



Communities Project Phase III: Modeling Effects of Changing Ecosystems on South Atlantic Fisheries and Fishing Communities

Resilient Fisheries Project Overview

Description

Phase III of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Communities Project will apply and enhance the South Atlantic Reef Fish (SARF) Ecopath with Ecosim and Ecospace (EwE) model to evaluate how future ecosystem change may affect fisheries, fishing communities, and management outcomes throughout the South Atlantic region. Building on community identification and characterization activities completed during Phases I and II, the project will integrate community-level data, indicators, fishing footprints, and vulnerability information into an ecosystem modeling framework. The model will be updated to incorporate future climate scenarios and used to examine species distribution shifts, productivity changes, multispecies interactions, regime shifts, fishing effort redistribution, and associated socioeconomic impacts on fishing communities. The project will also develop and evaluate ecosystem indicators that link ecosystem change to management outcomes and community resilience, supporting ecosystem risk assessment, tradeoff evaluation, and adaptive decision-making.

Progress Updates

- The proposal review and selection process is now complete, and a contract is now in place.
- The kick-off Oversight Team meeting is being planned for late September.

Project Team

Contractors: Lauren Gentry, FWRI(PI), David Chagaris, Luke McEachron, Shanae Allen, and Nicole Luchau

Oversight Team: Kathleen Howington, John Hadley, Marcel Reichert, Judd Curtis, Chip Collier, Lara Klibansky, NOAA members being finalized

Anticipated Timeline

2026

- ✓ **Apr** - Request for proposals released
- ✓ **May** - Proposal submission deadline
- ✓ **Jun** - Proposals reviewed and contractor selected
- ✓ **Aug** - Project Oversight Team formed; project begins
- Sept** - Initial Oversight Team meeting, then quarterly meetings
- Dec** - SARF model update and calibration

2027

- Apr** - SSC review of model updates
- TBD** - Scenario Testing and Analysis Complete; Final report presentation
- Implementation of project outcomes begins