

South Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, New England & Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils

ECOSYSTEM PILOT PROGRAMS

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Introduction

Evolving from Habitat Plan →

Fishery Ecosystem Plan

FOUR ITEMS:

1. Pilot Projects - background
2. Approach by NE, MA & GMFMC
3. SAFMC Approach to pilot & FEP
4. Recommendations

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Background

- In FY04, Congress allocated ~\$2 million for NOAA-Fisheries to conduct ecosystem management pilot projects in four regions:
 - **New England**
 - **Mid-Atlantic**
 - **South Atlantic**
 - **Gulf of Mexico**
- Report language from the Senate further explains -
 - *“The pilots purposely cover bodies of water that are contiguous, because the one influences the others.”*
 - *“Ultimately, should the pilots prove successful, the Committee would expect to fold more specific initiatives into the larger ecosystem approach.”*
 - *“NMFS is directed to report to the Committees on Appropriations not later than December 1, 2003 on its plans for implementing the pilots.”*

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Spending Plan for Pilot Projects (FY-2004 - \$1.948 kk)

- **Enhance Regional Ecosystem Governance Structures through Fishery Management Councils (FMCs) (\$945k)**
 - Determine Management Objectives, Threats, Options, and Alternatives
- **Conduct Technical Workshops (\$193k)**
 - Establish dialog between science and management in applying ecosystem principles to fisheries
 - * Assess the state-of-the-art, and facilitate dialog
 - * Determine technical needs
- **Develop Quantitative Decision Support Tools (\$810 k)**
 - Develop quantitative methods, frameworks and software to aid decision makers in evaluating management options and their consequences (models and GIS tools)

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Goals & Tasks

- Conduct public meetings with stakeholder groups to identify and prioritize ecosystem-related issues
- Participate in coordinated opinions/attitudes survey with wider public input
- Identify technical needs & inventory existing regional information (including that held by NOAA)
- Synthesize public input on Ecosystem Goals and Objectives
- All four Councils have now established Ecosystem Committees

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SAFMC Approach - FEP

1. Map fishermen & document catch/bycatch as they move across fisheries in our ecosystem
2. Expand existing relationships with other management agencies
3. Expand & refine South Atlantic Ecopath Model & explore sub-models for Oculina Bank HAPC, FL Keys, Deepwater Snapper Grouper Habitat & Albermarle-Pamlico Sound

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Map Fishermen & Basic Data

- Basic data on # fishermen, catch, by-catch, discards, size/age composition, CPUE incomplete to missing
 - Solution: Continue Implementing ACCSP**
- Document fleet dynamics in SA & links to GM, MA & New England
 - Solution: NMFS SERO completing revisions to permit database to allow tracking vessels across different fisheries; need to link to NER. Continue to administer economic logbooks; expand use.**

