x \$500 ea)		\$1,500
(i) Total Direct Charges			\$12,203	\$87,098
(j) Indirect Charges			\$2,266	\$14,335
25.59% MA Indirect		Applied to personnel salary	\$2,266	\$14,335
Totals			\$14,469	\$101,433
(k) Total Project Cost			\$115,902	
In-kind versus Direct Percent Contribution			12.5%	87.5%
Requested Amount			\$101,433	

Cost Details:

a. Personnel (\$56,018 Requested; \$8,855 Match):

In-kind Match: Anna Webb (DMF Program Manager VI) will oversee this project, coordinating with staff, industry groups, and ACCSP. Her time commitment may vary but will average roughly three hours/week over the 12-month period.

Requested: The Environmental Analyst II (Nick Buchan) and Environmental Analyst I positions will be directly involved in the planning of this project, enhanced outreach to commercial harvesters/industry groups, organizing and operating the trainings, developing training videos, print, and web content; assisting in the audit tool development, while also supporting harvesters during and after the (electronic-reporting) transition period. The Receiving Teller II position will work directly with harvesters for one-on-one support, in-person assistance, returning calls/emails, and providing feedback to the group for better user support as the project evolves. The time commitment may vary from week to week depending on milestones over the 12-month period but will average approximately 10 hours/week for the Environmental Analyst II and Receiving Teller II positions, and approximately five hours/week for the Environmental Analyst I position.

b. Fringe (\$21,180 Requested; \$3,348 Match):

Fringe and payroll charges are applied to full-time DMF personnel included in this budget, as approved by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The FY26 proposed fringe rates used in this budget include 35.60% fringe benefits and a payroll tax rate of 2.21%. The fringe benefit rate (35.60%) includes the costs for Group Insurance (16.99%), Retirement (17.60%), and Terminal Leave (1.01%). The payroll tax rate (2.21%) includes the costs of Unemployment Insurance (0.30%), Universal Health Insurance (0.06%), Medicare Tax (1.36%), and Paid Family Medical Leave (0.49%). Proposed fringe costs are broken down below:

FRINGE BENEFITS - FY26 Proposed			
	Rate	In-kind	Requested
Group Insurance	16.99%	\$1,504	\$9,517
Retirement	17.60%	\$1,559	\$9,859
Terminal Leave	1.01%	\$89	\$566
Unemployment Insurance	0.30%	\$27	\$168
Universal Health Insurance	0.06%	\$5	\$34
Medicare Tax	1.36%	\$121	\$762
Paid Family and Medical Leave	0.49%	\$43	\$274
Total		\$3,348	\$21,180

c. Travel (\$1,020 Requested; \$0 Match):

DMF will host three in-person trainings, of which two will be require overnight accommodations for staff due to travel distance. DMF is requesting hotel stays for three staff for two trainings, estimated at \$170/night (3 staff x 2 nights x \$170 each).

d. Equipment (\$0 Requested; \$0 Match): N/A

e. Supplies (\$1,700 Requested; \$0 Match):

DMF is requesting \$500 for general office supplies such as paper and envelopes for outreach mailings, as well as \$1,200 for two tablets (2 x \$600 each) that will be used for in-person trainings and DMF in-office assistance.

f. Contractual (\$0 Requested; \$0 Match): N/A

g. Construction (\$0 Requested; \$0 Match): N/A

h. Other (\$7,180 Requested; \$0 Match):

DMF is requesting \$3,000 for scanning and shredding services to reduce the paper storage footprint, \$500 for approximately 2,000 training guides used for in-person trainings and/or in-office assistance, \$1,680 (3,000 x \$0.56) to mail about 3,000 postcard notices to harvesters, notifying them of the electronic reporting transition and resources, \$500 to rent space for a centralized in-person training (the other two in-person trainings will be held at the Northshore and Southern DMF offices); and \$1,500 (3 x \$500 each) for refreshments and snacks for each of the three in-person training events. These costs are based on past scanning/shredding services, mailings, printed materials, and in-person events utilized or hosted by DMF.

i. Total Direct Charges (\$87,098 Requested; \$12,203 Match)

j. Indirect Charges (\$14,335 Requested; \$2,266 Match)

DMF will provide \$2,266 in indirect match costs applicable to Webb's personnel match dedicated above. DMF is requesting \$14,335 to cover indirect expenses for personnel requests for the Environmental Analyst I, Environmental Analyst II, and Receiving Teller II positions detailed above.

DMF's current federally-negotiated modified total direct cost indirect rate of 25.59% is applicable to personnel costs. A copy of this rate agreement can be provided.

- k. **Total Project Costs \$115,902 (\$101,433 Requested; \$14,469 Match)**
Project Cost Percentages: 87.5% Requested; 12.5% Match

Summary of Proposal for Ranking Purposes

Proposal Type: *New Project*

Primary Program Priority:

Catch and Effort: 100% - This proposal focuses on changes to the collection of catch and effort data from Massachusetts harvesters.

Data Delivery Plan: See outline on page 6.

Project Quality Factors:

Multi-Partner/Regional impact including broad applications:

Moving to electronic reporting allows Massachusetts to participate in development and progress towards OSR. This reduces the burden on harvesters jointly permitted in another jurisdiction and streamlines data access and review by agency staff.

Contains funding transition plan/defined end-point:

This is a one-year project with a defined end goal. The goal is to enhance the existing process to better serve harvesters, managers, and data consumers. Work conducted under this award will be able to be maintained without additional funds as support requests and additional development needs are expected to wane after the transition and initial launch period. Other funds will be transitioned to support the personnel on the grant after this work is concluded.

In-kind contribution: Please see the costs table on page 10.

Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness:

The transition to electronic reporting and in-season auditing will result in timelier access to quality-controlled trip-level data by managers, stock assessment scientists, and more. Current processes delay access until the fall of the following year and cleaning of the data continues far beyond that. Electronically reported data should become available to QA/QC earlier resulting in cleaner data available sooner.

Potential secondary module as a by-product:

None

Impact on stock assessment:

The improvement in timeliness and quality of Massachusetts trip-level reports will have a direct impact on when data become available to managers and stock assessment scientists. By providing quality-controlled data summaries sooner, managers and scientists will be able to use more current data in models and assessments.

Anna R. Webb

30 Emerson Ave · Gloucester, MA 01930
anna.webb@mass.gov · (978) 559-1948

EDUCATION:

Continuing Education:

Intro to Programming University of Massachusetts, Lowell; Fall 2016
Relational Database Concepts, University of Massachusetts, Lowell; Spring 2015
Hands-On Technology Transfer, Inc.: SQL Programming; Fall 2014

Graduate Education:

Master of Science degree, Marine and Atmospheric Science, *Focus: Fisheries*, School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, Stony Brook University, August 2011

Undergraduate Education:

Bachelor of Science Degree, Marine Vertebrate Biology, Stony Brook University, May, 2007

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE:

Program Manager IV, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Gloucester, MA
November, 2024 – Present; Supervisor: Story Reed

Ongoing Responsibilities:

- Acting Assistant Director for the Division and Program Leader for Division's Fisheries Statistics and Permitting Programs overseeing many tiers of employees' day to day operations.
- Oversee and provide support for harvester, vessel, and dealer data collection, entry, quality control, compliance, quota monitoring of various species, all special projects, and data dissemination to internal personnel, other partner agencies, and the public.
- Collaborate with other Division projects, state and federal partners, and ACCSP on various applications involving fishery-dependent data that are used to support fishery management.
- Act as the business project manager for EOEEA-IT built permitting and invertebrate sampling front-end applications and a liaison between end users and developers. Responsible for initial training and outreach as well as ongoing application maintenance.
- Manage and oversee development and enhancements to the statistics Oracle databases.
- Apply for new and manage ongoing federal grants related as the principal investigator.
- Present information compiled by the project to the public via public meeting forums.
- Chair of the Commercial Technical Committee, Past Chair and current member of the Information Systems Committee, and Chair of the SAFIS Outreach Committee at the ACCSP.
- Division IT liaison to the Department and EOEEA to support technological advances within the Division. Act as Division project manager for ongoing technical projects and coordinate modernization of legacy technology, including associated training and outreach.

Environmental Analyst IV, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Gloucester, MA
February, 2023 – November, 2024; Supervisor: Story Reed

- Program leader for Division's Fisheries Statistics Program with eight additional team members, six of whom are direct report employees.
- Oversaw and provided support for harvester and dealer data collection, entry, quality control, compliance, quota monitoring of various species, all special projects including the swipe card dealer reporting system and implementation of a VMS program, and data dissemination to internal personnel, other partner agencies, and the public.
- Collaborated with other Division projects, state and federal partners, and ACCSP on various applications involving fishery-dependent data that are used to support fishery management.

- Acted as the business project manager for EOEEA-IT built permitting and invertebrate sampling front-end applications and a liaison between end users and developers. Responsible for initial training and outreach as well as ongoing application maintenance.
- Managed and oversaw development and enhancements to the statistics Oracle databases.
- Applied for new and manage ongoing federal grants as the principal investigator.
- Presented information compiled by the project to the public via public meeting forums.
- IT liaison to the Department and EOEEA to support technological advances within the Division.
- Coordinated modernization of legacy technology used within the Division, including associated training and outreach.

Environmental Analyst III, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Gloucester, MA

November, 2015 – February, 2023

- Project leader for Division's Fisheries Statistics Project with six additional team members, including five direct report employees and additional temporary or seasonal employees as needed.
- Oversaw and provided support for harvester and dealer data collection, entry, quality control, and compliance, quota monitoring of various species, all special projects including the swipe card dealer reporting system and implementation of a VMS program, and data dissemination to internal personnel, other partner agencies, and the public.
- Collaborated with other Division projects, state and federal partners, and ACCSP on various applications involving fishery-dependent data that are used to support fishery management.
- Managed internal permitting and statistics Oracle databases and application development.
- Applied for new and manage ongoing federal grants as the principal investigator.
- Presented information compiled by the project to the public via public meeting forums.
- Acted as a supporting Division IT liaison to the Department and EOEEA.

Program Coordinator I, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Gloucester, MA

April, 2014 – November, 2015

- Oversaw the harvester fisheries-dependent data collection, entry, quality control, and compliance.
- Provide outreach and technical support to harvesters and dealers.
- Instituted an online video tutorial series for SAFIS users and other outreach programs.
- Participated in the swipe card dealer reporting mobile application project.

ACCSP Fishery Specialist (Coordinator), Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife-Marine Fisheries Section, Jamestown, RI: April, 2012 – April, 2014

- Oversaw fisheries-dependent, industry-supplied data entry and compliance.
- Contributed to quota monitoring decisions regarding closures and possession limit changes.
- Managed the research-set-aside program in Rhode Island.
- Wrote and submitted progress and final reports for ACCSP grants.
- Provided data to staff and external users while monitoring confidentiality issues.

