

South Atlantic Research and Monitoring Prioritization Plan for 2012-2016

Introduction

The 2006 reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) directs the Federal Regional Fishery Management Councils to develop a prioritized research plan for annual submission to the Secretary of Commerce. The following research and monitoring needs for 2012-2016 were developed by the South Atlantic Council in fulfillment of that requirement.

Highlighted Issues for 2012-2016

The South Atlantic Council requests that NMFS provide, as required in the MSRA, SAFE reports including complete landings and discard information and estimates of OFL and MSY for all managed stocks by June 1 of each year for use by the Council and its SSC in setting annual specifications (including ABC, ACL, and ACT) and evaluating AMs.

The South Atlantic Council requests that obtaining accurate fishery information including increased spatial resolution for landings, discards, and effective effort remain a top priority for NOAA fisheries.

The South Atlantic Council requests that efforts continue to improve recreational fisheries data collection, with increased emphasis on improving the precision of estimates for the many stocks in the snapper-grouper complex with extremely high PSE's.

The South Atlantic Council requests adequate funding for the fishery independent monitoring program as described in the report of the joint SAFMC-SEFSC Fishery Independent Monitoring Program Workshop. The Council also requests restoration of MARMAP funding to a minimum of \$850,000 annually.

The South Atlantic Council requests increased monitoring of discarding during seasonal and area closures.

The South Atlantic Council requests that NMFS implement adequate monitoring to enable evaluating the effectiveness of South Atlantic MPAs for protecting and ensuring adequate spawning biomass of snapper grouper stocks.

The South Atlantic Council requests that NMFS provide an annual progress report detailing efforts to implement the research recommendations noted in annual Council Research and Monitoring Reports. This report should be provided by May 1 of each year for consideration as the Council develops its annual research prioritization.

SAFMC Prioritized Research Recommendations for 2012-2016

Research and monitoring priorities are recommended that will enable the SAFMC to manage the resources under its jurisdiction in a manner consistent with the requirements of the MSRA.

1. Provide regular reports to the Council on fishery, monitoring, and research status.
 - a. Provide annual SAFE Reports for all FMPs and managed stocks that include estimates of MSY and OFL, landings and discards by fishery sector, trends in abundance as provided by fishery surveys, evaluations of current management, and summarized findings of any recent research activities.

- b. Provide annual reports to the Council on implementation of research needs prioritized in this document.
 2. Implement adequate fishery and population monitoring programs by 2015.
 - a. Collect basic fishery information (landings, discards, and biological characteristics) for all managed stocks.
 - b. Collect additional biological and survey information necessary to develop age-based quantitative stock assessments for those stocks which comprise the bulk of the fishery, or serve as important ecological indicators. These are listed in Appendix 2 as primary species
 - c. Initiate comprehensive fishery monitoring and sampling to support quantitative assessments, not necessarily age-based, for all secondary species listed in Appendix 2.
 - d. Initiate monitoring programs to provide adequate stock status and fishery exploitation information on stocks characterized as "Special Needs" (See Appendix 2)
 3. Resolve data collection and dissemination issues that burden constituents, create availability delays, and impede access by the Council and its technical bodies to the information required for adequate management by 2015.
 - a. Fully implement the data collection standards developed through ACCSP and ensure all data are provided to ACCSP in a timely basis.
 - b. Resolve data confidentiality issues that prevent dissemination of basic landings information to the SAFMC and its SSC.
 - c. Eliminate duplicative data collection programs and adopt electronic reporting.
 4. Evaluate the effectiveness of current MPAs and other closed areas with regard to preventing overfishing and restoring overfished stocks, and provide a full report on findings to the Council by March 1, 2015.
 5. Implement a monitoring and research program to address issues relevant to ecosystem management. Topics include trophic interactions, food preferences, predator-prey relationships, and ecosystem connectivity.
 6. Evaluate the cumulative impacts of existing regulations on the multi-species snapper grouper fishery in the South Atlantic.

Appendix 1. SAFMC Recommended Fishery Monitoring Framework

1. Basic fishery data required for managed species

The following information is required for all managed fisheries and stocks:

- Complete catch and bycatch reporting by species
- Per unit (ie, tow, set, site, deployment, depending on the nature of the fishery) information from for-hire and commercial fisheries collected through onboard electronic logbooks linked to GPS
- Representative biological sampling of catches
- Representative sampling of bycatch and discards
- License id information for all participants and vessels linked to trip and set reports
- Global participant frame provided through licensing of all participants
- Desired location elements include latitude, longitude, and depth

1. Shrimp Trawl Fishery

Per tow: duration, location, trawl details, catch estimate, discard estimate

Per trip: landings by species, trip costs, price paid per lb, # crew

Supplement: 5% observer coverage for discard, 20% coverage for detailed social & economic reporting.

