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THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Resilient Fisheries Update

September 2026



Resilient Fisheries Initiatives

A screenshot of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council website. The page has a dark blue header with the council's name and a "GET INVOLVED" button with social media icons. A left sidebar contains a navigation menu with items like Home, Regulations, Meetings, Fishery Management, News & Updates, About the Council, Habitat and Ecosystem, Best Fishing Practices, Citizen Science Program, Science & SEDAR, and Resilient Fisheries. A red arrow points to the "Resilient Fisheries" link. The main content area has a title "Resilient Fisheries" and a paragraph describing the initiative. To the right is a large image of the ocean under a blue sky.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council GET INVOLVED f t i y

[Home](#) / Resilient Fisheries

Resilient Fisheries

Resilient Fisheries Initiative and Projects support the development of more nimble and adaptive fisheries management processes and advice in the Southeast region by reviewing available information, identifying impactful change, and supporting the Council's implementation.

<https://safmc.net/resilient-fisheries/>

South Atlantic Resilient Fisheries Initiative

Path to Resilient Fisheries

- [East Coast Scenario Planning](#)
- [NMFS Atlantic Coast Science Coordination Workshop](#)

Collaboration and Coordination

- [East Coast Coordination Group](#)
- [Southeast Projects Coordination Group](#)
- [Project Oversight Teams](#)





Resilient Fisheries Initiatives

1 SAFMC Governance Projects: SAFMC Fishery Management Process Review and Ecosystem Information Review and Strategy Development

2 Stakeholder-Driven Adaptable Implementable Management (AIM) for Wreckfish Fishery

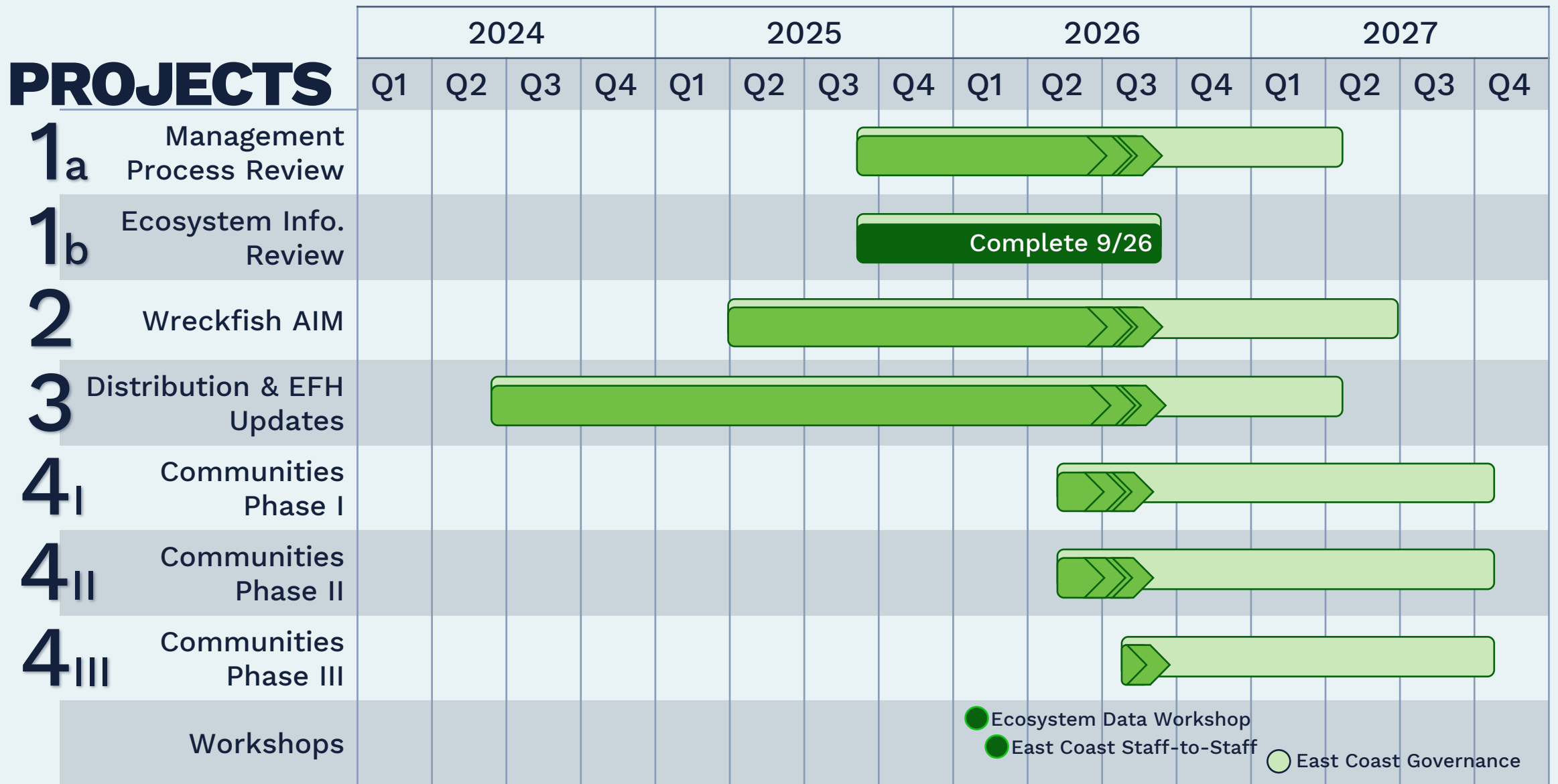
3 Updating Distributions & Essential Fish Habitat for Snapper Groupers, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Dolphin Wahoo FMUs

