#7

January 23, 2007

Mr. Paul J. Howard, Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street
The Tannery – Mill 2
Newburyport, Massachusetts 01950

Dear Paul,

Enclosed for your information is a list of projects (and associated study descriptions) recommended for approval under three Research Set-Aside Programs (RSA), administered by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the 2007 fishing year. These include the Mid-Atlantic, Atlantic Sea Scallop and Monkfish RSA Programs, all of which provide a mechanism to fund research investigations and project participants through the sale of fish harvested under a research and/or DAS quota.

RSA Program	2007 Fishing Year Season
Mid-Atlantic	January 1 – December 31, 2007
Atlantic Sea Scallop	March 1, 2007 – February 29, 2008
Monkfish	May 1, 2007 – April 30, 2008

No Federal funds are provided for research under RSA Program, but rather the opportunity to fish with the catch sold to generate income. The Federal Government may issue an Experimental Fishing Permit or a Letter of Acknowledgement, as applicable, which may provide special fishing privileges in response to selected research proposals.

Similarly, if any part of the proposed research activities were to occur in state waters, RSA recipients were requested to provide NMFS with a copy of written documentation to demonstrate that associated state fishery management agencies have been contacted regarding any necessary state authorizations for commercial landings of the species of concern or for the research activities overall. The recipients on the enclosed list have been notified of these requirements.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Harold C. Mears, Director
State, Federal and Constituent
Programs Office

Enclosures
cc: Deirdre Boelke, Andy Applegate, Chris Kellogg

CC: AJA, DB (1/24)

2007 Fishing Year - Research Set-Aside Projects

Program	Number	Title	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Mid-Atlantic	06-RSA-001	Development of a Supplemental Finfish Survey Targeting Mid-Atlantic Migratory Species	National Fisheries Institute	Eric Powell	1/1/07 - 12/31/07	Pending NOAA Grants approval
Mid-Atlantic	06-RSA-002	Bycatch Reduction and Gear Development in the Mid-Atlantic: Evaluation of Optimal Codend Mesh Size in the Loligo Fishery	National Fisheries Institute	Eric Powell	1/1/07 - 12/31/07	Pending NOAA Grants approval
Mid-Atlantic	06-RSA-005	Evaluation of Summer Flounder Discard Mortality in the Bottom Trawl Fishery	Cornell Cooperative Ext. of Suffolk County	Emerson Hasbrouck	1/1/07 - 12/31/07	Not yet submitted to NOAA Grants
Mid-Atlantic	06-RSA-007	2007 Fishery Independent Survey of Selected Hard Bottom areas in Southern New England	Capt. Charles Borden	Charles Borden, Eric Rodegast, and Laura Skrobe	5/1/07 - 12/31/07	Pending NOAA Grants approval
Atlantic Sea Scallop	07-SCA-002	Characterization of Benthic Habitat and Scallop Abundance Using Optical Imaging Technology: Phase 2	Arnie's Fisheries, Inc.	Richard Taylor, Jonathan Howland	3/1/07 - 2/29/08	Not yet submitted to NOAA Grants
Atlantic Sea Scallop	07-SCA-004	Developing an Improved Dredge for Standardized Surveys of the Sea Scallop Resource	Coonamessett Farm	Ron Smolowitz	3/1/07 - 2/29/08	Not yet submitted to NOAA Grants
Atlantic Sea Scallop	07-SCA-005	Field Testing of a New Dredge for the Sea Scallop Fishery	Coonamessett Farm	Ron Smolowitz	3/1/07 - 2/29/08	Not yet submitted to NOAA Grants
Atlantic Sea Scallop	07-SCA-009	An Assessment of Sea Scallop Abundance and Distribution in Selected Closed Areas: Georges Bank Area I and II, Nantucket Lightship and Elephant Trunk	Virginia Institute of Marine Science	William DuPaul	3/1/07 - 2/29/08	Not yet submitted to NOAA Grants
Atlantic Sea Scallop	07-SCA-010	Calibrating Industry Scallop Surveys with NOAA Vessel Platforms	Virginia Institute of Marine Science	William DuPaul	3/1/07 - 2/29/08	Not yet submitted to NOAA Grants
Atlantic Sea Scallop	07-SCA-013	High-Resolution Video Survey of the Habitat and Sea Scallop Resource in the Elephant Trunk and Nantucket Lightship Closed Areas	University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth	Kevin Stokesbury	5/1/07 - 4/30/08	Not yet submitted to NOAA Grants
Monkfish	07-MONK-001	The Biology of Large Monkfish, *Lophius americanus*	University of Maryland Eastern Shore	Dr. Andrea Johnson	5/1/07 - 4/30/08	Not yet submitted to NOAA Grants
Monkfish	07-MONK-002	A Tagging Study to Assess Monkfish (*Lophius americanus*) Movements and Stock Structure in the Northeastern United States	Gulf of Maine Research Institute	Dr. Graham Sherwood and Dr. Johnathan Grabowski	5/1/07 - 4/30/08	Not yet submitted to NOAA Grants
Monkfish	07-MONK-003	Determining the Best Mesh Size for Gillnetting Monkfish *Lophius americanus*	Capt. Brad Bowen	Bradford S. Bowen and Michael Pol	5/1/07 - 4/30/08	Not yet submitted to NOAA Grants