SPECIAL SKILLS:

- Relational database management including MS Access and Oracle based databases
- Data mining large datasets for repeating errors
- Proficient in SQL in Oracle, Microsoft Office Suite, expert in Microsoft Excel
- Experience with SQL Server, R, GIS, HTML, Visual Basic

AWARDS:

- 2022 Performance Recognition Individual Citation Recipient, Department of Fish and Game
- 2020 Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service recipient as part of the CARES team

NICHOLAS C BUCHAN

30 Emerson Avenue, Gloucester, MA 01930
(978)491-6220 ♦ Nick.Buchan@Mass.gov

EDUCATION

Graduate education: **M.S. in Geo-Information Science**, Salem State University. January 2024 - Present

Undergraduate education: **B.S. Marine Affairs, Minor in Fisheries Science and Technology**, University of Rhode Island, 2003- 2007

EXPERIENCE

Harvester Data Coordinator, EA II at Massachusetts Div. of Marine Fisheries

Jun 2019-Present

Current Responsibilities

- Harvester data lead including trip-level reporting and vessel tracking, Supervision of harvester data team including data entry, quality control, and vessel tracking staff.
- Oversee the harvester data collection, entry, quality control, and compliance for Massachusetts and provide outreach and technical support to harvesters submitting reports electronically through SAFIS or paper forms. Development of manuals and outreach materials.
- Lead the implementation of vessel tracking programs at MADMF. Member of ASMFC committee for implementation of vessel tracking in federal lobster trap fleet and approval of tracking devices.
- Primary contact for ACCSP regarding application feedback and development for harvester reporting and vessel tracking. Participate in regular multi-partner coordination meetings with ACCSP regarding SAFIS application development and testing.

Project Coordinator Cod Industry-Based Survey, AB II at Massachusetts Div. of Marine Fisheries

Apr 2016-Jun 2019

- Deploy at sea as chief scientist for approximately 85 days per year. Supervise both fishermen and at-sea sampling staff, ensuring they follow survey protocols. Sample catch for biological information including length, sex, maturity, and age.
- Implementation of Northeast Fisheries Science Center's (NEFSC) Fisheries Scientific Computer System 2 (FSCS2). This includes development of database for proper collection by MADMF protocols, server networking and management, and installation of electronic data collection equipment. Training of DMF staff to use and troubleshoot FSCS and associated hardware.
- Database administrator for local Oracle warehouse database. Creation of materialized views that access multiple data collection schemas to make information easily accessible to MADMF Scientists.
- Writing of applications and reports for permitting to governmental agencies and creation of outreach materials to fixed-gear fishers.

Fisheries sampler, ABI at Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Aug 2011-Apr 2016

- Sea and port sampling of commercial lobster trap, gillnet, hook and line, and otter trawl fisheries.
- Support Acoustic telemetry studies including gear maintenance, tagging, and at sea deployments.
- Create, audit, and maintain Microsoft Access relational databases for all projects.
- Provide data requests for DMF staff as requested.

Study Fleet Field Scientist at Integrated Statistics, Northeast Cooperative Research Contract

Jan 2010-Aug 2011

- Provide technical support to study fleet commercial fishing vessels use of Fisheries Logbook Data Recording System.
- Review fisherman reported data for completeness and accuracy.
- Sample participating vessels at sea to ground truth fishermen catch estimates and obtain biological sample requests as required.
- Provide data requests from Northeast Fisheries Science Center Oracle relational databases for data analysts and managers.

Data Editor at Integrated Statistics, Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Contract

Nov 2008-Jan 2010

- Review Fisheries observer data quality including completeness and correctness.
- Develop species distribution and other data quality audits using SQL and ArcGIS.
- Provide feedback and data quality reports to observers.

Fisheries Observer at AIS inc., Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Contract

Jul 2007-Nov 2008

- Conduct at sea observations of commercial fishing vessels collecting data on effort, catch, gear, and economics.
- 250 sea days completed on various gear types including: longline, gillnet, pot, and trawl.

AWARDS

2017 **Citation for Outstanding Performance Winner**, Department of Fish and Game Performance Recognition Program

2016 **Citation for Outstanding Performance Nominee**, Department of Fish and Game Performance Recognition Program

KEY SKILLS

- Excel at utilizing Oracle SQL to create queries, views, functions, and materialized views of a variety of fisheries databases.
- Knowledge of marine fisheries developed through over 800 days at sea.
- Extensive experience reviewing fisheries dependent datasets and using ticket tracking systems to track errors.
- Real world experience deploying marine electronics and data collection systems on commercial fishing vessels.
- Ability to develop rapport with harvesters and explain needs for data collection both in person, over the phone, and in email.

Appendix B: ACCSP Memo



Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N | Arlington, VA 22201

703.842.0780 | 703.842.0779 (fax) | www.accsp.org

TO: ACCSP Operations and Advisors Committee Members

FROM: Julie DeFilippi Simpson, ACCSP Deputy Director

DATE: August 15, 2025

SUBJECT: ACCSP Staff Workload for Proposed Project

Project Title:

Electronic Reporting Transition for Massachusetts Harvesters

Project Type: New Project

Principal Investigators: Anna Webb and Nick Buchan (MADMF)

ACCSP Staff Workload Comments: *

ACCSP anticipates little to no impact on staff workload from this project. Coordinating with MA staff on outreach and other onboarding is part of daily activities and the expected surge in workload will be spread over time and within current capacity at peak. Additional users of the system is part of the maintenance of the program and already incorporated into the anticipated activities of the Program.

* Comments and opinions are based on evaluation of this project individually as opposed to all proposed projects as all projects have yet to be submitted.

Our vision is to produce dependable and timely marine fishery statistics for Atlantic coast fisheries that are collected, processed, and disseminated according to common standards agreed upon by all program partners.



Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200A-N | Arlington, VA 22201

703.842.0780 | 703.842.0779 (fax) | www.accsp.org

June 13, 2025

To the members of the Operations and Advisory Committees:

The FY2026 Administrative Budget contains minimal changes to the core request. ACCSP leadership continues to make concerted efforts to maximize the potential of the administrative budget by finding additional sources of funding and exploring opportunities to gain efficiencies. For example, the IRA funds (\$367,822) that were secured to offset the cost of modernizing the ACCSP technological infrastructure have been delayed and those savings are realized in this budget. These efforts have resulted in a minimal increase in the Administrative Budget compared to FY2025.

Attachment I of the FY2026 Administrative Budget request, the 2024-2028 ASMFC Strategic Plan (Goal 3), provides an overview of the high-level tasks and milestones expected for the coming year.

Sincerely,

Geoff White

ACCSP Director

Funding Proposal
FY26 ACCSP Administrative Budget

Applicant Name: Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Project Title: Administrative Support to the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

Principal Investigator: Geoff White, Director, ACCSP

Requested Award Amount: \$2,430,054

Request Type: Maintenance/Administrative

Requested Award Period: March 1, 2026 through February 28, 2027

A. Goals

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is a state-federal cooperative partnership between 23 entities responsible for fisheries management, and fisheries data collection on the Atlantic Coast: the 15 Atlantic coast states and the District of Columbia, two federal fisheries agencies (Commerce's NOAA Fisheries and Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), three regional fisheries management councils (New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic), the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). Partner agencies are listed in the original [ACCSP Memorandum of Understanding](#).

The Program was established in 1995 to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and the general public.

By establishing and maintaining data collection standards and providing a data management system that incorporates state and federal data, ACCSP will ensure that the best available statistics can be used for fisheries management.

B. Objectives

1. Manage and expand a fully integrated data set that represents the best available fisheries-dependent data;
2. Continue working with the program partners to improve fisheries data collection and management in accordance with the evolving ACCSP standards within the confines of limited funds;

3. Explore the allocation of existing Program funds and work with partners to pursue additional funding;
4. Maintain strong executive leadership and collaborative involvement among partners at all committee levels;
5. Monitor and improve the usefulness of products and services provided by the ACCSP;
6. Collaborate with program partners in their funding processes by providing outreach materials and other support to demonstrate the value of ACCSP products and the importance of maintaining base support for fishery-dependent data collection programs to state partners and their executive and legislative branches as well as to all other partner agencies; and,
7. Support nationwide systems as defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).

C. Need

Various state and federal fishery management agencies on the Atlantic coast collect data on the status and trends of specific fish populations and the fisheries that utilize these resources; however, it is often difficult to develop sound recommendations to fisheries managers due to inconsistencies in the way data are collected and managed. The various data sets often cannot be integrated to provide accurate information at the state, regional, or coast-wide level. In addition, the disparate manner in which these data are collected and managed places duplicative burdens on fishermen and dealers reporting to multiple state and federal agencies and regions. Due to rapidly changing stock conditions, within-season regulatory changes and catch quotas have become common fishery management strategies. Timely and accurate harvest information for both recreational and commercial fisheries is required to determine the need for and effects of these management measures.

The [Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993](#) mandated a cooperative state-federal program for the conservation of Atlantic coastal fisheries. Section 804 of the Act requires the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior to develop a program to support state fisheries programs and those of the ASMFC, including improvements in statistics programs. Since the mid-1990s, the ASMFC has provided administrative support for this coordinated effort to improve data collection and management activities.

In 1995 the states, the ASMFC, and the federal fishery management agencies on the Atlantic coast entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to develop and implement a cooperative state-federal statistics program that would meet the management needs of all participating agencies. All program partners signed the MOU for the ACCSP at the Commission's 54th Annual Meeting in Charleston, SC. Following signing, an Operations Plan was developed to outline the specific tasks and timetables required to develop and initiate implementation of this program. In October of 2016, an updated MOU was approved that made the ACCSP a program of the ASMFC. This governance change integrates the long-term and annual planning processes with those already in existence for the ASMFC and conform to policy as set by the ACCSP Coordinating Council.

D. Results and Benefits

The ACCSP developed and adopted 1999, 2004 and 2012 versions of the Program Design (now renamed [Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards](#)), which document the standards and protocols for collection and management of commercial, recreational, and for-hire fisheries statistics. Program partners developed and approved minimum data elements for collection of catch, effort, biological, social, and economic statistics. The ACCSP also developed standard codes and formats to ensure consistency of all data collected under the Program. These standards require periodic review and revision as the needs of fisheries managers and the state of the art of fisheries science change.

In 2000, the first version of the [Data Warehouse](#) was made available to the program partners. Since then, it has grown to encompass almost a 70-year time series of fisheries-dependent catch and effort data. Loading of biological data has begun. These data are constantly reviewed and updated as needed.

In 2004, the first version of the [Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System \(SAFIS\)](#) eDR (electronic dealer reporting) was deployed, followed in 2008, by eTRIPS (electronic trip reporting). This system is used to collect data from commercial and recreational fishermen and dealers and is now deployed from Maine to Georgia. SAFIS is an ongoing and evolving system, requiring support, review, and revision. ACCSP is currently in the process of redesigning SAFIS to modernize technologies, streamline data processing and validation, and increase partner flexibility with respect to data collection through the use of switchboards.

The ACCSP will continue to reduce duplication of effort by dealers and fishermen, make more efficient use of limited funds, promote education of resource users, and provide a more complete information base for formulating management policies, strategies, and tactics for shared resources. An integrated multi-agency program using standard protocols for reporting compatible information will lead to more efficient and cost-effective use of current federally and state funded data collection and management programs. The ACCSP will reduce the burden on the fishing industry to provide information in multiple formats to multiple agencies, in alignment with the coastwide One Stop Reporting initiative, and will provide more accurate and timely information to achieve optimum public benefits from the use of fishery resources along the Atlantic coast. The ACCSP will ensure the timely dissemination of accurate data on commercial and recreational fisheries for use in stock assessments and fisheries management through a comprehensive and easily accessible data management system.

