



**GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION  
GULF OF AMERICA MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL FINFISH RESEARCH  
FY2025 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) is requesting proposals to develop research projects to conduct fishery-independent research on Cobia and Tripletail in the Gulf of America for which current data is deficient.

The Commission is making up to \$5M available for the funding period of March 1, 2026 to February 28, 2027. The Commission plans to award a single or multiple Gulf-wide projects for a period of one year with additional years available as funding allows. Project proposals must include at least one state marine resource management agency as a supporting partner. Any investigator or Consortia of investigators seeking support for this period must submit, as a single file, an electronic proposal by e-mail no later than **5:00 p.m. CST on Friday, November 14, 2025**. Please see the *Proposal Guidelines* section for proposal and submission instructions.

**Background**

To address concern over the stock condition and lack of basic fishery-independent data for many important fish species in the Gulf of America, Congress has requested the Commission to provide grants to academic-state partners, including multi-state consortiums, to conduct fishery-independent research on transboundary, multi-jurisdictional fish species in the Gulf of America for which current data is deficient. This one-year project will focus on Cobia and Tripletail in the region with additional species being added if future funds become available. Funding for the program has been accomplished through a partnership with the NMFS and the Commission such that \$5M will be available for individual and multi-partner proposals to begin in early-2026.

**Proposal**

The goals for the requested proposals should provide fishery-independent data related to target Cobia and Tripletail populations in the Gulf of America critical for current stock assessment models.

Projects should contribute to:

- stock identification,
- population exchange rates and exploitation,
- movement/migration and
- any effects on life history due to climate change.

When applicable, projects should also increase and expand the telemetry networks throughout the region to the benefit of the target and other marine species in both state and federal waters of the U.S. Gulf of America.

## Proposal Guidelines

Proposals should clearly outline the project objectives, methodologies, research outputs, qualifications of the investigators who would perform the work, where the work would be performed, and a detailed budget(s). It is critically important to clearly and explicitly articulate how the proposed work addresses the goals identified in this document. Proposals must include state marine resource agency support and direct collaboration is preferred. Proposals should indicate how the results of the proposed work will be utilized by managers and distributed to stock assessment scientists in the region. Proposals should not exceed **15 pages** in length (including references), must include a letter(s) of support from a partner state agency, and should follow the instructions for preparing proposals for Commission awards (*Attachment A*).

Applicants should be willing to work closely with Commission staff during the execution and progress of the projects. Funds for this project are provided by NOAA Fisheries. Projects accepted for funding must comply with all federal government audit principles/procedures and the Department of Commerce's Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions ([DOC Terms and Conditions](#)).

## Duration, Eligibility, and Funding

This grant program is intended to collect fishery-independent data necessary for future stock assessment and management of multi-jurisdictional finfish species, including those solely managed by the Gulf states. The Commission will fund proposals on a competitive basis. Proposals from foreign entities are not eligible. Proposals involving multiple investigators are welcome and collaboration is preferred and proposals must include support from a state marine resource management agency(s). Any U.S. federal government agencies or staff, including Regional Fishery Management Council staff, are not eligible to receive funding through this solicitation. These funds can be used to fund a project in its entirety, or in combination with existing funds or additional grant awards. The proposed work must be conducted in the U.S. Gulf of America region. Proposed activities should be completed in the one-year funding period of March 1, 2026 to February 28, 2027.

## Submittal Instructions

Investigators must submit by e-mail an electronic copy of the proposal. Electronic files must be a single file in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format and must be sent via e-mail to Steve VanderKooy ([steve.vanderkooy@gsmfc.org](mailto:steve.vanderkooy@gsmfc.org)) for receipt no later than **5:00 p.m. CST on Friday, November 14, 2025**. "FI-Research Projects" must be specified in the subject line. Proposals not received by the deadline will be returned without review. Proposals failing to comply with content and format requirements will be rejected.

