

THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

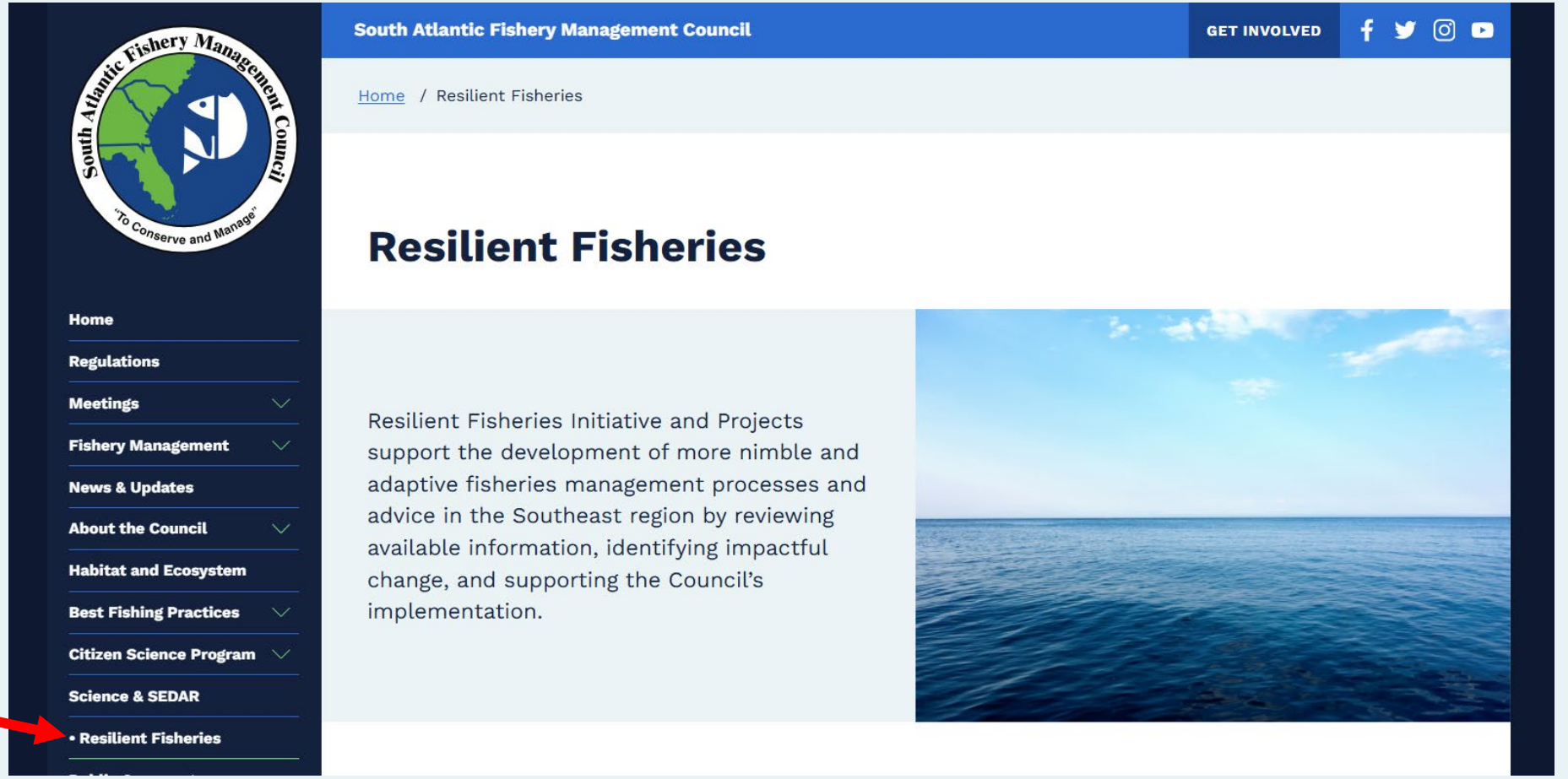
Resilient Fisheries Update

June-July 2026

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SAFMC Resilient Fisheries Update

There's more!