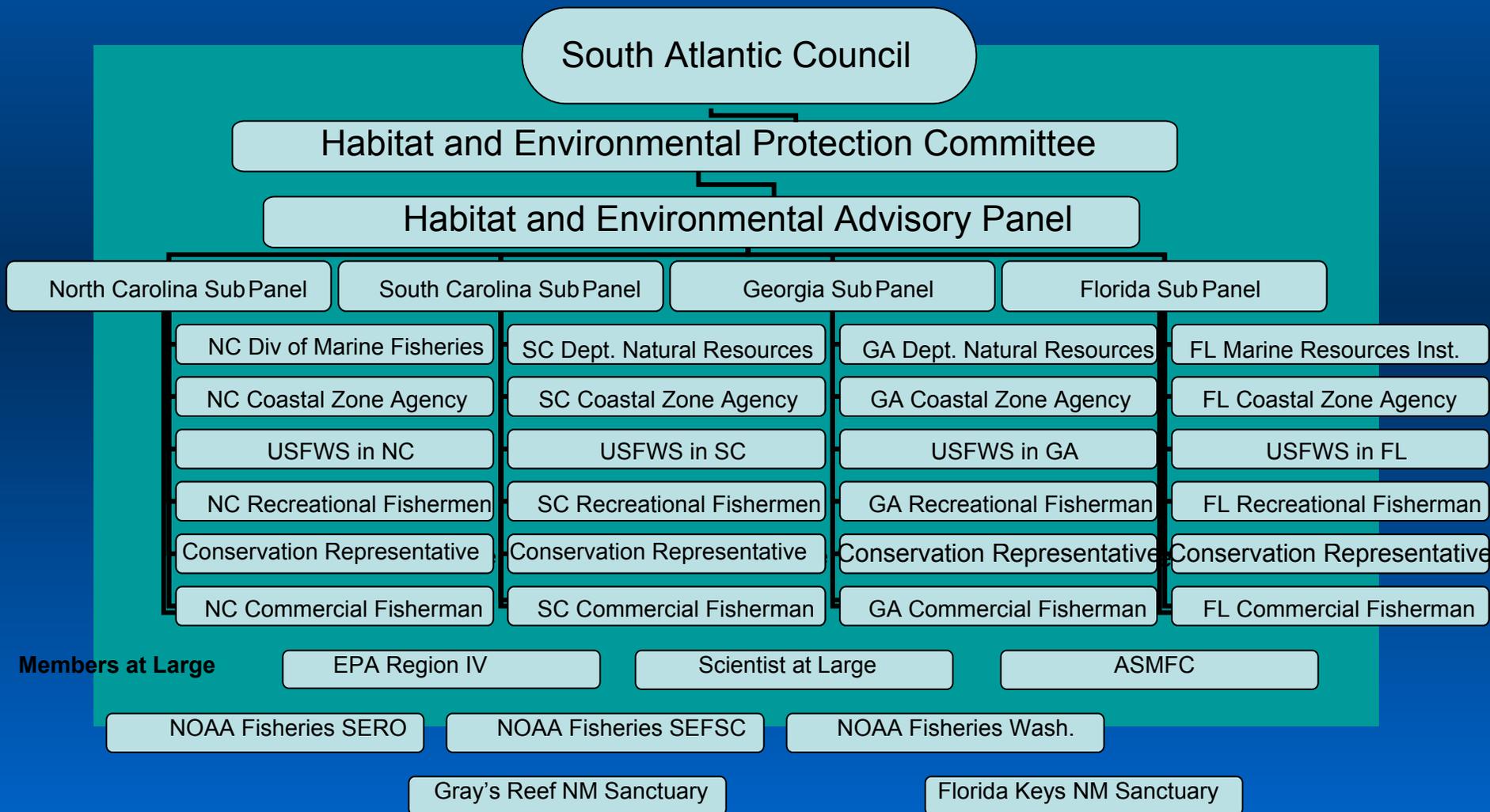
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Map Fishermen & Basic Data

- Why do we need this information?
 1. Stock assessments
 2. Impacts of regulations (intended & unintended)
 3. Effort shifts/cumulative impacts
 4. Fishery/fishing gear impacts on habitat
 5. Other applicable law (NEPA, ESA, MMPA, Executive Orders, etc.)

