



Snapper Grouper • Coastal Migratory Pelagics • Dolphin Wahoo

Updating Distributions & Essential Fish Habitat

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

Using state-of-the-art spatiotemporal modeling techniques this project will explore indicators of non-stationarity in the spatial distribution and habitat associations for the fish and fisheries managed under the Council's Snapper-Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics and Dolphin Wahoo FMPs. The outcomes will inform more resilient fisheries management and governance, by updating descriptions of distributions and Essential Fish Habitat. This will also inform decisions during an evaluation of existing governance structures, potential changes in interjurisdictional governance and implementing more resilient and adaptive management.

Objectives

1. Develop analytical tools (i.e., state-of-the-art spatiotemporal models) to quantify and predict species distributions of reef-associated and pelagic fishes in the Southeastern United States (SEUS) by integrating disparate survey data.
2. Evaluate the relative importance of habitat features and environmental conditions in driving the spatial distributions of reef-associated and pelagic fishes in the SEUS.
3. Predict habitat areas for reef-associated and pelagic fishes in the SEUS using multiple surveys.
4. Estimate abundance indices and document changes in species distributions by evaluating multiple range shift metrics and examine their associations with changing ocean conditions.

Project Oversight Team

Contractors: Jie Cao, NCSU (Co-PI); Janet Nye, UNC IMS (Co-PI)

Oversight Team: Kathleen Howington, Myra Brouwer, Lara Klibansky, Chip Collier, Tori Kentner (MAFMC), Simen Kaalstad (ASMFC)

Project Timeline

2024

INITIATE



Oct. - Request for proposals released.



Dec. - Proposals reviewed and contractor selected.

2025

DEVELOP



Jan. - Project Oversight Team formed



Mar. - Begin quarterly Project Oversight Team meetings with contractors

2026

REVIEW

Feb. - Project Oversight Team initial model review

Oct. - SSC review of spatiotemporal models

2027

PRESENT

Feb. - Presentation to Habitat and Ecosystem AP

Mar. - Presentation to Council; Submit final report

2028

IMPLEMENT

Begin Council consideration and implementation of project outcomes & recommendations



Stakeholder-Driven AIM for Wreckfish Fishery

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

This project will apply an adaptive management technique called Adaptive Implementable Management (AIM) to guide a stakeholder-driven management development process for the South Atlantic wreckfish fishery. During this process contractors will work directly with managers and stakeholders to develop management recommendations more robust to future uncertainty. Stakeholder engagement is being prioritized throughout the AIM process. To do this, interviews and stakeholder workshops are planned throughout the project period. Using decision-support tools, the contractors will work directly with stakeholders to explore and compare various management measures and harvest control rules. The resulting recommendations will be provided to the Council.

Objectives

1. Select a data-limited and climate-vulnerable fisheries species. (*Objective Complete - Wreckfish selected*)
2. Develop and apply AIM to inform catch levels and management recommendations for Wreckfish fishery.
 - a. Assess the health, potential, and uncertainties surrounding the chosen stock; and
 - b. Facilitate a stakeholder-driven management strategy process using decision-support tools and innovative engagement among stakeholders, scientists, and managers.

Project Oversight Team

Contractors: Thomas Remington, Lynker (PI); Dr. Josh Nowlis, Lynker (PI), Dr. Jeremy Collie, Dr. Mateja Nenadovic, and Brian Snouffer

Oversight Team: Mike Schmidtke, Allie Iberle, Judd Curtis, Christina Wiegand, Lara Klibansky, Chip Collier

Project Timeline

2024

INITIATE



Dec - Request for proposals released.

