

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Host Agency: NOAA Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

Position Title: Sanctuary Program Specialist

Host Location: NOAA Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, 10 Ocean Science Circle, Savannah, GA 31411

Fellowship Supervisor

Kimberly Roberson, Research Coordinator; Kimberly.Roberson@noaa.gov

Position Description: We are seeking a Georgia Sea Grant State Fellow to join our hard-working and supportive team as a *Sanctuary Program Specialist*. We offer a working environment that is welcoming, innovative, positive, fun, and growth-oriented, and we have enjoyed mentoring interns for many years. This partnership and hosting a year-long Georgia Sea Grant State Fellow began in 2019. [Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary](#) (GRNMS) is a federally-designated marine protected area that is administered by the [Office of National Marine Sanctuaries](#), part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). It is located approximately 19 miles off the coast of Georgia and encompasses 22 square miles of federal ocean waters. A combination of warm and cool currents creates a highly productive marine ecosystem supporting live bottom habitats, a wide diversity of fish and invertebrates, sea turtles and marine mammals. The sanctuary's primary objective is to conserve, protect, and enhance the biodiversity and ecological integrity of marine resources for current and future generations. This is supported in enabling federal legislation – the [National Marine Sanctuaries Act](#).

Georgia Sea Grant State Fellow will play a key role in advancing several science, policy and planning projects and programs, working closely with the sanctuary's research coordinator and resource protection coordinator. The fellow will help foster productive relationships with state and federal agencies, academic institutions, and stakeholders. In this position, the fellow will gain the diverse skills and professional experience necessary to succeed in a natural resource management career. Former sanctuary fellows at other sanctuary sites within the system have become permanent or contract NOAA employees, received the Knauss and Presidential Management Fellowships, or taken research and leadership positions in the private and non-profit sectors.

Working in the capacity of a Sanctuary Program Specialist, the fellow will support the following priority programs of GRNMS:

Science Plan and Research (approx. 30%)

GRNMS has developed a comprehensive research plan that includes living resource, habitat, oceanographic monitoring and other relevant actions. The document serves the purpose of guiding research and science projects for the next several years and ensures close alignment with the GRNMS management plan. The fellow will assist with project planning, implementation and reporting as it pertains to this effort, affording interaction and collaboration with a wide range of researchers and collaborators, gaining a broad and detailed knowledge of science, management, resource allocation and prioritization processes. The fellow will participate in sanctuary research and monitoring activities, including occasional trips aboard sanctuary research vessels, diving as needed, assisting on deck, helping with data acquisition and processing, and summarizing information for presentation and reporting.

Connectivity (approx. 30%)

The need to identify areas outside of GRNMS that sustain resources within sanctuary boundaries, and evaluate the need for additional protection of such areas, was identified as a priority activity in the 2014 revision of the GRNMS Management Plan. By gaining this knowledge, the management of GRNMS can better target actions and activities that enhance protection by assuring that connection pathways and processes are maintained. It will also help determine the sanctuary's role and potential in supporting biodiversity beyond its own boundaries through protection and management. To that end, a collaborative workshop is being planned to review and synthesize existing knowledge related to ecological connectivity. The workshop and subsequent report findings are required to advance understanding, define information gaps and chart the course for determining if further action is necessary to help to sustain regional marine resources. The fellow will support workshop organization and reporting by collaborating with staff and coastal GA partners.

Advanced Scuba Diving and Small Boat Crew member (approx. 15%)

The sanctuary conducts research and monitoring activities using research vessels and SCUBA diving. The GRNMS team needs to expand its in-house dive team to address the myriad of research projects that occur via vessel and scientific SCUBA diving operations. Therefore, the fellow will be expected to have advanced open water dive skills, be able to receive NOAA diver training and certification, be comfortable working aboard sanctuary research vessels, assisting on deck, and helping with field data acquisition.

Intern Team Lead (approx. 20%)

GRNMS may host several summer interns and volunteers, implementing and assisting in research, resource protection and visitor center operations. The fellow may serve as the Team Leader and have the opportunity to develop leadership and management skills.

Additional Opportunities (approx. 5%)

- Engage in personal career development planning with the active support and mentorship of the superintendent and other staff.
- Participate in internal office meetings, including providing progress reports and/or presentations.
- Contribute to superintendent reports and weekly activity reports, including compilation, information gathering, and document editing/formatting.
- Represent the sanctuary at select meetings and conferences, to observe, learn, present, and assist with follow-up actions.
- Assist with other work, as needed.

The fellow will benefit most from this opportunity if they bring these skills, experiences and interests: a natural self-starter approach to work; strong organizational, communication and writing skills; a personable approach and comfort working with a variety of constituencies in public and occasionally contentious settings; a strong ability to effectively manage multiple projects and deadlines; and enthusiasm for ocean stewardship and conservation.