

Gear Innovations Manager Whale Conservation Program

Location: Monterey/Santa Cruz area, California
Supervisor: Director of Policy and Conservation

Program Overview:

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (“the Foundation”) proposes to work with fishermen, resource managers, researchers, private businesses, whale watching operators, rehabilitation centers, and community leaders to systematically test gear innovations that may reduce risk of entanglement for whales as well as other marine mammals and sea turtles. Modifying fishing gear, identifying areas of high whale densities and risk of entanglement to inform fishing practices and management, and removing lost fishing gear from the water can decrease the likelihood of large whale entanglement. Pop-up gear (often called buoyless or ropeless gear) aims to minimize the number of vertical fishing lines in the water column thereby reducing the risk of potential entanglement and the need for disentanglement response. In-water testing and monitoring of fishing gear innovations provides valuable information, data, and design feedback needed to gauge the technology’s efficacy, ease of use by fishermen, safety, detectability, and level of impact on the marine environment. Working collaboratively with fishermen to test modified gear and gear innovations can foster collaboration and build trust through cooperative research while testing during real world scenarios.

Position Summary:

The Gear Innovations Manager’s primary role is to conduct cooperative research to reduce the risk of whale and sea turtle entanglement in California fishing gear and facilitate meaningful partnerships to advance solutions. The Gear Innovations Manager will oversee a collaborative project to systematically test gear innovation technology systems based on a robust scientific project design in realistic commercial fishing conditions over an extended period in partnership with a group of California commercial Dungeness crab fishermen, state and federal resource agencies, and other key partners. The position will communicate with gear manufacturers to acquire and/or rent several pop-up gear types and non-pop-up gear and distribute gear to the participating commercial fishermen during planned training sessions. To build trust and partnerships, the position will be the main point of contact with commercial fishermen to guide testing, and gain feedback on the reliability and useability of these gear types in realistic conditions. The Gear Innovations Manager will manage the data collection and analysis, providing reports and data summaries as necessary. This project will inform additional future testing -- in more complex, real world conditions and across additional testing criteria -- after successfully testing alternative fishing gear retrieval with the ultimate goal of informing the feasibility of scaling up use of gear innovations that may reduce the risk of whale and sea turtle entanglement.

Responsibilities

- Oversee and facilitate the development of the scientific project design, coordinating with multiple partners and collaborators
- Organize regular meetings and communications with California Ocean Protection Council (OPC), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), fishermen, technology developers, NGOs, and external science partner(s) throughout the project planning, implementation, and reporting
- Manage budgets and subcontracts related to the project, including gear acquisition and/or rental, generating contracts/agreements, managing invoices and payments, and working on logistics behind distribution and storage of gear

- Plan and host training(s) and meetings to prepare all the partners for project implementation and create connections among resource managers, commercial fishers, technology developers, and external academic partner(s)
- Support project implementation, at-sea testing, and cooperative research
- Manage data collection, analysis, progress reporting, and project evaluation
- Develop communications materials and presentations for internal and stakeholder audiences in coordination with the Foundation's Communications team and assist with local public relations

Deliverables:

- The scientific project design is finalized for both pop-up and non-pop-up gear testing with OPC, CDFW and expert scientific partners
- Organize and host regular project core team calls/meetings throughout project planning, implementation, and analysis and reporting
- All gear is acquired/procured (e.g. fishing gear units, deck units, and software) from select vendors as informed by the finalized scientific project design
- Commercial fishermen are committed to participation agreements with the Foundation to evaluate pop-up gear and non-pop-up gear (e.g. yale grip sleeve). Fishermen provide thoughtful feedback across testing criteria, particularly on any vessel modification requirements and new equipment.
- Host trainings and meetings with federal and state resource managers and enforcement, participating commercial fishers, science partners, and gear developers all in attendance.
- Participating fishermen are equipped with the gear and knowledgeable about how to deploy, retrieve, and collect/submit data
- At-sea testing completed and data is collected, analyzed, and distributed
- Collaborate with OPC and CDFW in data reporting, and post-testing debriefs. Provide quarterly reports on progress and project milestones, as well as final project reports with data summary that will be made publicly available on OPC's website
- Identify opportunities for local, regional and national communications and presentations for the project in partnership with the Foundation's Communications team and state agency partners, as well as sharing project progress to internal and stakeholder audiences
- Collect and share materials including photos, video, and narrative accounts/blogs, for internal and external communications

Qualifications

- Candidates should have at least Bachelor's Degree in a science related field with 4-5 years of experience with program management. Masters preferred
- Experience participating in community-based projects in the marine environment and working directly with commercial fishers, on fishing vessels, and/or with the fishing industry or community
- Experience in project management including planning and managing aspects of complex multi-partner projects, organizing meetings and events on set timelines
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, as well as strong problem solving, scientific, and research understanding
- Experience working with budgets and tracking expenses
- Attention to detail and ability to perform under tight deadlines
- Experience with data collection methods and analysis
- Proficiency in the use of the Microsoft Office software suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) and Google web-based office suite
- Demonstrated initiative, ability to work both independently and with others. Demonstrated ability to coordinate among and between various organizations, programs, and partners

Why You Will Love Us

- Dedicated and passionate staff committed to marine and Great Lakes conservation, and a fun group who takes its work more seriously than we take ourselves.
- Generous leave policy.
- Health Benefits: medical, dental, and vision
- Foundation paid disability and life Insurance
- Retirement: 403(B) with 3% employer contribution after one year of service. No match required, 100% vested.

Compensation and Benefits

\$60,000- \$65,000 commensurate with experience. The Foundation provides a competitive benefits package.

To Apply

[Apply Here](#). Please be prepared to submit a resume, cover letter, and 3 professional references. Applications received prior to September 18, 2020 will be preferred.

The Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and actively works to ensure fair and equal treatment of its employees.