

## PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT

**US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)  
Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC)**

**Title:** Evaluating the Movement Patterns and Survival of Juvenile Everglade Snail Kites (*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*) at Lake Okeechobee.

**Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** W81EWF-24-SOI-0018

**Assistance Listing Number:** 12.630

**Date Issued:** 28 March 2024

**Key Dates:** Phase I announcement will be open to receive statements of interest continuously until 12 noon Central Time (CT), 17 May 2024, at which point all statements of interest must be received.

If invited to Phase II, full proposal applications will be due at 12 noon Central Time (CT), 7 June 2024.

**Estimated Award Ceiling:** Approximately \$94,900.00 is expected to be the estimated award ceiling for a single year of the contract.

**Estimated Total Program Funding:** Additional funding may be available for work in subsequent fiscal years up to 4 years for a total of \$503,837.00 over 5 years.

**Agency Contact:** Kisha M. Craig, [Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil)

# I. Program Description

## A. Short Description of Funding Opportunity

ERDC seeks applications for an opportunity to enter into a cooperative agreement for monitoring juvenile Everglade snail kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus*) movement and survival patterns on Lake Okeechobee, and assessing how these patterns are affected by hydrology and other factors.

## B. Background

The Everglade snail kite is a federally listed endangered species. The principal threat to the snail kite is the loss, fragmentation, and degradation of wetlands in central and southern Florida resulting from urbanized and agricultural development and alterations to wetland hydrology through ditching, impoundment, and water level management. The Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Project, which was originally designed and constructed to serve flood control and water supply purposes, has disrupted the volume, timing, direction, and velocity of freshwater flow and has resulted in habitat loss and degradation in the Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) and other portions of the historic Everglades. Drainage of Florida's interior wetlands has reduced the extent and quality of habitat for both the apple snail and the snail kite.

The fragmentation or loss of wetland habitat significantly limits the snail kites' ability to be resilient to disturbance events such as various climatic events. As wetland habitats become more fragmented, either through destruction or as the result of hydrologic management, their dispersal distances become greater, putting increased stress on dispersing kites that may not be able to replenish energy supplies.

This agreement represents an opportunity to enter into a cooperative agreement for monitoring juvenile snail kite movement and survival patterns on Lake Okeechobee. Monitoring will focus on Lake Okeechobee, because this is a critical wetland habitat for snail kites and helps link populations in the Kissimmee Chain-of-Lakes to the population in the Everglades. The purpose of this research is to understand how current water management operational plans for lake stage and releases at structures and resulting changes in hydrology affect snail kite reproductive success, survival, demography, and population.

This project is being conducted to meet a requirement of a Biological Opinion (BO) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in association with the current regulation schedule for Lake Okeechobee (e.g. 2008 LORS and the anticipated Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM)) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Monitoring and reporting requirements of the BO identify the need to tag up to twenty near fledgling aged snail kites (i.e., 24 days old) with the best proven tags (radio, satellite, or cell) and monitor for up to five months, depending on survival. This period coincides with the lowest survival rates for fledglings as they learn to forage for themselves and begin moving beyond their nest area. Tagging is to commence during the spring recession season.

The mechanism for water management effects on juvenile snail kite survival is primarily related to foraging habitat and food availability (but can also include increased predation). For example,

rapidly receding water levels or low lake levels in general that occur during the first months of a juvenile fledging the nest can affect food availability through reductions in foraging habitat. These effects may be detectable through fledgling movement patterns or decreased survival if a large enough database is established for comparison. This project will play a critical role in building the knowledge base on juvenile movement and survival patterns under a variety of conditions.

### C. Program Description/Objective: (brief description of the anticipated work)

The purpose of this research is to understand how current water management operational plans for lake stage and releases at structures and resulting changes in hydrology affect snail kite reproductive success, survival, demography, and population.

Specific project objectives include the following:

- (1) to determine causes of mortality in juvenile snail kites, and determine how hydrology and other environmental conditions affect juvenile survival up to five months of age. Assess whether typical rates of juvenile mortality can be defined for a variety of hydrologic and environmental conditions.
- (2) to the extent possible, to assign a cause of death to each tagged juvenile snail kite that is found dead and assess whether and how hydrologic or other environmental conditions may have contributed to mortality.
- (3) to define typical movement behaviors for a variety of hydrologic and environmental conditions;
- (4) to identify threats that are most important to juvenile snail kite survival;
- (5) to provide data on potential population sinks;
- (6) to provide specific recommendations for management of water levels and for determining when and where to focus habitat management activities in order to increase population size through reduced mortality of young; and
- (7) to provide managers with on-going real-time updates on how hydrologic and environmental conditions are affecting juvenile snail kites.

