

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

## NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FISH AND WILDLIFE BUREAU OF MARINE FISHERIES

### Endangered Species Act Section 6 Habitat Conservation Plan Consultant Services

<b>Release Date:</b>	June 22, 2026
<b>Questions Due:</b>	July 6, 2026 @ 5:00 PM EDT
<b>Proposals Due:</b>	July 31, 2026 @ 5:00 PM EDT
<b>Award Date:</b>	Sept 10, 2026
<b>Expected Work Start Date:</b>	October 1, 2026

\*\*\*LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED\*\*\*

The Department of Environmental Protection will receive proposals as described herein.

All changes to the terms, conditions or work scope in this RFP will be released to the bid website.

Signed Proposals must be submitted via email to [jeffrey.brust@dep.nj.gov](mailto:jeffrey.brust@dep.nj.gov).

## **Endangered Species Act Section 6 Habitat Conservation Plan Consultant Services**

### **Project Overview**

The states of New Jersey (NJ), Delaware (DE), and New York (NY), through the State of New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), seek to hire a consultant to draft a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the endangered and threatened species of sturgeon (all sturgeon species endemic to the NY-NJ-DE state and federal waters), sea turtles, and other species of interest that will then be used to obtain an incidental take permit (ITP) from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

### **Project Goals & Objectives**

The overall goal is the drafting and completion of one HCP for sturgeon, sea turtles, and other relevant species that covers all three states or, in the alternative, one HCP with one subpart for each state's sturgeon, sea turtles, and other relevant species. The HCP shall be fully and thoroughly researched and drafted so as to be accepted as adequate and complete by NOAA.

### **Project Timeline**

The maximum duration of this project is three years but is conditional on availability of federal grant funding in years two and three. The preferred timeline would be to have an initial draft completed and submitted to NOAA Fisheries within two years of the start date, with an additional year for responding to public and agency comments and finalizing the application.

### **Financial Requirements/Budget**

The selected consultant shall charge no more than \$250,000 per year based upon monthly invoices, payment vouchers, timesheets, and any other evidence of expenses/expenditures submitted to NJDEP.

### **Contract Term**

The base term of the contract shall be for one (1) year from award date (the date on which the purchase order is issued), with possible extension for two (2) additional years, depending on availability of federal funding and provided that no event of default has occurred and is continuing. The contract may be extended based upon mutual agreement by NJDEP and the consultant. However, at no time shall the contract extend beyond the term of the federal grant used to pay the consultant.

### **Unique Considerations**

This project is being supported by a federal grant from NOAA. As such, the consultant shall be subject to all applicable federal laws including US Department of Commerce General Terms and Conditions ([Financial Assistance Policy | U.S. Department of Commerce](#)) and NOAA Administrative Terms ([Administrative-Standard-Award-Condition-October-2024.pdf](#)).

### **Scope of Work/Requirements**

The successful bidder will take a lead role in the development of a programmatic Habitat Conservation Plan to support an incidental take permit application covering sturgeon, sea turtles, and other protected species of interest in marine fisheries occurring in state waters of NY, NJ, and DE. The final product must be consistent with the requirements of ESA section 10(a)(2)(A) and (B), federal regulations, NOAA Fisheries policy and guidance, and other applicable federal laws and guidance. Specific duties include, but may not be limited to:

- Work with the states, NOAA Fisheries, and USFWS to develop an overall work plan for completing the HCP in a timely manner, including determining partner roles and responsibilities, developing a dispute resolution process, establishing communication protocols (*e.g.* regular check in meetings and email channels), developing and adhering to data sharing agreements, developing an outreach plan, identifying milestones, and developing a timeline for completion;
- Facilitate meetings and maintain and distribute minutes and other relevant communication summaries;
- Coordinate, oversee and contribute to activities for HCP content development including background research, and drafting and editing text, tables, figures, references, appendices, and other resources following the established timeline;
- Compile data and content into a complete HCP draft document that meets the standards and requirements as directed by the USFWS and NOAA Fisheries;
- Coordinate with NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, and other relevant partners;
- Conduct and facilitate outreach meetings (minimum of one in each state) and other communications with appropriate stakeholders, including harvesters, NGOs, and the general public;
- Develop and coordinate responses and updates to drafts of the HCP in response to comments from the states, NOAA Fisheries, and USFWS;
- Develop and coordinate responses to solicited and unsolicited public comment and other stakeholder input;
- Support and contribute to efforts to compile background materials including but not limited to HCP goals and needs, the proposed action, plan development, regulatory framework, environmental setting, and covered species;
- Identify and describe the anticipated impacts of state commercial fisheries on the species/stocks and habitats and develop minimization and mitigation strategies, monitoring programs, adaptive management, and alternative actions that are amenable to the States and NOAA Fisheries.
- Ensure HCP meets all criteria for issuance of an ITP permit as required in ESA section 10(a)(2)(B) and NOAA Fisheries' implementing regulations
- Develop other relevant documents and requirements.