E. Approach

The ACCSP is managed collaboratively by committee: the Coordinating Council, composed of high-level fisheries policy makers from all the program partners, is the governing body; the Operations Committee provides guidance in standards setting and funding priorities. An Advisory Committee provides industry input into the process. A number of other [technical committees](#) provide input into various aspects of the process.

Program planning builds on basic principles related to the goals stated in the ACCSP MOU:

- Development of data collection standards and the implementation of data collection programs will be done cooperatively, across jurisdictional lines;
- Consistent coast-wide data collection standards will be implemented by all program partners that include data on all fishing activities -- commercial, recreational and for-hire fisheries;
- Once achieved, data collection improvements will be maintained;
- These data will be loaded and maintained in a central data repository and provided to data users through a user-friendly query system;
- Program planning will be done collaboratively, by consensus;
- The program will be responsive and accountable to partner and end-user needs; and
- Focus on activities that yield maximum benefit.

Goal 3 of the ASMFC Strategic Plan (Attachment I) provides high-level activities to be conducted by ACCSP staff and committees under the FY26 Administrative Budget. As a program of the ASMFC, administrative support of ACCSP activities is funded through indirect charges of all ACCSP awards, including the Administrative Grant. Note that program activities and staff in support of the Marine Recreational Information Program are separately funded and therefore not included in this plan.

The ACCSP initially developed common standards collaboratively, by consensus, then began to work with program partners to implement the standards, according to a commonly agreed upon priority. All ACCSP technical committees, except for the Advisory Committee which is composed of industry and recreational representatives, are comprised of managers and staff of the partner agencies and set policy by consensus. Only the Coordinating Council votes directly on motions.

The standards, known as the [Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards](#), for data collection and management are developed and maintained by ACCSP Technical Committees, with review and oversight by the Operations Committee, and advice from the Advisory Committee. The ACCSP Coordinating Council makes policy level decisions to adopt the program standards. The full-time ACCSP staff coordinates all activities conducted by the ACCSP.

The [Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards](#) documents all completed standards and provides the basic framework for full implementation of the ACCSP by all program partners. The ACCSP is continuously evolving as technology and the needs of management and science change over time. Therefore, the *Standards* and supporting systems are always developing. Support for the implementation of ACCSP modules is provided by staff in various jurisdictions. To this end, funding is required to provide for full-time staff for all ACCSP activities, as well as for travel and meeting expenses.

The ACCSP Director, reporting to the Executive Director of the ASMFC, provides leadership for the Program, overall programmatic management and guidance, and is responsible for the day-

to-day operations. The ACCSP Deputy Director supports the ACCSP Director on operation and development of the Program and is responsible for managing the competitive ACCSP funding process, coordinating cross-team project management, and providing support for a wide range of Program activities. The ACCSP Program Assistant aids the ACCSP Director and ACCSP Deputy Director, provides staff support for program and technical committees by drafting, maintaining, and coordinating program documents, and publicizes the availability and benefits of the Program. The Data Team Leader provides guidance for data compilation and dissemination related activities. The Recreational Team Lead coordinates MRIP survey implementation and recreational and for-hire data standards. The Data Coordinators and Developers provide programming services and system support required to develop and fine-tune the data management systems, assist users as they access the system and provide quality management and control. The Data Coordinators also complete custom data requests, QA/QC existing data, maintain data feeds, and directly participate in data intensive activities such as a stock assessment data workshops. The ACCSP Software & IT Manager manages the information systems infrastructure and security and coordinates the development and management of ACCSP data collection systems. The Software Team staff provides expert consultation to partners as they implement new reporting, and licensing/permitting systems. The Software Team will continue to support development of SAFIS.

ACCSP staff will follow Goal 3 of the ASMFC 2024-2028 Strategic Plan during FY26, in consultation with all partners. Specific tasks to be accomplished during the period include initiation and maintenance of Partner data feeds from the commercial, recreational, and biological modules; incorporation of new entity and permit structures into SAFIS applications; maintenance of Federal Information Security Management Act procedures; and support of other partner projects by providing technical expertise as necessary.

The ASMFC has basic responsibility for the logistics of all committee meetings which support the development and ongoing operations of the ACCSP, including: the ACCSP Coordinating Council, the ACCSP Operations Committee, the Advisory Committee, the Recreational Technical Committee, the Commercial Technical Committee, the Information Systems Committee, the Biological Review Panel, the Bycatch Prioritization Committee, the Standard Codes Committee, and the SciFish Advisory Panel. Full-time ACCSP personnel staff these committees for planning of work, providing minutes and other documents, and other follow-up.

The ACCSP has helped foster an improved atmosphere of cooperation among its partners. The Program has succeeded in establishing coast-wide fisheries data standards that all program partners have agreed to adopt. Data collection and management systems will be developed and deployed and maintained as the standards and Partner needs evolve. Program partners remain engaged in the process, and the program has made substantial progress towards its goals.

1. Geographic Location: Atlantic Coast (Maine through Florida)

2. Milestone Schedule: See Goal 3 of the ASMFC 2024-2028 Strategic Plan (Attachment I)

This is a continuation from previous projects. Table 1 contains the base administrative budget amounts by year since implementation began in 1999.

Table 1. Administrative funding for ACCSP from 2000-2023

Year	Funding	Number of Staff
2000	\$681,451	3
2001	\$1,054,466	5
2002	\$1,178,677	6
2003	\$1,302,768	7
2004	\$1,298,319	8
2005	\$1,409,545	8
2006	\$1,380,598	8
2007	\$1,489,189	8
2008	\$1,447,620	9
2009	\$1,527,996	9
2010	\$1,509,899	9
2011	\$1,530,699	9
2012	\$1,509,555	9
2013	\$1,582,780	9
2014	\$1,718,447	9.5
2015	\$1,731,666	9.5
2016	\$1,623,360	9.5
2017	\$1,855,113	9.5
2018	\$1,854,249	9.5
2019	\$1,816,503	9.5
2020	\$2,012,744	11
2021	\$2,069,244	12
2022	\$2,224,272	13
2023	\$2,211,126	13
2024	\$2,260,327	13
2025	\$2,353,179	13

3. Cost Summary: The ACCSP requests \$2,202,732 for administrative support, committee travel and systems operations during FY26. The addition of the 10.32% indirect rate raises the request to \$2,430,054. The increase in request from FY25 reflects an increase in staff salaries and funding requested for travel due balanced with decreases in ASMFC indirect. Significant increases in Equipment and Supplies are not necessary due to the IRA funds secured by ACCSP staff.

The funds used for the ACCSP shall be accounted for separately from all other ASMFC funds.

4. Personnel

Program personnel funded through this grant, except the Recreational Team Lead, are dedicated 100% to the ACCSP and are full-time employees of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Note that personnel associated with the MRIP state conduct and 85% of the Recreational Team Leader are funded under separate authority and not accounted for in this document. Fringe benefits which include health care, vision, dental, annual, and sick leave are calculated at 29%. ASMFC salaries are kept confidential, thus only totals are displayed. Additionally, an agreement has been put in place with NMFS Highly Migratory Species (HMS) to partially fund the Information Systems Specialist responsible for maintaining HMS data feeds.

- ACCSP Director - Geoff White
- ACCSP Deputy Director – Julie DeFilippi Simpson
- Program Assistant – Marisa Powell
- ACCSP Software & IT Manager – Edward Martino
- Recreational Team Lead (15%) – Alex DiJohnson
- Software Developer – Jamal Oudiden
- Software Developer – Daniel Mestawat
- Software Developer – Kranthi Kumar Palla
- Data Team Lead – Michael Opiekun
- Data Analyst - Jennifer Ni
- Senior Data Coordinator – Joseph Myers
- Senior Data Coordinator – Heather Konell
- Data Coordinator – Anna-Mai Christmas-Svajdlenka
- Data Coordinator – Skye Thomas

Salaries and Wages	
Total Salary	\$ 1,501,207
Benefits @29%	\$ 435,350
Total Costs	\$ 1,936,557

5. Travel

Travel is broken down into two general categories; committee meetings and staff travel. Given shift back to having in-person meetings and supplementing with online meetings has continued, this year's request is level with the previous year for committee travel. In addition to staff travel to support committee meetings, staff travel is needed for implementation planning, data collection activities, outreach efforts, and information system development meetings with partners.

The Program funds fares to and from the meeting site, per diem according to Office of Personnel and Management guidelines and facilities costs for the meeting itself. (The daily rate per meeting includes cost of airfare or mileage, lodging, meals, and other travel related expenses.) Reimbursable participants include state fisheries directors and biologists, state and university scientists, law enforcement personnel and citizen advisors from Maine through Florida. Meetings will be held in various locations on the Eastern Seaboard, including but not limited to: Annapolis, MD; Norfolk, VA; Charleston, SC; Portland, ME; Alexandria, VA; Providence, RI; Tampa, FL; Washington, D.C.

The travel budget is based on an ASMFC average estimated \$325 per day multiplied by meetings multiplied by days multiplied by non-federal membership plus staff.

Committee Travel	Meetings	Days	Membership	Total	Staff	Total	Grand Total
Biological Review panel	1	0	15	\$0	1	\$0	\$0
Bycatch Prioritization	1	0	15	\$0	1	\$0	\$0
Commercial Technical Committee	1	2	15	\$9,750	1	\$650	\$10,400
Coordinating Council (with ASMFC)	2	0.5	12	\$3,900	2	\$650	\$4,550
Operations and Advisory Committees	1	2.5	20	\$16,250	2	\$1,625	\$17,875
Recreational Technical	1	1	15	\$4,875	1	\$325	\$5,200
Information Systems Committee	1	1	15	\$4,875	1	\$325	\$5,200
Total Committees				\$39,650		\$3,575	\$43,225
Staff Travel							
Partner Coordination	3	2	2	\$3,900			
Data Support (Stock Assessment etc)	1	5	2	\$3,250			
IT/SAFIS Support	2	1	1	\$650			
Outreach or Partner Training	4	1	2	\$2,600			
GulfFIN Coordination	2	1.5	2	\$1,950			
Staff Training	2	4	5	\$13,000			
Total Staff Travel				\$25,350			
Grand Total							\$68,575

Attachment II provides the FY25 schedule of the funding cycle and calendar of meetings, which serves as a tentative schedule for FY26.

6. Supplies

Supply costs include supplies not covered by the ASMFC indirect. This includes ACCSP specific materials for outreach, smaller information systems items such as network switches and cables.

Supplies	
Misc Hardware (cables, network switches, etc)	\$4,600
Backup Tapes	\$1,000
Total	\$5,600

7. Equipment

ACCSP maintains several large server systems and related hardware in support of the Data Warehouse, website, SAFIS, and administrative functions. These systems previously have had a 5-year life cycle after which they require upgrade or replacement. While ACCSP has historically decreased budget and extended life of servers, there is now a need to shorten refresh cycle to 3-years. This will allow for more capable hardware to meet increasing data flow needs as well as improve performance and support, results in less technical debt.

Included in the costs are normal life cycle replacements of laptop systems, assuming replacement of three (3) systems annually. Costs are based upon current market surveys and an estimate of our needs. In FY26, we have been able to reduce these costs to previous levels because we caught up on server replacements.

