

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WITHIN THE
COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT**

INTEREST #N62473-19-2-0023

PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2019

Project Title: Study of Abalone Reproductive Biology In Support of Black Abalone Recovery at San Clemente Island

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI) will address measures in support of critical habitat exemption requirements for Black Abalone at Naval Auxiliary Landing Field San Clemente Island. Approximately \$91,020 to \$101,133 is expected to be available to support the base requirements of this project and \$104,975 to \$116,639 is expected to be available to support Option Task 1.

Type of Assistance Instrument Anticipated: Cooperative Agreement

Authority: Cooperative Agreement under 16 USC §670c-1

Eligible Applicants: Any Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Californian cooperative partner who qualifies under the DoDGARS Part 34 or 2 Code of Federal Regulations 200 is eligible to apply.

Cost Sharing: Not required

Background:

Abalone are marine mollusks that were historically abundant in rocky reefs in Southern California and its offshore islands and banks. San Clemente Island (SCI) has one of the last remaining populations of Black Abalone (*Haliotis cracherodiii*) in southern California. Due to large scale mortality events associated with withering syndrome, populations declined dramatically throughout their range, including those on SCI. As a result of the massive population decline, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) listed the Black Abalone as endangered under the Endangered Species Act in January 2009 (74 FR 1937). Additionally, NMFS designated critical habitat for Black Abalone and identified the principal threats to Black Abalone as withering syndrome and associated conditions that may promote the spread of the disease. However, with the Navy's implementation of the Federal Register's Black Abalone critical habitat exemption requirements to manage Black Abalone populations, the Navy avoided critical habitat designation in 2011. Through proactive management efforts, the Navy is able to maintain both sustainable military and fleet readiness and conserve its sensitive marine resources with no net loss to the mission.

Several aspects of Black Abalone biology and life history are unknown or uncertain but important for assessing the status and recovery of the species. In particular, there is little knowledge of the species' spawning habits (e.g., habitat, seasons, and frequency) and recruitment dynamics, largely due to the difficulties associated with working in rocky intertidal habitats, the cryptic nature of newly settled larvae and juveniles, and the lack of consistent methods to spawn Black Abalone in captivity. Recovery of the species will involve addressing these data gaps to inform recovery efforts and assess the species' progress to recovery. This project will study the effect of ambient seawater temperatures on abalone gonadal development in order to evaluate the necessary environmental conditions required for successful spawning and recruitment. The purpose of this Cooperative Agreement (CA) is to complete a non-invasive characterization of gonadal development of abalone using ultrasounds to support the recovery of endangered Black Abalone at SCI and to address some of the knowledge gaps outlined in NMFS's Black Abalone Recovery Plan.

Brief Description of the Anticipated Work:

The Department of the Navy (DoN) is seeking statements of interest that address the Navy's critical habitat exemption requirements for Black Abalone at SCI. Generally, the Navy's base monitoring requirements will include: (1) Use non-invasive methodologies to evaluate the effect of ambient ocean temperatures at SCI on gonadal development (using Red Abalone as a surrogate for Black Abalone) to inform management efforts and strategies for the protection of the endangered species; and (2) prepare a draft and final report.

Please see enclosure 1 for full scope of work and enclosure 2 for applicable terms and conditions.

Period of Performance:

The proposed period of performance for the CA consists of a 18 month Base Period and one (1) 18 month Option Task. The end date is the anticipated date that the final report is accepted by the Government. However, the parties may extend the term of the CA by written modification. Total duration of this Agreement, including Option Task 1 shall not exceed 36 months. The exercise of the Option Task is subject to the availability of funds and may be awarded unilaterally.

A fifteen (15) day period, starting on date of award, will be used for the cooperator to provide preliminary documents to the CAA and CATR.

Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: Reagan Pablo (reagan.s.pablo@navy.mil).

- 1) SF 424 (Enclosure 3)
- 2) Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form (Enclosure 4). Please see Factor 1 for additional submittal requirements.
- 3) Research and Related Budget Form (Enclosure 5)
- 4) SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Enclosure 6). If applicable, complete SF- LLL. Applicability: If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the grant/cooperative agreement, you must complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying."
- 5) Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form (Enclosure 7). The Federal Government has a continuing commitment to monitor the operation of its review and award processes to identify and address any inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, or disability of its proposed PDs/PIs and co-PDs/PIs. To gather information needed for this important task, the applicant should submit the requested information for each identified PD/PI and co-PDs/PIs with each proposal. Submission of the requested information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. However, information not submitted will seriously undermine the statistical validity, and therefore the usefulness, of information received from others. Any individual not wishing to submit some or all the information should check the box provided for this purpose. Upon receipt of the application, this form will be separated from the application. This form will not be duplicated, and it will not be a part of the review process. Data will be confidential.

Reimbursement of pre-award costs will not be allowed.

Please note, that some of the forms functionality may be lost. Please visit <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/r-r-family.html#sortby=1> to retrieve the forms directly from the Grants.gov website.

