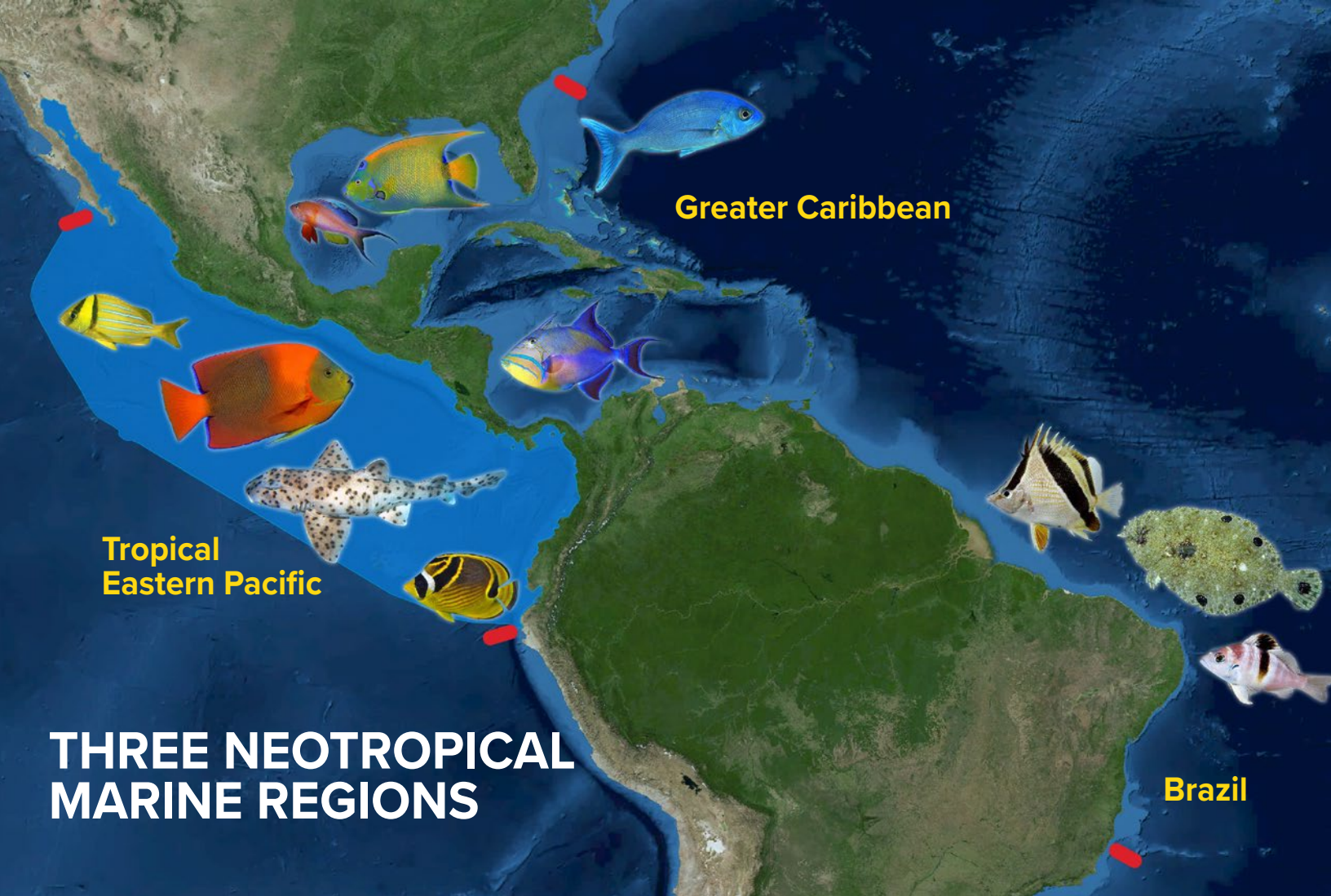


The background features a stylized illustration of a coral reef. The top half shows blue waves in various shades of light to medium blue. The bottom half is a dark blue area representing the reef, with a large, dark silhouette of a coral tree on the left and several small, dark fish swimming in the water.

**D. Ross Robertson
Fellowship
for field research
on neotropical
shore-fishes**



Smithsonian
Tropical Research Institute



THREE NEOTROPICAL MARINE REGIONS

PURPOSE

This endowment was established to support a range of fellowships for field-oriented research on the evolution, ecology, natural history and related taxonomic and systematic issues, of marine and brackish-water fishes found in nearshore, tropical, and subtropical waters of North, Central, and South America, and the Panama Canal. Fellowship proposals for collaborative research involving both Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) and the Division of Fishes of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) are encouraged. Proposals involving research on taxonomy and systematics should be placed within an ecological or evolutionary framework to complement the different research agendas of STRI and NMNH- fishes division. Activities supported by a fellowship will need to be based at STRI for at least part of the duration, emphasize field research, and may include research in neotropical countries other than Panama.

