

SAFMC Staff Report September 2024

IRA Funding Update

Notification that the SAFMC would be receiving Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds occurred on August 29, 2024. Since the last Council meeting, staff provided feedback on additional comments. Staff have met with NFMS staff to finalize three of the projects.

- Job 1: Staff are revising this project to address components of the East Coast Climate Scenario Planning.
- Job 2: Develop a management strategy evaluation-type tool for Wreckfish or Rock Shrimp. These species were recommended due to their potential sensitivity to climate change, small geographic area for the fishery, and engagement of stakeholders.
- Job 3: NMFS has approved the proposed EFH and stock boundaries evaluation.
- Job 4: Staff are reworking this proposal to better tie in climate change in the community analysis for future amendments and conducting stakeholder engagement meetings along with outreach to encourage attendance.

Lara Klibansky has been hired as the IRA and Climate Response Projects Coordinator. She has a long history of working with the NC Division of Marine Fisheries. She has started to develop requests for proposals that will be announced later this year. Continued delays in receiving funds resulted in changing timelines and additional changes to the scope may be needed to comply with the funding deadline.

Citizen Science Program

- SAFMC Release
 - Citizen science staff, in collaboration with NOAA Fisheries and state partners, developed and submitted a FY25 ACCSP grant proposal, ‘Enhancing Recruitment & Retention for the SAFMC Release Citizen Science Project’.
 - Data collection, recruitment, and retention efforts continued for the SAFMC Release project. Outreach activities have included monthly newsletters, social media posts, a mailing with Pitman Creek, assisting with the BFP MVP workshops led by Ashley Oliver, and helping plan and man a booth focused on BFP and SAFMC Release at ICAST 2024.
- FISHstory
 - FISHstory re-launched in Zooniverse on July 16, 2024. The FISHstory team has been thrilled with the participation thus far - with over 1,200 volunteers making 25,476 individual classifications – since the project re-launched.
 - To help promote FISHstory’s re-launch, citizen science staff collaborated on a live event with SciStarter, an organization that helps match volunteers to citizen science projects, on July 23, 2024. During the event, staff provided an overview of FISHstory including background information on how the project got started, along with a live demo of the project in Zooniverse. You can check out the recording on the Council’s YouTube channel [HERE](#).

- Alex Rocco, a NC State University graduate student working on the FISHstory project, will be giving a presentation ‘FISHstory: Using citizen science to estimate historic attributes of recreational fisheries’ at the American Fisheries Society’s annual meeting in September 2024.
- Staff continue working to expand FISHstory’s archive of historic photos. In August 2024, staff visited the West Palm Beach Fishing Club and were able to peruse their historic photo archives. In the upcoming months, we will be working with the Club to digitize some of their photos for inclusion in the FISHstory project.
- SMILE
 - Staff have continued meeting monthly with the SMILE Core project team. Initial analysis for data collected in 2023 is near completion and 2024 field testing is underway.
 - Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) staff will be presenting on the SMILE project at the American Fisheries Society’s annual meeting in September 2024.
 - Project partners have continued to share information on the project via social media and webpages. Citizen science staff have been helping with the development of a SMILE project flyer to raise awareness and promote the project.
 - The SMILE team is collaborating with researchers to incorporate social science efforts into the project to better understand motivations and barriers of potential volunteers.
- Staff in collaboration with ACCSP were invited to present on the SAFMC’s Citizen Science Program, SAFMC Release project, and SciFish platform as part of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission’s IRA Workshop 2 – Improving Recreational Released Catch Data.
- Staff have continued to work with researchers Rick Bonney, Jennifer Sweeney Tookes, Tracy Yandle, and Bryan Fluech on the Citizen Science Program’s initial evaluation. Bonney is working on a report summarizing his survey work with scientists and managers. Sweeney Tookes et al. have shared a draft report with staff on their interview work with fishermen. Research findings will be shared with the Citizen Science Operations Committee at their October 2024 meeting and with the Council at their December 2024 meeting.
- NOAA Fisheries announced a [funding opportunity for citizen science projects](#) that address data gaps in stock assessments and support climate-ready fisheries. The deadline for proposals is November 4, 2024.

Best Fishing Practices

The Sea Grant Team recently hired Charleston-native Greyson Webb as the new **Reef Fish Communication and Extension Fellow**. Greyson will be continuing the extension project which focuses on outreach and communication relative to best fishing practices. Her background in mass communication and journalism, with a degree from George Washington University and a focus on sustainability, are certain to open up new outreach avenues for the best fishing practices team. **Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program** workshops were held along the coast of Florida from Saint Augustine to Key West. Thank you to Florida Council members for their

assistance with outreach and their participation in discussions. Workshops were well attended, and discussions had with stakeholders were fruitful. BFP MVP workshops for North Carolina are in the planning stages and will be held in November.



