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THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

# Resilient Fisheries Project Update

## July 2025



# Presentation Outline

- Overview of Resilient Fisheries Initiatives
- SAFMC Climate Projects
- Timelines, Feedback and Next Steps

# Resilient Fisheries Initiatives

A screenshot of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council website. The header includes the council's name and a "GET INVOLVED" button with social media icons. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with items like Home, Regulations, Meetings, Fishery Management, News & Updates, About the Council, Habitat and Ecosystem, Best Fishing Practices, Citizen Science Program, Science & SEDAR, and Resilient Fisheries. A red arrow points to the "Resilient Fisheries" link. The main content area features the title "Resilient Fisheries" and a paragraph describing the initiative's goals, alongside a large image of the ocean.

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council** GET INVOLVED f t i y

[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.

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



# Resilient Fisheries Initiatives

## East Coast Scenario Planning Initiative



- Identify and plan for uncertainty
- Engaged hundreds of stakeholders throughout region
- Developed a scenario framework to explore potential governance and management changes

# Resilient Fisheries Initiatives

## East Coast Scenario Planning Initiative



## Outcomes

- Potential Action Menu
  - Cross-Jurisdictional Governance
  - Managing Under Increased Uncertainty
  - Data Sources and Partnerships
- East Coast Coordination Group

# South Atlantic Resilient Fisheries Projects



## Background

- NOAA announced funding for Regional Fishery Management Councils
- To support development and advancement of resilient fisheries management and implementation
- SAFMC developed projects that addressed existing needs
  - East Coast Scenario Planning Potential Action Menu
  - SAFMC Research and Monitoring Priorities
- Prioritized collaboration and coordination between management agencies

## Resilient Fisheries Initiatives

# South Atlantic Resilient Fisheries Projects

## Collaboration and Coordination


- East Coast Coordination Group
- Southeast Projects Coordination Group
- Project Oversight Teams



## **Resilient Fisheries Initiatives**

# **South Atlantic Resilient Fisheries Projects**



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- A vertical rectangular image on the left side of the slide showing a calm blue ocean under a clear sky.
1. Climate Response Readiness Review
  2. Stakeholder-Driven AIM for Wreckfish Fishery
  3. Updating Spatial Distributions and Essential Fish Habitat for Snapper-Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Dolphin Wahoo
  4. Communicating Climate Impacts with Fishing Communities



# Project 1: Climate Response Readiness Review



## Goal:

Improve the Council's responsiveness and adaptability to dynamic fisheries and ecosystems by evaluating and improving regulatory processes and governance structures.

## Objectives:

1. Evaluate how ecosystem and species information product development and availability can support Council allocation decisions and management actions.
2. Review outcomes of other U.S. Regional Fisheries Council program reviews, identify management process efficiencies and opportunities for the SAFMC to realize program
3. Identify opportunities to further use of cooperative, constituent-engaged data collection and research.
4. Evaluate committee structure and use: compare with NEFMC, MAFMC, Gulf Council and ASMFC.
5. Evaluate opportunities to build upon existing considerations of risk to account for increasing environmental uncertainties.

## Status:

2 Request for Proposals were developed to meet the objectives and were opened June 2025. Proposal review is underway, formation of Project Oversight Team will follow.

# Project 1: Climate Response Readiness Review



## **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

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Trish Murphey, Chair | Jessica McCawley, Vice Chair  
John Carmichael, Executive Director

### **Request for Proposals**

#### **Ecosystem Information Review and Strategy Development for More Resilient Fisheries**

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) is seeking a contractor to conduct an ecosystem information review and develop recommendations for ways to incorporate ecosystem information into SAFMC fisheries management processes.

**Proposal Submission Deadline:** June 30, 2025

#### **Background:**

In 2021, the SAFMC partnered with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to undertake the East Coast Ecosystem Assessment (ECCA).

