



## **Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Fisheries Restoration Program 2024 Request for Proposals**

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) is requesting proposals for contractor support to assist in the analysis of discards of reef fish (red snapper, red grouper, and gag) in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic recreational fisheries, including private boats, charter and headboat sectors. Results of the analysis will be published on the Return 'Em Right (<https://returnemright.org/>) website for easy query and access by the general public. This project is a component of the “Reduction of Post-release Mortality from Barotrauma in Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Recreational Fisheries” project. The GSMFC is partnering with [NOAA’s Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program](#) (DARRP) on this project to restore reef fish species impacted by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Recreational fishing information, including estimates of discarded fish, are collected through a variety of state and federal information gathering programs. This information supports federal and state fisheries management and provides critical information for stock assessments. In addition, Return 'Em Right uses estimates of discarded fish to understand the effect of education on discard rates and to help estimate survival rates of discarded fish.

The analysis will provide important metrics to measure restoration impacts, fill recently identified data needs in the Gulf of Mexico recreational fishery, and provide information to improve restoration of recreationally important species.

### **Statement of Work (SOW)**

The goal of this project is to develop an analysis and communication tool to allow GSMFC and partners to efficiently evaluate the effectiveness of the Return 'Em Right program by analyzing reef fish discard data. The discard analysis must generate high-level analytics and summary reports that can be presented on the Return 'Em Right website in a user-friendly format, suitable for both technical and general audiences. The analysis can be built on previously conducted analysis of discards used by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The results must be presented on a dynamic web-based tool for easy access by the project team and the general public. GSMFC will provide previously developed analysis and scripts for the contractor to use as a starting point. See an example of a similar end product at: <https://gulfcouncil.org/fishery-management-2/fisheries-science/#1644868960344-80826d27-d885>. The code for the existing application is here: <https://github.com/jfroeschke/GOMdiscards/>.

The analysis should be easy to update when new data are made available. All procedures for data gathering and analysis should be well-documented.

## Activities

The contractor will work directly with members of the project team (GSMFC, NOAA) to coordinate development of the database.

### 1. Task 1: Coordinate with Project Team

- a. **Initial Meeting:** Schedule an initial meeting within 10 days of contract award to discuss parameters and metrics for analysis and data collection steps.
- b. **Bi-weekly Meetings:** Conduct bi-weekly (every other week) coordination meetings with appropriate project partners to ensure progress and address any issues.

### 2. Task 2: Data Compilation

- a. **Non-disclosure Agreement (NDA):** Prior to the sharing of any data, a non-disclosure agreement must be established between the contractor and the data-providing organization(s), such as NOAA. This NDA is essential to protect any personal identifying information or sensitive data. The project team will provide guidance and support in facilitating this agreement.
- b. **Compile Data:** Compile a dataset including discards in numbers and weight for the private recreational, charter vessel, and headboat, sectors by year for the following species: red snapper, red grouper, and gag.
- c. **Discard Mortality Rates:** Compile discard mortality rates for red snapper, red grouper, and gag from existing sources, such as scientific papers and stock assessments. Discard mortality rates should be pertinent to the Gulf of Mexico or South Atlantic. When available include cofactors (e.g., season, depth, fishing mode) in discard mortality estimates.
- d. **Documentation:** Document the data compilation process and quality control used.
- e. **Export Process:** Ensure data can be efficiently exported and disseminated to partners for use as needed.

### 3. Task 3: Develop Reporting Tools

- a. **Scripts in R:** Develop well documented scripts for data analysis in R or other agreed upon format.
- b. **Dashboard:** Create a dynamic reporting dashboard that can filter results by year, month, state, vessel type (sector), species, and region. Include the ability to estimate discard mortality from total discards and discard mortality rates, and provide users the flexibility to use different discard mortality rate options.
- c. **Document methods:** Outline and document methods used for analysis.

### 4. Task 4: Test Database and Publish Tool

- a. **Process and Tool Testing:** Test data import, export, and reporting dashboard with project partners prior to full implementation to ensure accurate data uploading, warehousing, and dissemination.
- b. **Risk Assessment and Security Testing:** Before the final publication, the developed tool must undergo a risk assessment and security test conducted by the server hosting organization (University of Florida). The tool must pass these evaluations to ensure

compliance with data security standards and mitigate potential risks associated with data sharing and public access.

- c. **Publish Data:** Work with the project team to publish data and the tool on the Return ‘Em Right website.