Equipment	
Infrastructure Replacement of one server	\$ 10,000
Desktop/Laptop Systems	\$ 6,000
Total	\$ 16,000

8. Other Costs

Hardware and software support are supplied by several different vendors and includes costs associated with licensing and maintenance fees (such as *Oracle* licensing).

The Program maintains a high-speed internet connection and associated infrastructure in support of the server systems. The primary internet connection is covered by ASMFC. The second connection, using an entirely different technology and provider provides redundancy to the primary connection in case of failure. The system is configured to automatically fail over in the event of a failure of the primary internet connection. A previously maintained ACCSP funded connection dedicated to the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO)

to provide full time secure connectivity requested by the Region has been replaced with a VPN connection through NOAA's OCIO office. Coordination of ACCSP with the OCIO has resulted in a permanent decrease in costs in this area by about \$10,000.

Outside vendors include Hewlett Packard for systems hardware and software support; Oracle for database management systems support; DLT Solutions and Trident Solutions for hardware support. All pricing is based on the GSA schedule.

Software maintenance and development workload at times exceeds staff's resources. Contract services will be utilized to provide services that staff may be unable to perform.

E-Reporting Support

Funds are requested for electronic reporting outreach and support activities. Interest among state partners and harvesters is continually rising and a steady stream of new users are adopting the system where agencies will accept electronic reports through SAFIS. SAFIS eTrips in both the mobile and on-line versions are likely to be the top applications used by commercial harvesters in the Southeast as voluntary electronic reporting for commercial harvesters is rolled out. This is especially true as eTRIPS is the only application on the east coast that is considered compliant with the One Stop Reporting (OSR) requirements. In addition, most trips will be reported to the SAFIS system (via API) regardless of the tool selected.

Funds requested include both costs associated with initial deployment and ongoing support. Initial startup costs include, but are not limited to, in-person and virtual training workshops for harvesters and partner agency personnel and published training guides and videos that will be available via the ACCSP website. ACCSP continues to contract for help desk support for SAFIS which includes 24/7 helpdesk support, a toll-free number to contact support personnel, and a helpdesk ticketing program designed to keep track of all requests and provide feedback to the Program. The ACCSP Director and ASMFC Executive Director have secured external funding to support the help desk and FISMA costs in FY2026.

Other Expenses	
Software Support	\$60,000
Hardware Support	\$11,000
Communications/Internet Connectivity	\$12,500
Outreach Materials	\$2,500
Software Development	\$90,000
Help Desk Support	\$0
Total	\$176,000

Budget Summary

Budget Summary	2026
Personnel	\$1,501,207
Fringe Benefits	\$435,350
Travel	\$68,575
Equipment	\$16,000
Supplies	\$5,600
Other	\$176,000
Total Program	\$2,202,732
ASMFC Overhead (10.32%)	\$227,322
Total Proposal	\$2,430,054

Resources actively sought to support ACCSP activities in addition to the Administrative Grant

2025-2026 Support	Coverage	Funding Expected
IRA proposal (FIS) (RESCINDED)	Modernization of ACCSP Technological Infrastructure	\$367,822
HMS	Partial Data Analyst	\$40,000
NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology	ACCSP SAFIS Help Desk and FISMA Support	\$215,000
MRIP	State Conduct of MRIP APAIS, FHTS ME-GA, and additional surveys in some states (LPIS in ME, Catch Cards in MD & NC, and LPBS in NC). Includes Recreational Team Staff (3).	Total Grant: \$5,912,000 ACCSP: \$540,305

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

Five-Year Strategic Plan 2024-2028



*The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources
as assets which it must turn over to the next generation
increased and not impaired in value.*

Theodore Roosevelt

Introduction

Each state has a fundamental responsibility to safeguard the public trust with respect to its natural resources. Fishery managers are faced with many challenges in carrying out that responsibility. Living marine resources inhabit ecosystems that cross state and federal jurisdictions. Thus, no state, by itself, can effectively protect the interests of its citizens. Each state must work with its sister states and the federal government to conserve and manage natural resources.

Beginning in the late 1930s, the 15 Atlantic coastal states from Maine to Florida took steps to develop cooperative mechanisms to define and achieve their mutual interests in coastal fisheries. The most notable of these was their commitment to form the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) in 1942, and to work together through the Commission to promote the conservation and management of shared marine fishery resources. Over the years, the Commission has remained an effective forum for fishery managers to pursue concerted management actions. Through the Commission, states cooperate in a broad range of programs including interstate fisheries management, fisheries science, fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data collection and management, habitat conservation, and law enforcement.

Congress has long recognized the critical role of the states and the need to support their mutual efforts. Most notably, it enacted the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (Atlantic Coastal Act) in 1993, which built on the success of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act of 1984. Acknowledging that no single governmental entity has exclusive management authority for Atlantic coastal fishery resources, the Atlantic Coastal Act recognizes the states' responsibility for cooperative fisheries management through the Commission. The Atlantic Coastal Act charges all Atlantic states with implementing coastal fishery management plans that will safeguard the future of Atlantic coastal fisheries in the interest of both fishermen and the nation.

Accepting these challenges and maintaining their mutual commitment to success, the Atlantic coastal states have adopted this five-year Strategic Plan. The states recognize circumstances today make the work of the Commission more important than ever before. The Strategic Plan articulates the mission, vision, goals, and objectives needed to accomplish the Commission's mission. It serves as the basis for annual action planning, whereby Commissioners identify the highest priority issues and activities to be addressed in the upcoming year. With the Commission currently coordinating the management of 27 species/species complexes, finite staff time, Commissioner time and funding, as well as a myriad of other factors impacting marine resources (e.g., ocean conditions, protected species interactions, offshore energy, and aquaculture), Commissioners recognize the absolute need to prioritize activities, dedicating staff time and resources where they are needed most and addressing less pressing issues as resources allow. Efforts will be made to balance the competing needs of stability/predictability in fisheries management and the necessity for adaptability to respond to fishery and environmental conditions. A key to prioritizing issues and maximizing

efficiencies will be working closely with the three East Coast Regional Fishery Management Councils, NOAA Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Geological Survey.

Mission

The Commission's mission, as stated in its 1942 Compact, is:

To promote the better utilization of the fisheries, marine, shell and anadromous, of the Atlantic seaboard by the development of a joint program for the promotion and protection of such fisheries, and by the prevention of physical waste of the fisheries from any cause.

The mission grounds the Commission in history. It reminds every one of the Commission's sense of purpose that has been in place for over 82 years. The constantly changing physical, political, social, and economic environments led the Commission to restate the mission in more modern terms:

To promote cooperative management of marine, shell and diadromous fisheries of the Atlantic coast of the United States by the protection and enhancement of such fisheries, and by the avoidance of physical waste of the fisheries from any cause.

The mission and nature of the Commission as a mutual interstate body incorporate several guiding principles. They include:

- States are sovereign entities, each having its own laws and responsibilities for managing fishery resources within its jurisdiction
- States serve the broad public interest and represent the common good
- Multi-state resource management is complex and dependent upon cooperative efforts by all states involved
- The Commission provides a critical sounding board on issues requiring cross-jurisdictional action, coordinating cooperation, and collaboration among the states and federal government, including NOAA Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Geological Survey.

Vision

The long-term vision of the Commission is:

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Values

The Commission and its member states have adopted the following values to guide its operations and activities. These values affirm the Commission's commitment to sustainable fisheries management for the benefit of all fisheries participants and coastal communities. They also acknowledge the growing importance of managing fisheries in a more holistic and adaptive way, seeking solutions to cross-cutting resource issues that lead to long-term ecological and socioeconomic sustainability.

- Effective stewardship of marine resources through strong partnerships
- Decisions based on sound science
- Long-term ecological sustainability
- Transparency and accountability in all actions
- Timely response to new information through adaptive management
- Balancing resource conservation with the economic success of coastal communities
- Efficient use of time and fiscal resources
- Work cooperatively with honesty, integrity, and fairness

Driving Forces

The Commission and its actions are influenced by a multitude of factors. These factors are constantly evolving and will most likely change over the time period of this Strategic Plan. However, the most pressing factors affecting the Commission today are the state of the marine environment, fisheries, and coastal communities; resource allocation; the quality and quantity of scientific information; competing ocean uses; a growing need to address ecosystem functions; and interactions between fisheries and protected species. The Strategic Plan, through its goals and broad objectives, will seek to address each of these issues over the next five years.

The Marine Environment

Fluctuating ocean temperatures, sea level rise, and ocean acidification affect nearly every facet of fisheries resources and management at the state, interstate, and federal levels. Potential impacts to marine species include degraded water quality, altered prey and habitat availability, susceptibility to disease, changing migration patterns, and changes to spawning and reproductive potential. It is often difficult for fisheries stock assessments and management to keep pace with changes in distribution and productivity of fishery stocks. Several Commission species, such as northern shrimp, American lobster, Atlantic cobia, Atlantic croaker, Atlantic striped bass, Spanish mackerel, black sea bass, and summer flounder are already responding to changes in the ocean. In the case of northern shrimp and American lobster, current ocean temperatures have created inhospitable environments for reproduction and survivability in some areas. For cobia, black sea bass, and summer flounder, these factors have contributed to altered species distributions, with some species expanding their ranges and others moving into deeper and/or more northern waters to stay within preferred temperature ranges. Where shifts are occurring, the Commission may need to

reconsider state-by-state allocation schemes and make adjustments to our fishery management plans (FMPs). For other species depleted due to factors other than fishing mortality (e.g., habitat degradation and availability, predation), the states will need to explore steps to aid in species recovery. And, if a stock's viability is compromised, Commission resources and efforts should be shifted to other species that can be rebuilt or sustainably maintained.

Since 2021, the Commission and other marine fishery management organizations along the US East Coast have been exploring governance and management issues related to evolving ocean conditions and fishery stock distributions. This effort recognizes the need to plan for how fishery management organizations and coastal communities can best adapt to environmental changes in a thoughtful and deliberate way. Over the span of this Strategic Plan and beyond, the Commission and other East Coast marine fishery management organizations will be prioritizing actions around three overarching themes of cross-jurisdictional governance; managing under increased uncertainty; and data sources and partnerships to plan for possible future outcomes.

Allocation

Resource allocation among the states and between various user groups will continue to be an important issue over the next five years. Many of the Commission FMPs divvy up the available harvestable resource through various types of allocation schemes, such as by state, region, season, or gear type. The changing distribution of many species has further complicated the issue of resource allocation with traditional allocation schemes being challenged and a finite amount of fishery resources to be shared. Discussion may be difficult and divisive, with some states (and their stakeholders) wanting to maintain their historic (traditional) allocations, while others are seeking a greater share of the resource given increased abundance and availability in their waters. States will need to seek innovative ways to reallocate species so that collectively all states feel their needs are met. What will be required to successfully navigate these discussions and decisions is the commitment of the states to work through the issues with honesty, integrity, and fairness, seeking outcomes that balance the needs of the states and their stakeholders with the ever-changing realities of shifting resource abundance and availability.