2. Finfish Trap Fisheries

Per trap/string: duration, location, trap details, catch estimate, discard count

Per trip: landings by species, trip costs, price paid per lb, # crew

Supplement: 2% observer coverage for discard, 10 % video discard coverage, 20% coverage for detailed social & economic reporting.

3. Dive or Spear Fisheries

Per dive: duration, location, gear details, # divers, catch estimate

Per trip: landings by species, trip costs, price paid per lb, # crew

Supplements: 20% coverage for detailed social & economic reporting.

4. Handline Fisheries

Per set/site: duration, location, gear details, catch estimate, discard count

Per trip: landings by species, trip costs, price paid per lb, # crew

Supplement: 5% observer coverage for discard, 10% video discard coverage, 20% coverage for detailed social & economic reporting.

5. Deepwater Longline Fishery

Per set/deployment: duration, location, gear details, catch estimate, discard count

Per trip: landings by species, trip costs, price paid per lb, # crew

Supplement: 5% observer coverage for discard, 10% video discard coverage, 20% coverage for detailed social & economic reporting.

6. Pelagic Longline Fishery

Per set/deployment: soak, location, gear details, catch estimate, discard count

Per trip: landings by species, trip costs, price paid per lb, # crew

Supplement: 5% observer coverage for discard, 10% video discard coverage, 20% coverage for detailed social & economic reporting.

7. Bottom Longline

Per set/deployment: soak, location, gear details, catch estimate, discard count

Per trip: landings by species, duration, trip costs, price paid per lb, # crew,

Supplement: 5% observer coverage for discard, 10% video discard coverage, 20% coverage for detailed social & economic reporting.

8. Private Recreational

Per trip: mode, location, gear details, duration, landings by species, discard by species, expenditures,

Per Year: # trips by mode, location

Supplement: Voluntary logbook for discard characteristics (e.g., size and reason for discarding), 20% coverage for detailed social & economic reporting.

9. Headboat Recreational

Per set/site: location, duration, catch & discard estimate by species

Per Trip: # anglers, # lines, duration, landings by species

Supplement: 5% observer coverage for discard characteristics. Voluntary logbook for discard (size), 20% coverage for detailed social & economic reporting of owner/operators. 20% coverage for social & economic evaluations of participants.

10. Party/Charter Recreational Fishery

Per trip: mode, location, gear details, duration, catch & discard by species

Supplement: 5% observer coverage for discard characteristics. Voluntary logbook for discard (size), 20% coverage for detailed social & economic reporting of owner/operators. 20% coverage for social & economic evaluations of participants.

Appendix 2. Priority Stocks

SAFMC Primary Data Collection Species:

vermilion snapper	white grunt
red snapper	yellowtail snapper
snowy grouper	gray triggerfish
tilefish	mutton snapper
red grouper	red porgy
black grouper	dolphin
scamp	king mackerel
black sea bass	Spanish mackerel
gag grouper	golden crab
greater amberjack	

Expanded Data Elements for Primary Species:

- Representative sampling, adequate to support quantitative age-based stock assessments, by season, fishery, and area, of length, age, sex, and weight for landed & discarded fish
- Fishery-dependent survey derived measures of population abundance.
- Timely and up-to-date life history research: rates of growth, mortality, maturity, fecundity; movements, migrations, and stock structure evaluations

SAFMC Secondary Data Collection Species

blue runner	lane snapper
Goliath grouper	banded rudderfish
tomtate	rock hind
knobbed porgy	red hind
bar jack	wahoo
almaco jack	Paeneid shrimp

Additional Data Elements for Secondary species:

- Fishery-dependent survey measures of population abundance
- Evaluation of life history traits: rates of growth, mortality, maturity, fecundity; and movements, migration, and stock structure evaluations.

SAFMC "Special Needs" Stocks

Stocks listed here include those subject to restrictive management actions or possessing biological traits that hinder monitoring and evaluation by typical catch-based approaches.

Warsaw grouper	red snapper
speckled hind	wreckfish
Goliath grouper	spiny lobster
Nassau grouper	