

**VIRGINIA RECREATIONAL FISHING DEVELOPMENT FUND
SUMMARY PROJECT APPLICATION***

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<p>NAME AND ADDRESS OF APPLICANT:</p> <p>Virginia Marine Resources Commission 2600 Washington Ave, Newport News VA 23607</p>	<p>PROJECT LEADER (name, phone, e-mail):</p> <p>Joe Grist (757) 247-2237 joe.grist@mrc.virginia.gov Ronald Owens (757) 247-2244 ron.owens@mrc.virginia.gov</p>
<p>PRIORITY AREA OF CONCERN:</p> <p>Research</p>	<p>PROJECT LOCATION:</p> <p>Various Locations in Virginia</p>
<p>DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF PROJECT:</p> <p>Virginia Marine Sportfish Collection Project</p>	
<p>PROJECT SUMMARY:</p> <p>To collect recreational samples of cobia, red drum, spotted seatrout, blueline tilefish and snowy grouper for the purpose of obtaining harvest data pertaining to the length, age, and sex of each species.</p>	
<p>EXPECTED BENEFITS:</p> <p>By increasing the number of samples collected we will be able to increase our ability to describe species-specific life-history traits and provide better information for population analysis.</p>	
<p>COSTS:</p> <p>Total Costs: \$ 12,000.00</p> <p>Detailed budget must be included with proposal.</p>	

Updated 6/1/05

*This form alone does not constitute a complete application, see application instructions or contact Sonya Davis at 757-247-8155 or sonya.davis@mrc.virginia.gov : Due dates are June 15 (Jul. – Nov. Cycle) and December 15 (Jan. – May Cycle)

A request for funding of the Virginia Marine Sportfish Collection Project.

Need:

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission's stock assessment program has been collecting length, weight, sex, and age information from thirteen species since 1998. Fish are processed either by VMRC staff or the Age and Growth lab at Old Dominion University, Center for Quantitative Fishery Ecology.

The majority of samples collected come from the commercial fishing industry, with very few samples from the recreational fishing community. However, not all of the thirteen species are readily available for sampling from commercial harvesters. Recreational fisherman could provide needed biological data to fill any sampling deficiencies. Three species of importance to the recreational community are cobia, red drum, and spotted seatrout, however, sampling for these three species often fall short of VMRC goals due to the lesser role they play in the commercial fishing industry. Additionally, samples of two new species of interest, blueline tilefish and snowy grouper, are needed to assist in development of life-history and harvest data. Recently, blueline tilefish were added by the Virginia Saltwater Tournament Committee's list of fish to be recognized for trophy citations, and blueline tilefish and snowy grouper were each recommended to be considered for state record recognition. Additionally, the National Marine Fisheries Service's Populations Dynamics Lab in Beaufort, NC, a lab that specializes in ageing fish from the Snapper-Grouper complex, has offered to age any blueline tilefish and snowy grouper samples we can provide from Virginia and provide us the life-history data.

Objective:

To increase the number of length, sex, and age samples collected for the following species.

Cobia
Red drum
Spotted seatrout
Blueline tilefish
Snowy grouper

Estimated Benefits:

Marine fish populations are exploited by commercial and recreational fisherman and are subject to significant pressure through habitat degradation. Fisheries scientists conduct stock assessments to determine the health of a fishery and establish recommendations for future harvest levels. At the foundation of these stock assessments are accurate data on catch and effort and descriptive data on population demographics. Accurate and precise age, sex, and length composition data, in concert with age-specific vital rates such as fecundity and selectivity, allow fisheries scientists to choose from a suite of assessment models to predict appropriate harvests.

By funding this project, we will be able to increase the number of samples collected and will be better able to predict the trends of fish population in the future.

Approach:

In cooperation with local fishing facilities, chest freezers will be set-up at select locations. Each freezer will be marked with an identifying sign and a list of target species. Inside each freezer there will be a supply of durable plastic bags, information cards and pens. Cooperating fisherman will be able to put filleted frame of the fish, with head and tail intact, in a bag with the filled out information card and then place the bag in the freezer. Bags will be collected by VMRC staff and processed for biological information.

An incentive program for anglers will be included in the project. For fisherman participating in the program for the first time, each will earn a promotional hat. Each angler will be able to retain a fish ID number when they supply a fish, which will allow them to track the samples they provide and obtain specific information about their fish from the Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund (VSRFDF) website.

Location:

Various locations along coastal Virginia where anglers have access to fish cleaning stations and are easily accessible. Sites to be determined.

Length of Time:

Collection from recreational fishery, with promotional incentives, will continue each year. However, the annual budget will be adjusted (i.e. will not need new freezers every year), and any unused funds will be returned to the VSRFDF.

Estimated Cost (Year 1):

Item	Total Cost
Freezers (5)	\$4,000.00
Supplies (bags, cards, pens)	\$1,000.00
Promotional items (hats, signs)	\$4,000.00
Travel and sample collection	\$3,000.00
TOTAL	\$12,000.00