



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Trish Murphey, Chair | Jessica McCawley, Vice-Chair  
John Carmichael, Executive Director

## **AGENDA**

### **Full Council Session I**

North Charleston Marriott  
4770 Goer Drive  
North Charleston, SC

#### **Monday, September 15, 2025, 10:45 am to 5:30 pm**

##### **10:45 am – 11:00 am**

- Call to order and introductions
- Oath for new Council members
- Law Enforcement of the Year 2024 Award presentation
- Adoption of agenda
- Approval of minutes (June 2025)
- Litigation brief

##### **11:00 am – 12:00 noon**

1. Reports
  - a. State agencies
  - b. Staff (written report only) – *Attachment 1a*
  - c. Best Fishing Practices Initiative – (*Attachments 1b and 1c*, [recorded presentation](#))
  - d. Council Liaisons
    - i. Gulf Council (*Attachment 1d*) – Chris Schieble
    - ii. Mid-Atlantic Council (*Attachment 1e*) – Sonny Gwin
  - e. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
    - i. Southeast Regional Office (SERO) (*Attachment 1f*) – Andy Strelcheck
    - ii. Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) – Dr. Clay Porch, SEFSC

--- Lunch ---

##### **1:30 pm – 3:30 pm**

2. Executive Order (EO)14276 response (*Attachments 2a and 2b*) – Council Staff
3. Review SAFMC Research and Monitoring Plan priorities (*Attachments 3a and 3b*) – Dr. Chip Collier

--- Break ---

**3:45 pm – 5:30 pm**

4. Update on South Atlantic fishery independent surveys (*Attachment 4*) – Dr. Tracey Smart, SC Department of Natural Resources
5. Dolphin Management
  - a. Management strategy evaluation update (*Attachment 5a*) – Dr. Cassidy Peterson, SEFSC
  - b. Summary of recent research on dolphin (*Attachment 5b*) – John Hadley

**Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 8:30 am to 12:00 noon**

*Remarks from Eugenio Pineiro Soler, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Service and Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere/Deputy NOAA Administrator*

**8:30 am – 10:00 am**

6. Informational Session on State Management
  - a. Presentations
    - i. State Management of Federal Fisheries: Key authorities, roles, and considerations for program design and implementation (*Attachment 6a*) – Andy Strelcheck
    - ii. Gulf Council (*Attachment 6b*) – Dr. Carrie Simmons

**--- Break ---**

**10:15 am – 12:00 noon**

- iii. Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (*Attachment 6c*) – Jessica McCawley
    - iv. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (*Attachment 6d*) – Robert Beal
  - b. Council discussion

**Attachments:**

**Attachment 1a:** Staff report

**Attachment 1b:** Best Fishing Practices Evaluation Workshop Report

**Attachment 1c:** Best Fishing Practices Progress, Impact, and What's Next Presentation

**Attachment 1d:** Gulf Council Liaison Report

**Attachment 1e:** Mid-Atlantic Council Liaison Report

**Attachment 1f:** Protected Resources Report

**Attachment 2a:** Summary of comments on EO 14276

**Attachment 2b:** Draft SAFMC response on EO 14276

**Attachment 3a:** SAFMC Research and Monitoring Plan priorities presentation (*will be posted on 9/10*)

**Attachment 3b:** Revised SAFMC Research and Monitoring Plan (*will be posted on 9/10*)

**Attachment 4:** South Atlantic fishery independent surveys update presentation

**Attachment 5a:** Dolphin Management Strategy Evaluation update presentation (*will be posted on 9/10*)

**Attachment 5b:** Summary of recent research on dolphin

**Attachment 6a:** State Management of Federal Fisheries: Key authorities, roles, and considerations for program design and implementation

**Attachment 6b:** Gulf Council presentation (*will be posted on 9/10*)

**Attachment 6c:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission presentation (*will be posted on 9/10*)

**Attachment 6d:** Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presentation (*will be posted on 9/10*)

**Staff Lead:** John Carmichael ([john.carmichael@safmc.net](mailto:john.carmichael@safmc.net))

# **OVERVIEW**

## **Full Council Session I**

The Council will approve the minutes from the June 2025 meeting and the agenda for the September 2025 meeting.

### June 2025 Full Council 1 Summary Report

#### **1. Reports (*Attachments 1a-1f*)**

**Description:** Representatives will provide reports to the Council. Due to the limited time on the Council's September meeting agenda, Best Fishing Practices staff prepared a recorded presentation along with a survey to gather Council members' feedback on the Best Fishing Practices Campaign. **The recorded presentation can be viewed [here](#).** An email with the survey was sent to Council members on August 29<sup>th</sup> and Council staff will provide an overview of the results during the meeting on Friday, September 19th, 2025.

