

# VIRGINIA SALTWATER RECREATIONAL FISHING DEVELOPMENT FUND SUMMARY PROJECT APPLICATION\*



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<b>PRIORITY AREA OF CONCERN:</b>  Education, Research, and Data Collection	<b>PROJECT LOCATION:</b>  Online: <a href="http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com">www.vasaltwaterjournal.com</a>
<b>DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF PROJECT:</b>  Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal Public Outreach Project	
<b>PROJECT SUMMARY:</b>  Beginning July, 2007, the Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal ( <a href="http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com">www.vasaltwaterjournal.com</a> ) was made available to the angling public as a free online personal fishing logbook. The journal, or logbook, allowed anglers to record various levels of information, specific to their individual fishing trips, that they could have available for future reference. Also, the volunteer data was sought out to assist the Marine Resource Commission's staff by providing data not provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service for situations when size limits could be lowered, such as for summer flounder. However, participation and data sample sizes provided by the online journal has been limited. The project's goal is to improve public awareness of the site and educate the public on its utility as a free personal fishing journal, as a means to comply with mandatory recreational reporting requirements for trophy striped bass, tilefish and grouper catches and a public tool for directly contributing to recreational fisheries management in the Commonwealth of Virginia.	
<b>EXPECTED BENEFITS:</b>  Increase in volunteer angler participation providing improved sample sizes of fish measurements for kept and release fishes. This in turn, will provide improved fisheries catch data, above and below a size limit, to be used whenever management measures require an increase or provide for a decrease, in management size limits. Additionally, this data could provide the needed spatial coverage, currently not provided by the former Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey (MRFSS) or the current Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Service.	
<b>COSTS: *FOR EXPEDITED APPROVAL – TO BEGIN JULY 2012*</b>  Staff will continue to provide public outreach highlighting programs such as the Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal to various public organizations as requested and time permits. However, staff is unable to keep this program continually in the forefront with the angling public. Costs are for a two-year trial of public outreach through an angling publication and also radio media.	
<b>Print Advertising:</b>	\$5,000
<b>Radio Advertising:</b>	\$4,000
<b>Office materials and supplies:</b>	\$1,000
<b>Total Costs:</b>	\$10,000
<b>Detailed budget must be included with proposal.</b>	

Updated 11/12/08

\*This form alone does not constitute a complete application, see application instructions or contact Sonya Davis at 757-247-8155 or [sonya.davis@mrc.virginia.gov](mailto:sonya.davis@mrc.virginia.gov)

## **Request for funding for the Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal Public Outreach Project**

### **Need:**

While our mandatory reporting program provides consistent data from our commercial fishing sector, we have very little access to high quality samples from the recreational fishing sector. Recreational data is necessary in order to accurately predict how populations may change in response to fishery management changes such as size limits and seasonal closures. These data are required for any plans hoping to decrease maximum size limits and increase effort in the recreational fishery.

In 2007, the Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal was launched as a free online personal fishing logbook. The journal, or logbook, allows anglers to record various levels of information, specific to their individual fishing trips, that they could have available for future reference. It includes options to report trophy striped bass, tilefish, and grouper catches (required by regulation) in a convenient online form. Also, the Journal provides the volunteer angler data sought out to assist the Marine Resource Commission's staff for situations when size limits could be lowered, such as for summer flounder. These data are not generally captured by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Participation and data sample sizes provided by the online journal have been limited. The project's goal is to improve public awareness of the site and educate the public on its utility as a free personal fishing journal, as a means to comply with mandatory recreational reporting requirements for trophy striped bass, tilefish and grouper catches, and a public tool for directly contributing to recreational fisheries management in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

As of April, 2012, over 2,800 individuals have registered for the saltwater journal; however, actual participation in the program has been low. Initial participation in 2007 (the program's pilot year) included 82 participants and 564 reports. These numbers have steadily declined, and last year (2011), only 42 individuals provided reports (244 reports) (see table 1).

YEAR	INDIVIDUALS PROVIDING	INDIVIDUAL TRIP
	REPORTS	REPORTS
2007	82	564
2008	69	655
2009	47	263
2010	55	312
2011	42	244

Information on the Saltwater Journal is provided at any public outreach events performed by Fisheries Management staff (Boat shows, fairs, etc.) and highlighted on the Marine Resources Commission website; however, there is currently no other advertisement for the service. Advertising to the fishing public could increase program participation in the form of new participants and increased activity of existing participants.