#### Deliverables:

Weekly/bi-weekly email updates: During the snail kite breeding season, briefly include any relevant updates on juvenile snail kites in the state-wide or Lake Okeechobee-specific email updates that are sent out by field staff on a regular basis, as appropriate.

Quarterly Status Reports: Quarterly status reports will be delivered every 90 days on a quarterly basis. Each report will summarize work done and problems encountered during the reporting period, as appropriate.

Annual Report: A draft and final annual report will be submitted at the completion of each year of the cooperative agreement. The draft and final annual report will contain at minimum, an introduction section, a description of the methods used, an evaluation of the data collected during the reporting period for a given year, and a conclusion section. Each annual report should provide updated information and results on each of the project objectives above. A draft annual report will be submitted upon completion of each year of the cooperative agreement and will be reviewed by the USACE, Jacksonville District, with comments provided as appropriate. Submittal of the final annual report will occur after incorporation of the provided comments as necessary. An accompanying dataset will also be made available.

Final Report: A final report will be submitted one month prior to completion of the cooperative agreement. The final report will be a substitute for the annual report described above. The final report will contain at minimum an introduction section, a description of the methods used, an evaluation of the data collected during each year of the cooperative agreement, and a conclusion section. The final report should provide updated information and results, and summarize findings, for each of the project objectives above. The purpose of the final report will be to provide a summary of all years of work conducted under the cooperative agreement. A draft of the final report will be submitted and reviewed by the USACE, Jacksonville District, with comments provided as appropriate. Final submittal of the report will occur after incorporation of the provided comments as necessary. An accompanying dataset will also be made available.

#### Meetings:

Kick-Off Meeting: A kick-off meeting will be scheduled with the USACE, Jacksonville District to introduce the recipient of the cooperative agreement to the USACE point of contact and to discuss the proposed plan of work for the base year of the cooperative agreement.

Yearly Meetings: A yearly meeting will be scheduled with the USACE, Jacksonville District following completion of the final annual report and final report, as described above, to discuss work accomplished.

#### D. Public Benefit

This project will play a critical role in building the knowledge base for understanding juvenile snail kite movement and survival patterns by providing data that will fill critical information gaps and help to identify potential population sinks, threats to fledgling survival, hydrologic conditions that benefit wildlife, when and where to focus habitat management activities, and ultimately, how to increase population size through reduced mortality of young. This information is important to the public as it relates to ecosystem health. The Everglade snail kite is a federally listed endangered species. Snail kites act as ecosystem indicators for the Everglades.

Improvements to fledgling survival may indicate that the combination of several hydrological and biological functions have been correctly restored. Improvements in ecosystem health provide a direct benefit to the public via outdoor recreation opportunities for tourists and Floridians; improvements in water quality, timing, and distribution; and reductions in harmful algal blooms.

E. Authorization: 10 USC 4001

## F. Legal Requirements

Each Cooperative Agreement awarded under this announcement will be governed by 2 CFR 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”, 2 CFR 1100 Subchapter D—Administrative Requirements Terms and Conditions for Cost-Type Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Nonprofit and Governmental Entities and the DoD research general terms and conditions located at <https://www.nre.navy.mil/work-with-us/manage-your-award/manage-grant-award/grants-terms-conditions>.

## G. Program-Specific Requirements

# II. Federal Award Information

The following information applies to awards issued under this announcement:

- This is a new program.
- The Government anticipates 1 Federal awards from this announcement but reserves the right to award more or less.
- The total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this announcement is \$503,837.00
- The expected amount of funding for each award is \$94,900.00 for the Base Year, \$97,747.00 for Year 1, \$100,679.00 for Year 2, \$103,700.00 for Year 3, and \$106,811.00 for Year 4.
- Award(s) from this announcement will be Cooperative Agreement(s)
- The anticipated period of performance is 60 months (base year and 4 optional years) for the Cooperative Agreement
- Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards.
- The government reserves the right to accept only portions of an application and to negotiate with potential awardees
- Government’s substantial involvement includes participation in study site selections, design, and work plan development. The Jacksonville District will also participate in field data collection efforts as appropriate, will review quarterly and annual reports, and will provide input to data interpretation. The Jacksonville District will assist in the dissemination of study results through local scientific presentations and website postings and will incorporate the data and analysis into a system-wide database that assesses and evaluates ecosystem restoration efforts in central and southern Florida.