Mackerel Port Meetings

At the urging of the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel, the Council is hosting a series of port meetings along the Atlantic coast throughout 2024 aimed at taking a focused look at the Atlantic king and Spanish mackerel fisheries. Port meetings are more than a public comment opportunity. Attendees will have the chance to actively discuss their perspectives with other fishery participants and local Council members. Port meetings have been held in North Carolina (April), New England (May), New York (June), and Georgia (July). Staff have started planning and outreach for Florida port meetings, which are scheduled to occur the week of September 30th. Port meetings in South Carolina, which were cancelled due to Tropical Storm Debby have been rescheduled for October 7th and October 8th. Port meetings in the mid-Atlantic region are scheduled to occur mid-November. A final report from the port meetings initiative will be presented to the Council in March 2025.

ICAST 2024

Billed as the World's Largest Sportfishing Tradeshow, [ICAST 2024](#) was held July 16-19, 2024 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida - and the SAFMC well-represented! Sporting a new display, Council staff highlighted Best Fishing Practices and the Council's Citizen Science Program as part of the Council's 10X20' exhibit space in the Conservation Corner. Conservation organizations and management agencies participating in this year's event include Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), The Nature Conservancy, Return 'Em Right, The Guy Harvey Foundation, Florid Sea Grant, and the SC Department of Natural Resources.

The tradeshow, sponsored by the American Sportfishing Association, is open to wholesale and retail dealers from across the country and around the world. It provides a unique opportunity to network with regional bait and tackle businesses as well as national manufacturers. A "Donuts and Descending Devices" event was held on Thursday morning of the tradeshow, offering complimentary coffee and donuts as well as some amazing raffle packages to entice visitors to the Conservation Corner and learn about best fishing practices. The event was well-received and

over 100 participants signed up to receive additional information. Plans are underway for ICAST 2025!

CCC Communications Workgroup Meeting

Council staff attended an in-person meeting of the Council Coordination Committee (CCC) Communications Workgroup held August 6-8, 2024, at the Pacific Fishery Management Council office in Portland, Oregon. The workgroup was tasked by the CCC to begin planning for the 50th anniversary of the regional fishery management councils and federal fisheries management through the Magnuson Stevens Act. During the meeting, the workgroup also developed guidance materials for the councils to use for planning and hosting meetings of the CCC, including a timeline for meeting planning, logistics checklist, technical recommendations, and a repository for sharing items each year.

In addition, the workgroup reviewed materials from the Council Member Ongoing Development (CMOD) program and past materials from the earlier Fisheries Forum used for training purposes, discussed strategies for archiving materials, and began development of an infographic to aid in making motions for use by the ongoing CMOD program. The meeting also included a day of professional development training. The CCC Communications Workgroup will provide a report at the October 16-17, 2024 meeting of the CCC in Washington, DC.

Scientific Coordination Subcommittee (previously known as the National SSC)

SAFMC Staff and members of the SSC and the Social and Economic Panel attended the Eighth Scientific Coordination Subcommittee Meeting (SCS8) in Boston, MA on August 26-28. The meeting, centered around the theme "Applying Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rules in a Changing Environment," and featured three sub-themes: (1) Ecosystem science informing ABC controls in a dynamic environment; (2) The application of social science to achieve management goals in a dynamic setting; and (3) Adaptations of reference points, control rules, and rebuilding plans to accommodate changes in the environment. The meeting included one keynote speaker and several case studies for each of the sub-themes followed by breakout group sessions to discuss the implementation of these ideas into the ABC-CR process. Attendees will develop actionable guidance to support resilient and adaptive fisheries management, taking into account the changing environment. This guidance will be shared with all councils, and regional SSCs will develop additional actionable guidance based on their respective regional needs.

Marine Resources Education Program (MREP) Southeast

The [MREP Southeast](#) Workshop is scheduled for October 21-25, 2024, in St. Petersburg, FL. Staff continues to participate in the MREP Plan Team and Steering Committee for this annual workshop. Approximately 30 applicants from North Carolina to Texas have been accepted for this year's workshop, representing commercial, recreational, and for-hire fishermen as well as industry leaders, seafood dealers/retailers, and fishing organizations. The workshop includes presenters from both the SAFMC and Gulf Councils, NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, FWC, NOAA Office for Law Enforcement, and fishermen. Presenter prep calls are scheduled for September. Council staff will attend the workshop and provide support.

Workshop to Integrate Councils' Inflation Reduction Act Proposals and NMFS Climate, Fisheries, and Ecosystem Initiative

A workshop was held in Philadelphia, PA from August 15-16, 2024, to discuss Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) projects being developed by the New England, Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils and Climate and Ecosystem Fisheries Initiative (CEFI) projects being developed by the Northeast and Southeast Fishery Science Centers. Staff presented the SAFMC's IRA research proposals and identified regional overlap in the projects. Communication channels were established to promote effective collaboration and prevent duplication of work.