



Ecosystem Information Review and Strategy Development

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

This project aims to strengthen management outcomes by expanding the use of ecosystem information and collaborative research within the South Atlantic region. It will assess how all U.S. regional fisheries management councils utilize ecosystem data products and decision-support tools, provide comparative insights, and identify best practices and develop strategies for integration into SAFMC management processes. The project will also address practical implementation requirements, evaluate opportunities for cooperative data collection, and develop prototype ecosystem indicators tailored to regional needs. Project outcomes and recommendations will be presented in coordination with the Management Process Review.

Progress Updates

- The Project Oversight Team met in December and received updates on progress to date and report summaries.
- The project contractor participated in the SAFMC Ecosystem Data Workshop in Jan./Feb. 2026, including a presentation of Ecosystem Information Use Across All Regional Fisheries Management Councils.
- A revised All Councils Ecosystem Data Products and Approaches was submitted in Jan.
- Next steps are initiation of data acquisition for the development of prototype ecosystem indicators, which will be presented, along with a draft report on pathways for integrating ecosystem indicators, to the SSC in April.

Project Team

Contractor: Sarah Gaichas

Oversight Team: Myra Brouwer, John Hadley, Michelle Walsh (NOAA SERO), Michelle Bachman (NEFMC), Kiley Dancy (MAFMC), Verena Wang (Gulf Council), Chip Collier, Lara Klibansky

Project Timeline

2025

- ✓ **Jun** - Request for proposals released.
- ✓ **Jul/Aug** - Proposals reviewed and contractor selected
- ✓ **Aug** - Project Oversight Team formed. Begin Council document and literature review.
- ✓ **Sept** - Begin quarterly Project Oversight Team meetings; begin summary of Council approaches
- ✓ **Oct** - Interim Report on all Council data products and approaches to POT for feedback and revision

2026

- ✓ **Jan** - Draft Report on all Council data products and approaches
- ✓ **Jan/Feb** - Participation in Ecosystem Data Gaps Workshop
- Apr** - Draft Report on Pathways for Integrating Ecosystem Information/ Prototype Ocean Indicators to SSC
- Jul** - Final Report completed and outcomes shared with Management Review Process project team
- Sept** - Presentation of all project results to Council

2027

Implementation begins with the Council reviewing and considering the approval of project outcomes and recommendations.