# III. Eligibility Information

## A. Eligible Applicants

This opportunity is restricted to non-federal partners of the South Florida - Caribbean Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU).

Disclosures of current and pending support made in this application may render an applicant ineligible for funding. Prior to award and throughout the period of performance, ERDC may continue to request updated continuing and pending support information, which will be reviewed and may result in discontinuation of funding.

Religious organizations are entitled to compete on equal footing with secular organizations for Federal financial assistance as described in E.O. 13798, "Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty."

## B. Cost Sharing or Matching

This action will be 100% funded by USACE.

## C. Conflict of Interest

### a) General Requirement for Disclosure

You and your organization must disclose any potential or actual scientific or nonscientific conflict of interest(s) to us. You must also disclose any potential or actual conflict(s) of interest for any identified sub recipient you include in your application. We may have to ask you more questions if we need more information.

At our discretion, we may ask you for a conflict-of-interest mitigation plan after you submit your application. Your plan is subject to our approval.

### b) Scientific Conflict of Interest

Scientific collaborations on research and development projects are generally the result of close collaboration prior to the submission of applications for support. Accordingly, these collaborations should be considered when considering potential conflicts of interest. The potential conflict is mitigated by the disclosure of these collaborations, and the list of current and pending support you provide for senior and key researchers. Therefore, you must include in your list of current and pending support all collaborators, even if they did not formally provide support.

## D. Other

### a) Licensure or Certification

You must include the Acknowledgment of Support and Disclaimer on all materials created or produced under our awards. This language may be found in the Terms and Conditions included in the award documents.

## E. Certifications, representations, and assurances

1. To apply for grants and other funding opportunities the applicant entity must have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). Applications will not be accepted through Grants.gov or other methods unless the entity is registered in SAM. Registration in SAM now includes the acceptance of Certifications and Assurances. See <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/grantors/grantor-standard-language.html> for details on how to register in SAM, and Grants.gov
2. The Federal Assistance Certifications Report is an attestation that the entity will abide by the requirements of the various laws and regulations; therefore, as applicable, you are still required to submit any documentation, including the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if award value exceeds \$100,000.00), and, if applicable, informing DoD of unpaid delinquent tax liability or a felony conviction under any Federal law.
3. Certification Regarding Disclosure of Funding Sources. By checking "I Agree" on the SF 424 (R&R) block 17 you agree to abide by the following statement: "By signing this application, I certify the proposing entity is in compliance with Section 223(a) of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 which requires that: (a) the PI and other key personnel certify that the current and pending support provided on the proposal is current, accurate and complete; (B) agree to update such disclosure at the request of the agency prior to the award of support and at any subsequent time the agency determines appropriate during the term of the award; and (c) the PI and other key personnel have been made aware of the requirements under Section 223(a)(1) of this Act. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. code, Title 218, Section 1001)."

## **IV. Application and Submission Information (2 Phase Process)**

### **A. Phase I: Submission of Statement of Interest (SOI)**

1. Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:
  - a. Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: Kisha M. Craig, [Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil) (Maximum length: 2 pages, single-spaced 12 pt. font).
    - i. Name, Organization and Contact Information
    - ii. Brief Statement of Qualifications (including):
      - Biographical Sketch,
      - Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects,
      - Staff, faculty, or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise,
      - Any brief description of capabilities to successfully

complete the project you may wish to add (e.g. equipment, laboratory facilities, greenhouse facilities, field facilities, etc.).

Note: A proposed budget is NOT requested at this time.

The administrative point of contact is Kisha M. Craig, [Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil)

2. ERDC will only accept SOIs submitted on or before 17 May 2024, 12 noon Central Time (CT).

Based on a review of the Statements of Interest received, an investigator or investigators will be invited to move to Phase II which is to prepare a full study proposal. Statements will be evaluated based on the investigator's specific experience and capabilities in areas related to the study requirements.