## Proposal Evaluation

All proposals meeting the specified requirements will be evaluated through a technical review of independent experts. Proposals will be ranked based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

*Program Goals and Priorities* – The project contributes to the overall conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success in the U.S. Gulf of America region.

*Technical Merit* – The project is technically sound and feasible and there is a clear, logical, and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project

planning, design, and implementation to ensure activities are technically-sound and feasible. Permit needs are considered and the ability to secure proper permits to conduct the proposed work is compatible with project timelines.

*Budget Justification* – Costs are allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with the Commission’s project-specific cost categories (*Appendix A*) and comply with *OMB Uniform Guidance* as applicable.

*Collaboration* – Projects including multiple academic and state marine resource agency partners is strongly encouraged.

Decisions will be disseminated to P.I.s by January 2026 and research is expected to begin in early-2026 pending NOAA review and approval for all NEPA and ESA requirements.

**For More Information:**

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**Attachment A****Instructions for Preparing Proposals for  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Awards**

Proposal should be a scientific or technical action plan of activities to be accomplished. Please use the following format when preparing your proposal but restrict your proposal to a maximum of **15 pages** in length (including references) and a letter(s) of support from a state marine resource agency. Font size should be no smaller than 12. Proposals must include:

1. **Applicant name:** Identify the name of the applicant organization/agency/university.
2. **Title:** A short descriptive name of the proposal.
3. **RFP Priority:** Identify the priority or priorities that this proposal addresses and how the intended goals of the grant program will be met.
4. **Objective:** State concisely the purpose of the proposal in quantified terms where possible.
5. **Job Title:** A proposal subdivided into two or more jobs must identify each job separately.
6. **Job Objectives:** Provide an objective(s) for each job element, as appropriate.
7. **Job Procedures:** A detailed and concise set of procedures to answer who, what, how, when, and where. Proposals must clearly identify:
  - a. Applicants' activities and deliverables,
  - b. Activities and deliverables of other agencies involved in study, and
  - c. Statement of Authority/Confidentiality, if applicable.
8. **Location:** Describe the location of work.
9. **List of Key Personnel:** List all project personnel and their responsibilities. If personnel are working on the project but are not identified in the project-specific budget, they must be noted as working at no-cost to the project.
10. **Milestone Schedule:** Make a cross-referencing table summarizing, by job, activities that are to be attained each month, including reports.
11. **Project-Specific Budget:** Include a cost estimate breakdown for each cost category covered during the budget period identified. Detailed budget information is required for the following elements:
  - a. Personnel – For each employee, provide the time estimated to be charged to the project; the rate/year, month, day, or hour; and the resulting calculated cost assessed to the project.
  - b. Fringe Benefits – For each employee, identify all fringe-related costs and the rate applied. If the fringe rate is greater than 25%, a copy of the Fringe Rate Agreement must be included.

- c. Travel – Information must be provided on the purpose of travel, destination, daily cost charges, number of days, and number and identity of travelers. All out-of-state and foreign travel must be justified in the proposal.
- d. Equipment (items having a unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more) – Describe how equipment will be used on the project and why it is needed. Identify make and model numbers and unit cost. In addition, a lease versus purchase analysis is necessary for each piece of equipment. Computers and computer-related hardware are often less than \$5,000; due to long-term operational life-span, the need to purchase these items must be clearly explained.
- e. Supplies and Materials – List general categories of supplies and materials, including unit costs and quantities. The terms “miscellaneous” and “etc.” are not allowed.
- f. Contractual/Consulting Services – List each contractor/consultant, describe specific duties to be performed, and how the cost for the service was derived. In addition, a statement as to whether or not the contract or consulting service was competitively selected is necessary. If the service was not competitively selected, a sole source justification is required.
- g. Other Costs – List and describe other costs that are not assignable to the other direct cost categories. Indicate how these costs were derived.
- h. Indirect Costs – If indirect costs are charged, identify the rate used in the calculations, and include **a copy of the current negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with your proposal.**