

**PROCUREMENT JUSTIFICATION FORM (PJF)**

This form must accompany all contract requests and sole source requisitions (RQS) over \$5,000 submitted to the Division of Procurement Services.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please provide the requested information in the white spaces below. All responses (except signatures) must be typed; no hand-written forms will be accepted. See the guidance document posted with this form on the Division of Procurement Services intranet site (Forms page) for additional instructions.

PART I: OVERVIEW			
Department Office/Division/Program:		Inland Fisheries and Wildlife/Wildlife Resource Assessment Section	
Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator:		Adrienne Leppold Erica Jernell, Division Secretary	
(If applicable) Department Reference #:		N/A	
Amount: (Contract/Amendment/Grant)	\$ 27,400	Advantage CT / RQS #:	20221222000000001739
CONTRACT	Proposed Start Date:	1/1/2023	Proposed End Date: 12/31/2023
AMENDMENT	Original Start Date:		Effective Date:
	Previous End Date:		New End Date:
GRANT	Project Start Date:		Grant Start Date:
	Project End Date:		Grant End Date:
Vendor/Provider/Grantee Name, City, State:		Maine Audubon 20 Gilsland Farm Road, Falmouth, Maine 04105	
Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant:		The provider will be responsible for overseeing and coordinating all volunteer outreach efforts related to the remaining Wintering Bird Atlas season and assist with quality control of data before submitting for final analysis.	

PART II: JUSTIFICATION FOR VENDOR SELECTION

Check the box below for the justification(s) that applies to this request. (Check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	A. Competitive Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	G. Grant
<input type="checkbox"/>	B. Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>	H. State Statute/Agency Directed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C. Single Source/Unique Vendor	<input type="checkbox"/>	I. Federal Agency Directed
<input type="checkbox"/>	D. Proprietary/Copyright/Patents	<input type="checkbox"/>	J. Willing and Qualified
<input type="checkbox"/>	E. Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	K. Client Choice
<input type="checkbox"/>	F. University Cooperative Project	<input type="checkbox"/>	L. Other Authorization

Please respond to ALL of the questions in the following sections.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

1. Provide a more detailed description and explain the need for the goods, services or grant to supplement the response in Part I.

State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs) provide the foundation for wildlife conservation in states and Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan identified a contemporary bird atlas as a priority "Conservation Action". More than 420 species of birds occur in Maine during some point of their annual life cycle. In addition, of the 225 species of birds that nest in Maine, 150 of them are considered Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) (MDIFW 2015). To address the Department's mission to preserve, protect, and enhance bird populations, for use and enjoyment by current and future generations, we must improve our understanding of the abundance and distribution of Maine's birds. This bird atlas project will be invaluable for collecting data using "state-of-the-art" science to inform future wildlife action plans, both for common species and SGCN.

We anticipate a Maine Breeding and Wintering Bird Atlas will reveal changes in the distribution of breeding birds from the first atlas and systematically measuring breeding bird abundances will be invaluable in guiding future species status assessments and wildlife action plans. Furthermore, there has never been a systematic statewide effort to document the distribution of wintering birds, which can vary drastically from the composition of avifauna other times of the year. Given changes across our landscape that result in the loss or alteration of habitat, the abundance data collected as part of this atlas will provide critical baseline information for evaluating population changes of Maine's birds in the future.

The success of the Maine Bird Atlas is dependent on contributed records from volunteers. Thousands of citizen scientists have been providing presence/absence data with additional ancillary information describing the breeding status of the birds in survey grid cells across the state. With one final winter survey season remaining, a dedicated coordinator will ensure retention and engagement of volunteers and success of the project. Additionally, this position will be responsible for helping with data review and quality control checks of all breeding and wintering season data (~6 million records).

2. Provide a brief justification for the selected vendor to supplement the response in Part II. Reference the RFP number, if applicable.

Maine Audubon is uniquely qualified and positioned to successfully manage volunteer data collection for the Bird Atlas. Outside of the few paid coordinator and abundance sampling staff, this project will be completely reliant on data contributions from citizen scientists. The immense need for volunteer involvement and the fact that about 90% of Maine lands are privately owned demands we collaborate with established and connected entities in the state. Maine Audubon has an established volunteer network and landowner outreach program that will be a critical component for the success of this project.

Maine Audubon's established outreach and educational program is active year-round and they have a strong history of engaging citizen science volunteers to make meaningful contributions to conservation research. For example, Maine Audubon founded the Maine Loon Project (>900 volunteers), organizes Christmas Bird Counts statewide, and has successful volunteer-based projects for monitoring amphibians, butterflies, and bats statewide. They also have a history of working collaboratively with various organizations to achieve state recovery goals for species of special concern, identify important bird areas, and assist in conservation driven research.

Additionally, Maine Audubon has experience engaging citizens and training individuals in the use of eBird, the specialized citizen science database portal being used for Maine Bird Atlas data entry. The contractor is also one of only five individuals in the state that reviews sightings for the Maine bird records committee. This experience and overall knowledge of Maine bird natural history will be invaluable for quality control of volunteer-collected data.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

The Bird Atlas is a collaborative effort involving multiple partners from across the birding community in Maine. Successful completion of the project is dependent on maintaining continuity among project partners, contractors, and MDIFW staff. This provider has been involved with the Bird Atlas since the project was initiated in 2017. They are the only provider with the requisite expertise, connections, and background to successfully coordinate volunteer data collection and assist with data review for the Bird Atlas.

3. Explain how the negotiated costs or rates are fair and reasonable; or how the funding was allocated to grantee.

The Department concluded the negotiated costs are fair and reasonable based on research into the average national salary of an outreach coordinator. Annual average salary for a comparable, full-time position would be more than \$45,000/year, plus overhead. For a part-time work contract, this is on par with the national average.

4. Describe the plan for future competition for the goods or services.

The completion of this project will be largely dependent upon volunteers. As such, the opportunity exists for the contractor to recruit additional volunteers and even other individuals from partnering agencies who could lend their time and skills on a part-time basis.

PART IV: AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) / MAINE JOBS & RECOVERY PLAN (MJRP)

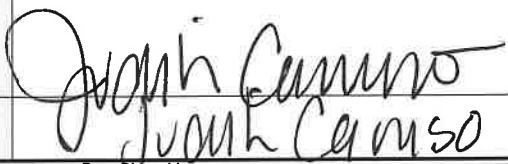
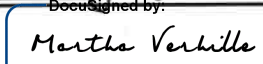
Does this request utilize ARPA/MJRP funds?

Yes – If Yes, please attach the approved Business Case(s).

No – If No, proceed to Part V.

PART V: APPROVALS

The signatures below indicate approval of this procurement request.

Signature of requesting Department's Commissioner (or designee):			Date:	12/15/22
Typed Name:	Juanh Cernuso			
Signature of DAFS Procurement Official:			Date:	12/27/2022
Typed Name:	Martha Verhille			

