



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Resilient Fisheries Update

June-July 2026

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SAFMC Resilient Fisheries Update

There's more!

A screenshot of the SAFMC website's "Resilient Fisheries" page. The page has a blue header with the council's name and social media icons. A dark blue sidebar on the left contains a navigation menu with "Resilient Fisheries" highlighted and a red arrow pointing to it. The main content area features the title "Resilient Fisheries" and a paragraph describing the initiative, alongside a large image of the ocean under a blue sky.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

GET INVOLVED

Home / Resilient Fisheries

Resilient Fisheries

Resilient Fisheries Initiative and Projects support the development of more nimble and adaptive fisheries management processes and advice in the Southeast region by reviewing available information, identifying impactful change, and supporting the Council's implementation.

Home

Regulations

Meetings

Fishery Management

News & Updates

About the Council

Habitat and Ecosystem

Best Fishing Practices

Citizen Science Program

Science & SEDAR

• Resilient Fisheries

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

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



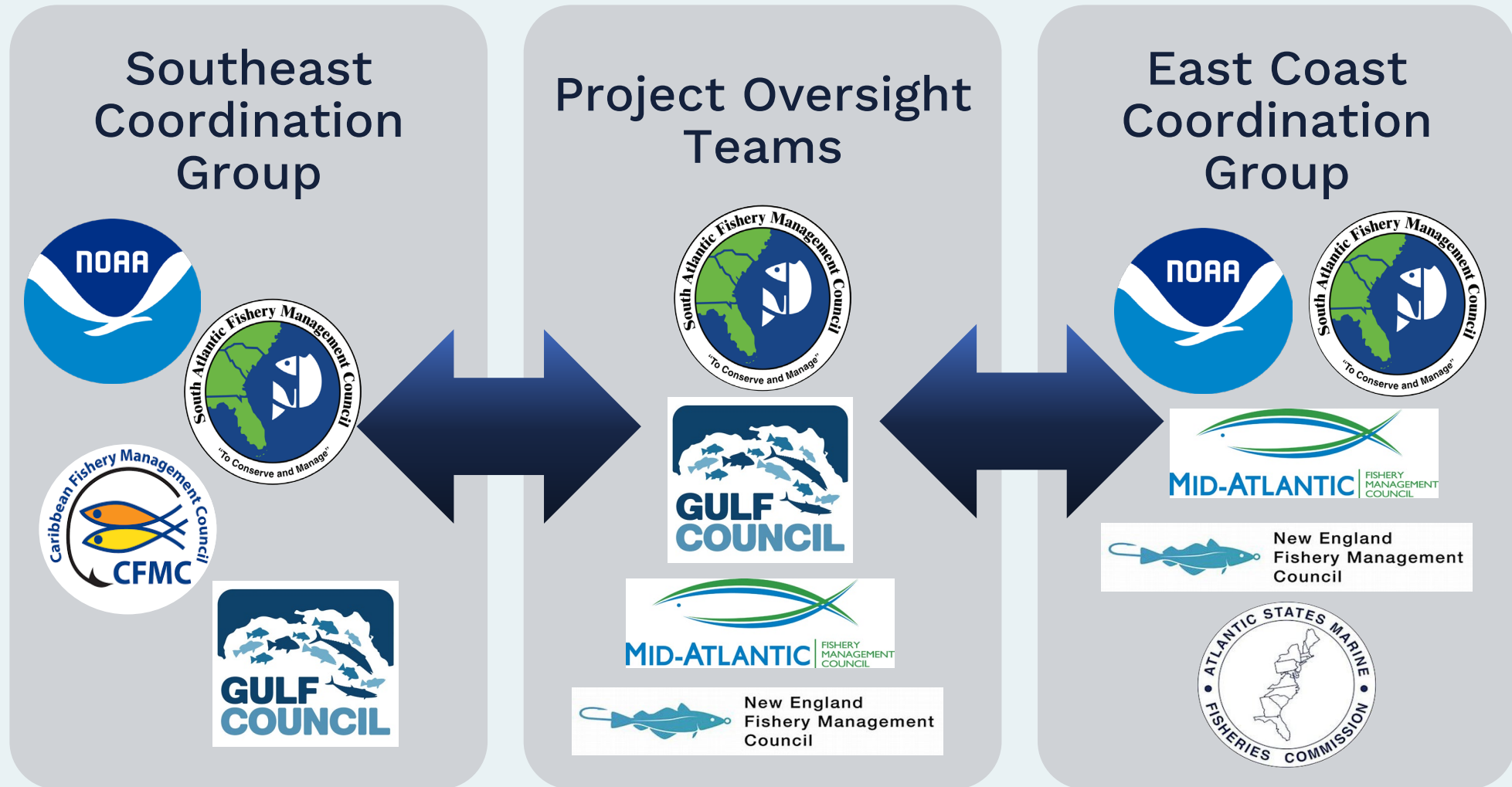
Resilient Fisheries Initiatives

- 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

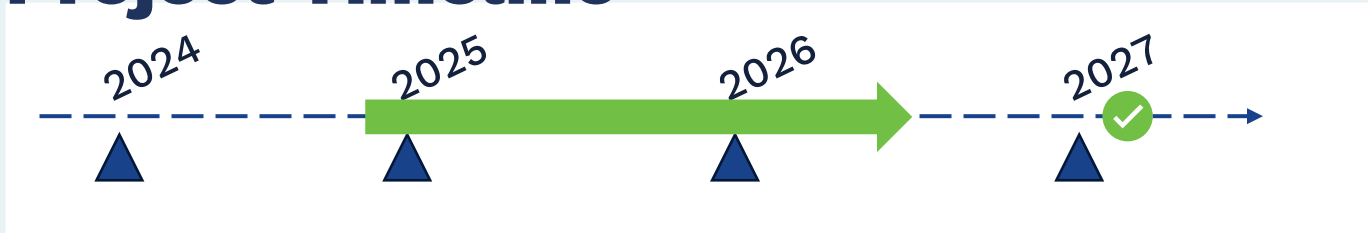




Project 1a: Management Process Review

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

Project Timeline



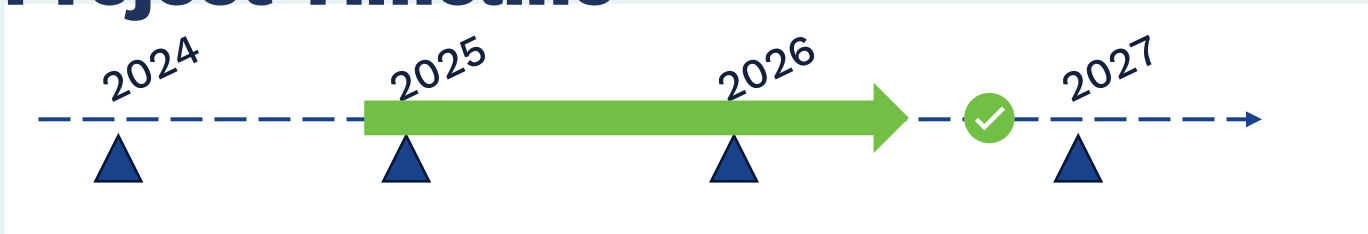
Deliverables:

- 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:

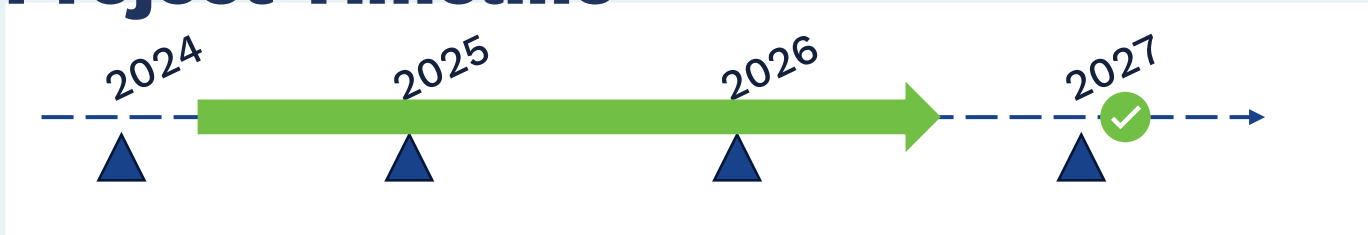
- Final report including implementation recommendations:
 - All Councils Data Products and Approaches
 - Pathways for Integrating Ecosystem Information and prototype Ocean Indicators

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

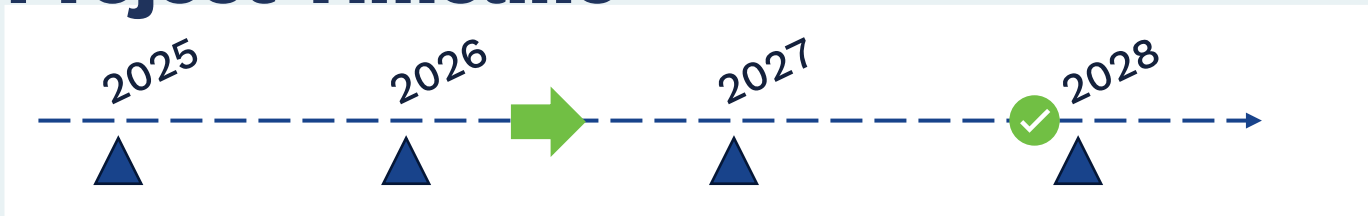
COMING SOON!