#### 5. **Task 5: Long-term Support and Maintenance**

- a. **Software Updates:** Updating the tool’s software to remain compatible with the latest technology standards and web hosting environments.
- b. **Bug Fixes:** Any bugs identified in the tool after deployment must be promptly addressed and resolved to ensure continued functionality and user satisfaction.
- c. **User Error Reports:** Manage user error reports, investigating and resolving issues reported by users of the tool.
- d. **Support Services:** Provide technical support and maintenance services for the tool for a minimum period of one year after deployment. This may include troubleshooting, enhancements, and improvements based on feedback and evolving requirements.

#### 6. **Task 6 (option): Annual updates**

- a. Annually update data and tools to provide the most current information to the Return ‘Em Right team and stakeholders.

### **Deliverables**

1. Complete Tasks 1-5, Task 6 optional
2. Data import and export processes
3. Meeting notes from bi-weekly meetings
4. Updated data for discards by year for priority species from the Gulf and the South Atlantic.
5. Discard reporting dashboard with summary-level results that can be filtered by species, year, month, state, sector, and region
6. Documentation for all procedures and analyses, which is critical for long-term, accurate, and efficient management of this tool
7. Final report due 90 days after the close of the project. The reporting form is a standardized fillable form and will be provided to the Contractor by GSMFC with detailed instructions provided for each section.

### **Timeline**

Proposals must be received by e-mail to Charlie Robertson ([charlie.robertson@gsmfc.org](mailto:charlie.robertson@gsmfc.org)) by 5:00 pm Central Standard Time on **Wednesday, December 11, 2024**. The period for this work will be approximately six months, February 1, 2025 to July 31, 2025. These time and dates are an approximation and subject to change based on time needed to complete processes for review, selection, and contract execution.

1. Work may begin as soon as a contract is in place.
2. During the coordination, development, and testing phases of this project, the contractor will meet regularly with the project team.

## Proposal Required Information

All proposals must be submitted to the GSMFC Coordinator listed above in the following standard format:

- **Applicant name:** Identify the name of the applicant.
- **Project title:** A brief statement to identify the project.
- **Requested award amount:** Provide the total requested amount of proposal.
- **Requested award period:** Provide the total time period of the proposed project.
- **Approach:** List all procedures necessary to accomplish the desired tasks.
- **Budget table and narrative:** Provide a detailed table of all costs to be incurred in this project, including, but not limited to: personnel, equipment, and travel. The budget table should be accompanied by a written breakdown of costs to be incurred. Funds for salaries and fringe benefits may be requested only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the proposed project and whose salaries and fringe benefits are directly related to specific products or outcomes of the proposed project. Hourly rates and projected hours worked on the project and/or percentage of time and yearly salary should be included for all salary requests. Applicants are strongly encouraged to request reasonable amounts of funding for salaries and fringe benefits to ensure the proposal is competitive.
- **Principal Investigator (PI):** List the PIs work experience similar or related to the development of databases specifically for fisheries data.
- **Experience and activities:** Describe any previous relevant experience(s) working with fisheries data and/or database development that are similar or related to the desired tasks described in this RFP.

## Proposal Review and Selection Procedures

Proposals must be received via e-mail ([charlie.robertson@gsmfc.org](mailto:charlie.robertson@gsmfc.org)) with the subject by 5:00 pm Central Standard Time on **Wednesday, December 11, 2024**. GSMFC will inform applicants of their selection status within 2 weeks, or request additional information. All those who submit complete and timely proposals and meet all requirements are eligible to be considered. Failure to follow the requirements described in this RFP will result in proposals being returned without review. The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals:

- Adherence to required information
- Qualifications of personnel assigned to project
- Range of similar experience and activities performed by applicant
- Description of approaches
- Cost of proposal

Applicants must be willing to work closely with GSMFC, as well as state and federal partners. Proposals will be reviewed by a technical team established in conjunction with the project team. The technical team will make final decisions on project approvals and grant awards in consultation with NOAA. The review and evaluation of all written proposals will take into consideration the description of eligible projects, funding availability and ability to complete the project in the established timeframe. Entities that receive project funding must abide by the established reporting requirements. If accepted for funding, this project must comply with all federal government audit

principles/procedures and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

The deadline to submit proposals is **COB on Wednesday, December 11, 2024**. Please submit proposals by e-mail to Charlie Robertson ([charlie.robertson@gsmfc.org](mailto:charlie.robertson@gsmfc.org)).

### **Contact Information**

For questions, please contact:

Charlie Robertson  
Fisheries/Sportfish Restoration and ANS Program Coordinator  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission  
2404 Government Street  
Ocean Springs, MS 39564  
Tel: (228) 327-0297  
Fax: (228) 875-6604  
[charlie.robertson@gsmfc.org](mailto:charlie.robertson@gsmfc.org)