



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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

## AGENDA

### Citizen Science Projects Advisory Panel

**Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M. – meeting via webinar**

Webinar Registration Link: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/327746169534439512>

1. Welcome & Meeting Overview
2. Citizen Science Program Update (*Attachment 1*)
3. Citizen Science Project Idea Portal (*Attachment 2*)
4. Citizen Science Initial Evaluation (*Attachments 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, and 3e*)

Other Business

Adjourn

#### **CitSci Projects Advisory Panel Members**

Steve Donalson, Mackerel Cobia AP  
Bryan Fluech, Outreach & Communications AP; Shrimp AP  
Richard Gomez, Snapper Grouper AP  
David Moss, Snapper Grouper AP  
Thoman Newman, Mackerel Cobia AP  
Matt Perkinson, Outreach & Communications AP  
Jon Reynolds, Dolphin Wahoo AP  
Justin Smith, Spiny Lobster AP  
Mimi Stafford, Spiny Lobster AP

#### **Attachments**

**Attachment 1:** Citizen Science Program Update Presentation  
**Attachment 2:** Citizen Science Project Idea Portal  
**Attachment 3a:** Citizen Science Initial Program Evaluation Overview  
**Attachment 3b:** Survey of Scientists & Managers Working in the Region Covered by the SAFMC – Bonney Final Report  
**Attachment 3c:** Overview Presentation of Scientist & Manager Survey Findings  
**Attachment 3d:** Decoding the Motivations of Fishers Considering Participation in Citizen Science Projects - Sweeney Tookes et al. Final Report  
**Attachment 3e:** Overview Presentation of Fishermen Interview Findings  
**Attachment 3f:** Comparison of Research Findings, Citizen Science Program Efforts & Recommendations

**Staff Lead:** Julia Byrd ([julia.byrd@safmc.net](mailto:julia.byrd@safmc.net))

# OVERVIEW

## **Citizen Science Projects Advisory Panel**

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

Overview of webinar agenda, materials, and goals for meeting  
Meeting Goals:

- *Committee member introductions and meeting logistics*
- *Provide update on Citizen Science Program activities*
- *Share information on Citizen Science Project Idea Portal & discuss promotion strategies*
- *Researchers share findings from Citizen Science Program evaluation work. Discuss findings and ideas on how the Citizen Science Program can be refined based on findings*

### **2. Citizen Science Program Update**

Staff will provide a brief update on the Citizen Science Program highlighting recent project activities.

### **3. Citizen Science Project Idea Portal**

The Citizen Science (CitSci) Research Priorities are updated every two years in conjunction with the Council updating their overall Research and Monitoring Plan. The research priorities guide the types of projects the Citizen Science Program will pursue and support. They are meant to help narrow down the focus from the many data needs in the South Atlantic to tangible ideas most important to fishermen, scientists, and managers in our region that would potentially work well with a citizen science approach.

The CitSci Research Priorities were initially drafted in 2018 and have been updated in 2019, 2021, and 2023. They will be reviewed and updated again in mid-late 2025. The Citizen Science Projects and Citizen Science Operations Advisory Panels are responsible for reviewing and recommending updates to the CitSci Research Priorities for the Council's consideration. The process to update the CitSci Research Priorities is summarized in Attachment 2.

In the past, there wasn't a mechanism for members of the public to share their project ideas with the Citizen Science Program. To help address this, the Council launched the [Citizen Science Project Idea Portal](#), an online tool to gather citizen science project ideas from stakeholders. The information gathered through the tool will be compiled and considered when updating CitSci Research Priorities.

The Citizen Science Project Idea Portal initially launched in summer 2024. Staff have done limited promotion of the online tool and there have been limited submissions thus far. Since the Council will be updating their CitSci Research Priorities in 2025, we would like to encourage stakeholders to submit project ideas in the upcoming months. Staff would like feedback from the AP members on strategies to promote the tool to fishermen.

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

- What strategies can we use to promote the project idea portal?
- What messaging could encourage fishermen to submit their ideas in the CitSci Project Idea Portal?
- What are the best places to advertise this tool to fishermen?
- What would be effective placement so that fishermen would see/hear the messaging when and where they have time to use the online tool?

#### 4. Citizen Science Initial Evaluation Plan (*Attachments 1a-1g*)

- a. 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 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 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.

During summer 2022, additional funding was obtained for this project through NOAA Fisheries and the SAFMC. Rick Bonney led research to gather information from a broader group of scientists and managers through an online survey. Jennifer Sweeney Tookes' research team collected information from a broader group of fishermen via interviews. *Attachment 3a* provides background information on the Citizen Science Program's initial evaluation.

- b. Bonney conducted the online survey with scientists and managers from approximately March through September 2024. The final report summarizing survey findings is *Attachment 3b*. Bonney will present an overview of survey findings highlighting recommendations on how the CitSci Program can respond to this research (*Attachment 3c*).
- c. The Sweeney Tookes' research team conducted interviews with fishermen from approximately July 2023 to February 2024. The final report summarizing survey findings is *Attachment 3d*. Sweeney Tookes will present an overview of survey findings highlighting recommendations on how the CitSci Program can respond to this research (*Attachment 3e*).
- d. Staff will provide an overview comparing key findings from the Bonney and Sweeney Tookes et al. research; share efforts the Citizen Science Program is currently undertaking that help address report recommendations; and provide ideas for additional strategies and activities the Program can implement to further respond to these research efforts (*Attachment 3f*).

The following questions may be helpful to consider when reviewing and discussing how the Citizen Science Program can be refined based on these research efforts.

- What are ways the Citizen Science Program should adapt or be refined based on these research efforts?
- What points of confusion or stakeholder concern do you think we should prioritize addressing in our communication? Should we develop some additional communication products to address key issues?

- What issues, challenges, and recommendations should the Program prioritize addressing in the short term (1-3 years)? In the long term (> 3 years)?

Other Business

Adjourn