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Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

# PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## NMFS Solicits Proposals for MAFMC 2009 Research Set-Aside Program

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced that it is accepting proposals under the Mid-Atlantic Council's Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program for research activities to be conducted in 2009. Applications must be received by NMFS on or before **5 p.m. EST on March 24, 2008**.

The Council, in coordination with NMFS and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, may set aside up to 3 percent of the total allowable landings (TAL) in certain Mid-Atlantic fisheries to be used for research endeavors. The RSA program provides a mechanism to fund research and compensate vessel owners through the sale of fish harvested under the research quota. Vessels participating in an approved research project may be authorized by the NMFS Northeast Regional Administrator to harvest and land species in excess of any imposed trip limit or during fishery closures. Landings from such trips are sold to generate funds that help defray the costs associated with the approved research projects. No Federal funds are provided for research under this notification.

NMFS is soliciting proposals for research activities concerning the summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, *Loligo* squid, *Illex* squid, Atlantic mackerel, butterfish, bluefish, and tilefish fisheries. NMFS and the Council will give priority to funding proposals addressing the research needs as follows:

### 2009 Research Priority List

#### Loligo Squid and Butterfish Interactions

- Mesh selectivity study of butterfish and secondarily for other species caught in *Loligo* nets during winter and summer/early fall.
- Test gear modifications in the *Loligo* squid fishery to reduce bycatch of butterfish and other species.

#### Illex squid

- Determine size and age-at-maturity, and growth parameters for *Illex* squid.

#### Summer Flounder

- Define distinctions between regulatory discards and bycatch attributed to gear, including mesh selectivity and/or overall gear design in the summer flounder fishery.
- Evaluate mortality of large fish released in the summer flounder offshore trawl fishery.
- Evaluate size and bag limits in the recreational fishery for summer flounder.

#### Black Sea Bass

- Estimate black sea bass mortality when left in pots (moderate priority).

- Develop indices for black sea bass recruitment (proof of concept).
- Verify age structure of black sea bass.

### Scup

- Estimate the components of scup total annual mortality (natural, commercial landings, recreational landings, commercial discards, and recreational discards).
- Develop indices for scup recruitment (proof of concept).

### Bluefish

- Develop bluefish index surveys (proof of concept).

## **Cooperative Agreements Enabled for First Time**

This solicitation for the 2009 program year will be the first to enable research projects that may be conducted as 'cooperative agreements.' Cooperative agreements are a special form of grant in which the government can contribute resources to a research project, such as equipment or the time of government scientists. The competitive element must still exist prior to the awarding of the grant; agency personnel are prohibited from assisting applicants in the preparation of proposals in any way. Only after the successful applicants have been selected is the government free to work collaboratively with them.

## **Complete Details and to Apply**

For complete details and information on how to apply, please visit the Grants.gov web site (<http://www.grants.gov>). Click on the 'Grant Search' Quick Link on the upper right-hand corner of the page and then search for Funding Opportunity Number:

**NMFS-NEFSC-2009-2001252** (case sensitive - must be all CAPS)

After clicking on the '2009 Mid-Atlantic Research Set-Aside Program' link, click on the 'Full Announcement' link to display links to the Federal Register notice, full text of the Funding Opportunity, and a ZIP file which contains both documents in PDF format.

Note that using the Internet Explorer browser appears to be more reliable than the Mozilla Firefox browser when accessing the Grants.gov web site.