

Current Funding Opportunities

FISCAL YEAR 2024 GRANTS

Fiscal Year 2024 Request for Proposals

Intent to submit deadline: Wednesday, January 31st 2024 ****NEW****

Proposal deadline: Wednesday, February 14th 2024 11:59pm EST

Applicant notification: by Wednesday, July 31st 2024

Funding Opportunities in Fiscal Year 2024

The Marine Mammal Commission is accepting proposals between December 06, 2023 and February 14, 2024 for projects focused on A) marine mammals in a changing climate; or B) advancing diversity, equity, inclusiveness, belonging, accessibility, and justice (DEIBAJ) in marine mammal science. Funding requests are limited to \$60,000 USD.

*** Those wishing to submit a proposal **must** email rpo@mmc.gov no later than **Wednesday, January 31, 2024** stating their intent to submit a full proposal by the proposal submission deadline.***

Full proposal submission deadline: **11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time, Wednesday, February 14, 2024**

Please see the submission procedures section on the [proposal requirements](#) page for instructions.

Topic A: Marine Mammals in a Changing Climate

Background

The Marine Mammal Commission's mission is to further the goals of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), 16 U.S.C. § 1361 et sec. These include restoring and maintaining marine mammal populations as significant functioning elements of healthy marine ecosystems. However, the dynamic nature of ecosystems can make assessing and attaining these goals challenging, particularly in the face of global climate change. Oceans are warming and becoming more acidic, and extreme weather events are becoming more frequent. These changes are driving range and distribution shifts of many marine species and disrupting ecosystem processes and functions. Detecting ecosystem changes and understanding the impact of such changes on marine mammal populations is essential to developing effective conservation and management response plans, and is a priority for the Marine Mammal Commission.

Building on previous years' efforts, the Commission is accepting proposals under this topic focused in two areas.

Topic A Focal Areas

1. Marine mammal health in a changing climate

Climate-driven changes in ecosystems are expected to alter the exposure of marine mammals to pathogens and toxins, and change prey availability, abundance, or quality. These changes in exposure could lead to nutritional stress, compromised immune systems, or other impacts on health, and ultimately can affect population vital rates. Increased capacity to detect changes in marine mammal population health and understand the underlying factors and processes contributing to those changes is critically needed to identify possible actions to respond to and mitigate impacts. Under topic area 1, the Commission seeks proposals that improve our understanding of the effects of climate change on the health of marine mammal populations.

2. Changes in marine mammal distribution or habitat associated with a changing climate

Climate-change driven alterations in ecosystems may lead to shifts in marine mammal distribution, range, phenology, or migration routes, and may alter the availability of prey or change exposure to predation or human activities. Under topic area 2, the Commission seeks proposals that increase our understanding of changes in marine mammal distribution or habitat driven by climate change.

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Understanding the effects of climate change requires longitudinal and cross-disciplinary data. Therefore, for both topic A focal areas, we encourage submission of proposals that demonstrate use of, or contribute to, long-term datasets, archives, or repositories that are available and accessible to other users. Projects that include the development or application of innovative tools for assessing health, as well as changes in distribution or habitat, to support long-term monitoring are also encouraged, and projects that link marine mammal health data in partnership with U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) Regional Associations' analytical data, tools, and products, will be favorably considered. If you are interested in a partnership with IOOS, please contact the appropriate Regional Association no fewer than 4-6 weeks prior to the proposal submission deadline.

## **Topic B: Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusiveness, Belonging, Accessibility and Justice (DEIBAJ) in Marine Mammal Science**

### ***Background***

There continues to be a lack of diversity among those engaged in marine mammal research and management. Economic and other barriers have limited accessibility to marine sciences in general, and exist at all stages of learning and career development. Diversity fosters innovation, and investing and engaging in diversity and inclusion as a whole is beneficial for addressing complex issues in marine mammal science and conservation. Diverse narratives and perspectives from the inclusion of all races, gender identities, sexual orientations, physical abilities, ages, stages of careers, and general backgrounds improve the collective opportunity to be more innovative, effective, and equitable in the field of marine mammal science. The Commission is committed to advancing opportunities that increase diversity, equity, inclusiveness, belonging, accessibility, and justice (DEIBAJ) in the field of marine mammal science.

The Commission seeks proposals that broaden participation, engage diverse learners, foster pathways, and develop leadership opportunities for historically underserved and underrepresented communities in marine mammal science. Topic B proposals will create or support DEIBAJ initiatives within the fields of marine mammal science. For example, within a marine mammal research group or institution, or a community-based non-profit, Topic B funding could support DEIBAJ initiatives such as cultivating an accessible, inclusive, and equitable working environment, providing mentor/mentee training or professional development opportunities, or developing paid internship programs. These are only a few examples, and we encourage applicants to think broadly and intentionally about DEIBAJ initiatives.

### ***Eligibility:***

Applicants from within the U.S. and outside the U.S. are eligible to apply, including both non-U.S. citizens and those affiliated with non-U.S. institutions.

At the time of posting, the U.S. Federal Government is working under a continuing resolution. Availability of funds to support research is dependent on passage of a final budget for the Commission.

## **Proposal Requirements and Submission Information**

Information on proposal requirements and submission procedures is available on the [proposal requirements page](#). Please review and follow this information carefully.

Applicants should note there is a new process for proposal submission, which includes sending an email no later than January 31, 2024 to [rpo@mmc.gov](mailto:rpo@mmc.gov) stating their intent to submit a proposal in order to receive a link to a personalized proposal submission folder. Proposals that are submitted after the deadline or do not meet the requirements will not be evaluated or considered for funding.

## **Proposal Evaluation**

All proposals will be evaluated with respect to: the importance or significance of the type of project proposed,<sup>1</sup> its relevance to the current funding opportunity and focal area and the Commission's mission and goals,<sup>2</sup> the technical and resource adequacy of the proposal,<sup>3</sup> and the likelihood that the project will achieve its stated objectives or outcomes. Review and selection of applications will be based on a detailed evaluation of these criteria and recommendations for funding. Awards are subject to the availability of funds.

Potential applicants may contact Dee Allen, Scientific Program Officer, by e-mail ([dallen@mmc.gov](mailto:dallen@mmc.gov)) or telephone (301-504-0087) with any questions about proposal requirements, the evaluation process, out-of-cycle funding, or suitability of a topic for Commission funding. During a review cycle, all proposals that meet minimum requirements will be reviewed by the [Commission's staff, Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, Commissioners](#), and external experts, as necessary. The Commission will assign reviewers based on their expertise and assurance that they have no conflict of interest with the proposed activities. The Commission will maintain the confidentiality of all proposals.

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1. For example, would such a project significantly advance critical scientific understanding, contribute to the development of an innovative method or technology, lead to groundbreaking policy ideas, or catalyze critical thinking through a meeting, workshop or symposium?
  2. **Mission:** Provide independent, science-based oversight of domestic and international policies and actions, thereby promoting effective implementation of the MMPA and its goals of protecting and conserving marine mammals and their habitat. **Strategic Goal:** Improve Population Assessment and Health Surveillance. Our goal is to improve the availability and quality of data, scientific assessments, and information necessary for marine mammal conservation and management programs, especially in the face of climate change.
  3. For example, are the elements described in the proposal (e.g., project plan, field and lab procedures, sample sizes, proposed statistical analyses, equipment, research platforms) internally consistent and are they sufficient to achieve the project's goals, objectives, and outcomes?

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