Science as the Foundation

Accurate and timely scientific information form the basis of the Commission's fisheries management process. Continued investments in the collection and management of fishery-dependent and -independent data remain a high priority for the Commission and its member states. The challenge will be to maintain and expand data collection efforts in the face of shrinking state and federal budgets. Past and current investments by state, regional and federal partners have established the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) as the principal source of marine fishery statistics for the Atlantic coast. State and regional fishery-independent data collection programs, in combination with fishery statistics, provide the scientific foundation for stock assessments. Many data collection programs will continue to be strained by budget restrictions, scientists' workload capacities, and competing priorities. The

Commission remains committed to pursuing long-term support for research surveys and monitoring programs that are critical to informing management decisions and resource sustainability.

Ecosystem Functions

Nationally, there has been a growing demand for fisheries managers to address broader ecosystem functions such as predator-prey interactions and environmental factors during their fisheries management planning. Ecosystem science has improved in recent years, though the challenges of comprehensive data collection continue. While the majority of the Commission's species are managed and assessed on a single species basis, there have been significant advancements in the development and use of ecological reference points for Atlantic menhaden management. Horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin are also managed in an ecosystem context to account for the forage needs of migratory shorebirds. The Commission remains committed to seeking ecological sustainability over the long-term through continuing its work on multispecies assessment modeling and the development of ecosystem-based reference points in its fisheries management planning process.

Competing Ocean Uses

Marine spatial planning has become an increasingly popular method of balancing the growing demands on valuable ocean resources. More specifically, the competing interests of commercial and recreational fishing, offshore energy development, aquaculture, marine transportation, offshore oil exploration and drilling, military needs, and habitat restoration are all components that must be integrated into successful ocean use policies. The Commission has always emphasized cooperative management with our federal partners; however, the states' authorities in their marine jurisdictions must be preserved and respected. The Commission will continue to prioritize the successful operation of its fisheries, but it will be imperative to work closely with federal, state, and local governments on emerging ocean use conflicts as they diversify into the future.

Protected Species

Like coastal fishery resources, protected species, such as marine mammals, sea turtles, and listed and candidate fish species, traverse both state and federal waters. The protections afforded these species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act can play a significant role in the management and prosecution of Atlantic coastal fisheries. The Commission and the states have a long history of supporting our federal partners to minimize interactions with and bycatch of marine mammals and sea turtles. The listing of Atlantic sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act has added a whole new level of complexity in the ability of the Commission's member states to carry out their stewardship responsibilities for this important diadromous species. The species spends the majority of its life in state waters and depend on estuarine and riverine habitat for their survival. Listing has the potential to jeopardize the states' ability to effectively monitor and assess stock condition, as well as impact fisheries that may encounter listed species. It is incumbent upon the Commission and its federal partners to work jointly to assess stock health, identify threats, and implement effective rebuilding programs for listed and candidate species through the state and federal process.

More recently, the depleted status of the Northern right whale population and the potential impacts to this population by entanglement in fishing gear, particularly lobster and crab gear, has heightened concern for both whales and the lobster industry.

Increased Cooperation and Collaboration among the States and between the States and Our Federal Partners

Demands for ecosystem-based fisheries management, competing and often conflicting ocean uses, and legislative mandates to protect marine mammals and other protected species further complicate fisheries management and require quality scientific information to guide management decisions. Federal agencies have a long track record of providing scientific support to the Commission and collaborations recently expanded in some areas. However, there is a developing trend of reduced support for fundamental data collection and assessment support. Year to year static funding results in decreased scientific support due to inflationary cost increases. There is a growing concern among fishery managers that some “control” over fisheries decisions and status has been diminished by limited data collection efforts and our inability to effect environmental factors that impact marine resources. Fisheries management has never been more complex or politically charged. State members are pulled between what is best for their stakeholders versus what is best for the resource and the states as a whole.

While the issues may seem daunting, they are not insurmountable. In order for the Commission to be successful, the states must recommit to their collective vision of “Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries,” recognizing that their strength lies in working together to address the fisheries issues that lie ahead. Given today’s political and environmental realities, the need for cooperation among the states has never been more important. It is also critical the states and their federal partners seek to strengthen their cooperation and working relationships, providing for efficient and effective fisheries management across all agencies. No one state or federal agency has the resources, authority, or ability to do it alone.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Commission will pursue the following eight goals and their related strategies during the five-year planning period from 2024 through 2028. It will pursue these goals through specific objectives, targets, and milestones outlined in an annual Action Plan, which is adopted each year at the Commission’s Annual Meeting to guide the subsequent year’s activities. Throughout the year, the Commission and its staff will monitor progress in meeting the Commission’s goals, and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies. While committed to the objectives included in this plan, the Commission is ready to adopt additional objectives to take advantage of new opportunities and address emerging issues as they arise.

Goal 1 – Rebuild, maintain, fairly allocate, and promote sustainable Atlantic coastal fisheries

Goal 1 focuses on the responsibility of the states to conserve and manage Atlantic coastal fishery resources for sustainable use. Commission members will advocate decisions to achieve the long-term benefits of conservation, while balancing the socioeconomic interests and needs of coastal communities. Inherent in this is the recognition that healthy and vibrant resources benefit stakeholders. The states are committed to proactive management, with a focus on integrating ecosystem services, socioeconomic impacts, habitat issues, bycatch and discard reduction measures, and protected species interactions into well-defined fishery management plans. Fishery management plans will also address fair allocation of fishery resources among the states. Understanding evolving ocean ecosystems and their impacts on fishery productivity and distribution is an elevated priority. Successful management in an evolving marine environment will depend not only on adjusting management strategies to be more adaptable and flexible, but also in reevaluating and revising, as necessary, the underlying conservation goals and objectives of fishery management plans. Current ocean conditions have a significant impact on fish stocks, fish habitats, and interactions between species and fisheries. The Commission state members will strive to proactively consider ecosystem level impacts when making management decisions to take a more holistic consideration of issues. Improving cooperation and coordination with federal partners and stakeholders can streamline efficiency, transparency and, ultimately, success. In the next five years, the Commission is committed to ending overfishing and working to rebuild overfished Atlantic coast fish stocks, while promoting sustainable harvest of and access to rebuilt fisheries. Where possible, the Commission will seek to aid in the rebuilding of depleted stocks, whose recovery is hindered by factors other than fishing pressure.

Annual action planning will be guided by the following objectives:

- Manage interstate resources that provide for productive, sustainable fisheries using sound science
- Strengthen state and federal partnerships to improve comprehensive management of shared fishery resources
- Create management frameworks that allow for increased resiliency and adaptability to environmental factors
- Practice efficient, transparent, and accountable management processes
- Evaluate progress towards rebuilding fisheries
- Promote sustainable harvest of and access to rebuilt fisheries
- Strengthen interactions and input among stakeholders, technical, advisory, and management groups
- Develop criteria for prioritizing management actions for species that are depleted due to factors other than fishing mortality
- Include environmental considerations in our management strategies

Goal 2 – Provide robust, actionable science to inform management decisions

Sustainable management of fisheries relies on accurate and timely scientific advice. The Commission strives to produce robust, actionable science through a technically rigorous, independently peer-reviewed stock assessment process. Assessments are developed using a broad suite of fishery-independent surveys and fishery-dependent monitoring, as well as research products developed, in cooperation with the fishing industry, by a broad network of fisheries scientists at state, federal, and academic institutions along the coast. This goal encompasses the development of novel and innovative scientific research, modern assessment methodology, and enhancement of the states' stock assessment capabilities. It provides for the administration, coordination, and expansion of collaborative research and data collection programs. Achieving the goal will ensure robust science is available as the foundation for the Commission's evaluation of stock status and adaptive management actions.

Annual action planning will be guided by the following objectives:

- Proactively address research priorities through cooperative state and regional data collection programs; strengthen stakeholder involvement in collaborative research projects
- Explore the use of emerging technologies to improve fishery-independent surveys, monitoring, and the timeliness of scientific products
- Provide training to enhance the expertise and participation of state and staff scientists in conducting stock assessments
- Streamline assessment data assimilation within individual states, and among states and the Commission
- Conduct stock assessments based on comprehensive data sources and rigorous technical analysis; deliver direct, concise scientific advice in order to achieve clear endpoints in the assessment process; generate indicators/rapid assessments for all stocks
- Balance requests from fisheries management with finite assessment workload capacity
- Support the development and utilization of industry-based surveys and other cooperative research opportunities.
- Integrate estuarine/state waters and federal waters environmental data for use in stock assessments to inform fisheries management decisions
- Communicate with stakeholders to ensure scientific advice and on-the-water observations are consistent
- Characterize the risk and certainty associated with the scientific advice provided to decision-makers
- Explore the use of management strategy evaluations to inform management decisions

Goal 3 – Produce dependable and timely marine fishery statistics for Atlantic coast fisheries

Effective management depends on quality fishery-dependent data to inform stock assessments and fisheries management decisions. Goal 3 focuses on providing timely, accurate catch, effort, and biological data on Atlantic coast recreational, for-hire, and commercial fisheries to support fisheries management.

This goal seeks to accomplish this through the activities of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), a cooperative state-federal program that designs, implements, and conducts marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and integrates those data into data management systems that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. ACCSP partners include the 15 Atlantic coast state fishery agencies, the three Atlantic Coast Fishery Management Councils, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, NOAA Fisheries, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Geological Survey.

Annual action planning will be guided by the following objectives:

- Focus on activities that maximize benefits, are responsive and accountable to partner and end-user needs, and are based on available resources
- Develop, implement, and maintain coastwide data standards through cooperation with all program partners
- Provide electronic applications that efficiently align partner data collection
- Integrate and provide access to partner data via a coastwide repository
- Facilitate fisheries data access through an on-line, user-friendly system while protecting confidentiality
- Support data systems modernization and integration

Goal 4 – Protect and enhance fish habitat and ecosystem health through partnerships and education

Goal 4 aims to conserve and improve coastal, marine, and riverine habitat to enhance the benefits of sustainable Atlantic coastal fisheries and resilient coastal communities in the face of changing ecosystems. Habitat loss and degradation have been identified as significant factors affecting the long-term sustainability and productivity of our nation's fisheries. The Commission's Habitat Program develops objectives, sets priorities, and produces tools to guide fisheries habitat conservation efforts directed towards ecosystem-based management.

The challenge for the Commission and its state members is maintaining fish habitat under limited regulatory authority for habitat protection or enhancement. Therefore, the Commission will work cooperatively with state, federal, and stakeholder partnerships to achieve this goal. Much of the work to address habitat is conducted through the Commission's Habitat and Artificial Reef Committees. In order to identify fish habitats of concern for Commission managed species, each year the Habitat Committee reviews existing reference documents for

Commission-managed species to identify gaps or updates needed to describe important habitat types and review and revise species habitat factsheets. The Habitat Committee also publishes an annual issue of the *Habitat Hotline Atlantic*, highlighting topical issues that affect all the states.

The Commission and its Habitat Program endorses the National Fish Habitat Partnership, and will continue to work cooperatively with the partnership to improve aquatic habitat along the Atlantic coast. Since 2008, the Commission has invested considerable resources, as both a partner and administrative home, to the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP), a coastwide collaborative effort to accelerate the conservation and restoration of habitat for native Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fishes. As part of this goal, the Commission will continue to provide support for ACFHP, under the direction of the National Fish Habitat Partnership Board.

