



Ecosystem Information Review and Strategy Development

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

This project aims to strengthen management outcomes by expanding the use of ecosystem information and collaborative research within the South Atlantic region. It will assess how all U.S. regional fisheries management councils utilize ecosystem data products and decision-support tools, provide comparative insights, and identify best practices and develop strategies for integration into SAFMC management processes. The project will also address practical implementation requirements, evaluate opportunities for cooperative data collection, and develop prototype ecosystem indicators tailored to regional needs. Project outcomes and recommendations will be presented in coordination with the Management Process Review.

Progress Updates

- The project is nearing completion with the final report presentation scheduled for the September Council Meeting.
- The report on All Councils Ecosystem Data Products and Approaches was submitted in February to the Project Oversight Team for review.
- The contractor presented findings from the all Councils report and asked for feedback on project next steps focused on quantitative indicator development and incorporation related to the Councils ABC Control Rule.
- A draft report on Pathways for Integrating Ecosystem Information and Prototype Ocean Indicators was submitted on April 30 for initial review.
- The contractor is scheduled to present at the June/July HEAP meeting.

Project Team

Contractor: Sarah Gaichas

Oversight Team: Michelle Bachman (NEFMC), Myra Brouwer, Chip Collier, Kiley Dancy (MAFMC), John Hadley, Lara Klibansky, Michelle Walsh (NOAA SERO), Verena Wang (Gulf Council)

Project Timeline

2025

- ✓ **Jun** - Request for proposals released.
- ✓ **Jul/Aug** - Proposals reviewed and contractor selected
- ✓ **Aug** - Project Oversight Team formed. Begin Council document and literature review.
- ✓ **Sept** - Begin quarterly Project Oversight Team meetings; begin summary of Council approaches
- ✓ **Oct** - Interim Report on all Council data products and approaches to POT for feedback and revision

2026

- ✓ **Jan** - Draft Report on all Council data products and approaches
- ✓ **Jan/Feb** - Participation in Ecosystem Data Gaps Workshop
- ✓ **Apr** - Draft Report on Pathways for Integrating Ecosystem Information/ Prototype Ocean Indicators to SSC
- Jul** - Final Report completed and outcomes shared with Management Review Process project team
- Sept** - Presentation of all project results to Council

2027

Implementation will begin with the Council reviewing and project outcomes and recommendations.