Priority will be given to proposals that indicate a high standard of research creativity and productivity

FELLOWSHIPS

- All applicants need two Smithsonian advisors, including at least one STRI staff scientist, and, if appropriate for the project, an NMNH fish curator as a co-advisor.

STIPENDS AND ALLOWANCES FOR RESEARCH, HEALTH INSURANCE AND RELOCATION

A D. Ross Robertson Fellowship provides a stipend, research/travel allowance, and a health insurance allowance plus a one-time allowance for relocation to STRI, as needed. The stipend level is reviewed each year and set at rates for comparable fellowships from US universities and the US National Science Foundation.

The research allowance provided as part of the fellowship is intended to cover, and be the sole source of STRI funding for, all reasonable research expenses needed to complete the activities described in the proposal.

→ **The 2023 fellowship is a 12 month predoctoral fellowship for a student pursuing a PhD.**

STIPEND:

\$46,000/year

RESEARCH ALLOWANCE:

up to \$25,000

TRAVEL ALLOWANCE:

A round-trip airfare to Panama

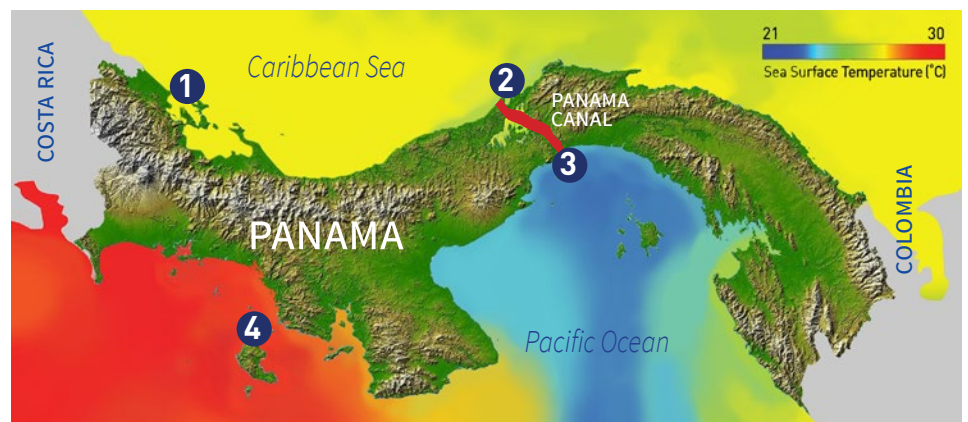
HEALTH INSURANCE:

up to \$2,500/year

MARINE RESOURCES AT STRI

STRI maintains marine laboratories on both coasts of Panama, a marine laboratory in Bocas del Toro on the western Caribbean coast; a marine laboratory at Galeta Point, near the Atlantic entrance to the Panama Canal; its largest marine laboratory at Naos Island, next to the Pacific entrance to the Canal, and a newly developing marine field station at Coibita Island, in Coiba National Park in Panama's western Pacific. It also has laboratories at Gamboa and Barro Colorado Island, at the heart of the Panama Canal. The marine labs offer a broad range of facilities, and provide support for STRI's scientific diving program.

These facilities offer access for field research in two very different marine environments that became established after the closure of the isthmus of Panama.



Sea Surface Temperature (C) during seasonal upwelling, January-April



VISIT THE FACILITIES:

- 1 Bocas del Toro Research Station
- 2 Punta Galeta Marine Lab
- 3 Naos Island Marine Lab
- 4 Coibita Island Marine Lab



OTHER RESOURCES:

- Full list of facilities
- STRI staff scientists
- National Museum of Natural History Division of Fishes
- NMNH Fishes Staff

ELIGIBILITY

STRI seeks a diversity of applicants and encourages students from institutions throughout the neotropics to apply. Awards are based upon merit, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, citizenship, age or condition of handicap of the applicant.

Applicants for predoctoral fellowships must be formally enrolled in a PhD program at a university.

→ **Appointments usually begin within a few months of an award being made, although the timing is flexible.**

For more information email the STRI Fellowships Office: STRIFellows@si.edu.



Holacanthus passer, subadult, Tropical Eastern Pacific. | Photo: D. Ross Robertson



DRR at Alacran Reef, Mexico 2019. | Photo: Carlos J Estapé.

