

Call for Applications

7th Student Workshop on International Coastal and Marine Management in the Gulf of Mexico Economic Valuation of Recreational Fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico May 2023 in-person with follow-up virtual meetings

Application Deadline: April 10, 2023

Development of a Report of Estimated Economic Values of Recreational fisheries in Different Areas of the Gulf of Mexico

Recreational fishing plays a key role as an economic driver around the world, but the economic value of this activity and its associated ecosystems is often poorly understood. Recreational fishing can be especially beneficial to developing countries, and also provides strong social and cultural connections to coastal and island communities. However, these benefits can be overshadowed by a lack of foresight and planning if management strategies are not put in place early in the process. In addition, the diverse coastal and marine ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico that support recreational fishing activities are experiencing increasing pressure from human activities, the effects of climate change, ocean acidification, etc., which threaten their long-term integrity. The ability to assign an economic value to recreational fishing activities and to understand the extent of changes and vulnerabilities of associated ecosystems are essential first steps in developing public policies to ensure their conservation and sustainable use. Furthermore, effective management at the scale of the Gulf of Mexico's large marine ecosystem will only occur with the cooperative participation of the three nations that surround it: Mexico, Cuba, and the United States.

We invite graduate students studying in these three nations to participate in the 7th Student Workshop on International Coastal and Marine Management in the Gulf of Mexico ("SWIMM 2023"), to be held in-person in and around Cancún, Mexico, in May 2023, with follow-up virtual meetings in Summer and Fall 2023. The workshop is organized by the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (HRI), the UMDI-Sisal, Facultad de Ciencias de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and the Centro de Investigaciones Marinas de la Universidad de La Habana (CIM-UH), and is supported by the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and the HRI Furgason International Fellowship.

The workshop is composed of three parts. For the first part, the workshop will start virtually in late April or early May 2023 with a series of short, recorded presentations and online activities about the SWIMM 2023 program itself, economic indicators, and information about various aspects of recreational fisheries to provide background.

The second part of the SWIMM 2023 program will run from approximately May 13-21, 2023, and will include participation in the "Latin America and Caribbean Fisheries Congress" (LACFC, see <https://lacfc.fisheries.org/>) in Cancún. In particular, SWIMM 2023 participants will assist with the organization and operation of a special symposium within the LACFC dedicated to the importance of recreational fisheries with contributions focused on topics such as bioeconomics, cross-sectoral conflicts and threats and/or management challenges. The special symposium will include an afternoon panel discussion focused on recreational fisheries in developing nations as well as institutional capacities. This second part of the SWIMM 2023 program will also include day trips outside of the direct Cancún area before and after the LACFC event to explore recreational fisheries operations, interact with stakeholders, and participate in other thematic, in-person activities.

The third part of the SWIMM 2023 program will be held virtually over summer and fall 2023, and participants will work to construct a database of economic assessment methodologies for recreational fisheries, gather information from recreational fisheries stakeholders who were contacted during the first part of the workshop in May 2023, and then compile and standardize this information to estimate the economic value of these activities and develop a report on the effort. The results of this publication will be shared with regional stakeholders as well as other authorities around the Gulf of Mexico so decision makers in each country will have information to develop public policies for their sustainable development. For example, the information could be used to establish an economic baseline that would potentially be used to prioritize monitoring programs and support future management strategies and decision making.

Upon successful completion of SWIMM 2023, students will receive a reference letter and certificate recognizing their participation in the program.

We invite applications from Ph.D. and M.S. graduate students who are either 1.) enrolled in graduate programs in the United States, Mexico or Cuba, or 2.) who are citizens of any of these three countries, but enrolled elsewhere. Candidates should be engaged in a program of studies and/or research in areas of environmental management, environmental or ecological sciences, environmental anthropology, economy, or political and social sciences with focus on socio-environmental issues, community or hazards planning, coastal or marine sciences, oceanography, biology, ecology or marine zoology and related disciplines. We are specifically interested in students who:

- can demonstrate skills in interdisciplinary work or in the design of solutions to problems in environmental resource management,
- have work experience at the interface between management and research, and
- are familiar with innovative or collaborative solutions and that are interested in incorporating educational and/or community components.

We are also interested in students who are committed to studying the problems and challenges of ecosystem conservation in the Gulf of Mexico and Greater Caribbean region whether it be through their present work or in the future.

Applications for this program must be completed online starting at the following URL:

<https://www.hartheresearch.org/swimm>

Please prepare the following materials BEFORE beginning the application process because they will be needed to complete the online application:

1. **Please compose answers to the following three questions indicating your interest and qualifications to participate in the workshop.** The answers for each question should not exceed 1500 characters (limit is strictly enforced by the online form and not flexible) and should be written in simple, clear language.
 - a.) How do your research objectives and academic career relate to the theme of this workshop?
 - b.) What previous experience do you have with coastal and marine ecosystems?
 - c.) How will participation in this workshop help advance your professional (academic and career) and personal goals?

Answers that do not directly address these three questions will automatically disqualify an application for further consideration.

2. **Please prepare a single, Adobe Acrobat PDF file of supporting materials that contains the following documents in the order specified:**
 - a.) Up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (two-page limit).
 - b.) Copy of all undergraduate and graduate level college transcripts (unofficial transcripts are acceptable).
 - c.) Two letters of support, one must be from the applicant's advisor or main supervisor and express their agreement with the student's participation in the workshop. Letter writers should clearly indicate their relationship to the applicant, and provide their contact information.
 - d.) High-quality scan of passport valid for at least 12 months (Mexican citizens may substitute their INE card for a passport). Furthermore, candidates should not have any legal impediment that prevents them from traveling to Mexico. For details about traveling to Mexico as a U.S. citizen, see <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Mexico.html>. For non-U.S. citizens, please review the appropriate information for your country of citizenship.

Submissions that do not closely follow the guidelines above will automatically disqualify an application for further consideration.

Although fluency in Spanish is not a precondition to participate, most parts of the workshop and related activities will take place in Spanish. A strong working ability with the language is highly recommended and will be one of the criteria used to select participants.

The final announcement of participant selections will be made by e-mail around April 21, 2023.

The program will cover roundtrip air or bus transport for participants to Cancún from their airport or bus station of origin, and transport, food, and lodging expenses related to the workshop while in Mexico. Participants will be responsible for expenses in their own home country before and after the workshop (like meals and getting to/from the airport) and for personal items such as toiletries or souvenirs while in Mexico.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, travel restrictions, and other circumstances beyond the control of the workshop organizers, the current itinerary may be subject to change or cancellation.

The application process, including submitting the PDF file of supporting documents mentioned above, must be completed by 5:00 pm Central Time on April 10, 2023. Incomplete applications or materials submitted past the deadline will not be considered.

For more information, please write swimm@tamucc.edu.