



Citizen Science

Citizen Science Program Growth

CitSci Ops AP
June 2026

CitSci Program has come a long way!



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By the Numbers 2019-2025



33 Partners

Have collaborated with the Program representing state, regional, and federal agencies, industry, academics, NGOs, and more.

83+

Community Members

Have advised the Program serving on work groups and Advisory Panels representing state and federal agencies, industry, academics, and NGOs.

4922 Volunteers

Have contributed to projects in multiple ways including project development, data collection, data classification, and data validation.



6 Projects

Have been done with the Program addressing 3 different research priorities and filling data gaps across 3 fishery management plans. 3 projects have been complete, 3 are on-going.



11 External Grants

Have been received to help support Program and project activities.



155 Outreach Activities

Have been conducted by the Program and collaborators including workshops, seminars, tabling events, scientific conferences, and more.



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Program Growth Challenges



STABLE FUNDING



PERSONNEL



CAPACITY

HOW DO WE GROW SMARTLY?





How do we strategically grow?

Discussion during October 2025 CitSci Ops webinar

Expand creative partnerships to share and leverage resources

Exploring 'friends of' organizations to help fundraise and outreach efforts (there are limitations/restrictions on this for Council)

Better utilizing ASMFC MOU to pursue new grant/funding opportunities

Consider pursuing public-private partnerships with external entities

Support for 'mini' CitSci Program Planning workshop to help plan for next stage of growth

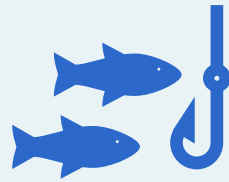


Where should we focus for next stage of growth?

Potential priorities identified by staff



Sustaining Program & growing capacity



Integrating collaborative science data into management & science



Improving communication & coordination of collaborative science efforts in South Atlantic and across regions



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Where should we focus for next stage of growth?



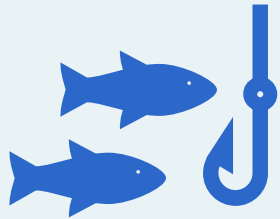
Sustaining Program & growing capacity

- Expand strategic partnerships to support long term capacity growth
- Sustain current projects that continue to address key data gaps
- Expand to develop a new project to address a key research priority
- Increase Program engagement in both fishing, science, and management communities



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Where should we focus for next stage of growth?



Integrating collaborative science data into management & science

- Increase awareness of projects and trust across fishing, scientific, and management communities
- Identify additional appropriate pathways for data to be considered in assessment and management
- Maintain and improve feedback loop, sharing data and data usage back with project participants and management



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Where should we focus for next stage of growth?



Improving communication and coordination of collaborative science efforts in South Atlantic and across regions

- Closer communication with individuals and organizations involved in collaborative science could provide more opportunities to collaborate, share best practices and expand partnerships
- Interest in working with partners to initiate a South Atlantic Collaborative Research Summit (similar to the Northeast)

Collaborative Science Workshop

May 7-8 in Charleston, SC



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South Atlantic



Northeast



Alaska

Developing collaborative, cross-regional fisheries science proposal

Additional Activities



Working to identify opportunities for new collaborations & partnership



American Fisheries Society

Cooperative Research
with Stakeholders Section

Stock Assessment
Integration Working Group



SAFMC Seminar Series: July 2026
How CitSci Can Support Stock Assessments?
NOAA Fisheries: Furnish et al.

Discussion Questions

- Do the potential focus areas identified by staff represent the right direction for the Program's next stage of growth? What focus areas would you recommend prioritizing?
- Are there other priorities or areas of emphasis that should be considered?
- What resources are you aware of that could help us address these priorities? What guidance do you have on next steps?
- What additional guidance or recommendations do AP members have to help inform the Program's next stage of development?