The tool used by ecosystem

The Council is looking for a contractor to:

1. Assess existing ecosystem data and tools used by regional management councils and their application in management processes;
2. Explore ways to integrate ecosystem information into SAFMC management, focusing on practical implementation requirements;
3. Seek opportunities for cooperative data collection and research to enhance ecosystem information in the South Atlantic region.

# Project 2: Stakeholder-Driven AIM for Wreckfish Fishery



## Goal:

Apply an adaptive management technique called Adaptive Implementable Management (AIM) to guide a stakeholder-driven management development process for the South Atlantic wreckfish fishery.

## Objectives:

1. Complete a data-limited stock assessment
2. Develop stakeholder-driven management decision
3. Recommend catch-level management strategies

## Status:

Contractor selected, Project Oversight Team formed, and work underway.  
Project timeline is on track.

# Project 3: Updating Spatial Distribution and Essential Fish Habitat

## Goal:

Explore indicators of climate-driven changes in spatial distribution and habitat associations for the fish and fisheries managed by SAFMC.

## Objectives:

1. Updated information on species and fishery spatial distributions
2. Comparisons between existing EFH designations to updated species distributions
3. Recommendations for potential future EFH change
4. Improved display of EFH information on the Council website

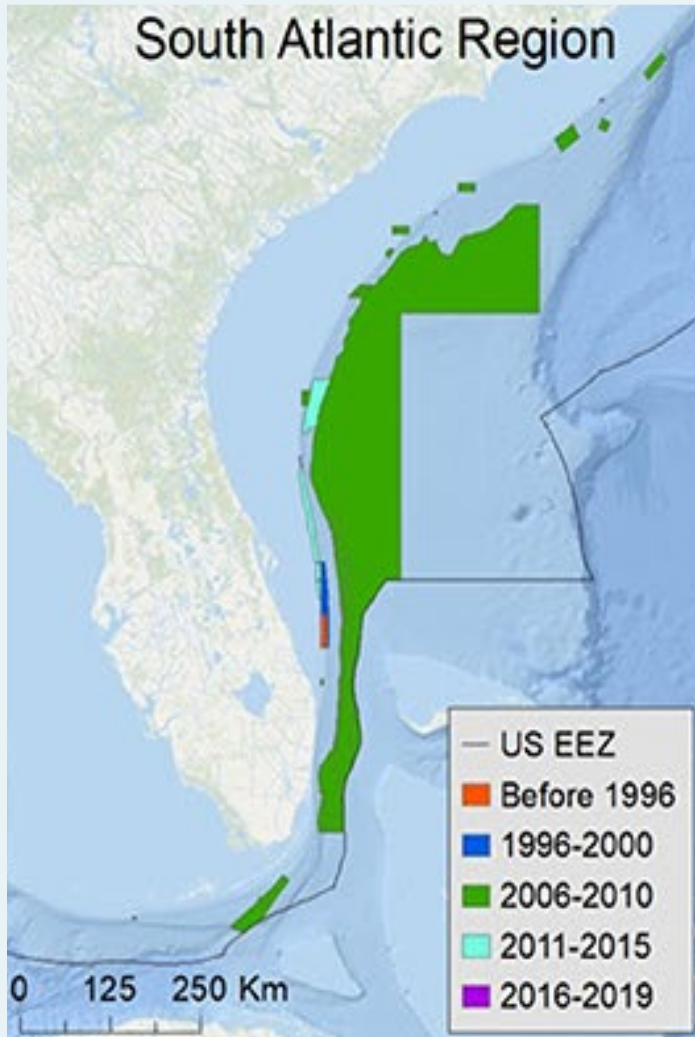
## Status:

Contractor selected, Project Oversight Team formed, and work underway. Project timeline is on track.





# Project 3: Updating Spatial Distribution and Essential Fish Habitat



## Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel Review

- Anticipate changes to Essential Fish Habitat designations based on project outcomes
- Jan/Feb 2027 Presentation by Contractor to HEAP to gather input



# Project 4: Communicating Climate Impacts with Fishing Communities

## Goal:

Identify and develop communications with fishing communities, including those newly interacting with Council-managed species in the South Atlantic region.

