

POSITION DESCRIPTION 2023-2024

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. 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 outreach and education programs, working closely with the sanctuary's research coordinator, resource protection coordinator, and education 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. The fellow may also participate in planning and executing a mini-science symposium for GRNMS research partners to present recent science and research.

Outreach and Intern Program support (approx. 30%)

GRNMS Ocean Discovery Center in downtown Savannah, GA host public tours, programs, and educational opportunities for the public and school-aged groups. To support the center, the fellow will assist with creating interpretive, science-focused talks, in concert with the Outreach and Education team, conveying current findings or future goals of sanctuary science and management to center audiences. Additionally, the fellow will support volunteer orientations and training, assist or lead programs and guide Ocean Discovery Center interpretation.

GRNMS hosts several interns and volunteers, both virtually and in person, supporting research, resource protection, and communications goals of the sanctuary. The fellow will serve as the intern Team Leader having the opportunity to develop leadership and management skills. The Team Leader may be responsible for establishing meeting schedules, hosting check-in meetings, and suggesting guidelines for project progress.

Assessing Resource Conditions (approx. 20%)

National Marine Sanctuary Condition Reports provide a summary of resources in each marine sanctuary, the pressures on those resources, current sanctuary condition and trends, and management responses to pressures that threaten the integrity of the marine environment. Specifically, the reports include information on the status and trends of water quality, habitat, living resources and maritime archaeological resources and the human activities that affect them. The Condition Report process and evaluation of resources within a given sanctuary precede a comprehensive 10-year review and update of the site's management plan and regulations. The fellow will support the finalization of the condition report and work with the Resource Protection team prepare and plan for the management plan review. The fellow will also support the Sanctuary Advisory Council and with the sector representatives on specific projects.

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 operations and dive team to address the myriad of research projects that occur via vessel and scientific SCUBA diving operations. Therefore, the fellow may be able to join the operations team as crew and/or the GRNMS dive team. It will be beneficial for the fellow 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.

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.