

Meeting Report
Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
April 19, 2021

The Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel (AP) met April 19, 2021 via webinar to discuss outreach and communications topics relevant to Council programs, projects, and products. Following introductions, the AP received presentations, provided recommendations, and offered updates on current outreach programs, to include:

- 1) Citizen Science Program Update
- 2) Commercial Fish Rules App Demo
- 3) Newsletter Discussion
- 4) AP Member Updates

1) Citizen Science Program Update

The AP received an [update](#) on the Council's Citizen Science Program, including the program's pilot projects, SAFMC Release and FISHstory. A variety of other projects involving rare species observations, diver observations of data limited species, Dolphin Wahoo Participatory Workshops, eMolt, and Dolphin movement & migration, are currently under various stages of development. The AP was also briefed on the ongoing work with Rick Bonney to evaluate the Citizen Science Program, gathering baseline data on knowledge, attitudes, collaborations, engagement, and trusts levels of various stakeholder groups.

In addition, staff provided updates on SciFish, a mobile application developed by the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) and Harbor Light Software in partnership with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF). Initially, SciFish will host the SAFMC Release project, which is expanding to collect information on all shallow-water grouper species, and NCDMF's Catch U Later project. Earlier this year, workshops were conducted to evaluate what ought to be considered and included in a customizable citizen science app (e.g. SciFish 2.0). Using information and input from questionnaires, workshops, and town hall meetings, the Council will work with ACCSP and other partners to expand SciFish so it can serve as an umbrella app for various fisheries citizen science projects along the Atlantic coast.

Staff posed the following discussion questions to the AP:

- Are there resources you could share relevant to branding architecture we could apply to the SAFMC Release Project in relation to the SciFish app?
- Once the SAFMC Release Project in the SciFish app is available, would you be willing to share with your networks? If so, what materials would you need in order to share?
 - News release
 - Social media posts

- Articles
- Media packet
- Images
- Blog posts

AP Feedback:

- Shark depredation issues came up during discussion and AP Members asked whether Citizen Science apps would collect information relevant to those issues. Staff explained that those topics did come up during the customizable citizen science app workshops and that some apps already allow fishermen to provide information on shark depredation. The SAFMC Release project will collect that information once it expands to include all of the shallow-water grouper species.
- Representatives from NOAA Fisheries said they would be willing to share information about SciFish once available and that there was no preference for the format of that content.
- Representatives from NCDMF shared that they will disseminate information about SciFish but prefer to receive content directly, such as press releases, social media posts, etc. NCDMF will also share articles about SciFish in future newsletters.
- Representatives from FL Sea Grant noted information on the project could be shared via their catchandrelease.org website.
- SAFMC Release is now easier to use than in previous renditions of the app.
- AP Members expressed concerns about the redundancies between MyFishCount and SciFish, some citing frustrations and the need to avoid angler confusion.
- It was suggested that data be shared across these varying platforms and staff explained that all of the data is funneled to ACCSP.
- Staff were encouraged to ensure that the SciFish app is streamlined and user friendly.
- Branding guidelines should be established for SciFish and media packets should be developed using software like Canva.
- Staff were encouraged to develop blogs describing the relationship between various mobile apps that are available.

2) Commercial Fish Rules App Demo

Staff provided a demo of the Commercial Fish Rules App, a mobile application developed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council in partnership with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and the Fish Rules team. The app hosts commercial regulations relevant to South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico federal permit holders and is scheduled to be available to the public in late May.

AP Feedback:

Following the demo, AP Members provided comments and suggestions.

- The content and design of the app would likely be useful for commercial fishermen and law enforcement.
- An AP Member asked whether state commercial fishing regulations would be included in the mobile app and staff indicated that including that information could be possible if state agencies choose to partner with Fish Rules.
- AP Members recommended that staff coordinate with the Southeast Regional Office Permit's Office to announce the availability of the app.

3) Newsletter Discussion

AP Members received a [presentation](#) on the Council's recent shift away from a quarterly newsletter to a format that allows for greater flexibility and timeliness. Staff now produce the "South Atlantic Bite", which is distributed every two weeks and includes newsworthy information from the Council and other agencies.

Staff provided the following discussion questions:

- What are your initial thoughts about the transition away from the quarterly newsletter format?
- South Atlantic Bite and Snippets
 - Is this format useful?
 - Are the introductory text and graphics sufficient?
 - What type of information would you like to see included?
 - The SA Bite is currently scheduled to be distributed on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. Is this frequency and schedule ideal? What changes would you make?
- Feature Articles
 - Is this approach effective in providing information on current management topics and issues?
 - Was the first article too long? Suggestions for formatting and images?
 - Would these articles fit better in a blog format?
 - What would make these articles more interesting to fishermen?
 - If the articles are continued, what topics should be covered?
 - What can we do to make this information more beneficial to you and improve the likelihood that it is shared?