Review of Statements Received: Proposals will be evaluated based on the following three factors: 1) Credentials of Key Personnel, 2) Scientific Approach, and 3) Reasonableness of Cost

NOTE: All requirements listed are minimum requirements. Offerors will be assessed on their ability to adhere to the listed requirements, completeness of responses, follow directions, comply with restrictions and provide quality control on their submittals. All page limits refer to 12-point font and single spaced one-sided pages.

Factor 1 - Credentials of Key Personnel

A. Principal Investigator: The Recipient shall designate one person as responsible for ensuring provisions are in place, project and personnel supervision are adequate, and quality control and meeting of reporting requirements are met on a daily basis. This person shall have, at minimum:

- i. A PhD in Animal Science/Reproductive Biology or related science.
- ii. Experience evaluating the effects of environmental stressors on aquatic animal reproduction.
- iii. At least 10 years of experience in the domain of marine invertebrate reproduction and culture methodology.

B. Postdoctoral Researcher: The Recipient shall designate one person as responsible for abalone culture and collection of biological data. This person shall have, at minimum:

- i. An MS in aquaculture, marine biology, or a closely related field.
- ii. Knowledge in domain of aquatic animal reproduction.
- iii. Ability to work efficiently in the field or at offsite facilities as well as independently and within research teams.

Factor 2 – Scientific Approach

Not to exceed 3 pages, the Offeror shall develop an outline for their approach to addressing the anticipated work stated above. The Offeror shall be evaluated as to the soundness of the overall approach and use of any innovative techniques to accomplish project objectives.

Factor 3 - Reasonableness of Cost

After technical evaluation of the proposal, the Offers shall be analyzed to determine whether they are materially/mathematically balanced with respect to prices or separately priced items, and for fair and reasonable pricing. A clear cost breakdown of work elements to be accomplished detailing quantities for the various work items, unit, unit prices and extended prices will be required and will be evaluated. Evaluation will include an analysis to determine the Offeror's comprehension of the requirements of the proposed agreement as well as to assess the validity of the Offeror's approach. Please be sure to provide a proposal for Option Task 1 as listed within the statement of work.

Please provide your proposed budget on the provided pdf titled, "Research and Related Budget" form* (Enclosure 5). Please submit one budget form for the base year of work and separate budget form for Option Task 1 as specified in the Statement of Work.

***Form: RESEARCH AND RELATED BUDGET**

Complete the Research and Related Budget form in accordance with the instructions on the form. You must provide a detailed cost breakdown of all costs, by cost category, by the funding periods described below, and by task/sub-task corresponding to the task number in the proposed Statement of Work. You may request funds under any of the categories listed as long as the item and amount are

necessary to perform the proposed work and meet all the criteria for allowability under the applicable Federal cost principles. The budget should adhere to the following guidelines:

The budget should be driven by program requirements. Elements of the budget shall include:

- Direct Labor - Individual labor category or person, with associated labor hours and unburdened direct labor rates.
- Indirect Costs - Fringe benefits, overhead, G&A, COM, etc. (must show base amount and rate). Justify in Field L.
- Travel - Number of trips, destination, duration, etc. Justify in Field L (on the form).
- Subcontract - A cost proposal as detailed as the applicant's cost proposal will be required to be submitted by the subcontractor. If applicable, include in Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment Form.
- Consultant - Provide consultant agreement or other document that verifies the proposed loaded daily/hourly rate. Include a description of the nature of and the need for any consultant's participation. Strong justification must be provided, and consultants are to be used only under exceptional circumstances where no equivalent expertise can be found at a participating university. Provide budget justification in Field L.
- Materials - Specifically itemized with costs or estimated costs. An explanation of any estimating factors, including their derivation and application, shall be provided. Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market survey, etc.). Justify in Field L.
- Other Directs Costs - Particularly any proposed items of equipment or facilities. Equipment and facilities generally must be furnished by the cooperator/recipient (justifications must be provided when Government funding for such items is sought). Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market survey, etc.). Justify in Field L.

Budget Justification (Field L on the form): Provide the required supporting information for the cost elements as shown above (see Research & Related Budget instructions) and listed as follows: indirect cost, travel, consultant, materials, and other direct costs.

Provide any other information you wish to submit to justify your budget request.

NOTE: Every deviation from the scope of work requirement must be identified. Proposer must identify the paragraph in the scope of work that is applicable and provide sufficient information to justify why the deviation is in the best interest of the government.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION FACTORS – Factor 1, 2, and 3 are of equal importance.

Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest:

We request that Statements of Interest be submitted by August 26, 2019 2:00 PM local standard time. This Request for Statements of Interest will remain open until an investigator team is selected. Statements of Interest received after August 26, 2019 2:00 PM local standard time is considered “late” and may not be considered. Please submit requests for information/questions no later than August 19, 2019 2:00 Pacific standard time.

Please send electronic responses and questions to:

Mr. Reagan Pablo, Contract Specialist Environmental Acquisition Core Reagan.s.pablo@navy.mil

Point of Contact Information:

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