

SAFMC EM/ER Proposal for developing an application for fishermen to provide discard information for Scamp.

Executive Summary/Overview:

This project will develop an electronic reporting application to collect fishery dependent information on discards, thus applying new technique to address a critical data need. The application will focus collecting data on scamp as a pilot, and details on discarded fish and fishing practices will be used to inform the SEDAR stock assessment of scamp planned for 2018. Outcomes of the project will be evaluated for determining if this approach can provide reliable and useful discard information for other stocks. During the first year, the application and database will be developed and data collection initiated. During the second year, data collection will be continued, the approach will be evaluated, and data provided for use in the stock assessment.

Improving information on discarded fish and the practices associated with discarding is a commonly identified assessment research need, and a priority research need for the South Atlantic Council, because reliable discard characterization information for many species managed by the South Atlantic Council is not available. The need for improved data has led the South Atlantic Council to pursue alternative data collection methods, in particular Citizen Science, as a way to increase fishermen's involvement in data collection. Collecting mortality and characterization information on discarded fish is a top priority to both fishermen and the Council due to the difficulty in efficiently sampling such fish by conventional methods. Fishermen in commercial and recreational sectors will be encouraged to use the tool to provide information on discard characteristics and fishing methods. Benefits of a mobile application include faster availability of information, increased confidence and buy-in for the information by fishermen, and an opportunity to foster collaboration with constituents.