

# **Virginia Saltwater Development Fund Evaluation of a Proposal for the Development of a Research or Data Collection Project**

**Project Number: 0412-19**

**Date: 06/25/12**

**Title: S) Genetic-based Investigation of Blueline Tilefish and Snowy Grouper  
Stock Structure (Year 1 of 2).**

“The Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund is to be used solely for the purpose of conserving and enhancing finfish taken by recreational anglers, enforcing laws related to natural resource conservation, improving recreational fishing opportunities, obtaining necessary data and conducting research for fisheries management, and creating or restoring habitat for species taken by recreational fishermen.”

Code of Virginia, Section 28.2-302.3

**NOTE: Please read the entire scoresheet before beginning, then provide comments, and circle ( ) the appropriate score for each item. Thank You.**

**A. Problem Description and Resolution (20 points)**

**1. Comment on the adequacy of the problem description, background information, knowledge of available literature/data sources, and anticipated benefits.**

The investigators provide an adequate description of the problem of lack of data for blueline tilefish and snowy grouper in Virginia. These two species are particularly vulnerable to rapid overexploitation due to their life history strategies and the fairly recent nature of their targeted fishery in this area. The background information is sufficient, but contains a few typographical errors, which were easily avoidable. The available literature for these species is limited; the grasp of knowledge, therefore, is difficult to assess, but appears to be adequate. The anticipated benefits are well-defined.

**2. Describe your views on the conceptual approach to solve the problem.**

The approach to solve the problem of this lack of data is sound. One gap in this research proposal is a lack of attention paid to alternative approaches to solving the problem for these species. The investigators are familiar with a population dynamics approach to monitoring rapid depletion of stocks, but make no effort to address how their genetic work would aid the more traditional research of an age and growth investigation.

SCORE (Circle one)	Poor				Excellent
	0	5	10	15	20

**B. Soundness of Project Design/Technical Approach (25 points)**

**1. Is there sufficient information to technically evaluate the proposal?**

Yes, the investigators provide sufficient detail as to their proposed execution of project objectives and subsequent goals. The approach to the problem is clear and concise, with details as to the materials and methods required for such work to be completed.

**2. What are the strengths/weaknesses of the project design (thoroughness, practicality, methods, integration with other work, etc.)?**

The strengths of the project design are its objectives and the approach appears to be well-developed and thoughtfully defined. The weakness of the projects design is its lack of integration with any existing work on this species.

SCORE (Circle One)	Poor				Excellent
	0	5	10	15	25

**C. Project Management and Experience/Qualifications of Personnel (15 points)**

**What is your opinion of the experience and capabilities of the Principal Investigator(s) to manage and conduct the work, the availability of facilities, and education and experience of assisting personnel.**

Through their work at one of the leading professional research institutions, I am sure that the Principal Investigators are fully capable of conducting the work at their facility. The techniques they propose are established and should not require any advanced or extraordinary technical skills.

SCORE (Circle one)	Poor			Excellent
	0	5	10	15

**D. Project costs (15 points)**

**Is the budget realistic and reasonable? Indicate any unreasonable costs.**

The estimated costs seem reasonable; all of the objectives and their associated costs are clearly outlined.

SCORE (circle One)	Poor			Excellent
	0	5	10	15

**E. Value of the Project to Fisheries Managers (25 points)**

**Do you believe the results of this project will further management of the species described? Will the results be useful to managers?**

Yes, these types of genetic data are very helpful in assessing not only the status, but also the rates of change in species which are being newly exploited, or whose exploitation is poorly understood.

**SCORE (circle one)**

**Poor**

**0**

**5**

**10**

**15**

**20**

**Excellent**

**25**

**PLEASE ADD ANY FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSALS BELOW:**

The proposed work appears to be well-planned and thought out. A few places could have used greater general background literature to support the building of the investigators arguments (i.e., despite the dearth of genetics and population dynamics literature for tilefish/grouper specifically, they could speak more broadly to these issues and support with existing work for other species in the snapper-grouper complex).

The investigators may not be aware that a portion of this proposal is attempting to be addressed in an ongoing project between the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and Old Dominion University, entitled "Population Dynamics of Grouper and Tilefish", funded through the National Fish and Wildlife Service.