**Council Action:** Review the Best Fishing Practices presentation and fill out the survey sent via email.

#### **2. Executive Orders Discussion (*Attachments 2a and 2b*)**

**Description:** The Council began discussion of Executive Order 14276 at its June 2025 meeting, acknowledging the importance of gathering perspectives from the public as a part of the response process. To that end, public input was solicited on what types of management actions may achieve the goals stated in the Executive Order. Public comments were accepted via the Council's website from July 28 through August 15, 2025. In addition to soliciting public comments, the Council hosted an online meeting of its advisory panels on August 11, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to gather their feedback on the executive order.

**Council Action:** Review comments and draft response and provide guidance to staff.

#### **3. SAFMC Research and Monitoring Plan priorities (*Attachments 3a and 3b*)**

**Description:** The Council revises their research and monitoring plan every two years. The research and monitoring plan is used by the Council and NOAA Fisheries staff to identify and prioritize research needs for fisheries in the South Atlantic. These research needs are circulated to funding agencies to be included as research grant priorities and used by researchers during development of research proposals. This revised research and monitoring plan included more information than past research and monitoring plans to aid in understanding the full breadth of research and monitoring needed to conserve and manage fisheries in the region.

The research and monitoring plan was presented to the Council in June 2025. Due to limited time, it was recommended that the research and monitoring plan be sent to committee chairs for their review and to prioritize research and monitoring topics for their committee. Council staff will and highlight the recommended research and

monitoring topics (Attachment 3a) and present the 2025-2029 South Atlantic Research and Monitoring Plan for approval by the Council (Attachment 3b).

**Council Action:** Review the research and monitoring priorities and the revised plan and approve.

**4. South Atlantic fishery independent surveys update (*Attachment 4*)**

**Description:** Staff from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources will present results from the Southeast Reef Fish Survey (SERFS) and the Coastal Trawl Survey, two long-running, fishery-independent programs that collect data along the South Atlantic coast. These surveys, conducted from North Carolina to Florida between 1990 and 2024, use chevron video traps (CVTs), longlines, and trawls to monitor trends in abundance, size, and distribution of key species the Fishery Management Plans for Coastal Migratory Pelagics, Shrimp, and Snapper Grouper.

**Council Action:** None

**5. Dolphin Management (*Attachments 5a and 5b*)**

**Description:** The NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) is conducting a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for the Atlantic dolphin fishery. The goal of this project is to develop an index-based management procedure that may provide catch level and management advice that best achieves the multiple management objectives of the fishery. SEFSC staff will update the AP on progress of the Dolphin MSE and recent modeling efforts.

As part of the review of the MSE, the terms of reference (TORs) will need to be reviewed by the SSC and the Council. The SSC will review the TORs at their Fall 2025 meeting. To keep work on the MSE moving forward in a timely manner, the Council will be asked to consider a motion that would allow the Chairs of the Council and Dolphin Wahoo Committee to approve the TORs on the Council's behalf after review by the SSC and before the December 2025 Council meeting.

Additionally, the Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel (AP) noted several recent research papers that suggested a decline in the Dolphin stock and availability along the U.S. Atlantic coast. These papers included those from [Damiano et al \(2024\)](#), [Rudershausen et al \(2024\)](#), and [Runde et al \(2025\)](#). When receiving the AP report at their June 2025 meeting, the Council requested that a summary of this research be provided at the next meeting. As such, Council staff will provide a brief overview of the research papers and findings.

**Council Action:** Provide feedback on the MSE for Dolphin. Consider a motion that would allow the Chairs of the Council and Dolphin Wahoo Committee to approve the TORs on the Council's behalf upon review by the SSC.

**6. Informational session on state management (*Attachments 6a-6d*)**

**Description:** The four South Atlantic states have been discussing opportunities to increase their role in data collection for species such as Red Snapper in response to the ongoing constituent dissatisfaction with catch estimates. Additionally, there are increasing calls for greater state involvement in Red Snapper management, similar to

how the species is managed by the Gulf states. At the June 2025 SAFMC meeting the Council requested holding an informational session on joint state-federal management of Council-managed species. Presentations were requested on the federal perspective and regulatory options from the Southeast Regional Office, the Council role in implementing state-based management of Red Snapper in the Gulf by the Gulf Council, a state perspective by the Florida FWCC, and a broader Atlantic perspective by the ASMFC.

A similar session is tentatively planned for the December 2025 Council meeting to address data needs and data collection opportunities.

**Council Action:** Identify questions, concerns, and issues to be addressed if joint state-federal management of Red Snapper is considered in the South Atlantic. Identify topics and potential presenters for the December data session.