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Project: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) Citizen Science Program Initial Evaluation Plan, Phases 1 & 2

Leads: Rick Bonney, visiting scholar and retired director of the Public Engagement in Science Program, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Julia Byrd, Manager, South Atlantic Fishery Council Citizen Science Program

Phase 1: One-hour interviews with 18 members of the fishing community--six commercial/recreational fishermen; six fisheries scientists; six fisheries resource managers--to establish baseline levels of knowledge about, confidence in, and trust in the citizen science process of collecting data to inform fisheries resource management.

Interview questions prepared by Rick Bonney and Julia Byrd with input from the SAFMC Citizen Science Advisory Committee

This interview script is designed to query respondents who may vary in their length and depth of responses. As time allows in an hour-long interview, prompts are included to elicit clarifications where appropriate.

Introduction:
Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. As I explained in my email, your knowledge of the South Atlantic fisheries community will help us gather information about current knowledge, attitudes, collaborations, engagement, and trust levels of various stakeholders of the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council which can be used to evaluate the eventual impact of its developing Citizen Science Program.

Informed consent:
My email also included a document with technical details about this research. I'd like to briefly review those details to see if you have any questions or concerns before we begin. [Provide quick review]

Recording:
Do you have any concerns about this interview being recorded, solely to allow me to refer back in case I don't fully capture details in my notes? [Confirm details regarding this per consent form]

Interview Questions:

Please tell me how you fit into the fisheries community. What role or roles do you play, and how long have you been involved?
(Probe if needed: fisherman, scientist, manager, concerned member of public?)

What involvement have you had in fisheries management, including with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC)?
(Probe to find out their degree and type of involvement; Julia to provide examples of how someone might be involved to help with probing)

How do you feel about the current health of fisheries in the South Atlantic?
(Probe if needed: health of specific fish stocks; health of fishing community; health of fishing industry)

Are you familiar with the stock assessment process (e.g. SEDAR) used to assess the health of the fish populations managed by the SAFMC?
(Probe to determine their degree of understanding; Julia to provide blurb on process to help address questions)

Are you familiar with the process the SAFMC uses to recommend management decisions?
(Julia to provide blurb on process to help address questions)

Do you think that the data currently available are sufficient to support fisheries management decisions?
(Probe to understand reasons for answer)

Have you ever engaged with citizen science?
(If yes, probe with the following questions:)
      Which project(s), and what was your involvement?
      How did you feel about the end result of the project and how the data were utilized?
      Have you used or tried to use citizen science data, and if yes, for what purpose?

Are you familiar with the SAFMC Citizen Science Program?
(Probe to learn their degree of familiarity.)

Are you familiar with the list of research priorities that SAFMC believe could be addressed by citizen science data?
(If not, have list at hand to describe a few)

Do you think that fishermen will be able to collect data of sufficient quantity and quality to address these priorities?
(Probes for fishermen: Do you think that scientists/managers will believe/accept information provided by fishermen?)

The following questions are potential probes for further discussion if this information hasn't already come up in previous questions:

For fishermen:
    Do you think that managers/scientists use science to make management recommendations?
    Do you trust managers to consider the needs of fishermen in making recommendations?
    Do you feel that the regulation setting process is easily understood or transparent?
    What about the regulation setting process could be improved upon?
    Do you trust other fishermen to provide accurate data?

For managers:
    Do you trust fishermen to provide accurate data?
    How can programs be designed to ensure that data are useful for management?

For scientists:
    Do you trust fishermen to provide accurate data?
    Do you trust managers to use your data to produce sensible policies?
     How can programs be designed to ensure that data provided are accurate?

In closing:

Is there anything that you have shared today that you would be sensitive about being shared with anyone else? Is there anything that would be risky for others or for the relationships of this stakeholder team if it were shared? If yes, here are some options for handling this. I will abide by your preference.

1. This information can be entirely removed from the research record, and therefore from any analysis and reporting.
2. This information can be used in a way that does not attribute it to you as the source (if you feel like this can be done without identifying you, given your role in relationship to the information).
3. This information can be used in a way that does attribute it to you, but only after your review and approval of the statement(s) which I will provide to you first.

Finally:
Thank you for taking the time to share these thoughts with me! I look forward to following up with you on the research results.