



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 kick-off Project Oversight Team (OT) meeting was held in September. The project oversight team (listed below) is composed of representatives from federal fisheries management partners across the East and Gulf coasts.
- The project contractor is collaborating with the Ecosystem Data Gaps Workshop steering committee on workshop tools and presentation.
- An interim report on all Councils data products and approaches was submitted to the OT for feedback and revision.
- Next steps are continued work on the all Councils data report for submission at the end of January to the OT, and initiation of data acquisition for the development of prototype ecosystem indicators.

Project Team

Contractor: Sarah Gaichas

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

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** begins with the Council reviewing and considering the approval of project outcomes and recommendations.