Scallop Research Set-Aside Program

2007 Fishing Year
6 Projects Recommended, Pending Final NOAA Approval, January 2007

Total DAS/lbs 6 projects = **330 DAS** Open Area
86,414 lbs Closed Area 1
107,760 lbs Nantucket Lightship Closed Area
217,038 lbs Elephant Trunk Access Area

07-SCA-002 - Arnie's Fisheries, Inc., *"Characterization of Benthic Habitat and Scallop Abundance Using Optical Imaging Technology: Phase 2"*

RSA Amount: **81 DAS** - Open Area
20,414 lbs - Closed Area 1
84,760 lbs - Nantucket Lightship Closed Area

Performance Period: March, 1 2007 – February 29, 2008

Description: The first goal of this project is to conduct photographic transects along the exact tow path of 100 stations made by the NOAA R/V Albatross IV during the annual scallop survey of July and August 2007. Biomass calculations will be developed using size frequencies generated from the NMFS dredge survey and compared directly with size frequency analyses from stereo images produced by their towed benthic habitat Mapping Camera system, HabCam.

The second goal is to install three additional instruments to the HabCam vehicle in order to increase the information gained from on-going camera transects. A stereo camera, hyper-spectrometer, and a high frequency sidescan sonar would be installed.

07-SCA-004 - Coonamessett Farm Inc., *"Developing an Improved Dredge for Standardized Surveys of the Sea Scallop Resource"*

RSA Amount: **86,759 lbs** - Elephant Trunk Access Area

Performance Period: March, 1 2007 – February 29, 2008

Description: The objective of this project is to design and test an eight foot wide scallop survey dredge to be used by NMFS and others for assessing the sea scallop resource and associated species. The project would be performed in two phases. The first phase would design and fabricate a prototype dredge and bag which would be then tuned on a test trip on a commercial vessel and modified as appropriate. The second phase will commence when an acceptable design is achieved and will consist of a limited set of tows field testing the chosen dredge design.

07-SCA-005 - Coonamessett Farm, Inc., *"Field Testing of a New Dredge for the Sea Scallop Fishery"*

RSA Amount: **20,000 lbs** - Closed Area 1
41,479 lbs - Elephant Trunk Access Area

Performance Period: March, 1 2007 – February 29, 2008

Description: This project will be a continuation of the 2006 scallop RSA project 06-SCA-001. The new dredge will incorporate improvements to the design changes currently being tested on reducing sea turtle injury and mortality. Work would also be done on optimizing the design for groundfish bycatch reduction using more appropriate materials and cross-sections. Tow tank testing, computer modeling, and extensive field testing will be used to validate the effectiveness of the new designs/modifications.