4 Multiphase Communities Project: Community Identification, Communication Plan Development, Ecosystem Change Impacts on Fishing Communities

WORKSHOPS

- SAFMC Ecosystem Data Workshop
- ECCG Governance Workshops (Staff-to-Staff & Broader)

PROGRESS & TIMELINES



Next Steps

Project Deliverables

- 44 Total Deliverables
- Includes presentations, workshops, final reports and others
- Project deliverables are not necessarily implementable and are not being developed in a vacuum

Workshop Outcomes

- Strategic guidance for implementation plan development
- Provide frameworks and support for collaborative items

Implementation Planning

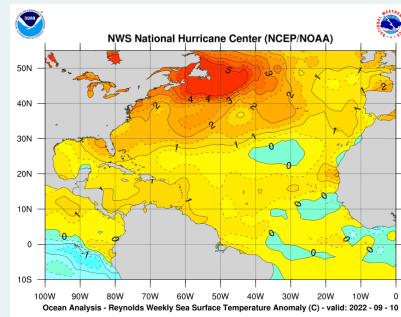
- Currently developing a portfolio of all implementable outcomes
- ~ 20 so far, but list will grow
- Portfolio considerations:
 - Resource needs – including Council staff time
 - Expected timeframes
 - Balancing new with existing priorities

Initial draft Implementation Plan coming in December

SAFMC Ecosystem Data Workshop

Workshop Context

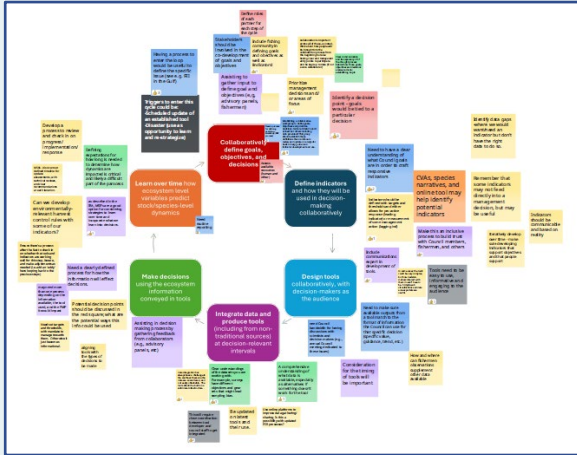
- Organized to address recommendations from:
 - [Atlantic Coast Science Coordination Workshop](#) (2021)
 - [East Coast Scenario Planning](#) (2021-2023)
- Collaboration with regional partners was a priority
- Guidance will inform implementation of IRA project outcomes and more!



