



Snapper Grouper • Coastal Migratory Pelagics • Dolphin Wahoo

Updating Distributions & Essential Fish Habitat

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

Using state-of-the-art spatiotemporal modeling techniques this project will explore indicators of non-stationarity in the spatial distribution and habitat associations for the fish and fisheries managed under the SAFMCs' Snapper-Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics and Dolphin Wahoo FMPs. The updated species distributions and Essential Fish Habitat descriptions will inform Council decision-making for more resilient fisheries management and governance. Project outcomes will also inform evaluations of existing governance structures, including cooperative and interjurisdictional governance approaches.

Progress and Next Steps

- The project is on track and progressing as expected. The Project Oversight Team (OT) met in August and received a project update and provided feedback to the contractors, including recommendations for the consideration of additional data sources.
- A Ph.D. student has been hired to work with the Co-PI's to develop the spatiotemporal models for species in the Coastal Migratory Pelagic and Dolphin Wahoo FMU's.
- Key data sources and collaborators have been contacted and requests submitted. Compilation and processing of data has begun as they become available.
- Next steps for the contractors will be developing single-species models for snapper-grouper and pelagic species. Initial results will be presented to the OT at their next meeting in Feb. 2026.

Project Oversight Team

Contractors: Jie Cao, NCSU (Co-PI); Janet Nye, UNC IMS (Co-PI)

Oversight Team: Kathleen Howington, Myra Brouwer, Tori Kentner (MAFMC), Simen Kaalstad (ASMFC), Chip Collier, Lara Klibansky

Project Timeline

2024

INITIATE



Oct. - Request for proposals released.



Dec. - Proposals reviewed and contractor selected.

2025

DEVELOP



Jan. - Project Oversight Team formed



Mar. - Begin quarterly Project Oversight Team meetings with contractors

2026

REVIEW

Feb. - Project Oversight Team initial model review

Oct. - SSC review of spatiotemporal models

2027

PRESENT

Feb. - Presentation to Habitat and Ecosystem AP

Mar. - Presentation to Council; Submit final report

2028

IMPLEMENT

Begin Council consideration and implementation of project outcomes & recommendations