

SAFMC Staff Report December 2022

SAFE Report

Council staff have started to develop Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Reports. These reports are required through National Standard 2 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The report should contain the best scientific information available on the condition of the stock, essential fish habitat, marine ecosystems, and fishery. These reports can serve as regular updates to the SSC and Council to aid in discussing the condition of the stock and potential need for adjusting current management measures. The SSC provided feedback on information that is crucial for a SAFE report and information that would be good to include based on draft SAFE reports for [Dolphin Wahoo](#) and [Snapper Grouper](#) (overfished and/or overfishing stocks) FMPs. SAFE reports will developed every two years for each FMP and provided at the April SSC meeting and June Council meeting.

Citizen Science

- SAFMC Release
 - Data collection, recruitment, and retention efforts continued for the SAFMC Release project. Outreach activities have included monthly newsletters, regular email and phone communication with project participants, as well as social media posts.
 - Staff have begun evaluating recruitment and retention strategies employed over the past year to help plan outreach efforts for 2023.
 - Additionally, staff have been working closely with the Best Fishing Practices staff to coordinate a content creation trip to gather photos and video footage for outreach materials and a trip with local writers in GA.
 - The SAFMC Release webpage, as well as the general Citizen Science Program webpage, have been updated to be more engaging and aesthetically appealing.
- SciFish
 - Work continues on the SciFish project builder and customizable app platform.
 - Staff, working with the SciFish Organizing Committee, have started development of policies and procedures to support and guide ACCSP partner development of new projects within the application.
- FISHstory
 - An ACCSP proposal, developed with NC State and the SEFSC, to continue and expand the FISHstory project was recommended for funding by ACCSP's Coordinating Council at their November 2022 meeting.
- SMILE
 - The SMILE (Size Matters: Innovative Length Measurements) project kicked off with a meeting of project partners during the November 2022 GCFI conference in FL.

- The Council is collaborating with REEF and SECOORA on this project to develop a survey method and generate a camera device that recreational divers can use to produce length data to inform stock assessments, ecosystem-based assessments, and coral restoration monitoring.
- A special issue of *Fisheries*, coordinated by NMFS and SAFMC staff, on citizen science and other nontraditional data sources and their use in fisheries management is now available online at <https://afspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15488446/2022/47/11>. The special issue includes eight papers from an American Fisheries Symposium, including one on the FISHstory project. The special issue will be open access through January 15, 2023.
- Staff presented Citizen Science Program updates at the [Outreach and Communications](#), [Mackerel Cobia](#), and [Snapper Grouper](#) Advisory Panel fall 2022 meetings.
- Staff joined a Steering Committee to develop a citizen science network of fisheries scientists, managers, and fishermen through the American Fisheries Society.

Website and Digital Communications Updates

- New Public Comment Tool progress:
 - Will be completed shortly after December Council Meeting and implemented in the new year.
 - Will be easier for Council members to access and read comments, allowing them to sort and organize based on location, comment topic, etc.
 - Will save time for technical staff when sorting through and analyzing comments.
 - Is more aesthetically pleasing, organized, and user friendly for public accessibility.
 - Comment forms will be displayed as Google Forms and responses will be displayed on a custom and web accessible Google Sheet.
 - Communications staff will use a web-based application to create and manage forms and responses.
- Completed [Managed Areas section](#) of the website.
- Presented [website and social media analytics](#) to the Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel.
- Redesigned [Best Fishing Practices](#) page to improve bounce rates and provide more resources for fishermen.
- Generally improving our social media presence by:
 - Providing additional resources to the public
 - Improving posting rates
 - Increasing following and engagement
- Currently working with technical staff to develop more extensive descriptions for individual amendment pages.
- DNS provider switch seems to have successfully eliminated the issue of users being blocked from entering the site.
- Will begin archiving historic Briefing Book materials.

Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) Update

[MREP Southeast](#) began the program's first round of in-person workshops with a Science Workshop held November 8-10, 2022 in St. Petersburg, Florida. Council members Judy Helmeý and Laurilee Thompson were in attendance along with 22 other MREP participants from the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Staff from the South Atlantic Council, Gulf Council, and NOAA Fisheries, along with program facilitators, were also involved. Unfortunately, the workshop was interrupted by Hurricane Nicole and the last day of the 3-day workshop was cancelled.

The MREP Management Workshop, the second part of the two-workshop series, is currently scheduled for February 21-23, 2022 in Tampa, Florida. An additional day may be added to the February workshop to cover the materials missed in November. The MREP Steering Committee will meet December 12-13, 2022 in San Juan, PR to discuss scheduling, program evaluation, curriculum, and other program-related topics.

Seminar Series Metrics

- Since November 2021, there have been 7 SAFMC Seminar Series Presentations covering topics related to 3 FMPs and a dedicated webpage was created to house the presentations (<https://safmc.net/safmc-seminar-series/>).
 - Snapper Grouper
 - Survey and trends in species
 - Distribution shift
 - Marine protected areas
 - Historic data
 - Reporting
 - Citizen science
 - Shrimp
 - Working waterfront
 - Coastal Migratory Pelagics
 - Historic data
 - Citizen science
- On average, 60 people registered and 48 people attended the seminar
- There has been increasing trend in attendance
- On average, 3 Council members, 5 SSC members, and 4 AP members attended
- Provide topics and potential presenter to Chip Collier (chip.collier@safmc.net)

Administrative Handbook

The SAFMC Administrative Handbook was last approved in June 2019. Since then, there have been updates to Council and NMFS polices and HR laws that need to be addressed. Draft edits were provided to NOAA GC for review, with a focus on HR topics, in December 2021. Comments were received in October 2022 and edits incorporated by staff. A revised handbook

will be provided to the Executive Committee for review in early December followed by discussion during a committee meeting to be held via Webinar prior to the March 2023 Council meeting. Council will be asked to approve a revised handbook at the March 2023 meeting.

Other Items

Staff was co-authored a [paper](#) on consistency in stock assessments published in Fish and Fisheries.