## B. Phase II (if invited): Submission of Full Application Package

### 1. Address to Request Application Package

The complete funding opportunity announcement, application forms, and instructions are available for download at Grants.gov.

The administrative point of contact is Kisha M. Craig, [Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil).

### 2. Content and Form of Application Submission

All mandatory forms and any applicable optional forms must be completed in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below.

- a. SF 424 R&R - Application for Federal Assistance
- b. Full Technical Proposal – Discussion of the nature and scope of the research and technical approach. Additional information on prior work in this area, descriptions of available equipment, data and facilities, and resumes of personnel who will be participating in this effort should also be included. In addition, a data management plan is required to be included. A data management plan is a document that describes which data generated through the course of the proposed research will be shared and preserved, how it will be done, or explains why data sharing or preservation is not possible or scientifically appropriate, or why the costs of sharing or preservation are incommensurate with the value of doing so. See also: DoD Instruction 3200.12. <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Directives/issuances/dodi/>

Data management plans are generally 2 pages in length, and must include the following considerations:

- (1) The types of data, software, and other materials to be produced.
- (2) How the data will be acquired.
- (3) Time and location of data acquisition, if scientifically pertinent.

- (4) How the data will be processed.
- (5) The file formats and the naming conventions that will be used.
- (6) A description of the quality assurance and quality control measures during collection, analysis, and processing.
- (7) A description of dataset origin when existing data resources are used.
- (8) A description of the standards to be used for data and metadata format and content.
- (9) Appropriate timeframe for preservation.
- (10) The plan may consider the balance between the relative value of data preservation and other factors such as the associated cost and administrative burden. The plan will provide a justification for such decisions.
- (11) A statement that the data cannot be made available to the public when there are national security or controlled unclassified information concerns (e.g., “This data cannot be cleared for public release in accordance with the requirements in DoD Directive 5230.09.”)

c. Cost Proposal/Budget – Clear, concise, and accurate cost proposals reflect the offeror’s financial plan for accomplishing the effort contained in the technical proposal. As part of its cost proposal, the offeror shall submit a full budget in sufficient detail so that a reasonableness determination can be made. A recommended template will be included in the invitation to Phase II. The SF 424 Research & Related Budget Form can be used as a guide but is required if the sub-recipient uses it. The cost breakdown should include the following, if applicable:

1. Direct Labor: Direct labor should be detailed by level of effort (i.e. numbers of hours, etc.) of each labor category and the applicable labor rate. The source of labor rates shall be identified and verified. If rates are estimated, please provide the historical based used and clearly identify all escalation applied to derive the proposed rates.
2. Fringe Benefit Rates: The source of fringe benefit rate shall be identified and verified.
3. Travel: Travel costs must include a purpose and breakdown per trip to include destination, number of travelers, and duration.
4. Materials/Equipment: List all material/equipment items by type and kind with associated costs and advise if the costs are based on vendor quotes and/or engineering estimates; provide copies of vendor quotes and/or catalog pricing data.
5. Subrecipient costs: Submit all subrecipient proposals and analyses. Provide the method of selection used to determine the subrecipient.
6. Tuition: Provide details and verification for any tuition amounts proposed.
7. Indirect Costs: Currently the negotiated indirect rate for awards through the CESU is 17.5%.
8. Any other proposed costs: The source should be identified and verified.

d. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile

1. Biographical Sketch

2. Disclosure of Current and Pending Support:

- i. A list of all current projects the individual is working on, in addition to any future support the individual has applied to receive, regardless of the source.
- ii. Title and objectives of the other research projects.
- iii. The percentage per year to be devoted to the other projects.
- iv. The total amount of support the individual is receiving in connection to each of the other research projects or will receive if other applications are awarded.
- v. Name and address of the agencies and/or other parties supporting the other research projects.
- vi. Period of performance for the other research projects.

e. SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if award value exceeds \$100,000.00)

3. ERDC will only accept full application packages submitted on or before 7 June 2024, 12 noon Central Time (CT).

4. Submission Instructions

Choose **ONE** of the following submission methods:

a. E-mail:

Format all documents to print on Letter (8 ½ x 11”) paper. E-mail proposal to Kisha M. Craig, [Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil).

b. Grants.gov: <https://www.grants.gov/>:

Applicants are not required to submit proposals through Grants.gov. However, if applications are submitted via the internet, applicants are responsible for ensuring that their Grants.gov proposal submission is received in its entirety.

