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NOAA Fisheries Accepting Proposals for 2008 Sea Scallop Research Set-Aside Program

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service is accepting proposals for the New England Fishery Management Council's 2008 Research Set-Aside Program (RSA) for Atlantic sea scallops.

The goals of the RSA programs are to further the understanding of the nation's fisheries, enhance information used in fisheries management decision-making, and foster collaborations among marine fisheries interests. Deadline for proposals is March 21, 2008.

"The scallop research set-aside (RSA) program has been one of our most successful RSA programs," said Earl Meredith, cooperative research program coordinator for NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center headquartered in Woods Hole, Mass. "Since its inception in 2000, 35 projects have been funded totaling more than \$19 million, or more than \$4 million in actual research expenditures and over \$15.7 million in compensation to fisherman."

Research activities can encompass all or part of the 2008 scallop fishing year, but all compensation fishing must be conducted by the end of the 2008 scallop fishing year, (February 28, 2009) . Projects funded under the scallop RSA should enhance understanding of the scallop resource or contribute to information used to make fishery management decisions.

Highest priority will be given to research proposals that address an intensive industry-based survey of each of the following access areas: Closed Area I, Closed Area II, Nantucket Lightship, Elephant Trunk and Delmarva. Other funding priorities include scallop biology, identification and evaluation of methods to reduce groundfish bycatch, identification and evaluation of methods to reduce habitat impacts, habitat characterization research, and identification of sources of sea turtle interactions and/or identification of ways to minimize interactions with sea turtles.

Additional funding priorities are improved information concerning scallop abundance and evaluation of the distribution, composition and density of scallops, scallop and area management research, and research projects that would assist with the transition to industry-based surveys.

No federal funds are provided for this research; funds are generated by the sale of set-aside scallops. Funds generated from RSA landings can be used, for example, to pay for gear modifications, monitoring equipment, additional provisions (such as fuel, ice, food for scientists), or the salaries of research personnel.

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, hospitals, other nonprofit organizations, commercial organizations, individuals, and state, local, and Native American tribal governments. Applications are also encouraged from historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions that

work in underserved areas. NOAA encourages applications from members of the fishing community and applications that involve fishing community cooperation and participation.

The full federal funding announcement for this RSA program can be viewed through the NOAA Grants On-line website at <http://www.grants.gov/>, under Funding Opportunity Number NMFS-NEFSC-2008-2001277.

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NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.