

Job description

Position: Chondrichthyan data collector, commercial fishing vessels

Employer: Namibia Nature Foundation (NaRaS project)

Context

NNF has launched a project to conduct research on sharks, skates, rays and chimaeras (chondrichthyans) in Namibian waters, the Namibia's Rays and Sharks (NaRaS) project. An important component of this project is the collection of data on chondrichthyan bycatch (accidental capture) by commercial fishing vessels. NNF is hiring an individual to collect data on fishing vessels over the duration of the project. These data will be used to understand which chondrichthyan species are present in Namibian waters and where; any hotspots for particular species and to determine whether certain species are more vulnerable to bycatch.

Duties

The data collector will undertake the following duties:

- Collect data on chondrichthyan bycatch. Data collection will involve recording basic information on the start and end time and position of each fishing set; photographing all bycaught chondrichthyans, and recording simple data (length and sex) on each bycaught animal.
- Enter all data into a spreadsheet after each fishing trip, check their own data entry for errors, and be available for debriefs with the NaRaS team.
- Provide feedback on the data collection process and contribute to modifying the methods, if needed.
- Other data collection, analysis or feedback duties may be requested by the NaRaS team as the project develops. These will be discussed with the data collector as appropriate.
- The data collector may also be requested to attend or participate in data presentations to government staff or chondrichthyan identification workshops run by NNF and collaborators.
- Adhere to NNF policies on safety and safeguarding whilst working at sea, and always behave in a responsible and professional manner.

For the right candidate, there will be opportunities to become more involved in the project, be a co-author on scientific publications, and gain valuable experience in research activities.

Requirements

- Be at sea for at least 2 weeks per month, as and when a space on a fishing vessel is available. You should therefore have the availability to go to sea as and when requested, and to be away from home for long periods.
- The role may involve long periods working in the holds of fishing vessels, photographing fishes and entering data into data sheets whilst working on deck. You should therefore not suffer from sea sickness and should be accustomed to working at sea, in challenging conditions. Interviews will only be conducted with individuals who have evidence of prior experience of working at sea.

- You must be willing to have a 6-monthly medical and to maintain an up-to-date safety at sea certification. Medical and certification costs will be covered by NNF, once a contract with the new employee has been finalised.

Qualifications/ experience

- BSc in a biological sciences required. Additional scientific qualifications (e.g. MSc) would be an advantage.
- Previous experience of working at sea is required Experience of working on commercial fishing vessels is desirable.
- Previous experience in recording biological data and using a GPS; conscientious and aware of the importance of precision in recording scientific information.
- Willingness to learn new skills and a proven interest in marine life.
- Motivated, with the ability to take initiative where needed, and to work independently and without supervision.

The data collector will board vessels operating out of Walvis Bay. Applicants should therefore be based in either Swakopmund or Walvis Bay, or be willing to rapidly relocate.

Time period: Applicants must be available to start this role no later than 15th March 2023. Data will be collected until at least 31st January 2024, with the possibility of extension of the role, subject to additional funding being secured.

Deadline for applications: 2nd March 2023, 17:00.

Please send a CV, proof of BSc qualification and a cover letter including details of your experience working at sea and what motivated you to apply for this job, to Dr. Ruth Leeney ruth@nnf.org.na and cc info@nnf.org.na