

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
Office of University Communications
Press Release
5/14/2014

Science Center for Marine Fisheries (SCeMFiS) Funds Nine Research Programs for 2014

Ocean Springs, MS - The Science Center for Marine Fisheries (SCeMFiS) is sponsored by the Industry & University Cooperative Research Program (I/UCRC) of the National Science Foundation. The I/UCRC program is established to bring participants from industry, government, and other organizations in need of science-based solutions into contact with academic scientists capable of providing that expertise under an organizational structure that permits participant retention of the science agenda in exchange for participant financial support. SCeMFiS utilizes academic and fisheries resources to address urgent scientific problems limiting sustainable fisheries.

The Industry Advisory Board (IAB) of SCeMFiS met April 30-May 1 at the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory to implement the research program for 2014. The University of Southern Mississippi is the lead academic institution in SCeMFiS with the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences as the partner institution.

The IAB continued 4 projects and initiated a total of 5 new projects at this meeting. Among these initiatives is the establishment of three national research teams. One of these teams, the Independent Advisory Team for marine mammal assessments, enters its second year. A second team, the SCeMFiS stock assessment team, will focus on research to support the scup (*Stenotomus chrysops*) benchmark assessment scheduled to occur in the spring of 2015. Scup is one of the most important commercial/recreational fish in the Mid-Atlantic region and has been a challenging species for assessment scientists for many years. The third team will focus on the methodology for improving biological reference points and their proxies and will focus initially on ocean quahogs (*Arctica islandica*).

In addition to these teams, SCeMFiS will fund:

- (1) additional work on the development of morphometric relationships to permit estimates of surfclam and ocean quahog length from broken clams to support federal survey requirements,
- (2) the fabrication of a survey dredge with selectivity characteristics that will increase the capture of small surfclams and ocean quahogs to improve recruitment indices,
- (3) research on the recruitment history of ocean quahogs,
- (4) the examination of the influence of sample density in generating survey artifacts in survey designs,
- (5) a management strategy evaluation for surfclams to determine the potential of increasing productivity of the stock during a time of climate change, and
- (6) the development of a sex-specific fisheries model for summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*).

The IAB will review each of these projects at its next meeting that will be held in October at the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences. Learn more about SCeMFiS at www.SCeMFiS.org.

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The mission of the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, Mississippi's marine laboratory, is scientific discovery related to coastal and marine resources, development of new marine technologies, and the education of future scientists and citizens.

About The University of Southern Mississippi

The University of Southern Mississippi, founded in 1910, is a comprehensive doctoral and research-extensive university fulfilling its mission of being a leading university in engaging and empowering individuals to transform lives and communities. In a tradition of leadership for student development, Southern Miss is educating a 21st century work force providing intellectual capital, cultural enrichment and innovation to Mississippi and the world. Southern Miss is located in Hattiesburg, Miss., with an additional campus and teaching and research sites on the Mississippi Gulf Coast; further information is found at www.usm.edu/gulfcoast.