



# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

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Carolyn N. Belcher, Ph.D., Chair | Trish Murphey, Vice Chair  
John Carmichael, Executive Director

## **AGENDA**

### **Citizen Science Operations Committees**

**Wednesday, May 22, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. – meeting via webinar**

Webinar Registration Link: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1583222414700658782>

1. Welcome & Meeting Overview
2. Citizen Science Initial Evaluation Plan (*Attachments 1a, 1b, and 1c*)
3. Citizen Science Program Update (*Attachments 2a and 2b*)

Other Business

Adjourn

#### **Operations Committee Members**

Scott Baker, Citizen Science Projects/Topics A-Team

Wally Bublely, SSC representative / SCDNR

Rob Cheshire, SEFSC representative

Michelle Duval, Fisheries Consultant

Will Heyman, LGL Consulting

Jimmy Hull, Fisherman / Dealer / Retail

Kathy Knowlton, GADNR

Nikhil Mehta, SERO representative

#### **Attachments**

**Attachment 1a: Citizen Science Initial Program Evaluation Overview**

**Attachment 1b: Sweeney Tookes et al. Progress & Preliminary Findings**

**Attachment 1c: Bonney Progress & Preliminary Findings**

**Attachment 2a: Citizen Science Program Update Presentation**

**Attachment 2b: 2023 Citizen Science Program Annual Report**

Staff Lead: Julia Byrd

# **OVERVIEW**

## **Citizen Science Operations Committee**

### **1. Welcome & Meeting Overview**

Overview of webinar agenda, materials, and goals for the meeting

Meeting Goals:

- *Committee member introductions.*
- *Share progress update and preliminary findings from Citizen Science Program evaluation work. Provide input on information that may be helpful to include in researchers' final reports and begin to discuss ways the Program could respond to the findings.*
- *Provide update on Citizen Science program activities.*

### **2. Citizen Science Initial Evaluation Plan (*Attachments 1a-1c*)**

At their December 2020 meeting, the Council supported working with Rick Bonney on an initial evaluation plan for the SAFMC's Citizen Science Program (Program). The detailed evaluation plan can be found [HERE](#). The plan focuses on gathering baseline data on knowledge, attitudes, collaborations, engagement, and trust from various stakeholder groups to help evaluate the Program's fourth goal to 'foster mutual learning, collaboration, and program engagement'.

In the original evaluation plan, baseline data was proposed to be collected in three phases: 1) interviews, 2) the development and piloting of an online survey, and 3) the implementation of the online survey. Rick Bonney presented [findings from the phase one interviews](#) to the Operations Committee in May 2023 and to the SAFMC in June 2023. Conclusions from the interviews noted the fisherman audience needed to be studied in much more detail and that research into the needs, desires, and motivations of fishermen and how best to reach fishermen will be critical to the Program. Bonney also noted that when collecting information from a broader group of fishermen, scientists, and managers deploying an online survey to scientists and managers should not be too challenging, but deploying an online survey to fishermen could be challenging.

During summer 2022, additional funding was obtained for this project through NOAA Fisheries and the SAFMC. Staff consulted with Rick Bonney on how best to apply the funds to these evaluation efforts. The decision was made to have Rick Bonney lead the research to gather information from a broader group of scientists and managers through an online survey and to put out a request for proposals in December 2022 to gather information from a broader group of fishermen. [Jennifer Sweeney Tookes and Tracey Yandle's proposal](#) was selected for funding. They are collecting information from a broader group of fishermen via interviews.

Over the past year, the Sweeney Tookes' research team have completed four research trips for the geographic included in their research. They have conducted interviews with a variety of recreational, for-hire, and commercial fishermen. Transcription of the interviews is complete and preliminary analyses are underway. Sweeney Tookes will provide a progress update and share preliminary findings (*Attachment 1b*).

Bonney pilot tested and finalized the online survey for scientists and managers in winter 2024. He has been working with state and federal agency contacts to compile a potential participant list. The online survey launched in Spring 2024 and is still underway. Bonney will provide a progress update and share preliminary findings (*Attachment 1c*).

Both research teams are on schedule to have final reports complete by July 2024. Once final results are available, Council staff would like to meet with the Citizen Science Advisory Groups to develop recommendations for how the Program should respond to the research findings. The tentative plan is for the Citizen Science Advisory Groups to meet and develop recommendations in the fall 2024 that would be presented to the Council at their December 2024 meeting.

The Committee will be asked to provide input focused on the following discussion questions.

#### SURVEY ONLY

- Do you have suggestions for other ways to identify potential participants for the scientist/manager survey?

#### SURVEY & INTERVIEWS

- Are there additional topics or themes that should be looked for in the data?
- Are there certain topics/types of information that would be helpful for the researchers to include in their final reports?
- How can/should the Citizen Science Program respond to the findings? Do you have ideas on how the Program could adapt or be refined based on the preliminary findings?

### **3. Citizen Science Program Update (*Attachment 2a and 2b*)**

Staff will provide a brief update on the Citizen Science Program highlighting recent programmatic and project activities that have occurred since the Committee's last meeting.

Other Business

Adjourn