### **Deliverables/Reports**

Within 12 weeks of the initiation of the project, the contractor shall produce (with state partner input and approval) a comprehensive workplan for the completion of the project within the specified timeframe. The workplan shall include, at a minimum, a description of partner roles and responsibilities, communication protocols (*e.g.* regular check in meetings and email channels), a dispute resolution process, data sharing agreements, an outreach plan, project milestones, and a timeline for completion of the HCP.

Throughout the process, the contractor shall provide, within a reasonable timeframe, detailed minutes of meetings with state and federal partners, stakeholder groups, and the public. Minutes from programmatic meetings shall include a summary of topics discussed, decisions that were made, outstanding issues, and assignments and deadlines. Minutes from outreach and public engagement events shall include attendee information (*e.g.* name, affiliation, contact info), questions/comments received, and official responses.

The primary deliverable will be an HCP deemed by NOAA Fisheries to be “accurate and complete” to be submitted in support of the states’ Incidental Take Permit application(s). The final product must be consistent with the requirements of an HCP as detailed in the ESA, federal regulations, NOAA Fisheries policy and guidance, and other applicable federal laws and guidance. NOAA Fisheries and USFWS have several resources available for guidance, including the USFWS HCP Handbook and associated Toolbox and a NOAA Fisheries template for an HCP outline.

### **Qualifications and Experience**

The ideal candidate will have documented experience in the successful completion of HCPs resulting in issuance of an incidental take permit by USFWS and/or NOAA Fisheries, with additional weight given to documented experience for HCPs completed for ESA-listed marine fish species. Applicants should demonstrate a high level of project management skills and techniques to ensure coordination and oversight of multiple partners and myriad concurrent tasks. Strong written and verbal communication skills across a wide range of audiences. Expertise with commercial marine fisheries and fisheries policy of the US (east coast preferred). Habitat assessment, conservation biology, GIS, regulatory and policy compliance.

### **Bidder Questions**

Bidders may submit questions no later than **5:00 p.m. July 6, 2026** to [jeffrey.brust@dep.nj.gov](mailto:jeffrey.brust@dep.nj.gov). Responses to questions will be emailed to all Bidders and posted online on the same webpage where the RFP was posted (<https://dep.nj.gov/bids/>) within 1-2 weeks.

### **Proposal Submission Requirements**

One electronic copy of the proposal must be submitted to [jeffrey.brust@dep.nj.gov](mailto:jeffrey.brust@dep.nj.gov) by **5:00 p.m.** on **July 31, 2026** and include the following:

- An executive summary outlining the approach to the project.
- Detailed methodology for completing the project objectives.

- A detailed description of how the Bidder proposes to complete each task identified in the scope of work.
- Examples of previous successful HCP projects completed.
- A statement demonstrating why the Bidder is uniquely qualified to complete the scope of work, including name, title, and qualifications of key personnel that will be assigned to each task who will be involved in the project.
- A detailed project timeline.
- Project budget using the supplied price sheet and detailed expense worksheet.
- Contact information for references from previous projects, particularly successful HCP projects.