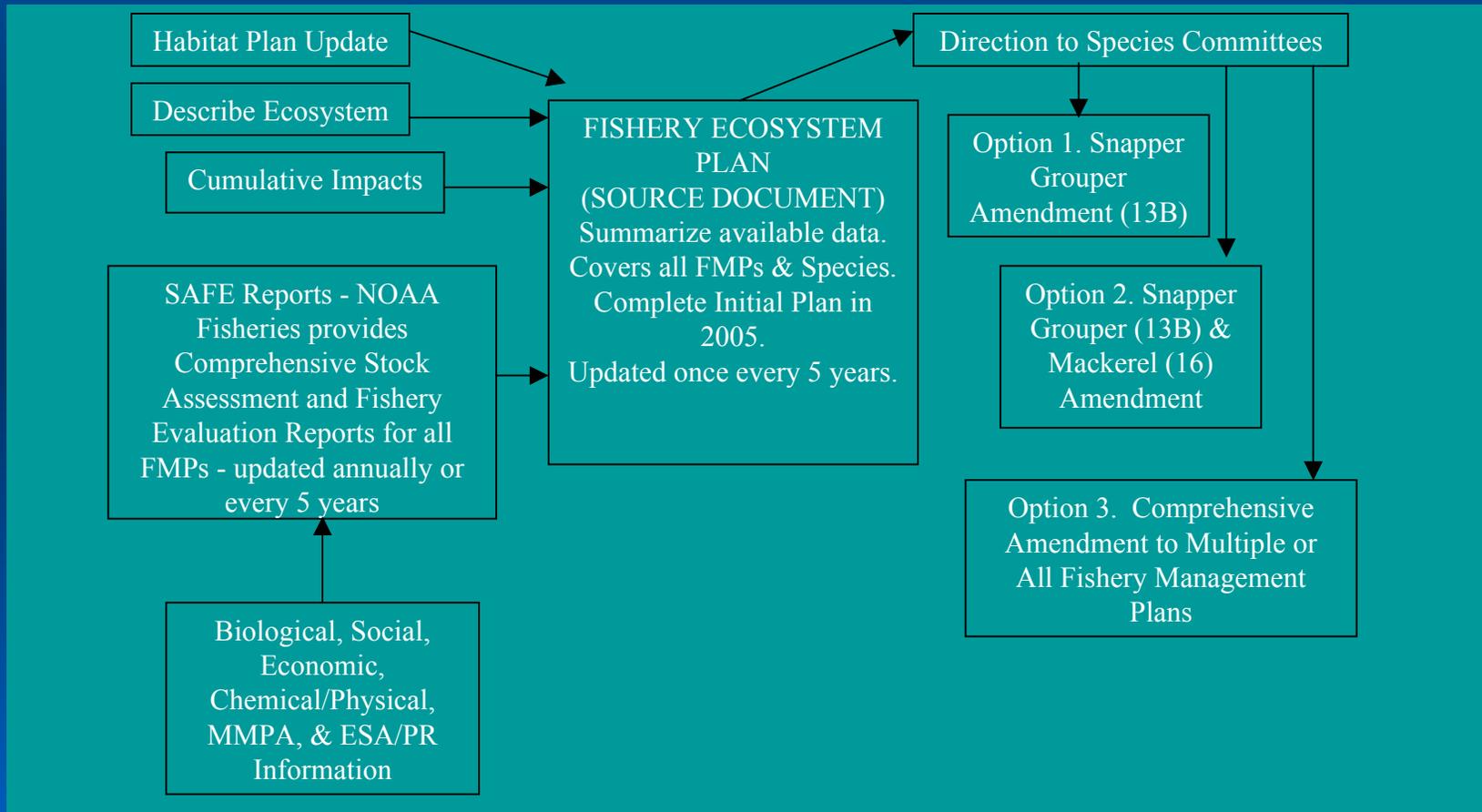
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Relationships with other Agencies



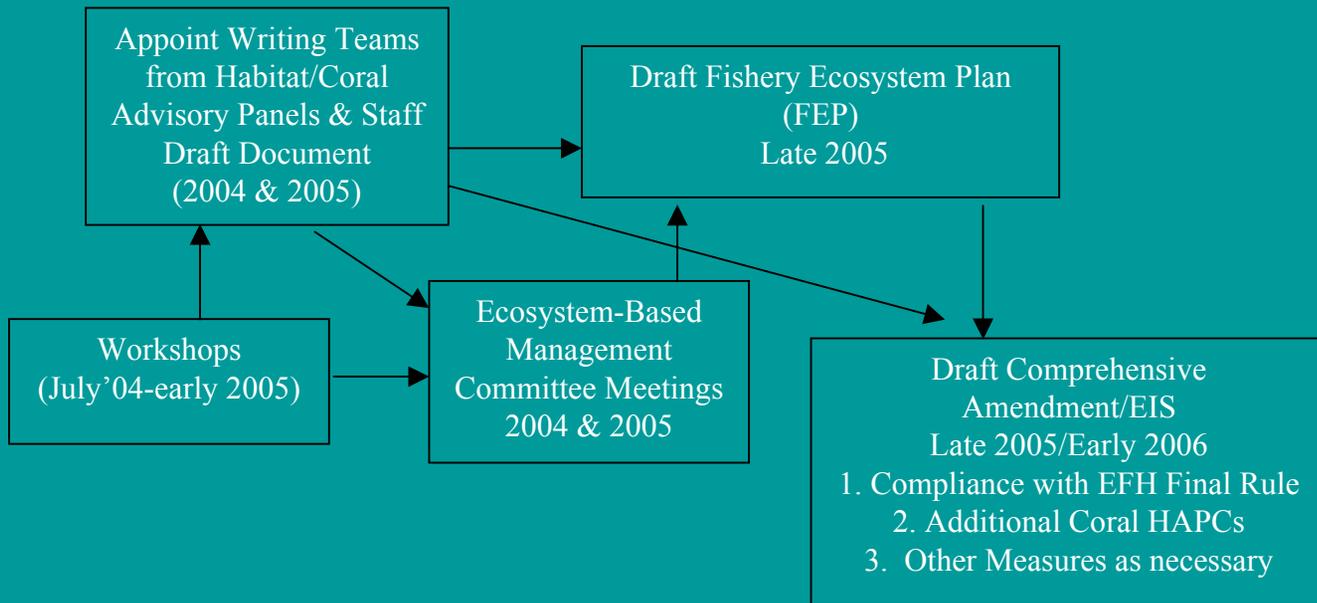
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5-Year System-Wide Evaluation



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Draft Timeline 2004/2005



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Potential Management Measures

CALCULATE AND CHARACTERIZE TOTAL REMOVALS (i.e., landings, effort, catch location, gear type/usage, discards, and bycatch including marine mammals and birds)

1. Identify all users:

- A. Require a permit to fish for, harvest, or possess any EEZ resource for all:
 - (i) Commercial vessels (includes commercial and for-hire)
 - (ii) Private recreational anglers

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Potential Management Measures

2. Calculate and characterize removals:

A. Continue to implement the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program – catch and effort (trip tickets, logbooks & MRFSS); discards, bycatch and protected resources; socio-economic.....

If a permit is required for private recreational anglers, the methods used to calculate catch and removals from anglers could be modified to sample from a known universe (permit holders).

This alternative assumes completion of work to link the permits and logbook/landings databases in the southeast.

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Potential Management Measures

Compliance with the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) final rule:

- A. Refine Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs) designations.
- B. Identify new Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs) as necessary.
- C. Address measures to reduce impacts of fishing and non-fishing impacts on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Essential Fish Habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (EFH-HAPCs) as necessary.
 - (i) Establish “Allowable Trawling Areas”

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Potential Management Measures

Coral, Coral Reef and Live/Hardbottom Habitat Fishery Management Plan:

- A. Establish additional Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs) – gear prohibitions from existing HAPCs would apply within these new HAPCs.
- B. No action

Enforcement/Data Collection/Safety at Sea:

- A. Require VMS on all commercial, for-hire and private recreational vessels. Private recreational vessels could use a “chip” that is imbedded in existing electronic gear or some type of acoustic monitoring.
- B. Require VMS on all commercial and for-hire vessels.
- C. Require VMS on all commercial vessels.

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Potential Management Measures

Changes to other Fishery Management Plans

- A. Snapper Grouper - establish management units and move to unit-based management:
 - (i) Red porgy - allow increase in harvest (rebuilding)
 - (ii) Black sea bass - reduce catches (overfishing/overfished)
 - (iii) Vermilion snapper - reduce catches (overfishing)
 - (iv) Snowy grouper - reduce catches (overfishing/overfished)
 - (v) Golden tilefish – reduce catches (overfishing)

- B. Mackerel
 - (i) Atlantic king mackerel - reduce TAC to address expected effort shift from snapper grouper regulations.

- C. Protected Species Interactions:
 - (i) Recommendations to Take Reduction Teams
 - (ii) Recommendations to States
 - (iii) Recommendations to ASMFC

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Humans – part of ecosystem

Collect data on fish

Models of ecosystem

Lots of GIS work

Need to focus more effort on humans

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Study 2 Species in “Our” Ecosystem

- *Homo commercilus*
commercial
for-hire
- *Homo recreationalus*
- Quantify & describe what they consume (size, age, etc.), discard, inputs



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Another “New” Species

- Ecosystem Scientist
 - Exponential growth (NOAA, CZM, Universities & States)
 - One common trait – working on projects for Councils to use
 - Map them: where they are and what working on and \$being spent



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Recommendations

1. **Council/Agency Steering Committee** to guide ecosystem work; guide future ecosystem funding to the areas and projects that get the most done; outputs the Councils can use - include 1 Council staff from each Council; 1 NMFS staff from each Center; 1 NMFS staff from HQ and 1 NOS staff. Establish within 30 days and/or before new \$ available (whichever occurs sooner).
2. **Map all NMFS & NOS (other?) individuals working on ecosystem projects** - this should ID location; contact information; description of project; level of funding; timeframe of project. This should be completed within 30 days.
3. **Clarify NMFS/NOS/Councils working relationship** - this should be completed within 30 days.
4. **Guidelines** - let data determine level of “ecosystem management” incorporated; recognize regional differences; allow Councils input prior to public review.

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Additional Information

SAFMC Web site – partnership with Florida’s Fish & Wildlife Research Institute to create an Essential Fish Habitat/Ecosystem homepage: www.safmc.net

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