New England Fishery Management Council

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2023-2024 Monkfish Research Set-Aside Program Call for Proposals; Apply by April 10, 2023

NOAA Fisheries is now soliciting proposals for funding through the 2023-2024 Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. The application deadline is Monday, April 10, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. As explained in the funding opportunity notice, monkfish RSA projects "must enhance the knowledge of the monkfish fishery resource or contribute to the body of information on which monkfish management decisions are made."

The New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, which jointly manage monkfish, established the RSA program through Amendment 2 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan. The Councils set research priorities for this program, while the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) of NOAA Fisheries administers the RSA competition, oversees the awarded projects, and monitors set-aside harvest activities. The Councils' 2023-2024 research priorities are listed in the table at right. Visit GARFO's webpage for application info.

No federal money is used to carry out these monkfish RSA projects. Instead, the Councils "set aside" 500 days-at-sea annually from the total number of monkfish days allocated to limited access monkfish vessels.

Because this is a two-year competition, 500 days-at-sea will be awarded for fishing year 2023 and another 500 days-at-sea will be awarded for 2024.

Proceeds from the harvest and sale of monkfish landed on the RSA days are used to fund the research and compensate industry fishing partners.

Questions?

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– NOAA Fisheries photo

2023-2024 Priorities for the Monkfish Research Set-Aside Program

Highest Priorities

1. Develop alternative stock assessment models; analyze existing survey indices for potential use in the Ismooth model and/or alternative assessment models.
2. Develop a standardized Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) index for the commercial directed monkfish gillnet fishery for potential use in assessments.

Other Priorities (not ranked)

3. Research on monkfish life history focusing on: (a) age and growth; (b) longevity; (c) reproduction; and (d) natural mortality.
4. Trawl and gillnet gear studies focusing on: (a) bycatch reduction, including reducing interactions with and injury/mortality to sea turtles, Atlantic sturgeon, North Atlantic right whales, humpback whales, and other protected species; and (b) size and/or species selectivity.
5. Research on pingers currently used to reduce harbor porpoise interactions with monkfish gillnet gear; investigate effectiveness of pinger use to also reduce seal interactions with monkfish gillnets.
6. Research to improve the monkfish market, including increasing domestic demand and developing new markets.
7. Research on discard mortality rates for gillnet and trawl gear (scallop dredge research was conducted previously).