### **Objective:**

The goal of this outreach project is to increase angler participation in the Saltwater Fisherman's Journal in order to provide important and necessary fisheries data from the recreational sector. Through print and radio advertising, the project will improve public awareness of the site and educate the public on its utility as a free personal fishing journal, as a means to comply with mandatory recreational reporting requirements for trophy striped bass, tilefish and grouper catches and a public tool for directly contributing to recreational fisheries management in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### **Approach:**

The outreach project will consist of both print and radio advertising campaigns to increase public awareness and participation in the Saltwater Fisherman's Journal. This new advertising will be combined with current advertising on the agency website, and at any outreach events. Both print and radio advertising will continue over the course of two years. After that time, participation will be evaluated with hopes that the program participation will then be self-sustaining.

Print advertising will include a ½ page advertisement in the *Chesapeake Angler Magazine*, in a local angling publication to run every other month for two years. First printed in 1997, the *Chesapeake Angler* is distributed around the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, as well as tournaments, fishing shows, and boat shows.

Radio advertising will include a 30-second commercial running twice per show on *Fishing Tidewater*®, a weekly talk-radio show focusing on recreational fishing topics, that airs on WHKT – 1650 AM, from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. every Saturday morning. Other radio stations have also been considered; however, advertising schedules on mainstream radio stations in the Hampton Roads area are much more expensive. Less frequent advertising on these larger stations can be considered upon request from the Recreational Fishing Advisory Board. Another radio outreach opportunity includes pre-recorded question and answer sessions on the *Hampton Roads Focus Show*, a weekly 30-minute Public Affairs Program that airs every Sunday Morning between 6:30am and 7:00am on WAFX 106.9 The FOX, FM99 WNOR and WJOI-AM 1230. Contact information, websites and other information are distributed by the show as well.

In addition, the Fisheries Management staff will continue all current outreach efforts. For 2013, the Saltwater Journal logo and information will return as the Marine Sportfish Collection Project's reward shirt emblem. These shirts are highly sought-after rewards for our popular Marine Sportfish Collection Project and generate a lot of public interest.

### **Estimated Benefits:**

Increase in volunteer angler participation would provide improved sample sizes of fish measures for kept and released fishes. This in turn, will provide improved fisheries catch data, above and below a size limit, to be used whenever management measures require an increase or decrease in management size limits. These data are especially important when decreasing maximum size limits, such as the recent changes in summer flounder. Additionally, these data could provide the needed spatial coverage, currently not provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service's Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), which is replacing the former Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey.

Two years of radio and print outreach could increase the awareness and usage of the program enough to enable it to be self-sustaining without the need of extensive future outreach. If the journal could become fishing trip habit to the average saltwater angler, then word of mouth and popularity could maintain participation levels. Additional outreach will also make the current exposure (on the agency website, at outreach events, and on reward t-shirts) more effective.

### **Length of Time:**

This project will run for three consecutive years after receiving one-time funding. It would consist of a two-year print and radio advertising campaign, followed by a third year of evaluation. Outreach success will be evaluated after the first year to see if any adjustments in demographic would be necessary. For the following year (the third year), the program will be monitored with no additional advertising, other than the agency website. Ideally, the two years of outreach will fuel the program popularity enough for it to be self-sustaining in future years by both popularity among anglers and word-of-mouth, in addition to continued exposure on the agency website and handouts at local events.

Expedited funding is requested for this project in order to capture the second half of the 2012 fishing season and continue through to the summer of 2014, with a one-year evaluation year to follow. Additionally, it could provide additional data for future fishery management decisions involving size and bag limits.

### **Estimated Cost (Total Project Costs for July 2012 through June 2014):**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Print advertising (Chesapeake Angler Magazine)	\$5,000.00
Radio advertising (Fishing Tidewater)	\$4,000.00
Office materials and supplies (Including information card mail-out to fishing clubs)	\$1,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>

# VIRGINIA SALTWATER Fisherman's Journal



[www.vasaltwaterjournal.com](http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com)

## YOUR Online Fishing Journal

Accurate Length Measurements On The Fish That  
Are Both Kept And Released Is Needed From  
Virginia's Anglers!!!

- Free personal online fishing journal
- Information can be used directly for fisheries management (i.e. raising or lower size limits)
- Data entry is simplified. When did you fish? Where did you fish? Provide measurements from your catch.
- Mandatory harvest reports for trophy striped bass, tilefish and grouper can be entered here.
- Yes, there is an Smart phone APP for this!

**Sign-on. Sign-up. Catch'em and  
Report'em!**