AP Feedback

- Social media posts and shorter email features are easily accessed from a mobile phone, while lengthy articles are best viewed from a computer.
- Staff should utilize Constant Contact's "Resend" feature as courtesy reminders for feature articles and other important information.
- AP members support the distribution of the South Atlantic Bite every two weeks and like the new format. Content is more timely and relevant. Other agencies,

including the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, now use a similar approach.

- AP Members suggested that the Chair and Executive Director columns, as well as the CitSci Corner, continue to occur in the distribution, but on a six-month schedule.
- AP Members noted that analytics for Constant Contact provided during the presentation comparing desktop and mobile use for email may suggest that agency partners are opening the newsletter more frequently (using their desktop computers). Staff were encouraged to review analytics periodically to evaluate what seems to work best under this new format.
- The “Mark Your Calendar” feature currently provided in the South Atlantic Bite is a helpful tool, including the links to the webinar registration.
- “Novel” information shared through the South Atlantic Bite is helpful and provides increased flexibility for sharing items of interest.
- Feature articles are a useful tool for highlighting the human dimensions of fisheries.

4) AP Member Updates

AP Members were asked to share relevant updates with the group. Those representing North Carolina Sea Grant, Florida Sea Grant, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission provided [information to be included in the briefing book](#). Others on the AP provided only verbal updates during the meeting.

North Carolina Sea Grant - Scott Baker

- Updates were provided in the briefing materials.

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) – Melissa Crouch

- In addition to updates provided in the briefing materials, FWC offered to share information on Charter Captain Influence Research once it is available so the Council and others can learn from the process and the results.

Florida Sea Grant – Shelly Krueger

- In addition to updates provided in the briefing materials, FL Sea Grant offered to share readership and viewer information for Spanish and English versions of Bite-Sized Science and other initiatives underway.

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) – Patricia Smith

- NCDMF is considering whether to become a partner with the Fish Rules App
- NCDMF will be going paperless and shifting many publications to electronic formats.
- NCDMF has a new fish identification email where fishermen can send a picture with a description to be identified by fisheries scientists.

Mark Phelps (For-Hire Fisherman Representative)

- Mark noted that federal for-hire electronic reporting requirements have been implemented in South Carolina. Initially there were some issues but the program appears to be running seamlessly now for those in South Carolina.
- Mark expressed concerns about Red Snapper and urged staff to consider making information about Red Snapper, particularly the set season dates, more accessible to the public. Staff noted that information is available from the Council's website, but took note of these suggestions. In addition, staff explained that modifications would be made to the Fish Rules App to make this season information more clear.
- Mark encouraged staff to consider a feature article to discuss ongoing issues with Red Snapper management in the South Atlantic. Staff noted that a feature article and a dedicated webpage might be helpful.

South Carolina Sea Grant – Graham Gaines

- South Carolina Sea Grant recently awarded \$5 million to the University of Florida to conduct a red snapper estimate in the South Atlantic similar to the Great Red Snapper Count in the Gulf of Mexico.
- South Carolina Sea Grant will work with partners to manage expectation and to produce media pieces.
- Questions from the AP can be directed to Graham Gaines with South Carolina Sea Grant or Will Patterson with the University of Florida.

NOAA Fisheries – Sean Meehan

- Outreach/Constituent meetings will be held with for-hire and private recreational fishermen in early May.
- NOAA Fisheries has produced a video about fishing in the Southeast region to promote recreational fishing.

Georgia Sea Grant – Bryan Fluech

- Georgia Sea Grant is involved in a "Trawls to Trash" initiative working with shrimpers in Georgia to recycle trawl nets for use as trash bags.

Robert Todd (At-Large Fisherman Representative)

- Robert has been teaching commercial fishing classes for high school students and is working with special needs students in culinary classes, making connections between seafood and its use in the kitchen.

AP Members in Attendance

Scott Baker, Jr., Chair

Shelly Krueger, Vice Chair

Katie Latanich
Mark Phelps
Cinthia Sandoval
Patricia Smith
Melissa Crouch
Erin Weeks
Emily Muehlstein
Tyler Jones
Lt. Anthony Gallegos on behalf of Lt. James Bruce
Bryan Fluech
Graham Gaines
Robert Todd
Steve Dougherty
BeBe Dalton Harrison
George Patane
Mary Sabo
Sean Meehan