

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

<b>NAME AND ADDRESS OF APPLICANT:</b> Virginia Marine Resources Commission 2600 Washington Ave, Newport News VA 23607	<b>PROJECT LEADER (name, phone, e-mail):</b> Joe Grist (757) 247-2237 <a href="mailto:joe.grist@mrc.virginia.gov">joe.grist@mrc.virginia.gov</a> Joe Cimino (757) 247-8068 <a href="mailto:joe.cimino@mrc.virginia.gov">joe.cimino@mrc.virginia.gov</a>	
<b>PRIORITY AREA OF CONCERN:</b> Research	<b>PROJECT LOCATION:</b> Various Locations in Virginia	
<b>DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF PROJECT:</b> Virginia Marine Sportfish Collection Project (Year-2)		
<b>PROJECT SUMMARY:</b> To collect recreational samples of recreationally important species, such as cobia, red drum, black drum, sheepshead and tautog, for the purpose of obtaining harvest data pertaining to the length, age, and sex of each species.		
<b>EXPECTED BENEFITS:</b> 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.		
<b>COSTS:</b>		
<b>Total Costs:</b>	<table border="1"><tr><td>\$ 12,000.00</td></tr></table>	\$ 12,000.00
\$ 12,000.00		
<b>Detailed budget must be included with proposal.</b>		

\*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](mailto:sonya.davis@mrc.virginia.gov) : Due dates are June 15 (Jul. – Nov. Cycle) and December 15 (Jan. – May Cycle)

A request for renewal of funding of the Virginia Marine Sportfish Collection Project (Year 2).

**Need:**

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission's Biological Sampling Program (also known as the 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. Species of importance to the recreational community include cobia, red drum, sheepshead and tautog; 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. In 2006, 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. In 2007, the National Marine Fisheries Service's Population Dynamics Lab in Beaufort, NC, entered into a cooperative effort with VMRC to age tilefish and grouper. The lab specializes in ageing fish from the Snapper-Grouper complex, and has offered to age a representative sample of tilefish and grouper from Virginia to develop life-history data and provide back for the recreational anglers information.

**Objective:**

To increase the number of length, sex, and age samples collected for the following species. This list is dynamic and can change as sampling needs are identified, or sampling goals met, during the year.

Current Listing (as of November 20, 2007)

Cobia	Black Drum	Sheepshead	Tilefish
Red drum	Spadefish	Tautog	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 continuing to fund 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 provided at select locations. Each freezer will be marked with an identifying sign and a list of target species. A supply of durable plastic bags, information cards and pens will be provided in each freezer. Cooperating fisherman will be able to put a filleted frame of the fish, with head and tail intact in a plastic bag, along with the completed information card, and place the bag in the freezer. Bags will be collected by VMRC staff and processed for biological information.

Additional samples will be obtained directly from select regional fishing tournaments which VMRC staff provides technical support. These tournaments include, but are not limited too, the Black Drum World Championship Fishing Tournament in Cape Charles and the Hampton Creek Cobia Tournament in Hampton. Participating tournament anglers will receive promotional shirts or hats, as described below, for their donations.

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 shirt or hat. Participating anglers will be able to receive information about the project's donated fish, to include information on length, sex and age of samples, through a project specific, twice-annual, newsletter sent to project participants, and from VMRC and Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund (VSRFDF) websites.

As of November 20, 2007, 126 anglers have received reward tee shirts for the donation of 270 fish to the collection project. For 2008, the reward program will expand to include hats adorned with the program logo. Enclosed are tables generated from VMRC's Biological Sampling Program that detail the species, number, and minimum and maximum size of the donations to date, at the three current donation sites. Staff will provide updated information to the Recreational Fishing Advisory Board at the January 14, 2008 applicant presentation meeting.

**Location:**

The project initially began on July 5, 2007, with collection freezers set-up in cooperations with three bait and tackle shops: Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton), Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach) and Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville). These three locations were ideal for the initial start-up of this project, as they were locations that had high angler traffic; and an onsite cleaning station and weight station. The project initially proposed five locations within the first year, and additional locations are being sought

after, including a location in the Middle Area/Northern Neck region. Staff is also working toward the possibility of additional collection sites for the Peninsula, South Hampton Roads, and Eastern Shore before the end of the first year of funding (May 2008).

**Length of Time:**

Collection from recreational fishery, with promotional incentives, will continue each year. However, the annual budget will be adjusted, and any unused funds will be returned to the VSRFDF.

**Estimated Cost (Year 1):**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Freezers (6)	\$5,000.00
Supplies (bags, cards, pens)	\$1,000.00
Promotional items (hats, shirts, signs, newsletter)	\$4,000.00
Sample collections and processing	\$2,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,000.00</b>

**Sportfish Project Collection Site=Chris Bait and Tackle**

<b>Sportfish Project Collection Site</b>	<b>Donated Species</b>	<b>Number of Samples Provided</b>	<b>Smallest Size Provided (Inch)</b>	<b>Largest Size Provided (Inch)</b>
Chris Bait and Tackle	Blueline Tilefish	<b>19</b>	16	27
Chris Bait and Tackle	Cobia	<b>11</b>	37	57
Chris Bait and Tackle	Sheepshead	<b>4</b>	20	24
Chris Bait and Tackle	Spadefish	<b>114</b>	6	21
Chris Bait and Tackle	Tautog	<b>4</b>	14	20

**Sportfish Project Collection Site=Long Bay Pointe Marina**

<b>Sportfish Project Collection Site</b>	<b>Donated Species</b>	<b>Number of Samples Provided</b>	<b>Smallest Size Provided (Inch)</b>	<b>Largest Size Provided (Inch)</b>
Long Bay Pointe Marina	Black Drum	<b>2</b>	22	45
Long Bay Pointe Marina	Blueline Tilefish	<b>2</b>	18	28
Long Bay Pointe Marina	Red Drum	<b>32</b>	15	25
Long Bay Pointe Marina	Sheepshead	<b>11</b>	3	24
Long Bay Pointe Marina	Snowy Grouper	<b>2</b>	43	45
Long Bay Pointe Marina	Spadefish	<b>9</b>	12	18
Long Bay Pointe Marina	Wreckfish	<b>6</b>	21	25

**Sportfish Project Collection Site=Wallaces Bait and Tackle**

<b>Sportfish Project Collection Site</b>	<b>Donated Species</b>	<b>Number of Samples Provided</b>	<b>Smallest Size Provided (Inch)</b>	<b>Largest Size Provided (Inch)</b>
Wallaces Bait and Tackle	Blueline Tilefish	<b>26</b>	17	24
Wallaces Bait and Tackle	Cobia	<b>14</b>	40	62
Wallaces Bait and Tackle	Sheepshead	<b>2</b>	22	26
Wallaces Bait and Tackle	Spadefish	<b>5</b>	10	17
Wallaces Bait and Tackle	Tautog	<b>7</b>	15	21