

Fisheries Approves 15 Coastal Recreational Fishing License Grants

MOREHEAD CITY – Revenues from the N.C. Coastal Recreational Fishing License will pay \$1.7 million in the coming year toward projects to help provide coastal fishing access and fisheries and habitat research.

The N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission approved 15 grants, totaling \$1,794,208 for the 2016-17 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 \$983,505. They include:

- **N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Update and Reprint North Carolina Angler's Guide - \$77,750**
Two year grant to provide funding for the fourth update and printing of the North Carolina Coastal Recreational Angler's Guide.
- **N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Marine Patrol Education Team Continuation - \$11,800**
One year grant to continue to provide educational equipment and resources to the Marine Patrol.
- **Oak Island Regional Fishing Pier and Kayak Launch - \$69,955**
One year grant to provide the installation of a fishing pier, and ADA accessible kayak launch at the Town of Oak Island park facility.
- **Eastern Carolina Artificial Reef Association (ECARA) Sunken Vessel Artificial Reefs in Northern Onslow Bay, NC - \$185,000**
One year grant to provide funds for the acquisition of retired marine vessels to establish sunken vessel artificial reefs in Northern Onslow Bay, NC.
- **Wildlife Resources Commission West Onslow Bay Boating Access Area Reconstruction - \$300,000**
One year grant that provides much needed site improvements to the boating and fishing access at the West Onslow Bay Boat Access Area.
- **Long Bay Artificial Reef Association (LBARA) Enhancement of Inshore Artificial Reef (AR430) - \$339,000**
One year grant to provide funds for the enhancement of the artificial reef site AR 430 off Brunswick County.

Fish Focus area has five grants totaling \$277,967. They include:

- **N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Validating and Updating Maturation Schedules for Better Management of North Carolina Fisheries. - \$46,392**
Three year grant to fund a project that will use a combined maturity staging approach to validate and update maturity schedules for commercially and recreationally important North Carolina finfish fisheries.
- **N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries NC Marine Patrol Technology - \$96,476**
Two year grant to provide funding for equipment that will allow officers to respond to request from the public for information pertaining to fisheries rules and regulations, perform license verifications, allow the officers to provide printed documents on site, and complete reporting assignments in the field.
- **University of North Carolina at Wilmington A Comprehensive Evaluation of the North Carolina Red Drum Juvenile Abundance Index: assessment of spatial and temporal persistence and the potential for a partial replacement survey design - \$60,282**
Three year grant to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the North Carolina red drum juvenile abundance index.
- **University of North Carolina at Wilmington A Partnership for Sustained Fisheries Management: development of a research fellowship program between NCDMF and UNCW - \$57,488**
Three year grant to establish a partnership between UNCW and DMF that would focus UNCW master's level graduate students and undergraduate students to address the specific research needs identified by DMF topic experts.
- **N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries An Economic and Social Survey of Coastal Recreational Fishing License Holders in North Carolina - \$17,329**
One year grant to conduct a representative survey that collects economic and social information from individuals who were licensed to fish in coastal areas of North Carolina in 2015 that will provide valuable data that is representative of specific research needs related to DMF's current and future Fisheries Management Plans.

Habitat Focus area has four grants totaling \$532,736. They include:

- **East Carolina University Submerged Aquatic Vegetation SONAR Mapping Surveys in Low-Salinity Habitats: Neuse River - \$77,103**
One year grant to expand the current program that uses long-shore rapid assessment survey techniques to obtain maps in areas of SAV.
- **N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Development of Inshore Fishing Oyster Reefs and the Development and Protection of Oyster Sanctuaries - \$101,200**
Two year grant to provide funding for a project to increase the productivity of Deep Bay, West Bay, and Middle Bay sanctuaries by enhancing structures at these sites.

- **N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Funding for Maintenance on the M/V West Bay to Continue Development of Artificial Reefs and Oyster Sanctuaries - \$250,000**
One year grant to fund maintenance on the M/V West Bay; the primary vessel needed to continue the programmatic goals of the artificial reef and oyster sanctuary program.
- **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Investigating Rates of Sedimentation in Tidal Creeks and Resulting Impacts on Fishery Production in Primary and Secondary Nurseries - \$104,433**
Three year grant to fund a study to combine coring, surveying, and experimental approaches to develop a more thorough understanding of how sedimentation is affecting recreationally important fisheries via the tidal creek and estuarine nurseries they rely on.

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.