Annual action planning will be guided by the following objectives:

- Identify fish habitats of concerns through fisheries management programs and partnerships
- Educate Commissioners, stakeholders, and the general public about the importance of habitat to healthy fisheries and ecosystems
- Better integrate habitat information and data into fishery management plans and stock assessments
- Engage local, state, and regional governments in mutually beneficial habitat protection and enhancement programs
- Foster partnerships with management agencies, researchers, and habitat stakeholders to leverage scientific, regulatory, political, and financial support
- Work with ACFHP to foster partnerships with like-minded organizations at local levels to further common habitat goals

Goal 5 – Promote compliance with fishery management plans to ensure sustainable use of Atlantic coast resources

Fisheries managers, law enforcement personnel, and stakeholders have a shared responsibility to promote compliance with fisheries management measures. Activities under this goal seek to increase and improve compliance with fishery management plans. This requires the successful coordination of both management and enforcement activities among state and federal agencies. Commission members recognize that adequate and consistent enforcement of fisheries rules is required to keep pace with increasingly complex management activity and emerging technologies. Achieving the goal will improve the effectiveness of the Commission's fishery management plans.

Annual action planning will be guided by the following objectives:

- Develop practical compliance requirements that foster stakeholder buy-in
- Evaluate the enforceability of management measures and the effectiveness of law enforcement programs
- Promote coordination and expand existing partnerships with state and federal natural resource law enforcement agencies
- Enhance stakeholder awareness of management measures through education and outreach
- Use emerging communication platforms to deliver real time information regarding regulations and the outcomes of law enforcement investigations

Goal 6 – Strengthen stakeholder and public support for the Commission

Stakeholder and public acceptance of Commission actions are critical to our ultimate success. For the Commission to be effective, these groups must have a clear understanding of our mission, vision, and decision-making processes. The goal seeks to do so through expanded outreach and education efforts about Commission programs, decision-making processes, and its management successes and challenges. It aims to engage stakeholders in the process of fisheries management and promote the activities and accomplishments of the Commission and its member states. Achieving the goal will increase stakeholder participation, understanding, and acceptance of Commission activities.

Annual action planning will be guided by the following objectives:

- Increase public understanding and support of activities through expanded outreach at the local, state, and federal levels
- Develop proactive communication to directly address issues of public concern
- Clearly define Commission processes to facilitate stakeholder participation, as well as transparency and accountability
- Strengthen national, regional, and local media relations to increase coverage of Commission actions
- Use new technologies and communication platforms to more fully engage the broader public in the Commission’s activities and actions

Goal 7 – Advance Commission and member states’ priorities through a proactive legislative policy agenda

Although states are positioned to achieve many of the national goals for marine fisheries through cooperative efforts, state fisheries interests are often underrepresented at the national level. This is due, in part, to the fact that policy formulation is often disconnected from the processes that provide the support, organization, and resources necessary to implement the policies. The capabilities and input of the states are an important aspect of developing national fisheries policy, and the goal seeks to increase the states’ role in national policy formulation. Additionally, the goal emphasizes the importance of achieving

management goals consistent with productive commercial and recreational fisheries and healthy ecosystems.

The Commission recognizes the need to work with Congress in all phases of policy formulation. Several important fishery-related laws may be reauthorized over the next couple of years (i.e., Atlantic Coastal Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act, Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, and Anadromous Fish Conservation Act). The Commission needs to proactively engage with reauthorization efforts, this includes advocating for increased funding from sources such as Sportfish Restoration Trust Fund and the Atlantic Coastal Act. The Commission will be vigilant in advancing the states' interests to Congress as these laws are reauthorized and other fishery-related pieces of legislation are considered.

Annual action planning will be guided by the following objectives:

- Increase the Commission's profile and support in the US Congress by developing relationships between Members and their staff and Commissioners, the Executive Director, and Commission staff
- Maintain or increase long-term funding for Commission programs through the federal appropriations process and other available sources. This includes funding for non-federal surveys and to support our partnerships with outside organizations such as US Geological Survey
- Engage Congress on fishery-related legislation affecting the Atlantic coast
- Promote member states' collective interests at the regional and national levels
- Promote economic benefits of the Commission's actions (return on investment)

Goal 8 – Ensure the fiscal stability & efficient administration of the Commission

Goal 8 focuses on ensuring the business affairs of the Commission are managed effectively and efficiently, including workload balancing through the development of annual action plans to support the Commission's management coordination process. It also highlights the need for the Commission to efficiently manage its resources. The goal promotes the efficient use of legal advice to proactively review policies and react to litigation as necessary. It also promotes human resource policies that attract talented and committed individuals to conduct the work of the Commission. The goal highlights the need for the Commission as an organization to continually expand its skill set through training and educational opportunities. It calls for Commissioners and Commission staff to maintain and increase the institutional knowledge of the Commission through periods of transition. Achieving this goal will build core strengths, enabling the Commission to respond to increasingly difficult and complex fisheries management issues.

Annual action planning will be guided by the following objectives:

- Conservatively manage the Commission's operations and budgets to ensure fiscal stability

- Utilize new information technology to improve meeting and workload efficiencies, and enhance communications
- Refine strategies to recruit professional staff, and enhance growth and learning opportunities for Commission and state personnel
- Fully engage new Commissioners in the Commission process and document institutional knowledge
- Utilize legal advice on new management strategies and policies, and respond to litigation as necessary



Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

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This list includes dates for fiscal year 2025, including ACCSP committee meetings, relevant dates of the funding cycle, as well as meetings or conferences ACCSP typically attends or which may be of interest to our partners. If you have any questions or comments on this calendar, please do not hesitate to contact the ACCSP staff at info@accsp.org.

Jan 28-30:	NEFMC Meeting – Portsmouth, NH
Jan 29:	2025 FHTS Training - Webinar
Feb 4-5:	ASMFC Meeting – Arlington, VA
Feb 11:	Bycatch Prioritization Committee Meeting – Charleston, SC
Feb 11-12:	Biological Prioritization Committee Meeting – Charleston, SC
Feb 11-12:	APAIS North Atlantic Training- New Bedford, MA
Feb 11-12:	MAFMC Council Meeting- Webinar
Feb 18-19:	APAIS South Atlantic Training- Wilmington, NC
Mar 1:	Start of ACCSP FY25
Mar 11:	Commercial Technical Committee Meeting – Philadelphia, PA
Mar 12:	Information Systems Committee Meeting – Philadelphia, PA
Mar 31:	Recreational Technical Committee Meeting - Webinar
Mar 3-7:	SAFMC Meeting – Jekyll Island, GA
Apr 8-10:	MAFMC Meeting – Galloway, NJ
Apr 7:	Operations and Advisory Committees Spring Meeting – Webinar
Apr 14-17:	NEFMC Meeting – Mystic, CT
May 5-8:	ASMFC/Coordinating Council Meeting – Arlington, VA
May 12:	ACCSP issues request for proposals
May 31:	Recreational Technical Committee – Webinar
Jun 3-5:	MAFMC Meeting – Virginia Beach, VA
Jun 9-13:	SAFMC Meeting – Cape Canaveral, FL
Jun 13:	Initial proposals are due
Jun 20:	Initial proposals are distributed to Operations and Advisory Committees
Jun 24-26:	NEFMC Meeting – Freeport, ME
July 7:	Any initial written comments on proposals due
Week of Jul 14:	Review of initial proposals by Operations and Advisory Committees – Webinar
July 18:	If applicable, any revised written comments due
Week of Jul 21:	Feedback submitted to principal investigators
Aug 5-7:	ASMFC Meeting – Arlington, VA

Aug 11-14:	MAFMC Meeting – Annapolis, MD
Aug 15:	Revised proposals due
Aug 22:	Revised proposals distributed to Operations and Advisory Committees
Week of Sep 8:	Ranking exercise for Advisors and Operations Members – Webinar
Sep 15-19:	SAFMC Meeting – Charleston, SC
Sep 23-24:	Advisors/Operations Committee Joint Meeting (in-person; location TBD)
Sep 23-25:	NEFMC Meeting – Gloucester, MA
Oct 7-9:	MAFMC Meeting – Philadelphia, PA
Oct 27-30:	ASMFC Annual Meeting/Coordinating Council – Dewey Beach, DE
Dec 2-4:	NEFMC Meeting – Newport, RI
Dec 8-12:	SAFMC Meeting – Kitty Hawk, NC
Dec 15-18:	MAFMC Meeting – Washington, DC

Geoff White

ACCSP Director



EXECUTIVE COMPETENCIES

- Committed to excellence and accountability
- Empowering leadership and inclusive management style
- Leveraging technology and cooperative approach
- Belief in holistic and integrated solutions
- Passion for strategic vision
- Project design and oversight
- Financial responsibility and accountability
- Effective communicator, writer and presenter
- Proven ACCSP ambassador

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SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

- Supported reduced fishery reporting burden through One Stop Reporting.
- Improved efficiency of APAIS data collection by integrating tablet data capture, Oracle database, SAS processing and delivery.
- Extended state conduct of MRIP FHTS and LPS with integrated web tools.
- Developed budget and managed over \$4.5M annual funding for multiple MRIP surveys through ACCSP and 13 State Partners
- Initiated development of comprehensive for-hire data collection methods.
- Developed and implemented the MRIP APAIS Atlantic state conduct transition
- Conceived and implemented changes to improve availability of ACCSP data

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Director, ACCSP 2019 – Present

Responsible for ACCSP strategic direction through the Coordinating Council, and management of ongoing projects. Represent ASMFC and Atlantic states on data related topics in regional and national meetings.

Recreational Program Manager ACCSP 2015 – 2019

Responsible for ACCSP's recreational fishery data standards and implementing state conduct of MRIP APAIS and FHTS surveys. Developed coastwide budgets, data collection, processing, and delivery systems. Managed local staff and guided partner staff in survey completion. Represented ACCSP and Atlantic states on MRIP Regional Council and at national meetings.

Data Team Lead / Systems Admin ACCSP 2008 – 2015

Provided data team leadership and subject expertise for ACCSP data projects and priorities. Engineered transition to state conduct of MRIP APAIS. Responsible for ACCSP information systems maintenance including network, servers, oracle databases, and 2010 office relocation.

Systems Admin -ACCSP 2004-2008

Responsible for the ACCSP's IT infrastructure. Provided subject expertise for partner data access, data translations, and development of web-based recreational and commercial queries.

Fisheries Specialist -ASMFC 1998-2004

Coordinated SEAMAP SA, staffed development of two multi-species assessment models, designed and implemented the Lobster Assessment Database, coordinated fisheries research programs and stock assessment reviews supporting fisheries management.

Marine Scientist -VIMS 1996-1998

Estimated fishing mortality of tautog in Virginia waters. Project results accepted as Virginia's fishery status in the ASMFC Tautog FMP.

MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

- Managed multiple concurrent projects and contracts to extend ACCSP capabilities.
- Contributing member of MRIP Regional Implementation Council & MRIP NAS reviews.
- Extended development of the MRIP survey state conduct through leadership of three local staff and 160 remote partner staff.
- Coached RecTech Committee development of Atlantic Recreational Implementation Plan.
- Supported Cooperative agreement funding and management, including proposal writing, information gathering, contract oversight, and report submission.
- Demonstrated ability to bring together diverse groups on issues by coordinating and facilitating workshops.