https://safmc.net/resilient-fisheries/

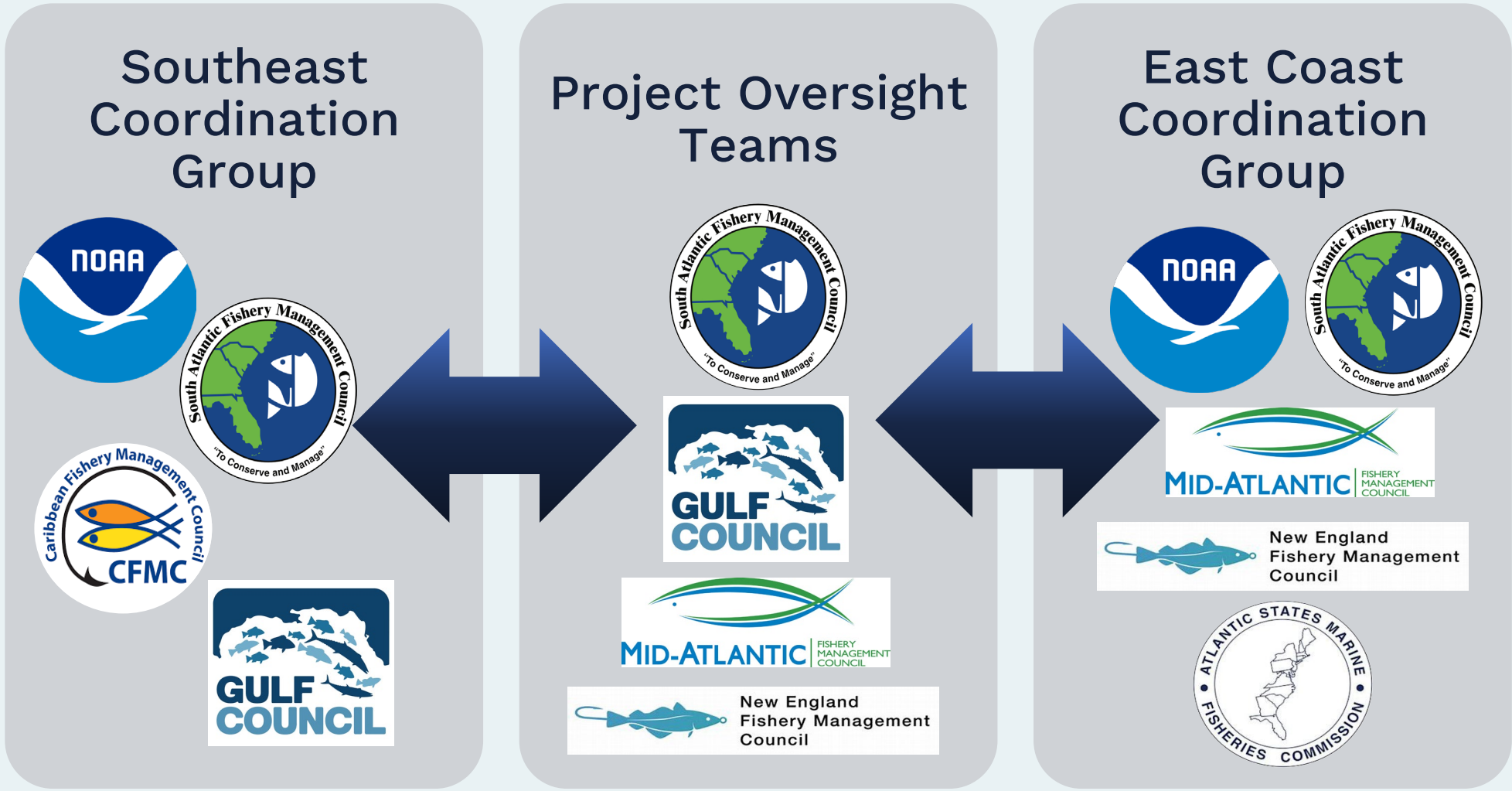
Resilient Fisheries Initiatives

1. SAFMC Governance Projects: SAFMC Fishery Management Process Review and Ecosystem Information Review and Strategy Development
2. Stakeholder-Driven Adaptable Implementable Management (AIM) for Wreckfish Fishery
3. Updating Distributions & Essential Fish Habitat for Snapper Groupers, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Dolphin Wahoo FMUs
4. Multiphase Communities Project: Community Identification, Communication Plan Development, Ecosystem Change Impacts on Fishing Communities

WORKSHOPS

- SAFMC Ecosystem Data Workshop
- ECCG Governance Workshops

Cross-Regional Collaboration



Project 1a: Management Process Review

Contractors: Aaron Kornbluth, Stephen Poland, Purcie Bennet-Nickerson

Project Timeline



Deliverables:

- FMP Dashboard
- Final report including reviews and recommendations for:
  - SAFMC Processes including Committee structure
  - Management process bottlenecks, benchmarking, Council NEPA efficiency
  - Risk policy framework review across councils

