

Improve Use of Habitat Information in Stock Assessments FY2013 Request for Internal Proposals

**Sponsored by the Habitat Assessment Improvement Plan Team
Due November 1, 2012 to [Lora Clarke](#)**

Research proposals are requested for funding in FY2013 under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Stock and Habitat Assessment Improvement Plans. The scope of this RFP is for projects designed to improve the use of habitat information in stock assessments. For information about the related to the stock assessment RFP (previously combined with this one) please contact [Richard Methot](#) or [Leah Sharpe](#).

A major focus of the Habitat Assessment Improvement Plan ([HAIP](#)) is to improve stock assessments through the incorporation of benthic and pelagic habitat information. Most stock assessments currently do not use habitat-specific data, aside from depth and geographic stratification of fisheries-independent surveys. Uncertainty in the estimates of species abundance may be reduced by considering how habitats affect: estimates of standardized fishery catch-per-unit effort; the design of fisheries-independent surveys and resultant estimates of relative stock size; catchability coefficients; life history parameters, such as natural mortality, growth, and reproduction; and stock-recruitment relationships as a function of habitat conditions. Furthermore, effective implementation of ecosystem-based management of habitat and coastal and marine spatial planning will require more information regarding habitat usage during various life stages, ecosystem effects of habitat disturbance, and the spatial and temporal scales of animal movements. This information can also be important for other applications such as minimization of bycatch.

Potential habitat-related projects include:

- Improve an existing stock assessment in a case study that uses existing habitat information to provide a better approximation of population dynamics or that develops and tests protocols to incorporate habitat-specific data into the assessment.
- Estimate the catch efficiency of survey gear in relation to different habitats and use this information to improve survey-based estimates of stock size.
- Measure habitat-related life-history parameters for incorporation into a stock assessment.
- Identify the locations of habitat critical to a species or life history stage using model-based predictions and/or survey data, and use this information in a simulated or actual stock assessment.

The number of awards and the total amount of funding available are contingent upon the final FY2013 appropriation, but plans are to fund between 3 and 6 projects with awards approximately ranging between \$20,000 and \$100,000. In FY2012, \$450,000 was made available for habitat assessment proposals, and a similar funding amount is planned for FY2013.

Proposals should include:

- *Background*
- *Approach*

- *Benefits* (i.e., addressing how the results will be used in stock assessment, how they will benefit management, and/or help in addressing ecosystem assessments)
- *Deliverables*
- *Budget*
- *Budget Justification* (brief narrative to support each budget category).

Please include two-page curriculum vitae for all participants in the project (including a list of collaborators over the past 48 months). The duration of the proposed research should not exceed two years. The project description should clearly state objectives and must include statements of work for both years one and two. Proposals should be in Times New Roman with 12 point font, preferably as MS Word or PDF documents. Project description must not exceed 2 pages (inclusive of everything except figures, references, budget, budget justification, and CVs). Proposals following these guidelines will qualify for further consideration.

At least one of the investigators must be a NOAA employee. If other investigators are not NOAA employees, please include a statement as to how funds would be transferred if the proposal is selected for funding. Collaborators from federal agencies may not charge federal salary or overhead, but may request all other categories of funding support. Two-year proposals may be submitted. Funding is contingent upon availability of Federal appropriations. The financial contact must be within NOAA, so that funds can be BOP'd from the Office of Science and Technology to the receiving FMC. These will be FY2013 funds, so they must be spent or obligated to a contract/grant prior to standard cut-off dates. **Proposals should be sent to [Lora Clarke](mailto:lora.clarke@noaa.gov) (lora.clarke@noaa.gov) by November 1, 2012.**

The Budget should include funding amounts requested for the following categories:

1. Personnel (provide time and cost for each person)
2. Fringe Benefits
3. Travel
4. Equipment (non-expendable property with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more)
5. Supplies
6. Contractual (provide separate itemized budgets for each contract & in the Budget Justification describe products/services to be obtained)
7. Other
8. Total Direct Charges (sum of 1-7)
9. Indirect Charges (provide rate and charges)
10. Totals (sum of 8 and 9)

Review process: The proposals will be reviewed by the HAIP team or their regional representatives as appropriate. Proposals will be rated according to the following criteria: Scientific and technical merit (40%); Importance, relevance and applicability to improved stock assessments (35%); Project costs (10%); and Project management and qualifications of applicant(s) (15%). Proposal funding decisions will be announced as soon as the FY2013 budget is received and the Office of Science and Technology spend plan is approved.

Although not a requirement, inter-disciplinary and inter-office collaboration among science centers, regional habitat conservation divisions, and the Offices of Habitat Conservation and Science and Technology are strongly encouraged. Lower priority will be given to projects that focus on use of environmental time series to reduce overlap with the Fisheries and the Environment (FATE) RFP.

Funded Projects: A project progress report will be required at the end of each fiscal year after the project is funded. A final project report and potential presentation of the results via a national webinar will be required within six months of project completion. Additionally, a one to two paragraph description of the project and relevant photos will be requested for inclusion on the S&T website.

IMPORTANT: In compliance with the NMFS Data Documentation Procedural Directive, all funded projects will create metadata at the Inventory, Discovery and Understanding levels, and will be responsible for entering/uploading these metadata for publication in the NMFS InPort database **when annual project reports are due. Failure to do so may make the PI ineligible for the next RFP cycle.**

HAIIP Team Representatives:

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