



## POSITION DESCRIPTION 2024-2025

**Host Agency:** NOAA Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

**Position Title:** Sea Grant State Fellow

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

**Fellowship Supervisor:** Kimberly Roberson, Research Coordinator; [Kimberly.Roberson@noaa.gov](mailto: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. Since 2019, this partnership has hosted a year-long Sea Grant State Fellow supporting [Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary](#) (GRNMS), a federally-designated marine protected area that is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [Office of National Marine Sanctuaries](#). The sanctuary is located approximately 19 miles off the coast of Georgia and encompasses 22 square miles of federal ocean waters, and the office is located in Savannah, GA. 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, government, and non-profit sectors.

Working in the capacity of a Sanctuary Program Specialist, the Sea Grant State Fellow will support the following priority programs of GRNMS:

### **Science and Monitoring** (approx. 30%)

GRNMS has developed a comprehensive research plan that includes living resources, 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 monitoring and applied science activities including helping with data acquisition and processing, summarizing information for presentation and reporting, categorizing drop camera video data related to exploration expeditions and occasional trips aboard sanctuary research vessels. The fellow may also participate in planning and executing a mini-science symposium for GRNMS research partners to present recent science and research. General ArcGIS knowledge will be beneficial.

### **Outreach and Intern Program support** (approx. 30%)

GRNMS is an active member of the community through various education and outreach initiatives across the coastal southeast. These initiatives include public events, exhibits, and public programs at the Gray's Reef Ocean Discovery Center. The Ocean Discovery Center is located in downtown Savannah, GA and

hosts free-of-charge public tours, programs, and educational opportunities for various audiences. To support these initiatives and the center, the fellow will assist with creating interpretive, science-focused programs and outreach products in concert with the Outreach and Education team. These programs and products will convey current findings or future goals of sanctuary science and resource management to various 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 student volunteers, both virtually and in person, that support the various missions of the sanctuary. The fellow will serve as the intern team leader responsible for supporting the creation of internship position descriptions, establishing meeting schedules, hosting check-in meetings, leading project progress, and assessing outcomes of the intern program.

#### **Marine Resource Management & Protection Support (approx. 30%)**

National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan Reviews (MPRs) are conducted every ten years to assess the effectiveness of current marine resource management policies and approaches for addressing ongoing and emergent conservation needs. MPRs are developed over a two-year process that significantly engages the public about the future of sanctuary conservation efforts, research, education, and outreach. The fellow will support MPR by editing and finalizing the results of a 2021 workshop on ecological connectivity of live bottom habitats in the South Atlantic Bight; gathering data and researching marine protection issues as needed; assisting with public scoping meeting and public hearing preparation, outreach, and implementation; and assimilating written and verbal public comments. The fellow will support ongoing compliance monitoring efforts by processing and analyzing aerial and surface monitoring reports of human activity at GRNMS and will provide meeting support for cooperative enforcement workshops. The Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) represents 20 different stakeholder groups with interests at GRNMS. The SAC meets quarterly to advise the sanctuary superintendent on matters of interest to the community. The fellow will support meeting preparation and implementation by conducting public outreach through social media. At meetings, the fellow will serve as primary rapporteur, operate the conference audio/video system, and assist with logistics. The fellow will prepare the meeting summary following each quarterly meeting; record major SAC actions in a database and track their progress; prepare a brief article about each SAC meeting; prepare awards for outgoing SAC members; assist with SAC recruitment efforts; provide support to SAC subcommittees and working groups as assigned; draft updates to SAC webpages; and help maintain SAC records.

#### **Advanced Scuba Diving and Science Team Topside Support (approx. 5%)**

The sanctuary conducts monitoring activities using research vessels and SCUBA diving. Therefore, the fellow may be able to join the operations team as topside science support and/or the GRNMS dive team. To do so, it will be beneficial for the fellow to have advanced open water dive skills, be comfortable working aboard sanctuary research vessels, assisting on deck, and helping with field data acquisition. In addition, existing American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS) certification, including CPR, First Aid, and other necessary experience, will be beneficial.

#### **Additional Opportunities (approx. 5%)**

The fellow will have the opportunity to engage in personal career development planning; participate in internal office meetings; contribute to superintendent reports and weekly activity reports; represent the sanctuary at select meetings and conferences; and 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.

**Statement of commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion:**

The ocean resources that national marine sanctuaries manage differ in size, species, depth, color, culture, and countless other ways. This rich diversity is part of our natural heritage, a gift to be discovered, appreciated and protected. Whether a natural ecosystem or a human community, diversity creates strength and resilience. NOAA is firmly committed to increasing the diversity within its workforce and creating inclusive work environments where everyone feels valued and experiences a true sense of belonging.