

Best Fishing Practices Campaign

Progress, Impact, and What's Next

SAFMC Meeting, September 2025



Outreach Goals and Objectives

- **Increase knowledge** of fishing methods that will improve survivorship of released snapper grouper species and related Council regulations.
- Encourage the **active use** of best fishing practices when fishing for snapper grouper species.
- **Gather information** on the utilization of descending devices and other best fishing practices via SAFMC Release and outreach activities.
- **Increase participation** in SAFMC Release and other Council activities.
- **Build and maintain** relationships with fishing communities.



Best Fishing Practices, Sea Grant, & Citizen Science Partnership



Leveraging resources & increasing reach

The Three Cs in Our Outreach

Consistency

Maintaining consistent outreach staff has strengthened relationships with stakeholders by fostering familiarity, reliability, and long-term engagement.



Capacity

FMP staff have limited time to devote to outreach; having dedicated outreach personnel ensures sustained engagement and progress toward long-term goals.



Credibility

Consistent staffing and prioritized outreach efforts have built trust with stakeholders, strengthening the credibility of our messaging and the Council across the South Atlantic.





Campaign Components

Meeting Fishermen Where They Are

- Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program
- Tackle shop outreach
- Seminars
- Industry events
- ‘What It Means to Me’ video series
- Educational materials
- Sea Grant media charter trips and seminar series



Program Accomplishments





Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program

- **215 BFP MVPs** including fishermen (recreational, commercial, and for-hire), state and federal agency staff, port samplers and observers
- **14 workshops** throughout South Atlantic region
- **Successes:** BFP MVPs post best fishing practices and Council involvement opportunities on social media, seek us out at events, participate in Citizen Science efforts, and have asked for additional outreach materials.



April 2024-June 2025



Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program

**We asked attendees what they found most useful
during the workshop. Here's what they said:**

“Ways to direct fishermen on how they can input their thoughts, not just through Council meetings.”

“How to descend fish.”

“Informing us on how the SAFMC works.”

“Release techniques and explanation of the management councils.”

“All of it. Learned so much today to pass on to others.”

“All the ways to get involved.”

“The positive face to face interaction.”

“The whole thing. I wish we could add more.”

“Talking in person to SAFMC staff.”

Dolphin Stakeholder Workshops

CALLING ALL COMMERCIAL, FOR-HIRE & RECREATIONAL DOLPHIN FISHERMEN AND INTERESTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS!

We need your input to understand what is most important to you about this fishery:

- What are your top priorities for managing dolphin?
- What do you most value in the fishery?
- What concerns do you have about the fishery?

These workshops will focus on gathering more specific information on preferences, priorities, and concerns with the dolphin fishery, in order to evaluate future management strategies.

Drinks and food will be available!

Monday, Jan 23, 2023: SCDNR, Marine Resources Research Institute, Room 145, 217 Ft. Johnson Road, Charleston, SC 29412

Tuesday, Jan 24, 2023: UNCW - Center for Marine Science, 5600 Marvin Moss Lane, Wilmington, NC 28409

Wednesday, Jan 25, 2023: Coastal Studies Institute, Room 242, 850 NC 345, Wanchese, NC 27981

Thursday, Jan 26, 2023: Brock Environmental Center, 3663 Marlin Bay Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23455

Workshops will start at 5:30 PM and end at 8:30 PM

Please RSVP to:

Cassidy Peterson, NOAA Fisheries
910-708-2686, cassidy.peterson@noaa.gov

Or online at: <https://safmc.wufoo.com/forms/q3kbewc0axi6cm/>



Photo credits: C. Rhodes, T. Frady, K. Iverson



Tackle Shop Outreach

2022-July 2025

By the numbers:

- 131 total shops visited
- 34% visited twice
- 11% visited three+ times

Shops remember us and our materials.

Fishing Seminars

- Seminar opportunities have come from events and other seminars.
- Since 2023, more fishing clubs are asking us to be the “sole presenter”.
- We have been asked to revisit clubs and shops multiple times.



'What It Means to Me'

A video project highlighting the stories of fishermen in the South Atlantic

- Not only do these fishermen explain the **value** in the Best Fishing Practices Campaign but also dive into why others need to **get involved in the Council process**.
- Over **340 views** on the first four videos.
- This project is what got us recognized and invited to the 2025 Florida Saltwater Fishing Expo in Daytona.
- We have **requests to have more videos filmed**, specifically for the 50th anniversary of the Magnuson Stevens Act.

