



Request for Proposals

For a Study to Assess the Importance of Atlantic Chub Mackerel to the Diets of Recreationally-Important Highly Migratory Species

Proposal Submission Deadline: February 16, 2018

Term of Contract: 2 years

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) seeks a highly-qualified contractor to design and carry out a study to assess the importance of Atlantic chub mackerel (*Scomber colias*) to the diets of recreationally-important highly migratory species (e.g. tunas, billfish, wahoo, dolphinfish) in the mid-Atlantic. Preference will be given to proposals which use genetic barcoding to identify degraded stomach contents to the species level. Based on stakeholder input, priority predator species include bigeye and yellowfin tunas and white and blue marlin. Priority sampling locations include Virginia Beach, VA and Ocean City, MD. However, other predator species and locations are also of interest.

Background

The Council is developing management measures for chub mackerel fisheries and will consider the potential ecosystem impacts of any management alternatives. However, limited quantitative scientific information on the role of chub mackerel as prey is available to support such considerations. Stakeholders have expressed concerns related to the potential impacts of a commercial chub mackerel fishery on recreationally-important predators such as tunas, marlins, wahoo, and dolphinfish. A literature review and a webinar with scientific experts identified quantitative information on the importance of the Scombridae family to the diets of several predators; however, limited quantitative information on the importance of chub mackerel has been identified. Identification of species such as chub mackerel, Atlantic mackerel, frigate mackerel, and bullet mackerel can prove challenging for traditional diet studies due to similarities in their appearance.

The Council is interested in funding a study using methods other than visual identification of stomach contents to quantify the importance of chub mackerel in the diets of recreationally-important predators. Based on the recommendations of experts who participated in a recent webinar on this topic, preference will be given to proposals which incorporate genetic barcoding techniques; however, other methods (e.g. examination of hard part morphology) will be considered. Please see <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/chub-mackerel-amendment> for more information.

Scope of Work

The contractor will be responsible for all aspects related to design of the study, data collection, analysis, and presentation of final results to the Council.

Contractor Qualifications

Applicants should have demonstrated experience with food habits research on marine fish.

How to Apply

Applicants should submit a proposal to Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, by email (cmoore@mafmc.org) by 11:59 pm on February 16, 2018. Proposals should include the following elements:

- *Executive Summary:* A summary of the proposed scope of work as well as brief summary of the applicant's qualifications.
- *Proposed Scope of Work:* A detailed plan for addressing the scope of work described above. This should include a summary of potential analysis approaches, a project schedule, a brief summary of how the project will be managed, and a list of all personnel who may work on the project.
- *Qualifications of Applicant:* A summary of the qualifications of the applicant and other team members, if applicable. Curriculum vitae should be included for all individuals who will work on the project.
- *Proposed Budget:* A detailed budget, including the basis for the charges (e.g. hourly rates, fixed fees).
- *References:* Names, full addresses, and phone numbers for three clients for whom the applicant has provided similar services to those requested.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on methodology, prior experience, references, qualifications, and budget. The Council may request additional information as deemed necessary or negotiate modifications to an accepted proposal.

Requests for Further Information

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Disclaimer

1. All costs associated with the preparation and presentation of the proposal will be borne by applicants.
2. Proposals and their accompanying documentation will not be returned.
3. Respondents must disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending civil/criminal legal actions.
4. The Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify this request for proposals in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests.