



# Best Fishing Practices

New Projects & Outreach Update

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel  
October 2023



# CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

What It Means to Me" project

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Best Fishing Practices Master  
Volunteer Program (BFP MVP)

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SAFMC and Sea Grant  
Outreach Activities & Future  
Plans



An aerial photograph of the ocean with waves, overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent band across the center. The text is centered within this band.

**'What It Means to Me'**



# Background and Purpose

- Trust between fishermen and fisheries managers has long been a challenge.
- Fostering positive relationships = regular interaction with stakeholders.
- Project aims to bridge trust gap by capturing participants' voices in a relatable and constructive manner.



# Project Goals

- #1:** Help bridge the trust gap between the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and fishermen.
- #2:** Encourage more fishermen to use best fishing practices and get involved in fisheries management by joining advisory panels, attending Council meetings, making public comment, becoming a SAFMC Release participant, and participating in the Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program.
- #3:** Document the stories of those involved in South Atlantic fisheries in a constructive manner.



# Focus

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- Record and edit informal, short conversations with fishermen.
- **Possible conversation topics:**
  - How participant began fishing
  - Importance of fishery preservation
  - How their fishery can be preserved
  - Involvement in SAFMC Release and FISHstory
  - Advice to fellow fishermen
- **Possible platforms:**
  - Social media stories and Youtube
  - ArcGIS StoryMap
  - SAFMC website
  - Other SAFMC outreach programs





# TIMELINE

2023

## July-September

- Develop project proposal
- Investigate platforms to be used
- Draft conversation topics
- Practice with SAFMC staff

## September-December

- Present proposal to Council- **APPROVED**
- Gather b-roll content
- Identify and confirm participants
- Project implementation
  - Oct: SG AP meeting
  - Nov: DW, MC AP meetings
  - Dec: Council meeting

2024

## December-February

- Continue gathering b-roll content
- Video and audio editing
- Begin sharing on SAFMC platforms



# Discussion

1. What **additional conversation topics** may fit into the scope of the project?
2. What platforms presented may be **best** to share videos on? **Additional suggestions** for platforms?
3. Who would be interested in participating in the project?



# Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program

Project Update





# Goals

- #1:** Expand reach by empowering key members of the fishing community to spread the best fishing practices message and methods on SAFMC's behalf.
- #2:** Increase awareness and use of all best fishing practices when releasing fish, specifically snapper grouper species exhibiting signs of barotrauma.
- #3:** Increase SAFMC's regular interaction with stakeholders that will grow involvement in fisheries management.





# What is it?



Regional, in person workshops to train volunteers to become experts in best fishing practices (BFP).



Encourage training those in their fishing community.



Hosted quarterly, approximately 1.5-2 hour long workshops

# Target Audience

- Key members of fishing communities
- Port samplers
- Novice fishermen (indirectly)
- State and federal agencies





# Workshop Components

## BEST FISHING PRACTICES

- Barotrauma
  - How they work, state and federal regulations
- Descending devices
  - How they work, state and federal regulations
- Additional best practices
  - Handling, hooks, air exposure, avoidance
- Creating a descending device

!! ***Discussion throughout***



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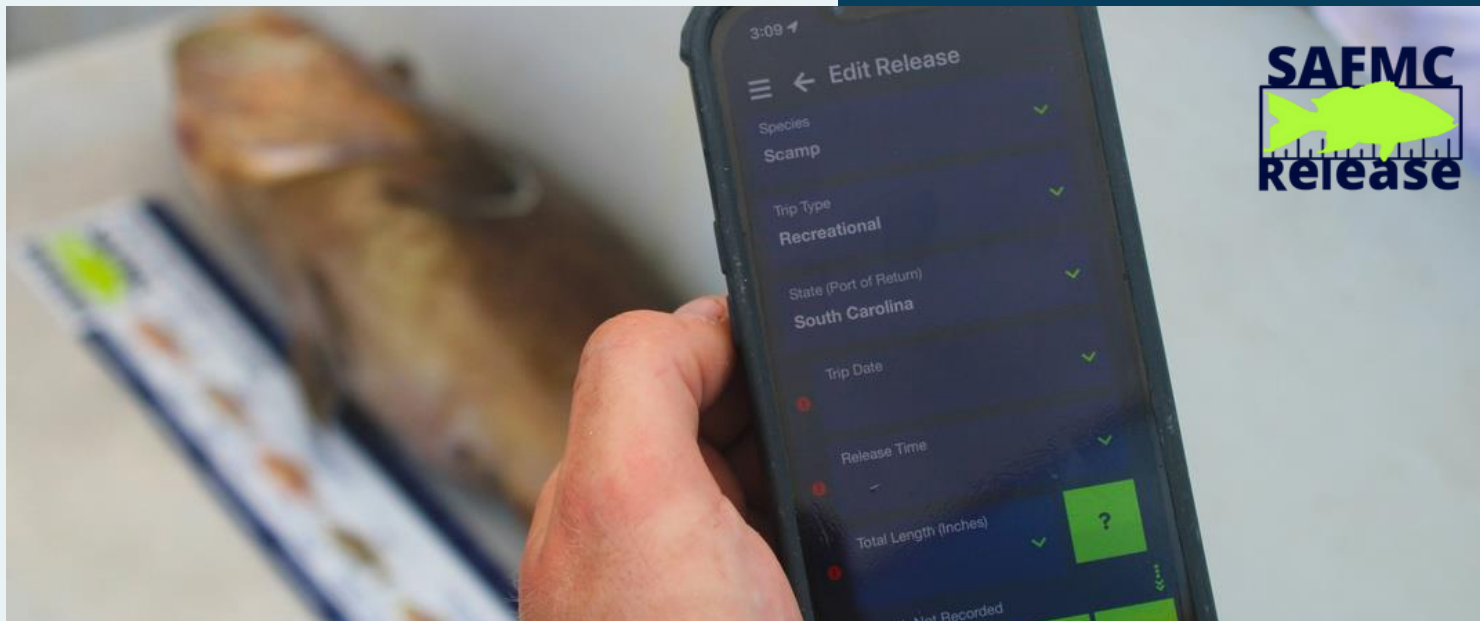


