



Communities Project Phase I: Place-Based Identification and Characterization of South Atlantic Fishing Communities

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

Phase I of the Communities Project is designed to build on the Council's longstanding history of engagement with fishing communities by strengthening and refining its understanding of who those communities are and how they are affected by management decisions. This phase focuses on the place-based identification and characterization of communities impacted by South Atlantic Fishery Management Council actions, using existing social, economic, and environmental data at a finer geographic scale than currently available. It examines communities' connections to Council-managed species and assesses vulnerabilities related to ecosystem change, such as sea level rise, storm impacts, and shifts in fish distribution. The resulting analysis, data products, and visual tools provide the Council with a clearer, more nuanced picture of fishing communities across the region, creating a strong evidence base to support more targeted outreach, communication, and management efforts in Phase II and beyond.

Progress Updates

- The project oversight team held a kick-off meeting in May to discuss Phase I and II coordination, timelines, and project plan
- Given the project timeline, the OT will meet monthly to ensure alignment between project phases and project objectives.
- An in-person meeting is planned for early September.

Project Team

Contractors: University of Florida: Edward Camp; Angela Collins; Bryan Fleuch; Joy Hazell; Michael Jepson; Kai Lorenzen; Andrew Ropicki; Jennifer Sweeney Tookes; Tracy Yandle

Oversight Team: Julia Byrd, Chip Collier, Christina Curtis, Kathi Kitner (SEP), Lara Klibansky, Christina Package-Ward (NOAA, SEP member), Jason Walsh (NCDMF, SEP Vice Chair)

Anticipated Timeline

2025



Dec- Request for proposals released.

2026



Jan/Feb - Proposals reviewed and contractor selected; Project Begins



Mar - Project Oversight Team to be formed and quarterly meetings begun



May - Kick-off OT Meeting; project underway



Jun - Place-based fishing communities update from data; changing ecosystem analysis; Community vulnerability assessment

Fall - Database development

2027



April - Draft report presented to Social and Economic Panel

May - Outreach project development

TBD - All reports and presentations completed.

Implementation of project outcomes begins.