THE DONOR OF THE FELLOWSHIP ENDOWMENT

D. Ross Robertson received a PhD in 1974 from the University of Queensland, for a study of the relationship between social organization and sex-change in a labrid fish on Australia's Great Barrier Reef. The Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization then provided a postdoctoral fellowship that allowed him to work for a year on the behavior of Caribbean reef fishes while based at STRI.

him to pursue field research on a broad variety of topics relating to the behavior, ecology, diversity, and evolution of shore-fishes in all three tropical oceans. He has never wanted to do anything else.

In appreciation of a highly rewarding and stimulating life in science at STRI, Dr. Robertson decided to give back much of what he received through his employment by creating an endowment for student fellowships to support the development of future generations of fish biologists studying similar topics in the neotropics. As he has also had a research interest in the taxonomy of neotropical reef fishes, and an appreciation of the value of that now under-supported, traditional field, such research is included among the topics to be supported by these fellowships.



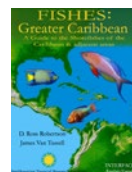
DRR with diving companions, Tobago, 2020. | Photo: Carlos J Estapé.

In 1975, he became a STRI staff scientist and continued in that capacity for 45 years. He retired in late 2020 but continues to remain active in research and fieldwork. Becoming a staff scientist at STRI was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that allowed

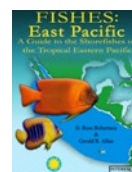
 VISIT THE FOLLOWING LINKS:



D. ROSS ROBERTSON
[STRI SCIENTIST PAGE](#)



FISHES: GREAT CARIBBEAN
[ONLINE AND MOBILE RESOURCES AVAILABLE](#)



FISHES: EAST PACIFIC
[ONLINE AND MOBILE RESOURCES AVAILABLE](#)



FELLOW APPLICATIONS

A complete application includes the following:

1. A detailed research proposal (single spaced, 12-point font) containing:
 - A **one-page project summary** that provides an overview of the proposed research, and a **separate project description** that does not exceed five pages. The project description must include objectives, hypotheses or research question(s), experimental design, and an explanation of the theoretical and/or practical significance of the research.
 - A **research budget**: Fellowships are intended to fully fund proposed research activities during the tenure of the fellowship. Proposals need to include a detailed budget covering all expenses related to the project, including equipment, supplies, research-related travel costs, and other support required to conduct the research, with individual justification for the various expenses. Applicants need to indicate amounts and sources of all non-Smithsonian financial support related to the proposed research. STRI fellows are subject to fees (see <https://stri.si.edu/fees/category-a>) that need to be included in the budget. Applicants should discuss potential research costs with STRI and NMNH sponsors before submitting an application. The budget will be carefully reviewed by STRI and is subject to agreement between STRI and the fellow.
 - A **complete timetable** with milestones and travel-date estimates so as to accomplish the research objectives according to the planned tenure.
 - A **bibliography** of publications cited in the proposal.
2. **The applicant's Curriculum Vitae**, to include education history, expertise, achievements and honors, publications, and a short description of research interests.
3. A **diversity statement** (a statement that reflects your views and experience in working to the goal of promoting a diverse, inclusive, collegial, and rigorous scientific workplace).
4. **The STRI advisor and the co-advisor** who have agreed to be advisors to the applicant.
5. **PDFs of up to three of the applicant's publications.**
6. **Letters of reference requested by an applicant** are to be sent separately by two non-Smithsonian scientists familiar with the candidate's education and accomplishments. The provider of a reference letter is responsible for uploading the letter to SOLAA, (see <https://solaa.si.edu/solaa/#/public>). Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all letters of reference are submitted by the submission deadline.

→ Incomplete or oversized applications and those received after the application deadline will not be considered.



Paraclinus barbatus, the Goatee Blenny, Roatan.
Photo: Mickey Charteris

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION

Deadline for submission: July 31, 2023.

Applicants will be informed of results within 8 weeks after that deadline.

All applications must be submitted through SOLAA, ([the Smithsonian Online Academic Appointment system](#)).

Follow these steps:

1. Go to: <https://solaa.si.edu>
2. Select "New to SOLAA? Complete the information to create an account."
3. Once you create your account and provide the information required, you can select the type of appointment. Choose as follows:
 - Program Type: "Fellowship"
 - Unit of interest: **Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute**
 - Program: STRI- D. Ross Robertson Fellowship (Program ID 3753)
 - Fill in the application questions
 - Upload the required documents
 - Request the reference letters, giving sufficient time for referees to submit them to SOLAA **before the application deadline.**