FISHERIES EXPERIENCE

- Deep understanding of the ACCSP mission, activities, and partners gained over 24 years of working in consensus-driven environment of Atlantic coast fisheries management
- Adept at balancing state and federal partner needs in the development of coastwide data standards, data entry and query tools for recreational and commercial fisheries data
- Proven ability to understand fisheries stock assessment data needs

IT EXPERIENCE

Software Development – Strategic priorities for SAFIS capabilities. Managed and programmed projects to create Data Warehouse end user queries, APAIS web interface, APAIS Tablet application, API data transmission and FHTS CATI.

Oracle DBA – Managed 10 DB instances supporting coastwide standardization of fisheries data collection and dissemination.

Systems Administrator– Performed or directed data center implementation and support including network security & system availability.

EDUCATION & AWARDS

- B.S. Dickinson College
- M.S. Virginia Institute of Marine Science
- ASMFC Stock Assessment Training I-III
- Oracle PL/SQL, DB Administration, Windows & Linux Server Administration
- Project Management & Leadership Training
- ASMFC Employee of the Qtr 2003, 2011
- ASMFC Directors Meritorious Service 2017
- ASMFC Science & Technical Excellence 2019
- Eagle Scout, Boy Scouts of America



Guide for Ranking Proposals

FY2026 Edition

INTRODUCTION

Each year, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (Program) distributes a [Funding Decision Document](#) outlining the priorities for the coming fiscal year. These priorities are reviewed by the Coordinating Council each spring before the request for proposals is distributed. The Funding Decision Document is available to all ACCSP grant applicants.

We cannot assume that all proposals will meet the guidelines set forth by the document. This is precisely why we need a diverse set of eyes to review the proposals so we can distribute the funds in accordance with Program guidelines.

PHILOSOPHY

What is most important to remember as a proposal ranker is that you are consistent when reviewing the proposals. Many people have different viewpoints as to what would receive a high score. For instance, someone might think it is worth 10 points if a proposal states that it will collect all minimum data elements of catch and effort, whereas, someone else might view a proposal that collects all minimum data elements as worthy of 7 points, which would leave room if another proposal went above and beyond with an innovative data verification program.

It is entirely up to you how you view these proposals. We realize each proposal ranker is coming from a different perspective and we look forward to gathering a diverse set of rankings for each proposal. **The most important aspect to ranking proposals is to remain consistent from proposal to proposal.**

CATEGORIES FOR RANKING

For FY2026, there are three categories used to rank the project proposals:

- 1) *Primary Program Priority;*
- 2) *Project Quality Factors;* and
- 3) *Other Factors.*

SCORING

The factors of each category carry a different weight. For instance, when ranking these proposals, the score of the primary module given to the proposal is given a weight of 3 (the score given is multiplied by 3). The funding transition plan, improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness, impact on stock assessments, and impact on management criteria are given a weight of 2 (the score given is multiplied by 2). Finally, the data delivery plan, multiple partners, in-kind contribution, potential secondary module, merit and properly prepared criteria are all given a weight of 1 (the score given is multiplied by 1).

PRIMARY PROGRAM PRIORITY

Projects must be rated on how well the data being collected by the project fit the current [Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards](#). You will rate only one module in addition to whether the proposal contains a data delivery plan. If a secondary one is recognized, it will be considered during the *Project Quality Factors*. The highest possible score for this section (PRIMARY PROGRAM PRIORITY) is 32. The score of this category is 45% of the total score of the project.

Our vision is to produce dependable and timely marine fishery statistics for Atlantic coast fisheries that are collected, processed, and disseminated according to common standards agreed upon by all program partners.

A. *Biological Sampling* – ACCSP is principally seeking to collect biological data in FY2026. If a proposal description states that it will primarily collect biological data, the proposal may score a maximum of 10 points.

How does a proposal receive the maximum 10 points? [The FY2026 Biological Matrix](#) identifies the top quartile of all species ranked by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, regional councils, NOAA Fisheries, and the states. The top quartile species are grouped by average priority and biological sampling adequacy. The proposals should be given a high ranking if data are collected on species with high average priority and inadequate adequacy (FY2026 species: *black sea bass, Spanish mackerel, and red snapper*). A mid-level score would be given to those proposals that have a low average priority and inadequate sampling (FY2026 species: *gag grouper, snowy grouper, American shad, red grouper, river herring, tilefish, scamp, red porgy, American lobster, ocean pout, cobia, American eel, winter flounder, blueline tilefish, Atlantic halibut, N. short-fin squid, gray triggerfish, scup, and bluefish*) or high average priority and adequate sampling (FY2026 species: *none*). A low level score would go to those species that have a low average priority and are adequately sampled (FY2026 species: *Atlantic menhaden, horseshoe crab, and shortfin mako shark*).

B. *Catch and Effort* – A second priority for FY2026 is catch and effort data. If a proposal description states that it will primarily collect catch and effort data, the proposal may score a maximum of 8 points.

How does a proposal receive the maximum 8 points? The ACCSP standard for commercial catch and effort statistics is mandatory, trip-level reporting of all commercial harvested marine species, with fishermen and/or dealers required to report standardized data elements for each trip by the tenth of the following month.

The ACCSP standard for recreational catch and effort statistics are covered in more detail in the current Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards. Something you may want to consider when ranking proposals is whether or not all data elements outlined in the Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards. To determine scoring for this factor consider the following:

- 1) If they collect the minimum data elements would the proposal be ranked a 5 and thus for all additional information it would lead up to the highest possible score – a 8?
- 2) Is the data collection method they used (1 ticket vs. 2 ticket) a determining factor on the final score given in this category?
- 3) Also, is data validation a consideration for this ranking?

C. *Bycatch/Species Interaction* - A third priority for ACCSP for FY2026 is the collection of bycatch data. If a proposal description states that it will primarily collect bycatch data, the proposal may score a maximum of 6 points.

How does a proposal receive the maximum 6 points? The [FY2026 Bycatch Matrix](#) identifies the top quartile of all fisheries fleets ranked by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, regional councils, NOAA Fisheries, and the states. The bycatch matrix was revised to use a fleet-based approach in 2021. The top fleets are ranked by scoring protected species interactions, amount of regulatory discards, amount of non-regulatory discards, significant changes in management in the past 36 months, total number of trips, and total landings. The fleets in the top quartile of the matrix for FY2026 ranked from highest to lowest include: Mid-Atlantic gillnet, snapper grouper H&L fleet, South Atlantic shrimp trawl, New England otter trawl, Mid-Atlantic pound net, American lobster pots, pelagic H&L fleet (North), New England gillnet, New England extra-large mesh gillnet, Mid-Atlantic small-mesh otter trawl (bottom), Mid-Atlantic large-mesh otter trawl (bottom), Mid-Atlantic fish pots and traps, South Atlantic large-mesh gillnet, HMS pelagic longline (Southeastern, Atlantic, and Gulf), Mid-Atlantic dredge (other), New England crab pots, South Atlantic blue crab. Points should be given according to how the fleet was ranked in top quartile with the most points going towards a proposal studying the fleet with the highest ranking.

The Definition of bycatch as defined in the Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards includes:

a. Fish which are harvested in a fishery, but which are not sold or kept for personal use, and includes economic discards and regulatory discards. Such term does not include fish released alive under a recreational catch and release fishery management program. From Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

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b. Discarded catch of any living marine resource plus retained incidental catch and unobserved mortality due to a direct encounter with fishing gear. From NOAA Fisheries Service (used for its National Bycatch Strategy and bycatch reduction efforts).

D. *Social and Economic* – Another important priority in FY2026 is the collection of social and economic data. If a proposal description states that it will primarily collect social and economic data, the proposal may score a maximum of 6 points.

How does a proposal receive the maximum 6 points? [Priorities](#) for commercial social and economic data collection were compiled by the Committee on Economic and Social Science. Additionally, there is a list of data elements found in the Atlantic Coast Fisheries Data Collection Standards you may want to consider as a proposal ranker. The ACCSP has established standards for social and economic data collection in recreational and for-hire finfish fisheries. Our standard is voluntary surveys of finfish fisheries conducted at least every three years.

E. *Data Delivery Plan* – All proposals are expected to submit data collected through a proposal to the ACCSP. A proposal may therefore receive up to an additional 2 points if the proposal clearly identifies a plan for submitting collected data to ACCSP. When considering how many points a proposal should receive, consider the method of data transmission and frequency of submission to ACCSP.

PROJECT QUALITY FACTORS (Partners, Funding and Data):

A. *Multi-Partner Regional impact including broad applications* (PARTNERS) - To determine scoring for this factor (a score of 0-5) consider the following:

- 1) Does this project involve one or multiple partners?
- 2) Does this project collect data from one or multiple partners?
- 3) What is the timeline for benefiting from the data?
- 4) Does this project have a narrow or broad scope of work?

The highest possible score for the above section (PARTNERS) is a 5. The score of this category is 7% of the total score of the project.

B. *Contains funding transition plan/Defined end point* (FUNDING) - To determine scoring for this factor (a score of 0-4) consider the following:

- 1) How long has the project been receiving funds from ACCSP or other sources?
- 2) Does the project have an end point or continue year after year?
- 3) If the project continues does this project explain how new funds will be applied in coming years?
- 4) Is there a transition plan?

C. *In-kind contribution* (FUNDING) – To determine scoring for this factor (a score of 0-4) consider the following:

- 1) Is the partner adding funds as well as ACCSP?
- 2) At what level is the partner applying additional funds?
- 3) Is it at a level that is acceptable for the ACCSP standards?

The highest possible score for the above section (FUNDING) is a 8. The score of this category is 11% of the total score of the project.

D. *Improvement in data quality/quantity/timeliness* (DATA) - To determine scoring for this factor (a score of 0-4) consider the following:

- 1) At what rate can this project provide data to the ACCSP Data Warehouse?
- 2) Are the data collected from this project a higher pedigree than in previous years?
- 3) Does this project include innovative ways to collect data?
- 4) Does this project outline a clear and timely mechanism for sharing data to ACCSP?

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E. *Potential secondary module as a by-product (In program priority order)* (DATA) – In determining what (if any) score to give for a proposal that addresses a secondary module as a byproduct consider the following, if the secondary module is:

- 1) Biological data receives a score of 0-5;
- 2) Catch and effort data receives a score of 0-4;
- 3) Bycatch data receives a score of 0-3; and
- 4) Social and economic data receives a score of 0-3.

Note that only one secondary module should be considered for scoring.

F. *Impact on stock assessment* (DATA) – To determine scoring for this factor (a score of 0-3) consider the following:

- 1) Does this project collect data from a species that has a stock assessment in the next few years?
- 2) Does this project collect data that can be organized in a fashion suitable for the ACCSP Data Warehouse that can be used for a stock assessment when needed?

G. *Impact on management* (DATA) – To determine scoring for this factor (a score of 0-3) consider the following:

- 1) Does this project collect data from a species that has pending management actions in the next few years?
- 2) Does this project collect data that can be organized in a fashion suitable for the ACCSP Data Warehouse that can be used for management when needed?

The highest possible score for the above section (DATA) is 14. The score of this category is 28% of the total score of the project.

OTHER FACTORS

A. *Innovative* (New projects only) – To determine scoring for this factor (a score of 0-3) consider whether the project proposes use of new technologies or methodologies or will result in new financial savings.

B. *Properly Prepared* – To determine scoring for this factor (a score of -1-1) consider the following:

- 1) Does the proposal follow the guidelines of the Funding Decision Document?
- 2) Does this proposal follow the directions of the guidelines set forth by the request for proposals?

