



# PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Kim Kosko  
732-872-1300 x18 or  
[kkosko@njmsc.org](mailto:kkosko@njmsc.org)

**New Research Represents a Solid Investment for New Jersey's Coastal Future**

(Sandy Hook, NJ)..... Four new research projects that will directly impact New Jersey's critical coastal resources are now underway. The New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium/New Jersey Sea Grant Program (NJMSC/NJSG) will invest one third of the funds it was recently awarded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Sea Grant Program in high-priority, stakeholder-driven research. All four projects will contribute to better understanding and stewardship of the marine and coastal environment, and ultimately help sustain the considerable revenue those resources contribute to the State's economy.

Dr. Michael Peek of William Paterson University will conduct a study of American Beachgrass to determine if genetically diverse plantings will result in healthier dunes. Millions of beach-goers utilize New Jersey beaches each year and healthy beaches require healthy dunes. While American Beachgrass creates and stabilizes beaches, New Jersey dunes are currently planted with a single variety released in the 1970's. Peek's project will develop and assess alternative plant strains.

Dr. Robert Chant, from the Rutgers University Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences will examine the exchange of water between Raritan Bay and the ocean. This information collected for this highly urbanized estuary will represent the first comprehensive study of circulation patterns and dispersive processes in Raritan Bay and provide managers with data and insights into processes that determine water quality.

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Dr. Olaf Jensen from the Rutgers Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences will be working to improve fishery management through better estimates of biological reference points. As abundance of adult fish decreases, survival of young fish increases, partially offsetting the loss of adults. The strength of this effect determines how much a specific population can be fished. Jensen's work will analyze this effect for important species in New Jersey, including summer and winter flounder, scup, tautog, and weakfish.

Dr. Eric Powell of the Rutgers University Haskins Shellfish Research Lab will be investigating summer flounder landings to better manage that specific fishery. Summer flounder is one of the most sought after fish by anglers and seafood consumers and one of the most important recreational and commercial fisheries in New Jersey. Sustainable management of summer flounder is difficult because no information on the sex ratio of commercial and recreational landings exists. Powell's research project is designed to collect this critical information for the New Jersey recreational and commercial fishery.

NJMSC/NJSG Extension, Education and Communications staff will work closely with all four research teams during the year to track their project's progress and work with them to find ways to use the research data to produce resource materials that will have practical use for a broad range of New Jersey stakeholders.

NJMSC/NJSG is an affiliation of colleges, universities and other groups dedicated to advancing knowledge and stewardship of New Jersey's marine and coastal environment. The organization meets its mission through its many research, education and outreach programs. For information about NJMSC/NJSG and its work, visit [njmsc.org](http://njmsc.org)

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**22 Magruder Road • Fort Hancock, NJ 07732 • tel. 732-872-1300 • fax: 732-291- 4483  
web site: [njmsc.org](http://njmsc.org) • email: [general@njmsc.org](mailto:general@njmsc.org)**