



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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

AGENDA

Citizen Science Operations Advisory Panel

Thursday, June 4, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. – meeting via webinar

Webinar Registration Link: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5064664372568881504>

1. Welcome & Meeting Overview
2. Citizen Science Program & Project Update (*Attachment 1a-1b*)
3. Tracking & Sharing Citizen Science Program Indicators (*Attachment 2*)
4. Citizen Science Program Growth (*Attachment 3*)
5. Citizen Science Operations Advisory Panel Membership

Other Business

Adjourn

Operations Committee Members

Scott Baker, NC Sea Grant

Wally Bublely, SSC representative / SCDNR

Rob Cheshire, SEFSC representative

Michelle Duval, Mellivora Consultant

Will Heyman, Sustainable Marine Solutions Consulting

Kathy Knowlton, GADNR

Nikhil Mehta, SERO representative

Julie Simpson, ACCSP

Bob Zales, Fisherman / SFA

Attachments

Attachment 1a: Citizen Science Program Update Presentation

Attachment 1b: Citizen Science Program 2025 Annual Report

Attachment 2: Citizen Science Program Indicators Presentation

Attachment 3: Citizen Science Program Growth

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 welcome and introductions.*
- *Provide update on Citizen Science Program activities*
- *Share final Citizen Science Program Indicators and discuss plans for tracking and sharing more broadly*
- *Review and recommend updates to citizen science research priorities*
- *Discuss Citizen Science Program growth strategies and approaches*

2. Citizen Science Program Update (*Attachment 1*)

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

3. Tracking & Sharing Citizen Science Program Indicators (*Attachment 2*)

During 2020, the Citizen Science Operations Committee developed and refined the Citizen Science Program's Planning document which included vision, mission, goals, objectives, strategies, and draft indicators of success. The Council reviewed and adopted these in December 2020. Since then, Council staff have used the Program Planning document to determine annual work plans and guide the overall direction of the Program.

To help evaluate progress, the Program plans to review its activities under each goal, objective, and strategy every five years. The first review took place during the Citizen Science Operations AP fall 2024 meeting, where members assessed Program activities from 2019–2024.

In addition to this five-year review, the Program is planning to annually monitor key indicators associated with each goal to assess progress between review periods, identify opportunities for improvement, and measure the Program's ongoing impact. These indicators were developed with input from the Citizen Science Operations and Projects AP and reviewed by the Council at its December 2025 meeting.

Staff will share the final indicators, plans for tracking them, and ask for input on how best to share information on indicators through our communication channels.

Requested Action:

AP members are asked to provide feedback on indicator tracking plans and on methods to share indicators through our communication channels.

The following questions may be helpful to consider when providing feedback.

- What types of visuals or formats (e.g., dashboards, charts, infographics) would be most effective for sharing indicators?

- What entities would be most interested in this information? Which groups or stakeholders should we consider sharing it with?
- What communication channels beyond the Program webpage would be most useful for sharing indicator highlights and updates?

4. Citizen Science Program Growth (*Attachment 3*)

At the October 2025 Citizen Science Operations AP meeting, members discussed the continued growth and evolution of the Citizen Science Program and the need to strategically plan for the Program's next phase. Members recognized the significant progress made over the past decade and the importance of identifying sustainable ways to support continued growth. Suggestions by the AP included looking for opportunities to expand and diversify partnerships, trying to identify and pursue new funding and resource development opportunities, and fostering public-private collaborations. AP members also expressed support for exploring avenues to hold a dedicated Citizen Science Program Planning Workshop to help identify long-term priorities and strategies related to staffing, funding, partnerships, and overall Program growth.

Since the last meeting, staff have considered where the Program should focus for the next stage of growth. Potential priorities identified by staff include:

- **Sustaining Program and 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 engagement in both fishing, science, and management communities in Program
- **Integrating collaborative science data into management and science**
 - Increase awareness of projects and trust in 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
- **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 Cooperative Research Summit](#))

Staff would like to continue the conversation with the AP by sharing updates on current activities and ongoing efforts related to these topics, including a recent Collaborative Science meeting held in Charleston, SC in May 2026 with the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation, Skipper Science Partnership, and the Alaska Conservation Foundation.

Requested Action:

AP members are asked to provide feedback on focus areas and approaches to guide the next stage of growth as well as strategies to help navigate key challenges.

The following questions may be helpful to consider when providing feedback.

- 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?

5. Citizen Science Operations Advisory Panel Membership

Staff will share an overview of the Citizen Science Operations AP membership, including information on the terms for current members.

Other Business

Adjourn