# Workshop Components

## GETTING INVOLVED

- Citizen Science
  - SAFMC Release, FISHstory
- The SAFMC
  - Magnuson Stevens Act overview
  - SAFMC jurisdiction and FMPs
  - Advisory panels, Council, public comment

!! *Discussion throughout*



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# Timeline

## ***Phase I***

April '23-July

- Establish background, purpose, audience goals
- Identify barriers and solutions
- Determine workshop components

## ***Phase II***

July-November

- Develop workshop components
- Establish evaluation methods
- Program branding
- Draft locations and dates

## ***Phase III***

December-March '24

- Solidify locations and dates
- Develop informational materials
- Create advertisements and promote workshops

## ***Phase IV***

March-December

- Workshop implementation





# Discussion

1. What **exact locations** could these workshops be held in your city/state?
2. Who would be willing to attend and spread the word about this workshop in their community?



A background photograph showing a red snapper being held by a person wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt with the 'Sea Grant' logo. Another person is using a digital scale to measure the fish's weight. The scene is set outdoors on a light-colored surface.

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# 2023 SAFMC and Sea Grant Outreach Efforts

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& What's Coming Up



# EVENTS

- Haddrell's Point Fishing Expo-Charleston, SC
- SCDNR Open House- Charleston, SC
- NCDMF 200 Year Jamboree- Morehead City, NC
- ICAST- Orlando, FL



# SEMINARS

- Haddrell's Point Fishing Expo-Charleston, SC
- Coastal Scuba- North Myrtle Beach, SC
- Jacksonville Offshore Fishing Club-Jacksonville, FL
- SeaCoast Anglers- Little River, SC





# ADDITIONAL EFFORTS

## *Tackle Shop Outreach*

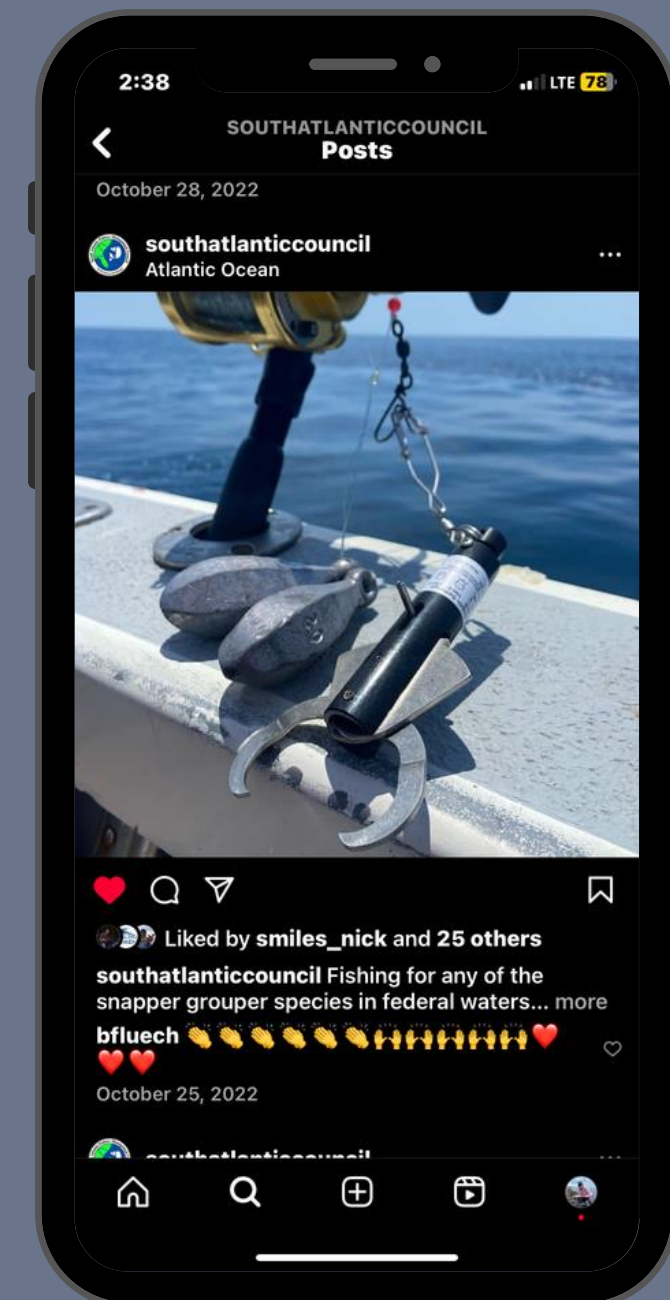
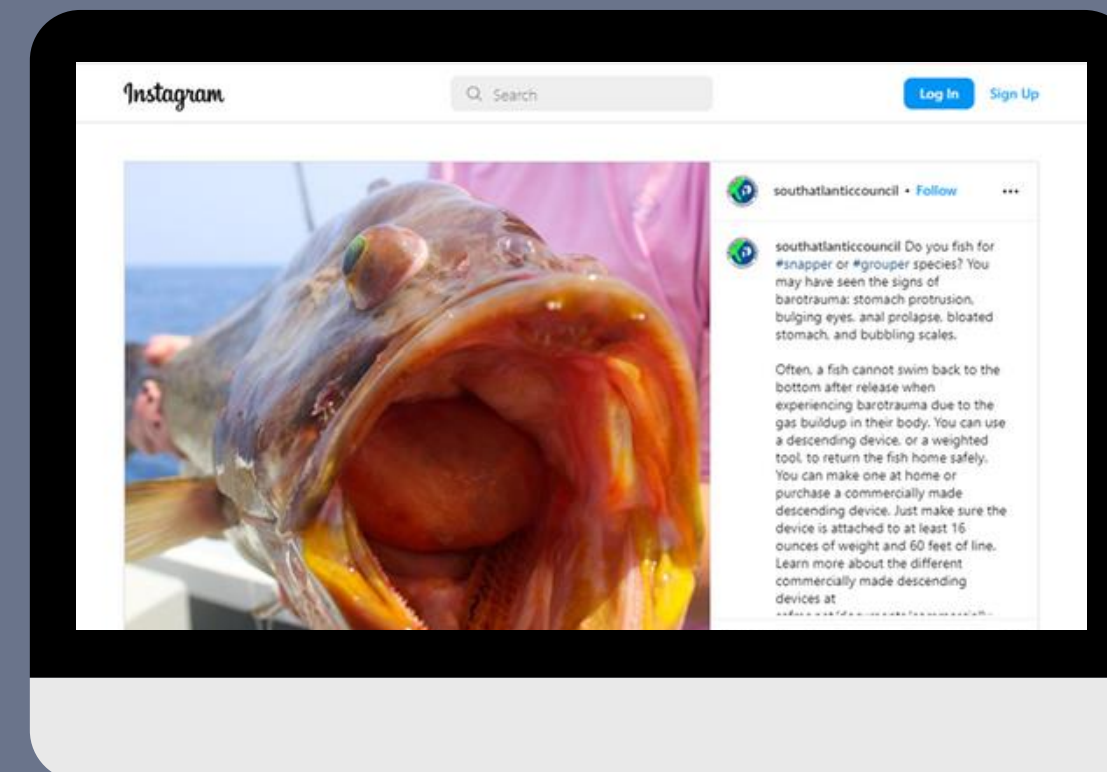
- ① North Carolina (Morehead City)
- ① South Carolina (Hilton Head, Charleston)
- ① Georgia (Savannah, Brunswick)
- ① Florida (Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Daytona, Miami, Key Largo)





# ADDITIONAL EFFORTS

- Pitman Creek mailings
- Increased BFP social media presence
- Citizen Science content creation trip
- Descending Device Outreach  
Coordination Team
- New BFP materials (rack card, brochure)







## CREATE YOUR OWN DESCENDING DEVICE

### WHEN DO YOU NEED A DEVICE?

- ✓ When fishing for snapper grouper species in South Atlantic federal waters
- ✓ On any vessel (private, charter/headboat, commercial)

### WHAT WILL YOUR DEVICE NEED?

- ✓ Minimum of **16 oz** of weight
- ✓ Minimum of **60 feet** of line or rope
- ✓ 1 device **readily available** per vessel

## TYPES OF HOMEMADE DEVICES

### INVERTED HOOK



A barbless hook and enough weight makes this a simple and effective descending device.