Project 1b: Ecosystem Information Review

Contractors: Sarah Gaichas

Project Timeline



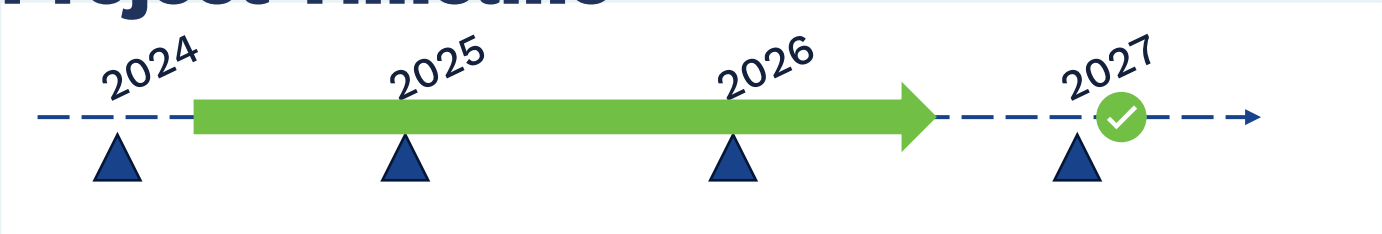
Deliverables:

- Final report including implementation recommendations:
  - All Councils Data Products and Approaches
  - Pathways for Integrating Ecosystem Information and prototype Ocean Indicators

Project 2: Management Strategies for Data-Limited Wreckfish Fishery

Contractors: Josh Nowlis, Thomas Remington, Jeremy Collie, Mateja Nenadovic, and Brian Snouffer

Project Timeline



Deliverables:

Final Report including:

- Short list of stakeholder selected alternative Harvest Control Rules and management measures

Project 3: Updating Spatial Distribution and Essential Fish Habitat

Contractors: Jie Cao, Janet Nye, Seungyeon Jade Hong

Project Timeline



Deliverables:

- Updated spatial distributions for some Snapper-Grouper/Dolphin Wahoo/CMP
- Relative importance of habitat and environments and conditions driving spatial distribution changes
- Predicted habitat areas for species
- Estimated abundance indices and changes in species distributions

Project 4: Communities Project

Objectives

Characterize South Atlantic fishing communities, their economic dependencies, and vulnerabilities to environmental change

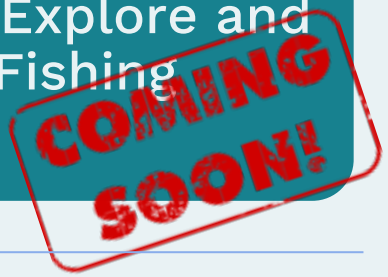
Phase I: Place-Based Identification and Characterization of SA Fishing Communities

Development of a strategic Outreach and Communication Plan to promote use of community perspectives in Council decisions

Phase II: Stakeholder Outreach and Communication Assessment and Strategic Plan

Ecosystem modeling for improved understanding of community impacts

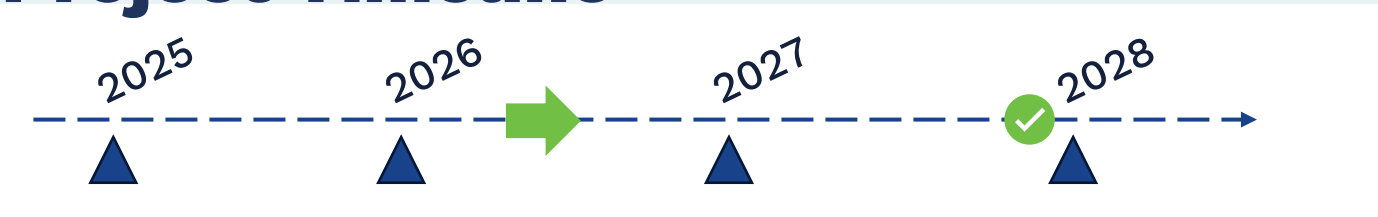
Phase III: Ecosystem Modeling to Explore and Describe Changes Affecting Fishing Communities



Project 4: Communities Project Phases I & II

Contractors: Edward Camp, Jennifer Sweeney Tookes, Bryan Fluech, Tracy Yandle, Michael Jepson, Kai Lorenzen, Chelsey Crandall, Angela Collins, Andrew Ropicki & Joy Hazell

Project Timeline



Deliverables:

Phase I

- Place-based fishing communities impacted by SAFMC management decisions Report
- Outreach products
- Councils existing use of social data and identify new onramps assessment