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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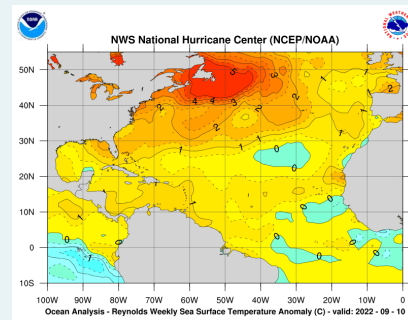
Essential Fish Habitat Five-Year Review

- 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

SAFMC Resilient Fisheries **Ecosystem Data Workshop**

Purpose of this Briefing

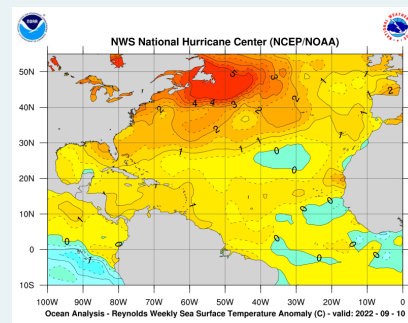
- Summarize key system-level observations from the workshop
- Highlight the six guidance themes developed through the process
- Focus on broad outcomes relevant to future ecosystem-based management



SAFMC Resilient Fisheries **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

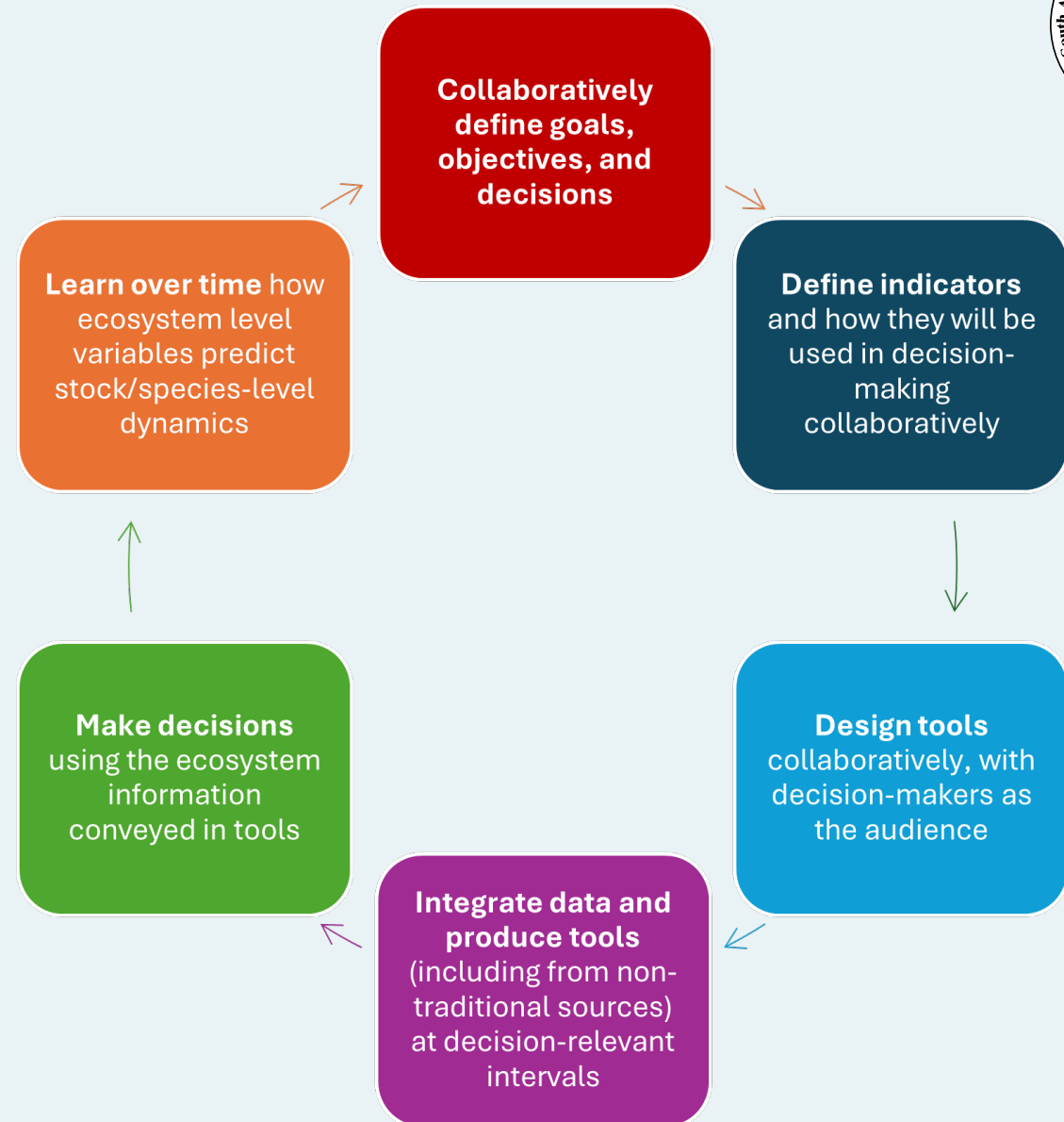
INTEGRATION

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





Guidance Themes

1 PURPOSE

Start with a Purpose and Use Existing Processes

Clearly define goals, objectives, decisions, and roles

- Begin with management purpose
 - Clarify decision pathways and responsibilities
-

2 PROCESSES

Build on existing processes

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

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

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

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?



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