

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
Gulf Coast Research Laboratory
Public Information Office
Press Release
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Science Center for Marine Fisheries (SCeMFis) holds productive initial meeting

Ocean Springs, MS –The Industry Advisory Board (IAB) of SCeMFis met for the first time June 21-22 at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory of the University of Southern Mississippi. The University of Southern Mississippi is the lead academic institution in SCeMFis with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science as the partner institution. Dr. Rodney Bennett, the University of Southern Mississippi's new president, as well as Senator Brice Wiggins were on hand to address the group and welcome them to the Gulf Coast.

The Science Center for Marine Fisheries (SCeMFis) is sponsored by the Industry & University Cooperative Research Program (I/UCRC) of the National Science Foundation (NSF). 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 active participation in the science agenda in exchange for participant financial support. SCeMFis utilizes academic and fisheries resources to address urgent scientific problems limiting sustainable fisheries.

The IAB initiated a total of 8 projects at this meeting, fully funding four and providing initiation funds for 4 others.

Fully-funded projects include:

- The development of morphometric relationships to permit estimates of surfclam and ocean quahog length from broken clams to support federal survey requirements.
- Fabrication of a dredge liner to support a targeted juvenile survey in the new surfclam and ocean quahog industry-vessel based survey carried out by the NMFS-NEFSC.
- Formation of a marine mammal and sea turtle assessment team to provide the basis for further research on marine mammals by SCeMFis.
- The examination of the influence of sample density in generating survey artifacts in survey designs, with an emphasis on black sea bass.

Projects initiated using seed money include a review of surfclam management options, development of a research program on biological reference points, and design studies for additional research on the biology and sampling of monkfish and yellowtail flounder. The IAB will review each of these projects at its next meeting that will be held in October at the College of William & Mary and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.

The first SCeMFis products are expected to be available by mid-August, as two of the surfclam/ocean quahog projects will provide information and gear for the federal survey expected to be at sea during that time. Further products will become available over the coming year. Follow 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 .