2025

DEVELOP



Jan - Proposals reviewed and contractor selected



Feb - Project Oversight Team formed



Mar - Begin monthly Project Oversight Team meetings with contractors; Species selection complete, Wreckfish selected

Oct - SSC review of draft Wreckfish Assessment

Nov - AIM Workshop for Stakeholders

2026

ENGAGE

Jan - Jun - Customize AIM Harvest Control Rule Design Tool based on stakeholder feedback

Jul - Stakeholder Management Design Workshops

2027

PRESENT

Apr - SSC review of draft project report

Jun - Present to Council; Submit final report

IMPLEMENT

Begin Council consideration and implementation of project outcomes & recommendations

Under Review • Subject to Change



Improving Communication and Outreach for More Resilient Fishing Communities

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

This project is composed of four parts and would operationalize recommendations from the East Coast Scenario Planning initiative by identifying communities that interact with Council-managed species in the South Atlantic region and beyond. The purpose is to identify and engage communities where outreach has been limited in the past. This will improve the Council's understanding of constituent preferences for engagement and provide an opportunity to inform constituents about the Council process and improve their ability to become engaged. The proposed work would also describe community effects from increasing environmental uncertainty. This project is currently under review for funding.

Objectives

- 1a. Identify place-based fishing communities in the South Atlantic region, the extent of their interaction with Council managed species, and what vulnerabilities they may face due to dynamic coastal ecosystems.
- 1b. Develop an outreach assessment and communication plan for working with these fishing communities.
2. Increase awareness on opportunities for public participation through Council processes and engagement activities.
3. Using information from a modified Ecopath with Ecospace model to develop a report describing how observed changes in fish distribution may influence the social and economic benefits the commercial and recreational fishing have on coastal communities.

Project Oversight Team

Contractors: TBD

Oversight Team: Julia Byrd, Christina Wiegand, Lara Klibansky, Chip Collier, SEP representative (additional membership TBD)

Anticipated Project Timeline

2025 ► INITIATE

- Request for proposals released
- Proposals reviewed, contractor selected and work begins
- Council Staff begin work on developing Outreach Strategies
- Project Oversight Team formed; begin quarterly meetings

2026 ► DEVELOP & IMPLEMENT

- Final report on South Atlantic region fishing communities presented to Council
- Staff to conduct initial outreach trips to fishing communities
- SSC Review of modified Ecopath with Ecospace Model

2027 ► WRAP UP AND REPORT

- Final report on community involvement and communication preferences
- Final Outreach and Communication Plan presented to the Council
- Council staff wrap up outreach efforts for new communities and evaluate expansion efforts
- Final report on outcomes of impact analysis using modified Ecopath with Ecospace model



Under Review • Subject to Change

South Atlantic Management Program Review

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

This project will address the goal of improving the Council's responsiveness and adaptability to dynamic fisheries and ecosystems by evaluating and improving regulatory processes and governance structures. The contractor will review the Council's management program and identify existing challenges. They will then leverage strategies and best practices identified during similar program review initiatives conducted at other regional councils to develop recommendations for Council consideration. This project is currently under review for funding.

Objectives

1. Evaluate how ecosystem and species information product (e.g. Ecosystem Status Reports) development and availability can better support Council allocation decisions and management actions.
2. Review outcomes of other U.S. Regional Fisheries Council program reviews and identify management process efficiencies and opportunities for the SAFMC to realize program improvements that will allow the Council to act in a more expedited manner.
3. Identify opportunities to further use of cooperative, constituent-engaged data collection and research.
4. Evaluate committee structure and use: compare SAFMC committee operations with the NEFMC, MAFMC, Gulf Council and ASMFC.
5. Evaluate opportunities for the Council to build upon the existing considerations of risk in its control rule, to account for increasing environmental uncertainties.

Project Oversight Team

Contractors: TBD

Oversight Team: Myra Brouwer, John Hadley, Lara Klibansky, Chip Collier (additional membership TBD)

Anticipated Project Timeline

2025 ▶ INITIATE

- Request for proposals released.
- Proposals reviewed and contractor selected
- Project Oversight Team formed
- Begin monthly Project Oversight Team meetings with contractors

2026 ▶ PROGRAM REVIEW

Contractor will meet with POT and conducts review of Council processes and other regional council program reviews and outcomes.

2027 ▶ DEVELOP

Contractor will develop a report including recommendations for Council action.

IMPLEMENT

Contractor will present report to Council. The Council will consider approval of recommendations and directing staff to implement recommendations.