SAFMC Citizen Science Projects Advisory Committee
Webinar Meeting Summary
10/3/2019

Welcome and Meeting Overview

- Staff gave a short welcome and Committee members introduced themselves to one another
- Since this was the first meeting of the Citizen Science (CitSci) Projects Advisory Committee, staff provided a brief overview of the role of this group
    - Meet via webinar 1-2 times per year
    - Primary tasks include: identifying citizen science research and data needs across all FMPs; assist with developing volunteer engagement strategies; serve as outreach ambassadors for the Program
- Staff reviewed the webinar goals:
    - Review and update current citizen science research priorities, as appropriate
    - Identify additional research and data needs across Council FMPs that could be addressed through citizen science
- Staff provided a brief overview and background of the Councils Citizen Science Program

Citizen Science Research Prioritization Process

- Process was developed by the Citizen Science Actions Teams; this will be the first time the CitSci research priorities will be updated – so feedback on the process is welcomed
- CitSci research priorities will be updated every two years in conjunction when the SAFMC updates their overall Research & Monitoring (R & M) Plan
- Process Overview
    - Step 1: Staff review and provide input on SAFMC's Overall Research & Monitoring Plan – this occurs every two years; input informed by SSC, APs, SEDARs, etc.; SAFMC members review and finalize R & M plan (typically occurs at June or Sept Council meeting)
    - Step 2: Citizen Science Projects Advisory Committee and Operations Committee review and recommend updates to the Citizen Science Research Priorities; input informed by newly approved R & M plan, issues discussed at APs, insights from Committee members; feedback from both groups incorporated into updated CitSci Research Priorities draft document
    - Step 3: SAFMC reviews and considers the updated CitSci Research priorities for adoption (typically at December Council meeting)
    - Additional step (to be developed): would like to build an online 'CitSci Project Portal' where members of the public could submit potential project ideas; these ideas would be shared with CitSci Projects Advisory and Operations Committees to consider when they recommend updates to the CitSci research priorities

Feedback on Current CitSci Research Priorities

- Staff walked through current research priorities with examples of potential projects under each priority topic; Committee discussed and provided feedback on each of the current priorities; brief summary of the feedback provided for each priority is summarized below

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Age Sampling***
    - **Support keeping as a research priority**
    - May be difficult/take too much time for commercial fishermen to do in conjunction with normal fishing activities
    - Could have two-pronged approach
        - For-hire – may be reasonable to have capt/mates collect otoliths when cleaning fish at the end of trips; process to collect and send data to age labs would need to be easy and streamlined; may make more feasible if scheduled days to do this?
        - Private recreational (PR) – CitSci volunteer port samplers; train invested group of volunteers to remove otoliths/collect data; could be stationed at fish cleaning stations/marinas/landings, etc.; would need to consider sampling strategy (where/when/what species to collect)
    - Carcass collection programs may be logistically easier for age sampling than removal on site

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Maturity Sampling***
    - **Support keeping as a research priority**
    - Commercial – could likely collect gonad samples during regular fishing activities; storage may be an issue if gonads couldn't be stored on ice for multi-day trips; if storing on ice is an issue, photos may be feasible
    - PR – consider more difficult to collect than age data; likely better to do with a biologist
    - For-hire - feasible to do this if have specified day to collect data (once per week could be feasible; more than that would be challenging); carcasses could be stored in cooler for work up the next day; this would help make process more efficient
    - Could potentially have state by state volunteer teams; dedicated group of volunteers trained by biologists to collect data/bio samples (similar to tagging programs)
    - Need to prioritize collection of bio samples/data so doesn't take too much time

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Discard Information***
    - **Support keeping as a research priority**
    - Commercial – would be difficult to do for every released fish on a trip especially when fish are biting; sub-sampling would make more manageable – would need to think about sampling design; would be a lot to ask for commercial fishermen to report through the discard logbook program and asked to do via a citsci project
    - Collecting a photo of released fish may be difficult; the rest of the data needed are feasible to collect, but may be hard to do while actively fishing; easier to write on paper/gunnel/etc. and then enter into app post fishing
    - PR – the simpler the data collection tool, the better

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Genetic Sampling***
    - **Support keeping as a research priority**
    - Easier to collect if two people available to sample (for fish to be released); data could potentially be collected from harvested and released fish

- Coordination/submission of samples/data needs to be easy and streamlined
- Important to pilot with select volunteers to see how it would work, gauge feasibility, and develop streamlined process

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Monitoring in Managed Areas***
  - **Support keeping as a research priority; however, some feedback suggested this may be better suited for Cooperative Research Project (CRP) than CitSci**
  - Interest from fishermen in knowing what is happening in these managed areas; so likely interest in participating in projects
  - Commercial fishermen have successfully worked with researchers to collect data in these areas in the past; however compensation likely needed to make feasible to participate in projects
  - Charter (CH) fishermen noted they may have less overhead than commercial fishermen – so compensation may be less of an issue
  - PR – this may be difficult to do with rec fishermen due to location of managed areas
  - Noted scientists may need to be involved in data collection
  - Perception of fairness could be an issue (e.g. fishermen 'chosen' to participate in projects)

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Bottom Habitat Mapping***
  - **Recommend removing from research priorities**
  - Committee felt this topic may be challenging for citsci project; may be better for CRP project?

