

Fisheries Approves 18 Coastal Recreational Fishing License Grants and the Division of Marine Fisheries Five Year Plan for Obligated Funds from the Marine Resources Fund

MOREHEAD CITY – Revenues from the N.C. Coastal Recreational Fishing License will pay \$2.3 million in the coming year toward projects to help provide coastal fishing access as well as fisheries and habitat research.

The N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission approved 18 grants, totaling \$2,325,088 for the 2016 Request for Proposal cycle. The grants are funded from the N.C. Marine Resources Fund, which receives revenues from the sale of the Coastal Recreational Fishing Licenses.

The grants are sorted into three focus areas. Grants that fall under the People Focus area include public education and public water access projects. Grants that fall under the Fish Focus area are fisheries research projects. Grants that fall under the Habitat Focus area include projects that enhance, protect or research fisheries habitat.

People Focus area has six grants totaling \$787,294. They include:

- **2017-P-052 Oregon Inlet Artificial Reef Committee Establish new artificial reef in NC state waters off the coast of Dare County - \$371,000**
Two-year grant to construct new off-shore artificial reefs in coastal North Carolina waters approximately 8 miles south of Oregon Inlet within three miles of the coast. The Committee approved funding pending the Oregon Inlet Artificial Reef Committee secure 30% of the total project cost in matching funds.
- **2017-P-053 NC Wildlife Resources Commission Manns Harbor Boat Access Area - \$113,000**
One-year grant to construct one new bay of trailer parking spaces. Pave existing gravel areas with asphalt and stripe parking areas.
- **2017-P-54 NC Wildlife Resources Commission Beaufort Boat Access Area - \$75,000**
One-year grant to pave existing gravel areas with asphalt and stripe parking areas.
- **2017-P-057 N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries NC Recreational Fishing Digest - \$37,600**
One-year grant to update and re-print the North Carolina Recreational Fishing Digest.
- **2017-P-059 Town of Oak Island Veterans Park Handicapped Accessible Fishing Access - \$92,200**
One-year grant for the installation of an ADA accessible fishing pier and boardwalk along the existing bulkhead, and ADA accessible walkway at the Town of Oak Island park facility.
- **2017-P-064 Town of Swansboro Bicentennial Park Recreational Fishing Pier - \$98,494**
One-year grant to construct an inshore recreational fishing pier at Bicentennial Park, located on NC Highway 24 at the White Oak River Bridge.

Fish Focus area has five grants totaling \$539,970. They include:

- **2017-F-052 North Carolina State University Estimating survival and stock structure of cobia using telemetry and population genetics - \$166,612**
 Three-year grant to use telemetry tagging and population genetics to study stock structure and boundary questions on cobia.
- **2017-F-054 N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries North Carolina Multi-Species Tagging Program – \$193,967**
 Three-year grant to continue the statewide, multi-species tag-return program That provides independent estimates of fishing mortality, natural mortality, and migration rates.
- **2017-F-043 N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries NCDMF Carcass Collection Program – \$7,750**
 Three-year grant to continue the Carcass Collection Program that is a source of length, age and sex data for recreationally important fish stock assessment models.
- **2017-F-053 North Carolina State University Developing indices of abundance, characterizing juvenile habitat and identifying major spawning areas for North Carolina sheepshead – \$118,166**
 Two-year grant to determine trends in sheepshead abundance and to identify major spawning areas for sheepshead.
- **2017-F-048 North Carolina State University Beaufort Bridgenet Ichthyoplankton Sampling Program: Addressing the Need for Fishery-Independent Juvenile/Larval Indices for Recreationally Important Species – \$53,475**
 Two-year grant for the generation of larval abundance indices from 1986-2019 for multiple species targeted by recreational anglers for use in stock assessments.

Habitat Focus area has seven grants totaling \$997,824. They include:

- **2017-H-061 N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Developing methodology for assessing recreational fish use in Strategic Habitat Areas - \$176,537**
 Two-year grant to initiated a process to identify priority habitat areas, referred to as Strategic Habitat Areas (SHAs), for key species by developing coast wide habitat monitoring protocols.
- **2017-H-069 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Effects of isolated marsh islands and fringing mainland marshes on secondary production and food web dynamics in tidal estuaries - \$85,748**
 Two-year grant to determine the relative importance of large continuous marshes, and smaller isolated marsh islands on secondary production of recreationally important fish and crustaceans.
- **2017-H-060 Cape Fear River Watch Improving Recreational Fishing Opportunities for Striped Bass in the Cape Fear Lock and Dam1 - \$259,539**
 Two-year grant to provide funding to increase the productivity of Deep Bay, West Bay, and Middle Bay sanctuaries by enhancing these sites.
- **2017-H-068 Duke University Rapid, high-resolution mapping of Coastal Strategic Habitats - \$121,739**
 Two-year grant to utilize recent advances in drone technology, to enhance oyster reef habitat monitoring.

- **2017-H-059 University of North Carolina Wilmington Development of SAV Sentinel Sites in Southeastern NC: Linking SAV Health and Resilience to Environmental Drivers – \$82,217**
Three-year grant to conduct research that will provide direct links between changes in SAV health and water quality parameters.
- **2017-H-070 N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Maintaining and expand long-term continuous water quality monitoring and improving comprehensive water quality analysis through the use of innovative software – \$148,993**
Three-year grant to maintain the three NCDMF sampling projects which use continuous water quality monitoring equipment.
- **2017-H-063 North Carolina State University Evaluating cultch oyster reefs as essential fish habitat – \$123,051**
Three-year grant to study the value of cultch reefs created by the NCDMF as essential fish habitat and quantify the contribution of cultch reefs to overall fish production per unit area.

Division of Marine Fisheries Five Year Plan for Obligated Funds from the Marine Resources Fund - \$14.5 Million July 2017 – June 2022.

For more information on these grants or the Coastal Recreational Fishing License grant program, contact Wayne Johannessen, Coastal Recreational Fishing License grants coordinator, at 252-808-8004 or Wayne.Johannessen@ncdenr.gov.