Phase II

- Assessment of Communication and Outreach activities
- Communication strategic and implementation plan
- Communications hub
- Guidance materials and training

Implementation Planning Underway

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Implementation Planning Underway

Resilient Fisheries Initiatives

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4 Multiphase Communities Project: Community Identification, Communication Plan Development, Ecosystem Change Impacts on Fishing Communities

Essential Fish Habitat Five-Year Review

- Updated spatial distribution
- Comparisons between existing EFH designations
- Improved EFH maps on the Council website
- EwE modeling to explore indicators of change
  - potential future EFH changes
  - improved use of ecosystem data into Council process

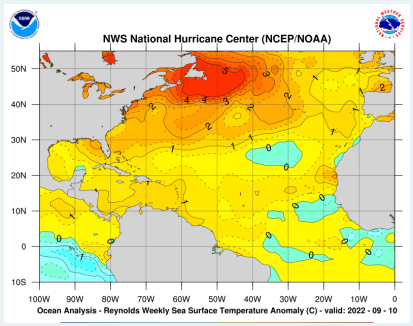
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Ecosystem Data Workshop

Purpose of this Briefing

- Summarize key system-level observations from the workshop
- Highlight the six guidance themes developed through the process
- Focus on broad outcomes relevant to future ecosystem-based management









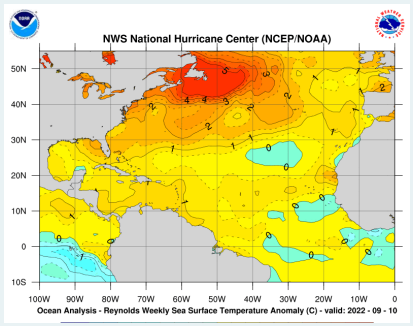
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Ecosystem Data Workshop

Workshop Context

- NOAA-funded, SAFMC-led regional workshop
- Organized to address recommendations from:
  - Atlantic Coast Science Coordination Workshop (2021)
  - East Coast Scenario Planning (2021-2023)
- Collaboration with regional partners was a priority
- Guidance will inform implementation of IRA project outcomes and more!









Workshop Outcomes – System-Level Observations

Awareness, Capacity and Relevance

AWARENESS AND ACCESS

There is already a lot of ecosystem information available

- The challenge is not necessarily a lack of information
- Existing tools are hard to find, compare, and use
- Raise awareness and streamline what already exists

CAPACITY

Capacity is limited, so practical approaches matter

- Teams have limited time, budget, and staff
- Simple, ready-to-use tools deliver more value than complex ones
- Focus on a few high-value resources rather than covering everything

DECISION RELEVANCE

Ecosystem information works best when tied to specific decisions

- Many tools were built without a clear decision or audience in mind
- Information helps most when designed around a management need
- Make decision relevance a central focus going forward

Workshop Outcomes – System-Level Observations

Trust, Usability and Integration

FAMILIARITY AND TRUST

Familiarity and trust strongly affect whether information is used

- Decision-makers favor tools they already know and trust
- New tools have value but need time to earn credibility
- Transparency and repeated use build confidence

TIMING AND USABILITY

Timing and usability are major challenges

- Information often arrives too late to shape the decision
- Tools that are hard to use get set aside, regardless of quality
- Fitting smoothly into existing workflows drives real adoption