<https://safmc.net/what-it-means-to-me-video-project/>



Fishing Expos, Industry & Agency Events

- Staff and Council logo recognized from other events such as BFP MVP.
- Events have lead to future invitations back, seminars, and to new events.
- Example: Saltwater 2024 Sportsman Seminar Series lead to a seminar at the Raleigh Saltwater Sportfishing Club, which led to a revisit, and a seminar at the Piedmont Saltwater Fishing Club.



Sea Grant Media Charter Trips

- **Hatteras, NC:** NC Coastwatch [article](#)
- **Beaufort, NC:** [Video](#) by Sci NC, presented by NC PBS
- **Key West, FL:** Keys Weekly [article](#)
- **Charleston, SC:** SC Sea Grant [article](#)
- **Charleston, SC:** Media created by Keen Eye Marketing, will be posted on Z-Man Fishing Products channels



2024 Sea Grant Reef Fish Webinar Series

Seminar Topics:

- **Reef Fish Surveying** with Dr. Walter Buble
- **South Atlantic Red Snapper Research Program** with Dr. Will Patterson
- **Greater Amberjack Count** with Dr. Sean Powers and Dr. Mark Albins

By the numbers:

- 130 unique attendees
- 8 U.S. states, 3 countries



Best Fishing Practices Evaluation Workshop

February 20th-21st, 2025





BFP Evaluation Workshop: Purpose, Goals, & Objectives

Overall Goal: Develop recommendations for executing and evaluating best fishing practices outreach efforts to incorporate into ongoing outreach campaigns and future strategic planning, such as the South Atlantic Research and Monitoring Prioritization Plan for 2025-2029.

Objective 1: Discuss the effectiveness of current outreach efforts and suggest improvements.

Objective 2: Identify gaps in knowledge and stakeholder understanding of best fishing practices.

Objective 3: Identify connection points between outreach, outreach evaluation, and the science and management process.

A photograph of a person fishing from a boat on the ocean. The person is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt with a graphic on the back, black shorts, and a black cap. They are holding a fishing rod and reel. The background is a clear blue sky and a calm blue sea.

BFP Evaluation Workshop: Priority Recommendations

- 1** Gain insight into how different recreational angler groups perceive themselves, value various species, and make trip satisfaction tradeoffs to inform outreach efforts and be designed to enhance the overall fishing experience.
- 2** A meta-analysis across a range of species and best fishing practices to understand the range of conservation benefits, including identification of high-effect, low-adoption practices.
- 3** An evaluation of the current Council outreach programs to understand program outcomes versus goals and objectives, barriers to success, and to define clear and measurable success metrics to guide future program adjustments.

A person with long brown hair tied back, wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and black shorts, is fishing from a boat. They are holding a fishing rod with a red reel. The background is a clear blue sky and a calm blue ocean. The person's shirt has a graphic on the back that says "AURELIEN".

BFP Evaluation Workshop: Priority Recommendations

- 4** Data collection on prevalence of use and knowledge of descending devices from citizen science work as well as observer coverage to validate angler submitted data and aggregation of this data across platforms.
- 5** Stock assessment simulations/sensitivities or management strategy evaluations to estimate how adoption of best fishing practices affects stock dynamics and future productivity.

Best Fishing Practices Campaign: Looking Ahead



Regarding best fishing practices: ***“People need to know about it, they need to be educated on how to do it, and how to pass it on.”*** - Chip Berry, Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel Member, ‘What It Means to Me’ November 2023

Regarding BFP MVP: ***“It was amazing to talk to all the folks, and it was really fun, and interactive, but the information exchange and the relationship building was huge. I hope that there can be continued funding in this momentum for best fishing practices, and that citizen science can continue...”*** - Amy Dukes, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council June 2024

“I think focusing on the stakeholder engagement, the education, and the why is how we're going to turn this fishery around.”
- Haley Stephens, Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel October 2024

Best Fishing Practices Campaign: Looking Ahead



- The Campaign not only educates on best fishing practices, but also how the management and science process works.
- Our outreach efforts **strengthen trust** between the Council, fishermen, and other stakeholders through **transparent communication**.

Ongoing efforts are essential to sustain progress and achieve the Campaign's long-term goals.



THANK YOU to *all* Council staff, Council members, AP members, and others who have helped make the Best Fishing Practices Campaign a success.

TO DO

Please fill out the Google Form that was sent to your email by 9/17/2025.