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Fishing Infrastructure***
  - **Support keeping as a research priority**
  - Recommend adjusting data needed to include not just GPS locations of existing infrastructure, but collecting locations for infrastructure that no longer exists (e.g. closed fish houses, old commercial dock areas, etc.); a lot of fishing infrastructure has already been lost – so it would be helpful to capture this information as well
  - Committee felt collecting this information would be feasible, especially if allowed to collect over period of time in conjunction with normal activities

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Historic Fishing Photos***
  - **Support keeping as a research priority**
  - Committee felt fishermen would have a strong interest in this topic; could help fill in data gap prior to when data collection programs started
  - Many photos would be available throughout the South Atlantic region; noted libraries may be good resource to find photos
  - Fishermen may be willing to provide photos and help validate species identifications; likely better for small, targeted group of volunteers
  - Noted most CH fishermen keep daily logbooks with photos; likely would be interest from many fleets

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Fishery Oral Histories***
    - **Support keeping as a research priority**
    - Recommend adjusting data needed to include interviews with fishermen to learn about the history of the fishery as well the current state of the fishery
    - Commercial fishermen would be interested in participating; there have been a lot of changes in the fishery over time and would be good to capture this information before older fishermen are no longer around to share this information

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Oceanographic/Environmental/Weather Conditions***
    - **Support keeping as a research priority**
    - Collecting this information would be feasible during normal fishing activities and fishermen would be interested in collecting this type of data

- **CitSci Research Priority: *Rare Species Observations***
    - **Support keeping as a research priority**
    - Noted PR fishermen would especially be interested in this type of project; would need clear training/structure and outreach for project to put into context
    - May be helpful to tie into work with historic photos; could help determine if reported observations are actually rare occurrences or if are just seeing more now due to social media, etc.

Brainstorm Additional CitSci Research and Data Needs

- Committee was asked to brainstorm additional research and data needs that could potentially be addressed through citsci; there was limited time left in the webinar to brainstorm, so Committee members are encouraged to send additional ideas to Julia as needed
    - Spiny Lobster
        - Limited information available on NC spiny lobster fishery; need to determine what data are available and what data are needed for better management (sizes, discards, spawning/eggs) and see if citsci could be used to help collect needed data
            - *To start addressing: could potentially add spiny lobster under the targeted species for the Maturity and Discards CitSci Research Priorities*
        - Was noted that citsci approach could be used to collect information on stone crab, specifically info on recreational harvest
            - *Since Council doesn't manage stone crab – wonder if it may be helpful to share this idea with state of FL?*
    - Dolphin Wahoo
        - Would like to determine what data are needed for a dolphin stock assessment and see if citsci could be used to collect needed data
        - Noted that there has been discussion on whether a dolphin assessment would be appropriate for ICATT or SEDAR; need more discussion on venue for potential dolphin assessment and on what type of assessment that would be appropriate for dolphin as this will drive data needs; this is a work in progress

Next Steps for Updating CitSci Research Priorities:

- **Oct 25:** CitSci Operations Committee Meeting; will provide feedback on research priorities
- **Week of Oct 21st:** Habitat AP will meet and provide feedback on research priorities
- **Oct 30:** DRAFT Updated Cit Sci Research Priorities sent out to CitSci Projects Advisory & Operations Committees for review
- **Nov 6:** Edits on Updated CitSci Research Priorities due to Julia
- **Nov 8:** DRAFT Updated Cit Sci Research Priorities finalized for SAFMC review

Webinar Attendance:

Committee Members:	Steve Donalson, Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Jimmy Hull, Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Bob Lorenz, Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Kerry O'Malley-Marhefka, Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Jon Reynolds, Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel Justin Smith, Spiny Lobster Advisory Panel Mimi Stafford, Spiny Lobster Advisory Panel
Council Members:	Mel Bell, SCDNR
Council Staff:	Julia Byrd & John Carmichael
Other Attendees:	Erika Burgess, Bob Crimian, Patrick Findley, Rusty Hudson