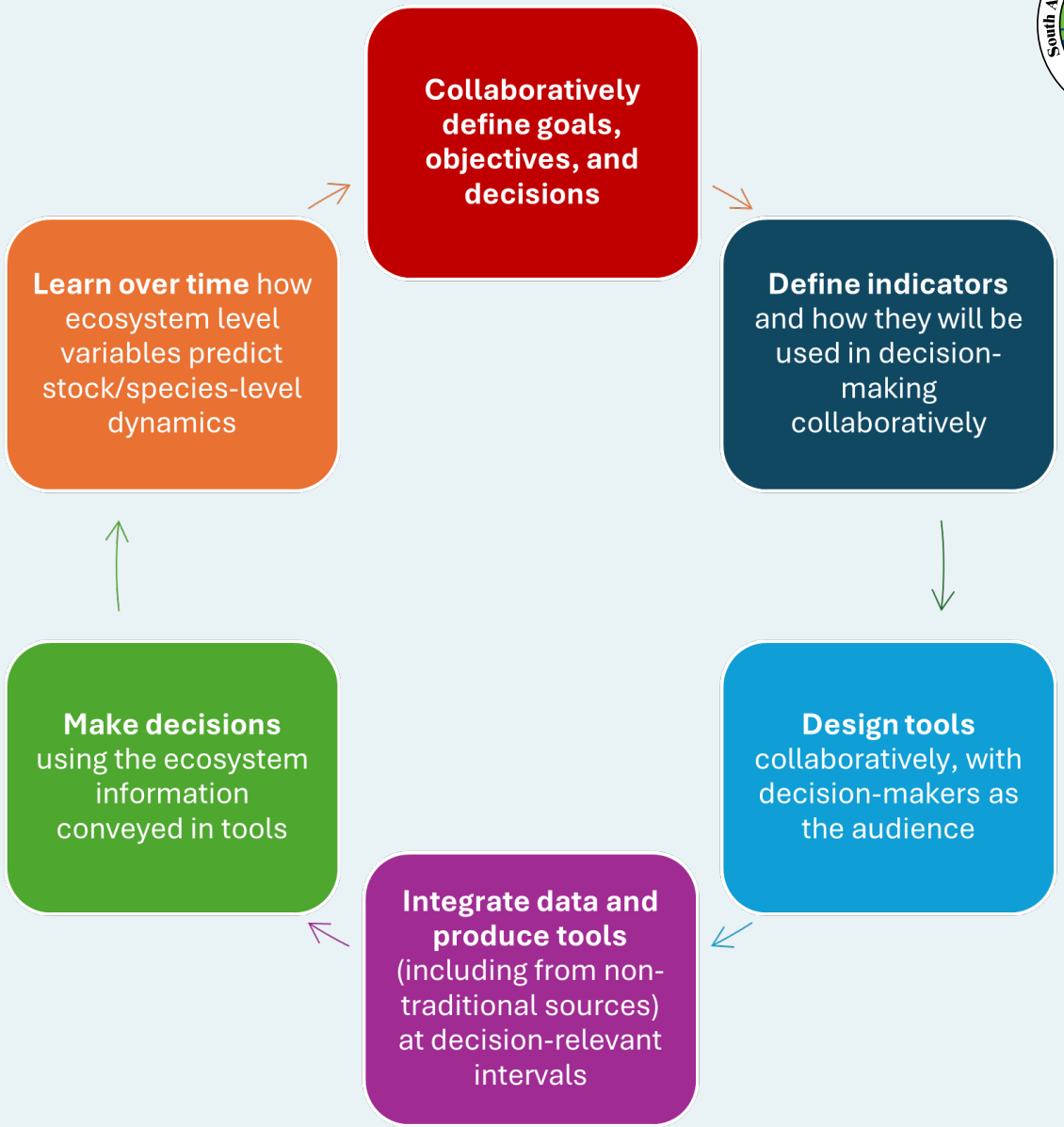
INTEGRATION

Integration into decisions is limited

- Many tools were built without a clear decision or audience in mind
- Information helps most when designed around a management need
- Make decision relevance a central focus going forward

Collaborative, Strategic Cycle to Integrate Ecosystem Data into Fisheries Management Decisions

- Begin with clear goals, objectives and decisions
- Collaboration across managers, scientists, partners and early
- Information linked directly to action
- Repeatable yet flexible process
- Transparency, trust, and shared learning



WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Guidance Themes

1 PURPOSE

2 PROCESSES

Start with a Purpose and Use Existing Processes

Clearly define goals, objectives, decisions, and roles

- Begin with management purpose
- Clarify decision pathways and responsibilities

Build on existing processes

- Use existing Council, SSC, committee, and advisory structures
- Focus on practical entry points rather than new systems

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Guidance Themes

3 COLLABORATE

4 DESIGN FOR USE

Collaborate and Design for Use

Collaborate within and across regions

- Involve managers, scientists, and partners early
- Support coordination across councils and NOAA regions

Strategically design indicators and tools

- Align indicators and tools with decisions
- Consider audience, timing, data availability, and resilience

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Guidance Themes

5 BUILD TRUST

6 IMPROVE TOOL USE

Build Trust and Improve Tool Use

Build trust in indicators and tools

- Use transparent, inclusive, and iterative processes
- Strengthen feedback loops and communication

Enhance use of promising tools

- Improve awareness of existing tools
- Refine tools to better support management use

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Wrap-Up

Key Takeaways

Workshop outcomes point to a need for more strategic, decision-focused use of ecosystem information

The main challenges are less about lack of data and more about:

- Alignment
- Usability
- Timing
- Trust
- And Process

The guidance themes provide a practical framework for improving ecosystem data integration over time

Questions?