C. *Merit* – To determine the scoring for this factor (a score of 0-3) consider the subjective worthiness of the proposal to receive funding.

The highest possible score for the above section (OTHER FACTORS) is a 4. The score of this category is 6% of the total score of the project.

If you have any questions, please reach out to ACCSP Deputy Director, Julie DeFilippi Simpson (julie.simpson@accsp.org).

Thank you for your hard work and dedication in reviewing the proposals!

GLOSSARY OF TERMS COMMONLY FOUND IN PROPOSALS

Access sites: Areas where fishermen fish from shore. Or access sites can be defined as the place fishermen board or leave a boat to go fishing.

Bank: A stretch of rising land at the edge of a body of water not washed by high water, which could be rocks or an overhanging cliff.

Beach: A level stretch of pebbles, bedrock shore, or sand beside a body of water (often washed by high water).

Breachway: Shore along a connecting channel.

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Breakwaters: An offshore structure used to protect a harbor or beach from the forces of waves.

Bridge: A structure carrying a pathway or roadway over a body of water.

Bulkhead (as known as seawall): A retaining wall along a waterfront.

Bycatch (2 accepted definitions):

a. Fish which are harvested in a fishery, but which are not sold or kept for personal use, and includes economic discards and regulatory discards. Such term does not include fish released alive under a recreational catch and release fishery management program. *From Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act*

b. Discarded catch of any living marine resource plus retained incidental catch and unobserved mortality due to a direct encounter with fishing gear. *From NOAA Fisheries Service (used for its National Bycatch Strategy and bycatch reduction efforts)*

Catch: The total number, weight, or other measure of marine resources (fish, invertebrates, or others) which are captured and retained, released, or discarded.

Advisory Committee: Finfish, shellfish, and protected species that are captured, whether retained, released, or discarded.

Discarded or released catch: The portions of the catch that is not retained (i.e., discarded or released at sea dead or alive) and includes incidental take of protected species.

Advisory Committee: Recommends deleting the definition above and replacing it with:

Economic, social, and cultural discard: Finfish and shellfish that are the target of a fishery, but which are not retained because they are undesirable size, sex, or quality, or for other economic, social, or cultural reasons.

Regulatory discard: Finfish, shellfish, and protected species harvested in a fishery which fishermen are required by regulation to discard.

Immediate use catch: Use of the retained catch for food or bait before the end of the trip.

Landed catch: The total number, weight, or other measure of all marine resources (fish, invertebrates, others) captured, brought to shore and retained at the end of a trip. This includes catch that is discarded or not sold after being landed. This type of catch is indicated by disposition codes.

Advisory Committee:

Landed Catch: Finfish, shellfish, and protected that are captured, brought to shore and retained at the end of a trip.

Causeway: An elevated or raised way across wet ground or water.

Charterboat: *Trip Definition* - Any trip of a vessel-for hire engaged in recreational fishing (VHERF) that is hired on a per trip basis. For survey purposes, and possible alternative definitions, information should be gathered on: a) number of anglers (refers to all marine recreational resource users); b) size of boat; and c) where fishing occurred. *Boat Definition* - A charterboat is any VHERF that typically is hired on a per trip basis.

Commercial and recreational fisherman: For statistical purposes only, anyone who sells or barter any portion of the catch from a trip is a commercial fisherman for that trip, and any marine resources that are sold or bartered are considered a commercial product. All other fishermen and catches are considered recreational. Commercial trips with effort but no catch are still commercial trips and should be reported.

Commercial dealer: A seafood dealer is defined as any person or entity other than the final consumer, who purchases, ships, consigns, transfers, transports, barter, accepts (maintains) or packs any marine fishery

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products received from marine resource harvesters or marine aquaculturists. Any marine fishery products landed in any state must be reported by a dealer or a marine resource harvester acting as dealer in that state. Any marine resource harvester or aquaculturist who sells, consigns, transfers, or barter marine fishery products to anyone other than a dealer would himself be acting as a dealer and would therefore be responsible for reporting as a dealer. This definition is provided for purposes of statistical gathering only.

Docks: Structure built out over water and supported by pillars/anchors with long-term docking facilities for boats.

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ): Offshore waters 3-200 miles on Atlantic coast. For the Gulf coast it is 9-200 miles from the shoreline.

Effort: Estimated number of fishing trips taken by an individual (recreationally).

Entanglements: A condition in which any part of a protected species is tangled, wrapped and snared, hooked, or otherwise attached to fishing gear.

Fisheries-dependent: Information collected directly from the commercial, for-hire, and recreational fisheries.

Fisheries-independent: Information gathered independent of the fisheries through direct or indirect sampling of the stocks.

Fishing guide: A person hired by a recreational fisherman to aid in fishing activities.

Fishing trip: A period of time over which fishing occurs. The time spent fishing includes configuring, deploying, and retrieving gear, clearing animals from the gear, and storing, releasing or discarding catch. When watercraft are used, a fishing trip also includes the time spent traveling to and from fishing areas or locales and ends when the vessel offloads product at sea or returns to the shore. When fishing from shore or man-made structures, a fishing trip may include travel between different fishing sites within a 24-hour period.

Commercial Trip: Any trip where the retained catch is or would be sold or bartered. This includes trips with effort but no catch.

For-hire Trip: Any shore or vessel trip whose participants are engaged in a marine resources recreational activity that is contracted for a fee.

Recreational Trip: Any trip for the purpose of recreation from which none of the catch is sold or bartered. This includes trips with effort but no catch.

Split Trip: A split trip is any angler trip in which a portion of the landings are sold commercially and a portion of the landings are retained for personal use.

Gear: Anything used to catch marine resources.

Gear configuration: Materials, construction, measure (e.g., mesh size, length of gear), and deployment of gear.

Guided beach trip: Any shore-based trip where a guide is hired or provided.

Guided fishing trip: A fishing trip on which a fishing guide is hired to provide services directly related to fishing activities.

Headboat: Trip - Any trip of a VHERF that is hired on a per person basis. For survey purposes, and possible alternative definitions information should be gathered on: a) number of anglers (refers to all marine recreational

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resource users); b) size of boat; and c) where fishing occurred. *Boat* - A headboat is any VHERF that typically is hired on a per person basis.

Inland: Waterbodies less than zero miles from the shoreline. Also, includes waterbodies found inside the boundaries for territorial waters.

Intercept survey: On-site interviews which gather data from fishermen during or upon completion of their fishing trip at access sites.

International: Offshore waters greater than 200 miles from the shore line

Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS): A taxonomic database for terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals. The product of a partnership of federal agencies collaborating with systemists in the federal, state and private sectors to provide scientifically credible taxonomic information.

Jetties: A kind of wall, usually made of rocks, built into the water to restrain currents or protect a harbor.

Metadata: Metadata are corollary or descriptive information, both numeric and non-numeric, which may qualify or explain primary data.

Mode of fishing: The method by which a recreational fishing trip is taken, e.g. private/rental boat, shore, or for-hire.

Multi-trip fisheries: Multiple trip fisheries are characterized by a large number of relatively short duration trips employing the same type of gear, (e.g. lobster pots), and resulting in catch of the same species (e.g. lobster), or relatively few species

Non-consumptive use: Any activity related to marine resources where no take of marine resources is attempted. Examples include photographing wildlife in natural or managed areas, SCUBA diving to view jewfish, whale watching, etc.

Observer: A trained agent (employee, contractor, grantee, etc.) of any ACCSP partner acting as an unbiased data collector observing fishing operations on fishing vessels at sea.

Other fishing modes: Any other non-boat fishing.

Piers: Structure built out over water and supported by pillars without long-term docking facilities for boats.

Person: Any individual, corporation, partnership, association or other entity, or any federal, state, local, or foreign government or any entity of such governments, including regional fishery management councils.

Port agent/sampler: A trained agent (e.g., employee, contractor, grantee, etc.) of any partner acting as an unbiased data collector, collecting data after the completion of a fishing trip.

Post stratification: Summarization of data into strata different from strata design used during data collection.

Price: The dollar amount per landed unit (e.g. pounds, bushels) of a given species (or species landing condition and market category).

Private access sites: Privately owned riparian land with dock/shoreline, waterfront residential developments, or marinas inaccessible to intercept sampling.

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Private boat: *Trip* - Any boat trip for which no fee is paid for use of the boat. *Boat* - Any boat for which no fee is paid for use of the boat.

Protected species: Any organism listed under the MMPA, ESA, or the Migratory Bird Treaty or any state protected species legislation. The term protected species can include protected finfish species (e.g., Atlantic salmon, shortnose sturgeon), invertebrates (e.g., Queen conch), sea birds, and plants (e.g., sea oats).

Protected species interactions: Any interaction with a fishery, which results in the harassment, harm, or death of individuals of a species.

Public: Any user of non-confidential information.

Rental boat: *Trip* - A trip on a boat that is rented or leased. No captain or crew is hired. *Boat* - A boat that is rented or leased. No captain or crew is hired.

Retained catch: The number or weight of marine resources caught and kept for immediate use (e.g., bait, food) or for landing.

State territorial seas: Inshore 0-3 miles on Atlantic coast. Gulf coast is 0-9 miles from the shoreline.

Strandings: A marine mammal or sea turtle where: 1) the specimen is dead and/or moribund on the beach or shore or in a coastal waterway or EEZ, or 2) the specimen is alive and is on the beach or shore and is unable to return to the water under its own power, or 3) the specimen is in the EEZ or a coastal waterway where the water is so shallow and/or inhospitable that the specimen is unable to return to its natural habitat under its own power.

Stratification: The process of dividing a population into two or more non-overlapping comprehensive subpopulations, called strata, for the purpose of conducting independent surveys of these subpopulations.

Stratum: An identifiable sub-population of a population that is being sampled.

Team Fish: The cooperative harvesting of the resource by a group of fishermen. These fishermen may be formally organized in a sector or coop. Cooperation may take many forms (information-sharing on the location of the stocks, rationalization of the group's fleet, coordinate access to fishing grounds to avoid congestion and gear conflicts, search for lost gear, etc.), but in most cases the main objective is to increase the profits of the whole group.

Trip (see fishing trip): A trip is shore to shore by gear/area combination, or in the case of transfers at sea, an offloading at sea is a trip.

Trip duration: *Recreational Trip Duration:* A day of fishing measured in hours fished for the shore mode and dock-to-dock duration for the private/rental boat mode. *For-hire Trip Duration:* Dock-to-dock duration measured in hours fished

Unique Identifier for commercial fisheries: The unique identifier for commercial fisheries trip data is the trip start, the vessel identifier, and trip number when a vessel is involved; the trip start, the individual identifier, and the trip number when a vessel is not involved. Reporting of the unique identifier is required of both commercial fishermen and dealer on all submitted reports.

Unique identifier for recreational fisheries: The unique identifier for recreational trip data is the date of return, the sampler number, the record number, and the individual.

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Value: The total landed dollar amount of a given species (or species landing condition and market category).
Example: 100 pounds of lobster at a price of \$3.50 per pound will have a value of \$350.

Vessel directory frame: A list of known vessels operating in a particular fishery, which can be used to sample that fishery.

Waterbodies: Bodies of waters used for defining areas fished and identified by standard codes.

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