



Request for Proposals

Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Habitat Pilot Project Services

Purpose

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) is seeking proposals to support the development of a report on current methods used in the identification of critical fish habitat areas in the US and abroad, and the development of 10-12 short policy documents (background and policy statements) focused on anthropogenic activities that may affect critical fish habitat.

Background

The Council is one of eight councils responsible for developing fishery management plans to prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished fisheries in U.S. federal waters. The councils were established in 1976 following the passage of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and have played an important role in restoring the health of the nation's fisheries. The Council includes representatives from the seven states of the Mid-Atlantic region - New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.

The Council recommends management measures for 13 species of fish or shellfish, including summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish, Atlantic mackerel, short-finned squid (*Illex*), long-finned squid (*Loligo*), butterfish, Atlantic surfclam, ocean quahogs, golden tilefish, spiny dogfish, and monkfish. The latter two species are managed jointly with the New England Fishery Management Council. The Council also works with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to cooperatively manage summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish, and spiny dogfish.

Fish require healthy surroundings to survive and reproduce. Essential fish habitat includes all types of aquatic habitat where fish spawn, breed, feed, and grow to maturity. To date, the Council has identified essential habitat for every life stage of its managed species using the best available scientific information and has developed several habitat areas of particular concern (HAPCs). HAPCs are considered high priority areas for conservation, management, or research because they are rare, sensitive, stressed by development, or important to ecosystem function. However, these HAPC designations have been made in a single species context and the Council has made relatively limited use of the HAPC provisions and other place-based approaches. Identifying HAPCs that are critical for the productivity of Mid-Atlantic fish populations, in a more holistic, multi-species context, is essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems and sustainable fisheries.

As the Council develops an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) Document, under its 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, it will become necessary to identify HAPCs for Mid-Atlantic managed fish and shellfish species. Proactive identification of these areas will enable the Council to reduce or mitigate impacts from anthropogenic (human-caused) activities, such as certain fishing practices as well as coastal and marine development, which threaten to alter, damage, or destroy these habitats. In the larger context, making fisheries management decisions and recommendations in an ecosystem



context will make Mid-Atlantic fisheries more resilient to changes in coastal and ocean habitats due to development, climate, and other pressures.

Scope of Work

This request for proposals is for a consultant to provide the Council with a report on current methods used in the identification of critical fish habitat areas in the US and abroad, and to develop 10-12 short policy documents (background and policy statements) focused on anthropogenic activities that may affect critical fish habitat. These documents will support the Council in future work to identify HAPCs and in the development of Council policy and objectives related to habitat issues. A Project Oversight Team comprised of staff from the Council, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Habitat Division (headquarters and regional offices), the consultant, and one or two other Habitat experts if needed, will provide the consultant with direction on the best approach to gathering information to support the development of these documents. The Project Oversight Team will also provide the list of critical activities to serve as the subject for the policy documents and will work collaboratively with the consultant during this process to ensure effective work products are developed.

The specific project objectives are to:

- 1) Produce a report on current methods used in the identification of critical habitat areas in the US and abroad.
- 2) Develop Council policy documents on anthropogenic activities in our region that may affect fish habitat, from which overarching habitat objectives for the EAFM Document will be derived.

Proposal and Project Timeline

RFP Release	August 1, 2014
Deadline for Proposal Submission	August 22, 2014, 5:00pm
Notification of Award	September 1, 2014
Oversight Team Meeting (initial)	September 2014
Begin Development of Documents	September - December, 2014
Interim Progress Report Submitted	December 15, 2014
Continued Development of Documents (may include additional Oversight Team Meetings)	December 2014 - February 2015
Submit Current Practices Report and Policy Documents	February 15, 2015
Final Approval of Current Practices Report and Policy Documents by Oversight Team	March 1, 2015

Location of Work

Much of the document preparation and interaction between the consultant and staff can occur virtually (online, email, telephone). The consultant must be available to meet periodically with staff and the Project Oversight Team, and the Council's Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Advisory Panel if needed, at several locations.



Staff and Oversight Team Support

The Project Oversight Team, including Council staff, will work collaboratively with the consultant during this process to ensure effective work products are developed.

Qualifications and Evaluation Criteria

The consultant should demonstrate substantial experience in preparing reports and documents to support natural resources management decision-making. They must be willing to engage in a collaborative, iterative process with the Project Oversight Team. Knowledge of fisheries management and previous work with habitat-related issues for agencies involved in natural resource management would be desirable. The project will be awarded to the individual or firm that has the qualifications and experience to develop high-quality and effective products described under the scope of work.

Deliverables/Schedule of Payments

The consultant will deliver a report on current methods used in the identification of critical fish habitat in the US and abroad, and 10-12 short policy documents (background and policy statements) focused on anthropogenic activities that may affect critical fish habitat. A deposit of 30% will be paid after award of the contract. Upon delivery and acceptance of a midterm progress report (December 15, 2014), an additional 30% of the contact amount will be paid. The remaining balance of 40% will be paid on final approval of the work products by the Project Oversight Team (March 1, 2015). Invoices will be paid by the Council to the consultant within 30 days of invoice.

Primary Points of Contact

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