

Notice of Funding Opportunity
State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
Fish and Wildlife

New Jersey Skylands Region
Timber Rattlesnake and Eastern Copperhead Grant:

Eastern Copperhead Survey Technique Development and Assessment

FAQs:

- 1) Can radio-telemetry be used to conduct research and obtain the data necessary to inform the technique and finalize the end-product?

Answer: Yes. Radio-telemetry can be conducted to gather data used to inform the proposed technique and/or to test the technique developed. However, doing so in our central montane region may be difficult due to the limited population information and potential land access constraints. In the northern montane region, study snakes used in the Rutgers University study could be transferred to the Grantee in approximately May-June 2025. Radio-telemetry cannot be a part of the final technique the NJ DEP would provide to land-use permit applicants required to identify copperhead critical habitat features as part of their permit application process.

- 2) Regarding indirect costs, the application guidelines state that indirect costs are unlikely to be funded as part of the grant. However, academic institutions often require funding for indirect costs to route grants and contracts through the institutions to generate student support, purchase requisitions, etc. Typically, academic institutions do not allow personnel to route contracts unless indirect costs are funded. The percentage often can be negotiated lower than the institutional full rate if the funder states what the maximum allowable indirect rate is. It can be helpful for Principal Investigators negotiating this process if the funding opportunity states the maximum allowable rate that can be put into the budget. Is there a way NJ Fish and Wildlife could clarify what the maximum allowable indirect rate would be for this grant?

Answer: The maximum allowable indirect rate NJ Fish and Wildlife is willing to fund is 10%.

- 3) Is there an overall page limit associated with the final application document, or limits for specific sections?

Answer: A maximum of ten (10) pages is requested to adequately present the necessary information for sections 4.5.2 through 4.5.11, excluding supporting documentation (e.g.,

resumes, CVs, publications, etc.). There is no limit on supporting documents, but please only submit information relevant to your proposal and applicable experience. A maximum of two (2) pages is requested for section 4.5.12 (Budget).

- 4) Are there any plans to solicit shorter "pre-proposals" from potential applicants to weed out ideas that would not likely be funded?

Answer: No, there are no plans to request pre-proposals.

- 5) We are aware of the on-going radio-telemetry study on Eastern Copperheads being conducted by Rutgers University. Is it possible for grant applicants to obtain and review these data prior to application submittal in order better shape research study plans?

Answer: No. Due to the sensitive nature of the data, NJ Fish and Wildlife, Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) will not make data available to prospective applicants prior to or upon application submittal. Applicable data access will only be provided to the awarded Grantee(s) as needed through (a) Data Sharing Agreement(s).

- 6) How many telemetry-confirmed Copperhead hibernacula and gestation sites are documented in the ENSP database that we could use?

Answer: This information has been summarized by region (northern- vs. central-montane) in Appendix A of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

- 7) How accurate are the locational coordinates for these Copperhead hibernacula and gestation sites?

Answer: GPS accuracy was reported by the observers as ranging from 1 – 30-ft for these sites. In ENSP's Biotics database, these sites would be deemed "High" accuracy (i.e., within 6-50-m of the reported location). However, please see question # 9 regarding access and the current research teams' potential field assistance.

- 8) How many of these sites are in the northern montane portion of the state and how many are in the central montane area of New Jersey?

Answer: This information has been summarized by region (northern- vs. central-montane) in Appendix A of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

- 9) Are there at least 2-4 sites in each of the potential study areas that have extensive enough publicly owned land (or permissible private holdings) with suitable accessibility to perform intensive field work?

Answer: Please see the currently available data in Appendix A of the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Depending on whether you seek points and/or polygons of these sensitive

areas will affect the number of sites you may wish to apply to your study. All telemetry-confirmed dens and gestation sites are on conserved lands (state or county).

- Access to state lands will require permits from the NJ DEP's State Parks, Forests, and Historic Sites (SPFHS) and NJ Fish and Wildlife. Neither requires a fee.
- To ease access for field personnel, Grantees may wish to obtain authorization from energy companies. The ENSP does not anticipate this being a problem based on past experience.
- Northern montane region: All but one (1) telemetry-confirmed den and all telemetry-confirmed gestation sites are within the Rutgers University study area (*see section 5.4 of grant notice*). As such, access to these sites prior to approximately June 2025 would require coordination with the Rutgers University research team to avoid interference and/or disruption to their study. Through this coordination, the Rutgers' Principal Investigator would accompany the Grantee's team and provide them with the accurate extent of each critical site. The Grantee would be required to apply to a county authority for access authorization to some sites, but the ENSP has been assured access would be granted. There is no charge for the applicable county's permit for scientific research.
 - Note, access to northern montane sites will require somewhat extensive hiking (by New Jersey standards).
- Central montane region: All telemetry-confirmed sites are within the study area of a second, multi-year telemetry study that will likely continue until at least the spring of 2026. Access to these sites will require the approval of a county authority but is not guaranteed. If access is granted, the Grantee will be required to coordinate with the existing research team to avoid interference and/or disruption to their study and the Principal Investigator of the current research team would provide the Grantee's team with the accurate extent of each critical site in the field. There is no charge for the applicable county's permit for scientific research.

See sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity regarding applicable permits. The ENSP will assist in land access permit and authorization processes but is not responsible for permit fees that may arise.

10) Would vehicular access by researchers be granted to such sites if located in restricted or gated areas?

Answer: None of the currently identified dens and gestation sites are in restricted areas but may require authorization from gas/electric companies to park and/or walk along their rights-of-way for easier access. NJ Fish & Wildlife will assist in gaining such authorization and is confident such access will not be an issue. However, as stated in our response to question # 9, sites in the northern montane region are not near roads and as such, will require somewhat extensive hiking to reach them. Sites within the central montane also require hiking to access them, but less so than the north.

11) Are there minimum experience requirements for surveyors and/or field technicians?

Answer: The only eligibility requirements are outlined in section 4.3 (Eligibility Requirements) of the grant notice. Per section 4.5.5 (Personnel information), applicants will provide information pertaining to the entire team's relevant experience for their assigned job responsibilities. Experience will be assessed as part of the scoring criteria (Appendix C).