## Objectives:

1. Identify fishing communities and collect their preferences for council engagement
2. Identify challenges in these communities
3. Evaluate role of Council in mitigating these challenges

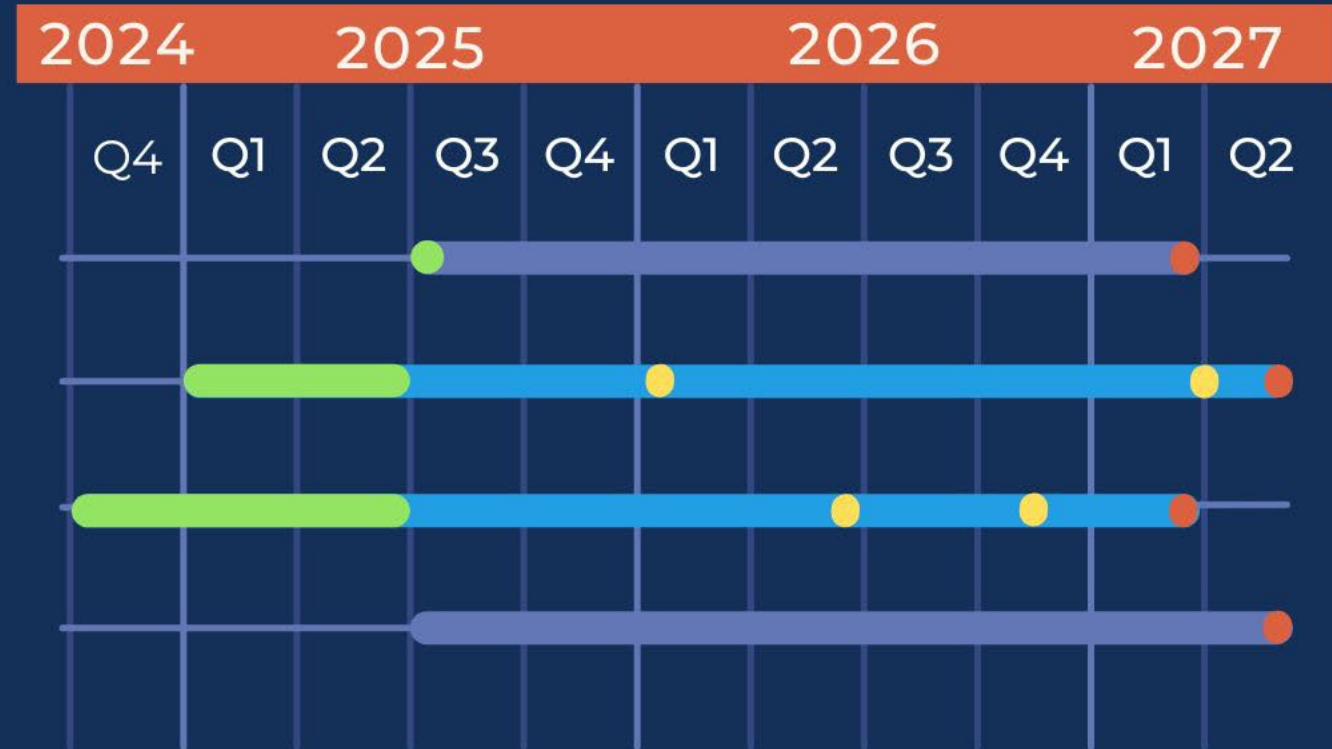
## Status:

Project is under review.

# Timelines and Next Steps

## PROJECT

- 1: Readiness Review
- 2: Data-Limited Fishery
- 3: Distribution and EFH
- 4: Fishing Communities



- Project Progress
- SSC or AP Input
- Presentation to SAFMC
- Anticipated Timeline
- Established Timeline

# Questions?