07-SCA-009 - Virginia Institute of Marine Science, *"An Assessment of Sea Scallop Abundance and Distribution in Selected Closed Areas: Georges Bank Area I and II, Nantucket Lightship and Elephant Trunk"*

RSA Amount: **30 DAS** Open Area
23,000 lbs Closed Area 1
23,000 lbs Nantucket Lightship Closed Area
44,400 lbs Elephant Trunk Access Area

Performance Period: March, 1 2007 – February 29, 2008

Description: The proposed project would survey the named areas simultaneously towing a dredge compliant to NMFS survey gear specifications and a standard commercial dredge. The use of two different configurations of scallop dredges conducting fine scale surveys would provide a more complete view of the size distribution of the resource in the area. The survey data and analyses will be provided to the New England Fishery Management Council, Sea Scallop PDT, and NMFS for inclusion in the TAC setting process for access area management.

07-SCA-010 - Arnie's Fisheries, Inc., *"Calibrating Industry Scallop Surveys with NOAA Vessel Platforms"*

RSA Amount: **15 DAS** Open Area
23,000 lbs Closed Area 1
44,400 lbs Elephant Trunk Access Area

Performance Period: March, 1 2007 – February 29, 2008

Description: This project proposes to conduct an industry based survey in the "shadow" of the NMFS scallop survey. A commercial vessel using survey dredges would follow the NMFS survey vessel and conduct same station surveys with the objective of obtaining enough comparative information to allow some degree of calibration between the two vessels. The project would conduct 100 comparative tows at pre-determined stations during each of the NMFS scallop surveys covering Georges Bank and the Mid-Atlantic.

07-SCA-013 - University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, *"High-Resolution Video Survey of the Habitat and Sea Scallop Resource in the Elephant Trunk and Nantucket Lightship Closed Areas"*

RSA Amount: **204 DAS Open Area**

Performance Period: May, 1 2007 – April 30, 2008

Description: This study will examine the sea scallop abundance and evaluate their spatial distribution, size composition and density as well as habitat characteristics in the ETCA and NLCA using a high-resolution cooperative industry-based video survey. These surveys would provide a highly precise and accurate estimate of size specific sea scallop density and a series of maps of the sea floor detailing the distribution of substrate, depth, live scallops, dead scallops, and megafauna (sponges, starfish, filamentous fauna).

Monkfish Research Set-Aside Program

2007 Fishing Year

3 Projects Recommended, Pending Final NOAA Approval, December 2006

Total DAS/3 projects = 367 Monkfish Research DAS

07-MONK-001 – University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), "The Biology of Large Monkfish, *Lophius americanus*." Principal Investigator – Dr. Andrea Johnson, UMES.

Project Description: To provide information on the biology of large monkfish (90 cm. and larger) that can be used to enhance the management of the resource. Research will focus on determining monkfish age and growth patterns, investigating the spawning frequency of large monkfish, and estimating the rates of cannibalism of large monkfish. This is a continuation of the research awarded to UMES under the FY 2006 Monkfish RSA Program.

RSA Amount: **102 Monkfish Research DAS**

Project Period: May, 1 2007 – April 30, 2008

07-MONK-002 – Gulf of Maine Research Institute, "A Tagging Study to Assess Monkfish (*Lophius americanus*) Movements and Stock Structure in the Northeastern United States" Principal Investigators – Dr. Graham Sherwood and Dr. Jonathan Grabowski.

Project Description: This project will employ short duration tows and gillnets to capture monkfish for a tagging study focused on adult monkfish movement patterns, spatial segregation by sex, and population structure. A tag reward system is the incentive for industry reporting of tagged fish recovered during commercial fishing operations.

RSA Amount: **185 Monkfish Research DAS**

Project Period: May, 1 2007 – April 30, 2008

07-MONK-003 – Bowen Fisheries, Inc., "Determining the Best Mesh Size for Gillnetting Monkfish (*Lophius americanus*)." Principal Investigator – Bradford S. Bowen; Scientific Collaborator – Michael Pol, MA Division of Marine Fisheries.

Project Description: Investigators will develop selectivity curves by comparing monkfish catches in 10", 12" and 14" gillnets. Larger mesh sizes tend to catch larger monkfish and larger monkfish generally yield higher prices than smaller monkfish. Therefore, this project tests the theory that larger mesh sizes will increase profits and limit environmental impact by reducing catch of smaller monkfish and non-target species.

RSA Amount: **80 Monkfish Research DAS**

Project Period: May 1, 2007 – April 30, 2008