



New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 2020

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2020-2021 Monkfish Research Set-Aside Program Supports Novel Tagging, Image Analysis Projects

The 2020-2021 Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program will support two innovative projects designed to help researchers and fishery managers better understand the stock structure and movement of monkfish and more easily detect these fish on the seabed, which could be useful in survey applications.

Monkfish is managed jointly by the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. The New England Council has the administrative lead. The Monkfish RSA Program was established in [Amendment 2](#) to the Councils' Monkfish Fishery Management Plan. The amendment specifies that 500 monkfish days-at-sea will be "set aside" annually from the total number of monkfish days allocated to limited access monkfish vessels in order to address research priorities identified by the Councils. The intent is that this research will enhance everyone's understanding of the monkfish resource and contribute to the body of information that's available for management decision-making.

The Councils work together with NOAA Fisheries to support research-set aside projects. The way the program is structured, the Councils set the research priorities, and then NOAA Fisheries manages the RSA competition and administers the program.

The New England Council outlined research priorities for 2020-2021 projects during its June 2019 meeting. The list of priorities is available [here](#). The Northeast Fisheries Science Center and the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, which are part of NOAA Fisheries, announced the selected projects on [March 11](#).

2020-2021 Monkfish Research Set-Aside Project Selections

Institution (Collaborators)	Project Title	Days-At-Sea Award*
Arizona State University (New England Aquarium)	The Use of Novel Fishery-Independent Tagging Technology to Investigate the Moments and Stock Structure of Adult Monkfish (<i>Lophius americanus</i>) Along the United States East Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020 Award: 400 days-at-sea• 2020 Value: \$2,102,582• 2021 Award: 399 days-at-sea• 2021 Value: \$2,099,397
University of Delaware	Using Deep-Learning Image Analysis to Detect Monkfish from Seabed Imagery – Development and Implementation of a Convolutional Neural Network for Survey Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020 Award: 100 days-at-sea• 2020 Value: \$526,300• 2021 Award: 101 days-at-sea• 2021 Value: \$531,563

* Dollar values are calculated based on an estimated price of \$400 per day-at-sea.



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No federal money is involved in this industry-funded program. Instead, the research is conducted collaboratively between fishermen and researchers who work under RSA-awarded days-at-sea. Funds generated from the fish that are harvested and sold are used to cover the cost of research activities and compensate industry partners.

NOAA Fisheries has developed a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about research set-aside programs. The agency addresses questions such as:

- How are projects selected? Who decides which projects are going to be funded?
- How are fishermen included in the review and selection process?
- What are the different stages of the grant competition? What type of financial reporting is required for RSA grant recipients?
- What is RSA compensation fishing? Who decides which vessels get to conduct RSA compensation fishing? How do vessels get involved in RSA compensation fishing? Why does NOAA Fisheries limit the number of vessels that can conduct RSA compensation fishing?
- What are the grant reporting requirements? How does NOAA Fisheries ensure that research results are technically sound before a final report is accepted? How do I get a copy of a final report?
- How effective are RSA programs in supporting research that help manage fisheries?

Read the full list of questions and answers [here](#).

More Information At-A-Glance

- Questions about this year's awards? Contact Ryan Silva, GARFO's Cooperative Research Liaison, at (978) 281-9326, Ryan.Silva@noaa.gov.
- Visit the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's 2020-2021 RSA awards [webpage](#).
- More information about the region's Research Set-Aside Programs can be found [here](#).
- Visit the New England Fishery Management Council's [monkfish webpage](#).



– NOAA Fisheries photo