

Southeast region participatory modeling workshops

Project description and mission statement

Overarching goal

Increase information flow between scientists, managers, fishermen and other stakeholders, in support of improved stock and ecosystem assessments in the Southeast Region.

Specific objectives

- Document stakeholder knowledge of the system in a consistent format
- Identify the important linkages of feedbacks present in the system, including physical, biological, social and economic ecosystem components
- Recognize key leverage points in the system which would serve as priorities for evaluating risk
- Highlight factors which are priorities for future targeted research and potential inclusion in the data interpretation, stock assessment, or management process
- Understand what stakeholders value in the system

Modeling workshop description

A conceptual picture of a specific fishery ecosystem is developed in a collaborative setting among stock assessment scientists, social scientists, and members of the fishing community. The conceptual model building exercise takes place in groups of 10-15 people through a series of workshops with different participants. The purpose of the workshops is to inform strategies for improving stock assessments and ecosystem-based fishery management in the region. The main insights sought from stakeholders are to help the science community identify important components of the system – including those components that reflect the ecosystem services most valued – and understand how these components are related. The resulting model will be used in a strategic rather than operational sense; i.e., the model will inform subsequent analyses or existing simulation and assessment models, rather than producing actionable results itself.

The initial participatory modeling workshop effort will be implemented over a three-year time horizon, with the goal of integrating outputs into science and management over the near term (3-5 years). Integration will take place via informal and formal communications with the Fisheries Councils and their advisory panels and scientific and statistical committees, as well as through the SEDAR process and Integrated Ecosystem Assessment program activities such as Ecosystem Status Reports.

General expectations

NOAA Fisheries partners have a commitment to maintain honest and transparent communication and, to the best of their ability, to report back to participants the results of the modeling exercises and the ways that results were integrated into science and management. Industry partners have a role in maintaining open communication, providing feedback when requested, and helping to recruit community members for involvement.

Dolphin/wahoo fishery modeling

Following on an initial workshop series focusing on snapper-grouper fisheries of the West Florida Shelf, the initiative is being introduced to the dolphin/wahoo fishery in the South Atlantic. Initial results from the workshops will be communicated to the SAFMC and its SSC in the fall of 2020.

Project Contact: Mandy Karnauskas, NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Mandy.Karnauskas@noaa.gov, 305-361-4592