

**From:** Zachary Darnell  
**Subject:** Ph.D. Assistantship- Use of turtlegrass beds as habitat by nekton across the Gulf of Mexico

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We seek a highly motivated student to fill a funded Ph.D. assistantship at The University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs, MS. The selected student will be co-advised by Dr. Kelly M. Darnell ([https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A\\_\\_gcr1.usm.edu\\_cv\\_darnell.kelly\\_cv.darnell.kelly.php&d=DwIFAw&c=Ngd-ta5yRYsqeUsEDgxhcqsYYY1Xs5ogLxWPA\\_2Wlc4&r=e2OJ1azRFn8ihJzb2HxZT0AqoiqLvxfeeTyN59ZLoI&m=UIOkXbVGZG466ISs32ksmaF-kdHHhdyzodpgEllnv4o&s=UhG7uMrWPNRHpUAWsyRahNYSWau9qv0X2UoGMdwogBA&e=](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__gcr1.usm.edu_cv_darnell.kelly_cv.darnell.kelly.php&d=DwIFAw&c=Ngd-ta5yRYsqeUsEDgxhcqsYYY1Xs5ogLxWPA_2Wlc4&r=e2OJ1azRFn8ihJzb2HxZT0AqoiqLvxfeeTyN59ZLoI&m=UIOkXbVGZG466ISs32ksmaF-kdHHhdyzodpgEllnv4o&s=UhG7uMrWPNRHpUAWsyRahNYSWau9qv0X2UoGMdwogBA&e=)) and Dr. M. Zachary Darnell ([https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A\\_\\_sites.usm.edu\\_zdarnell\\_&d=DwIFAw&c=Ngd-ta5yRYsqeUsEDgxhcqsYYY1Xs5ogLxWPA\\_2Wlc4&r=e2OJ1azRFn8ihJzb2HxZT0AqoiqLvxfeeTyN59ZLoI&m=UIOkXbVGZG466ISs32ksmaF-kdHHhdyzodpgEllnv4o&s=0t5z42MNH5Nn2TsHe1pJXplhCH6O7IL-uTzHLI3UX60&e=](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__sites.usm.edu_zdarnell_&d=DwIFAw&c=Ngd-ta5yRYsqeUsEDgxhcqsYYY1Xs5ogLxWPA_2Wlc4&r=e2OJ1azRFn8ihJzb2HxZT0AqoiqLvxfeeTyN59ZLoI&m=UIOkXbVGZG466ISs32ksmaF-kdHHhdyzodpgEllnv4o&s=0t5z42MNH5Nn2TsHe1pJXplhCH6O7IL-uTzHLI3UX60&e=)).

The overarching goal of this project is to conduct a management-driven, Gulf of Mexico-wide assessment of the use of turtlegrass as habitat by nekton and to evaluate the support provided to blue crabs, a commercially valuable species, using habitat-specific production estimates. This project will involve substantial field sampling and laboratory sample processing. Experience working in seagrass beds is preferred, but not required. This is a collaborative project with researchers at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, the University of Florida, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The student will work closely with personnel from these institutions.

The student selected for this assistantship will pursue a Ph.D. in the Division of Coastal Sciences within the School of Ocean Science and Technology. This assistantship will begin in August 2017, and includes tuition and a stipend of \$23,400 per year (increasing to \$24,000 per year after achieving candidacy). The student selected for the assistantship will be a fully integrated member of the project team and will contribute to study design, collection and analysis of data, and manuscript preparation. Applicants with an M.S. degree are preferred.

The Division of Coastal Sciences is a research and graduate education unit within the School of Ocean Science and Technology, offering programs leading to the Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Science degrees. The Division is located at Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (Ocean Springs, MS), a marine laboratory featuring comprehensive basic and applied research programs in coastal and marine biological sciences. Research program support includes state-of-the-art laboratory facilities and instrumentation; a fleet of small and large research vessels, including the R/V Point Sur; the GCRL Museum collection; the Center for Fisheries Research and Development; NSF I/UCRC Science Center for Marine Fisheries, and aquaculture facilities including the Thad Cochran Marine Aquaculture Center.

Interested students should contact Dr. Kelly Darnell ([kelly.darnell@usm.edu](mailto:kelly.darnell@usm.edu)). Please include a copy of your CV (including GRE scores), unofficial undergraduate and graduate transcripts, and contact information for three professional references. For full consideration, submit all materials prior to April 15.