Contractors are required to complete and submit the following forms with their proposal, along with any certificates identified below, which can be found here:

<https://www.nj.gov/treasury/purchase/forms.shtml>)

- State of New Jersey Combined Standard Terms and Conditions
- Ownership disclosure form
- Disclosure of investigations and other actions involving vendor
- Disclosure of investment activities in Iran form
- Two-year chapter 51/Executive Order 333 vendor certification and disclosure of political contributions for non-fair open contracts
- Chapter 271 vendor certification and political disclosure form
- Macbride principals form
- Proof of business registration
- Certificate of insurance / ACORD
- Source disclosure form
- Certification of non-involvement in prohibited activities in Russia or Belarus pursuant to P.L.2022, c.3.
- Proof of affirmative action compliance - submit one of the following
  - New Jersey certificate of employee information report
  - Federal letter of approval verifying a federally approved or sanctioned affirmative action program (dated within one year of the submission)
  - Affirmative action employee information report (form aa302)

As noted above, Contractor is subject to the CSTC provided via the links below:

[https://www.nj.gov/education/purchasing/docs/26006\\_Attachment\\_1\\_State\\_of\\_New\\_Jersey\\_Standard\\_Terms\\_and\\_Conditions\\_6\\_3\\_2025.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/education/purchasing/docs/26006_Attachment_1_State_of_New_Jersey_Standard_Terms_and_Conditions_6_3_2025.pdf)).

Contractor must also establish and maintain an active profile in NJSTART ([www.njstart.gov](http://www.njstart.gov)), the State of New Jersey's eProcurement system. Submission of forms, as available, through NJSTART is also acceptable. It is recommended that all potential Consultants read through all Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) located on the NJSTART Vendor Support Page (<https://www.nj.gov/treasury/purchase/vendor.shtml>) for further information.

Contractors may add subcontractor(s) to their project team to complete this work; however, all subcontractors must complete and submit the previously identified forms as well as establish and maintain an active profile in NJSTART.

**Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Understanding of project scope and objectives and presents an approach that would permit successful performance of the technical requirements of the RFP.
- Quality and feasibility of proposed methodology and timeline.
- Relevant experience and qualifications of the consultant team.
- Past performance and examples of similar work.
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget.

The Department will select the proposal most advantageous to the State, price and other factors considered.

**Proposal Evaluation Rubric  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
ESA Section 6 HCP Consultant Services**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Max score</b>	<b>Score</b>
Understanding of project scope and objectives	10	
Quality and feasibility of proposed methodology and timeline	10	
Qualifications and experience of project team	10	
Cost effectiveness of proposed budget	10	
Successful completion of previous HCP work	10	
Successful completion of previous marine fisheries HCP	5	

**Professional Services Fee Proposal  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
ESA Section 6 HCP Consultant Services**

This Fee Proposal to be Returned with the Entire Proposal by July 31, 2026

PROPOSAL DUE DATE, NO LATER THAN **5:00 PM, July 31, 2026**

FIRM NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**THE UNDERSIGNED PROPOSES TO PROVIDE ALL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AS STATED IN  
THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AND SCOPE OF WORK**

<b>Expense category</b>	<b>Total amount</b>
Salary + fringe	
Travel	
Equipment and supplies	
Other	

TOTAL LUMP SUM FEE FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

PROPOSALS ARE BASED ON A LUMP SUM AMOUNT FOR ALL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES INDICATED AND INCLUDES ALL REQUIRED SITE VISITS, OFFICE SUPPORT, REPRODUCTION EXPENSES, TRAVEL AND LODGING.

Signature and Title of Principle or Individual of the firm authorized to sign contractual documents:

Signature of the consultant below attests that the Consultant has read, understands and agrees to all terms, conditions and specifications set forth in the Request for Proposal (RFP) and Consultant Proposal Package.

THE WAGE LEVELS INCLUDED ON THE "PROJECT KEY PERSONNEL LIST" WILL BE USED FOR ANY EXTENSION OF SERVICES BEYOND THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT COMPLETION DATE. FEE PROPOSAL TO HOLD GOOD FOR 60 DAYS FROM THE DATE SUBMITTED.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**Detailed Expense Worksheet (continued)**  
**New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection**  
**ESA Section 6 HCP Consultant Services**

**Travel expenses**

<b>Destination</b>	<b>Number of travelers</b>	<b>Fare</b>	<b>Lodging</b>	<b>Meals</b>	<b>Tolls and mileage</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>

**Equipment and supplies**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Unit price</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<i>Equipment</i>			
<i>Total equipment</i>			
<i>Supplies</i>			
<i>Total supplies</i>			
<i>Grand total</i>			

**Other** (Please provide detailed descriptions and prices for additional budget items.)