All applicants choosing to use Grants.gov to submit proposals must be registered and have an account with Grants.gov. It may take up to three weeks to complete Grants.gov registration. For more information on registration, go to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html>.

Organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and active System for Award Management (SAM) registration to apply for Federal financial assistance.

C. Application Withdrawal:

An applicant may withdraw an application at any time before award by written notice via email. Notice of withdrawal shall be sent to the agency point of contact identified in this announcement and are effective upon receipt.

## D. Funding Restrictions

Per 2 CFR § 200.216, funds may not be used to procure telecommunications equipment or video surveillance services or equipment produced by

- Huawei Technologies Company,
- ZTE Corporation Hytera Communications Corporation,
- Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company,
- Dahua Technology Company
- any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities

Funds from an award may not be used to attain fee or profit.

## V. Application Review Information

### A. Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria, listed in descending order of importance:

- Technical merits of the proposed research and development; and
- Potential relationship of the proposed research and development to Department of Defense missions
- Any other criteria

### B. Review and Selection Process:

Each application will be reviewed based on the selection criteria above rather than against other applications submitted under this Announcement.

Based on the Peer or Scientific Review, proposals will be categorized as Selectable or Not Selectable (see definitions below). The selection of the source for award will be based on the Peer or Scientific Review, as well as importance to agency programs and funding availability.

- i. Selectable: Proposals are recommended for acceptance if sufficient funding is available.
- ii. Not Selectable: Even if sufficient funding existed, the proposal should not be funded.

Note: The Government reserves the right to award some, all, or none of proposals. When the Government elects to award only a part of a proposal, the selected part may be categorized as Selectable, though the proposal as a whole may not merit such a categorization.

In addition to the technical/program review, the DoD performs a budget review and a risk review as directed by 2 CFR 200.206, including a review of the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). Applicants may review information in FAPIIS and comment on any information entered into that system. Comments made by applicants will be taken into account in addition to other information in considering

applicants' integrity, business ethics, and record of performance.

## VI. Federal Award Administration Information

The notification e-mail regarding a selection is not authorization to commit or expend DoD funds. A DoD grants officer is the only person authorized to obligate and approve the use of federal funds. This authorization is in the form of a signed Notice of Award. Applicants whose applications are recommended will be contacted by a DoD grants officer to discuss any additional information required for award. This may include representations and certifications, revised budgets or budget explanations, or other information as applicable to the proposed award. The award start date will be determined at this time.

## VII. Reporting Requirements

The terms and conditions of the award will provide the specifics on how to submit the reports and any required sections for those reports.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.328 (Financial Reporting) and 2 CFR 200.329 (Program Performance)

Report	Requirements/Form	Frequency	Means of Submission
ERDC Progress Report	Progress during the period covered by the corresponding SF 270 via email submission	Upon submission of the SF 270	E-mail
Research Performance Progress Reports (Interim and Final)	OMB Control Number: 0704-0527	Annually	E-mail
Financial Report	SF 425	Bi-annually	E-mail
Payment Report	SF 270	Monthly	E-mail
Closeout Report	See OAR Article VI of DoD R&D General Terms and Conditions	Once	E-mail

Awardees will need to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR 170: Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information.

The terms and conditions of the award will provide the specifics on how to submit the reports and any required sections for those reports.

## VIII. Federal Contacts

Questions should be directed to:

Kisha M. Craig  
Grants Specialist

[Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kisha.M.Craig@usace.army.mil)

Timothy D. Black  
Grants Officer

[Timothy.D.Black@usace.army.mil](mailto:Timothy.D.Black@usace.army.mil)

Questions regarding Grants.gov should be directed to: the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).

## **IX. Other Information**

The Federal government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of the announcement. Only grants officers can bind the Federal government to the expenditure of fund.

Applicants are advised to monitor Grants.gov for potential amendments to this Notice of Funding Opportunity. You can also elect to be automatically notified by Grants.gov whenever there is a change to the opportunity.

Applications must not include any information that has been identified as classified national security information under authorities established in Executive Order 12958, Classified National Security Information.