



# South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

## News Release

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### Council Launches its First Citizen Science Pilot Project

*New project gives fishermen opportunity to provide information about released scamp grouper via mobile app*

Estimating the number of fish harvested by offshore fishermen has consistently been a challenge for federal fishery managers. Gathering information about what fishermen *release* during a fishing trip is even more so. To help fill these data gaps, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council has initiated its first Citizen Science pilot project, SAFMC Scamp Release. The project allows fishermen to use the mobile app, *SAFMC Release*, to provide information on released scamp grouper. The mobile app was developed by Harbor Light Software with the support of The Pew Charitable Trusts and Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program with the [Citizen Science Association](#) serving as a fiscal sponsor.

“Fishermen have consistently offered to help collect data, many offering their boats to act as research platforms for sampling and observations,” explained Council Chair Jessica McCawley. “The Council’s Citizen Science Program, developed over the last three years with the guidance of a wide array of stakeholders and partners, now allows for that information to be collected. We are very proud of this new program and hopeful that data collected in this first pilot project can be used in an upcoming stock assessment for scamp.” A stock assessment for scamp grouper is scheduled to begin later this year and completed in 2021.

The *SAFMC Release* app provides an easy-to-use platform for fishermen to collect data on scamp that are released, including information on length, depth, and location of released scamp, as well as release treatment and the condition of the fish when released. Information on released fish is a research priority identified by the Council and an important data component for stock assessments. Data collected by individual fishermen through the pilot project will be confidential. “We are now recruiting offshore fishermen that target snapper grouper species to participate in this initial pilot project,” said Julia Byrd, the Council’s Citizen Science Program Coordinator. “Timing is key - and we need fishermen to begin collecting data now,” said Byrd. “The ability to collect this data through the *SAFMC Release* app offers a unique opportunity and we’re excited about the prospect to supplement data that will be used in future management of scamp.”

The aim of the Council’s [Citizen Science Program](#) is to engage fishermen, scientists and managers in co-creating projects that align with the Council’s research needs. This pilot project is designed to show that citizen science is a cost-effective way to supplement existing data collection efforts. Additional information about the SAFMC Scamp Release pilot project is available from the Council’s website at: <http://safmc.net/cit-sci/scamp-release/>.

Fishermen interested in providing data through the SAFMC Scamp Release pilot project should contact Julia Byrd at [julia.byrd@safmc.net](mailto:julia.byrd@safmc.net) or by calling 843/571-4366.

**The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils, conserves and manages fish stocks from three to 200 miles offshore of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and east Florida.**