SAFMC Ecosystem Data Workshop

Workshop Outcomes

- [Ecosystem Data Workshop Report](#)
- System-Level Observations and a Collaborative, Strategic Cycle
- Guidance for Advancing Ecosystem Data Integration



- 1 Clearly define goals, objectives, decisions, and roles
- 2 Build on existing processes
- 3 Collaborate within and across regions
- 4 Strategically design indicators and tools
- 5 Build trust in indicators and tools
- 6 Enhance use of promising tools



East Coast Governance Workshops

Context

- ECCG organized-workshops in support of continuing governance project collaboration by the NEFMC, MAFMC, and SAFMC, and with support of ASMFC and NOAA Fisheries.
- Organized to address potential action items from the East Coast Climate Scenario Planning
- Foster implementation of joint or cooperative management changes by each Council.

Relevant Council IRA Projects

NEFMC	MAFMC	SAFMC
IRA 4: Operationalizing the East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Initiative	IRA 3: Operationalizing outcomes of MAFMC program review	IRA 1a: Fishery Management Process Review: Enhancing Responsiveness for Dynamic Ecosystems
IRA 5: Holistic Strategic Plan for Climate Resilient Management	Connection to IRA 7: Developing a process and indicators to evaluate stock distribution changes and governance issues	IRA 1b: Ecosystem Information Review and Strategy Development



East Coast Governance Workshops

Timeline

Gather Information 2025/Early 2026

Councils work in parallel to document existing advisory body and joint management processes

Ongoing

Develop Initial Ideas February 2026

Staff-to-staff workshop to discuss staff perspectives on current structures and processes; brainstorm improvements

Complete

Refine and Evaluate February 2027

Broader governance workshop with additional Council/Commission/N OAA Participants → develop recommendations

Implement 2027

Bodies consider recommendations; Leadership planning exercise with ECCG+; Regional Operating Agreements Workshop



Staff-to-Staff Workshop

Details

Charleston, SC
Feb. 25-26, 2026

Organized by the ECGG



Steering Committee

Michelle Bachman (NEFMC), Kiley Dancy (MAFMC), Lara Klibansky (SAFMC), Chelsea Tuohy (ASMFC)

Facilitators

Kim Gordon, Resource Logic & Deirdre Boelke, FIN

SAFMC Participants

Myra Brouwer, John Hadley, Christina Curtis, Lara Klibansky

Workshop Purpose

To facilitate discussion and information sharing around fishery governance topics and generate ideas for improving the spectrum of governance structures and processes used for East Coast fisheries.

Staff-to-Staff Workshop

Outcomes

- 75+ Ideas generated
- Emergence of recurring governance themes
- [Staff-to-Staff Governance Workshop Summary](#) – including cross-regional governance challenges/opportunities

Most Frequently Discussed Opportunities

Governance Structures	Process Improvements	Communication & Coordination
Flexible joint approaches	Clearer documentation	Earlier cross-regional coordination
Expanded representation	Defined roles / expectations	Better information sharing
Targeted joint groups (sub-committees)	Streamlined workflows	Priority-setting alignment
	Improved onboarding	Stronger liaison support
		Consider greater consistency in how Committees are used



East Coast Governance Workshops

Timeline



East Coast Governance Workshop

Details



Boston, MA

Feb. 22-24, 2027

Organized by the ECGG



Steering Committee

Michelle Bachman (NEFMC), Kiley Dancy (MAFMC), Lara Klibansky (SAFMC), Chelsea Tuohy (ASMFC), Travis Ford (GARFO), Karla Gore (SERO)

Facilitators

Deirdre Boelke (FIN) and Michelle Duval (Mellivora Consulting)

SAFMC Participants

Jessica McCawley, Kerry Marhefka, Dewey Hemilright, Tom Roller, Walter Bublely, John Carmichael, Chip Collier, Lara Klibansky

Workshop Purpose

Identify opportunities to strengthen cross-jurisdictional governance in response to changing species distributions, evolving fisheries, and increasing management complexity.



East Coast Governance Workshop

Status

Workshop Steering Committee

- Meet regularly with Facilitation Team
- Reviewing Staff-to-Staff Outcomes
- Monitoring Governance Projects across Councils
- Drafting Workshop Objectives and Agenda
- Planning logistics – NEFMC are hosting

Next decision point

- ECCG review of draft objectives and agenda during Fall 2026 Meeting

Council Feedback

Council input will guide SAFMC Steering Committee member and leadership as we work with partner organizations to shape the Workshop focus and agenda.

Staff-to-Staff Workshop: Most Frequently Discussed Opportunities

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At a high level, which of these opportunities is the Council MOST interested in, NOT interested in, and is anything missing?