### JAW CLAMP



Easily made with a fish grip device, some rope, and rubber bands.

### WEIGHTED CRATE



Attach weights to a basket or milk crate, and descend your fish.

Scan the QR code to learn how to create these devices!



### Why Regulations?

Snapper grouper species live in deeper waters and often suffer from barotrauma. The regulations listed in this brochure aim to improve the survival of released fish in the multi-species snapper grouper fishery.

### Barotrauma 101

When gases in a fish's body cavity expand due to changes in barometric pressure while being reeled up quickly from depth.



#### THE SIGNS:

- Floating on water surface
- Bulging eyes
- Bloated stomach
- Protruding stomach
- Anal prolapse
- Bubbling scales

### Additional Information

Learn more about best fishing practices and federal regulations in the South Atlantic on our website at [safmc.net/bfp](http://safmc.net/bfp).



### FISH RULES

BY FISHBRAIN



Download the free Fish Rules app to have the latest regulations at your fingertips. Available for recreational and commercial.

### Have Questions?

Contact Ashley Oliver, Best Fishing Practices Outreach Specialist  
[ashley.oliver@safmc.net](mailto:ashley.oliver@safmc.net)

### Using Best Fishing Practices

Federal Requirements When Fishing for South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Species



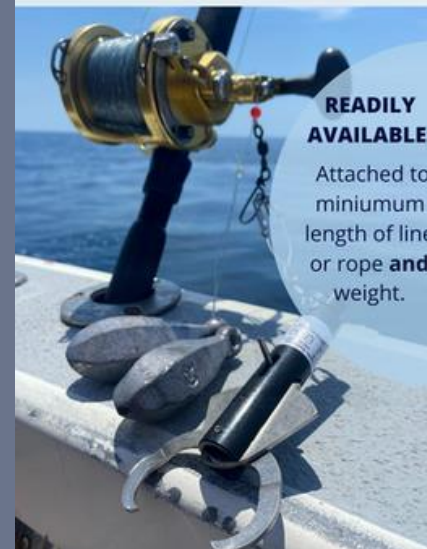
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- Descending Device Requirements
- Hook Requirements
- Dehooker Requirements
- Using a Descending Device

### Descending Device Requirements

- Have at least one descending device on board and **readily available** for use on any commercial, for-hire, or private recreational vessel while fishing for or possessing South Atlantic snapper grouper species.
- Attach the device to at least **16 ounces of weight**.
- Attach the device to minimum of **60 feet of line or rope**.



#### READILY AVAILABLE:

Attached to minimum length of line or rope **and** weight.

### Hook Requirements

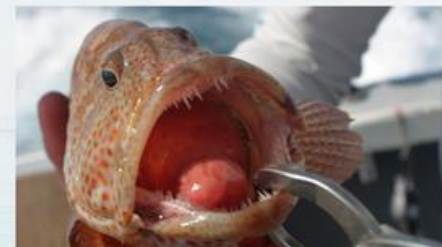
- Non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks with hook-and-line gear and natural baits north of 28° N latitude (just south of Cape Canaveral, FL).
- Non-stainless steel hooks with hook-and-line gear with natural baits south of 28° N Latitude.

### Dehooker Requirements

- Have at least **one** dehooking device on board and use it to remove hooks from snapper grouper species.
- The dehooker must have a blunt end and rounded edges and be able to secure the range of hook sizes and styles.
- The device must allow the hook to be secure and shield the barb to prevent re-engaging hook.

### Using a Descending Device

- A descending device is a weighted instrument that helps fish return to depth.
- A descending device should only be used if the fish is showing signs of barotrauma.



Learn more, including how to create your own descending device, at [safmc.net/bfp](http://safmc.net/bfp).

### BEST PRACTICES





# ***Upcoming Plans for 2023 & 2024***

## **Seminars**

- November: West Palm Beach Fishing Club
- TBD: South Dade Recreational Anglers Club
- TBD January: FL Keys

## **Events & Additional Efforts**

- January: FL Keys Seafood Festival- Key West, FL
- January: Haddrell's Point Fishing Expo- Charleston, SC
- Tackle shop outreach (Central NC, South FL and Keys)
- Sea Grant media trips (Morehead City, NC; FL Keys)
- Spring: BFP MVP



*Questions?*

## BEST PRACTICES

Use appropriate



gear

Keep the fish



in the water

Look for signs



of barotrauma

Use a descending



device when  
needed

For a complete list of best practices visit:  
[safmc.net/bfp](http://safmc.net/bfp)

