



Request for Proposals Fish Aging Technician(s)

Proposal Submission Deadline: June 2, 2023

Term of Project: 1 year (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024), with possibility of contract renewal for a second year.

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) seeks a highly-qualified technician(s) to process samples from a variety of MAFMC managed species to help with the determination of their ages. Up to 2 technicians may be contracted based on qualifications to complete the scope of work.

Background

The Northeast Fisheries Science Center Fishery Biology Program (Program) contributes to the basic understanding of species age and growth related demography and ecology, and integrated ecosystem research plan for the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank, south through the middle US Atlantic seaboard. The Program has provided ages on nearly 105,000 otoliths and other hard structures from over 22 species each year, and has been doing so since 1938. Most otoliths and other hard part structures are read for production ages that support age-structured stock assessments that serve as the basis for scientific advice to the MAFMC. These data provide information on age compositions, recruitment strength, and fish population growth dynamics which ultimately inform the scientific basis for determination of stock status, biological reference points and annual catch limits for these fish species.

Scope of Work

We are seeking a contractor to support the Fishery Biology Program in the preparation, processing, and aging of the appropriate hard part samples for MAFMC managed species. These samples include both previously collected (backlog) and newly collected hard part structures. Below are the species and sampling range anticipated for this project:

- Summer flounder (up to 5000 samples)
- Scup (up to 2000 samples)
- Black sea bass (up to 3000 samples)
- Atlantic mackerel (up to 1500 samples)
- Butterfish (up to 3000 samples)
- Golden tilefish (up to 6000 samples)
- Bluefish (up to 2000 samples)
- Atlantic surfclam (up to 1000 samples)
- Ocean quahog (up to 1500 samples)

The contractor will regularly meet with a Contract Oversight Team (minimum of 3 meetings per year held online) to ensure the scope of work proposed under this contract is addressed. Supplies needed for this project will be purchased and provided to the Fishery Biology Program, and made available to the technicians.

Contractor Qualifications

Applicants should have a background in marine, estuarine, environmental science, biology, or other related fields. The applicant must also have experience in the processing of samples and methods of aging fish and shellfish, utilizing structures such as otoliths, scales, and shells.

The applicant should have a general knowledge of fishing and marine ecosystems, and knowledge of the technical methods associated with investigating fish life history (age, growth, mortality, reproduction). The applicant should have a basic knowledge of biological science to make observations, analyze results and how to maintain accurate records. Knowledge of the operation and maintenance of a necropsy laboratory, microscopes, and chemical handling hoods are preferred skills. In addition, skill in preparing samples, mixing chemicals, making measurements, recording data, and use and maintenance of analytical instruments are necessary. The applicant should have the ability to work both rapidly and accurately, and to use computers to input and retrieve data.

The work environment varies from office to laboratory to field sites, and occasionally involves working with chemicals, walk-in freezers, or areas that are slippery, uneven, and unsteady.

The preferred applicant should have:

- Bachelor's degree with 1-2 years' experience or a Master's degree
- Experience in the identification of finfish, elasmobranchs, shellfish, and other invertebrate species commonly encountered along the Atlantic coast from Nova Scotia to Cape Hatteras
- Demonstrated experience relevant to project-specific interests, including interpreting samples and data of fish hardparts, such as otoliths or umbos, for ageing
- Demonstrated experience with microscopes, image analysis systems (Image J), or electronic data entry systems
- Demonstrated experience dissecting fish
- Demonstrated experience with personal computers using word processing software, spreadsheets, and email

Duty Location

The contractor duty location will be the Northeast Fisheries Science Center located at 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA, 02543. The contractor will be directly supervised by Eric Robillard, Supervisory Research Fishery Biologist at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center.

How to Apply

Applicants should submit a proposal to Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, by email (cmoore@mafmc.org) by 11:59 pm on June 2, 2023. Proposals should not exceed 20 pages total (excluding curriculum vitae) and should include the following elements:

- *Executive Summary:* A summary of the proposed scope of work as well as a brief summary of the applicant's qualifications.
- *Proposed Scope of Work:* A detailed plan for addressing the scope of work described above. This should include a summary of potential analysis approaches, a project schedule, a brief summary of how the project will be managed, and a list of all personnel who may work on the project.
- *Qualifications of Applicant:* A summary of the qualifications of the applicant and other team members, if applicable. Curriculum vitae should be included for all individuals who will work on the project.

- *Proposed Budget:* A detailed budget, including the basis for the charges (e.g. hourly rates, fixed fees).

Timeline

May 3, 2023: Issuance of Request for Proposals

June 2, 2023: Deadline for proposal submission

June 16, 2023: Contractor notification

June 30, 2023: Contracts finalized

July 1, 2023: Project begins

June 30, 2024: Submission of final documentation of all aging work completed (total number by species).

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on prior experience, references, qualifications, and budget. The Council may request additional information as deemed necessary or negotiate modifications to an accepted proposal.

Requests for Further Information

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

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Disclaimer

1. All costs associated with the preparation and presentation of the proposal will be borne by applicants.
2. Proposals and their accompanying documentation will not be returned.
3. Respondents must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending civil/criminal legal actions.
4. The Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify this request for proposals in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.