# SAFMC
# Citizen Science Initiative

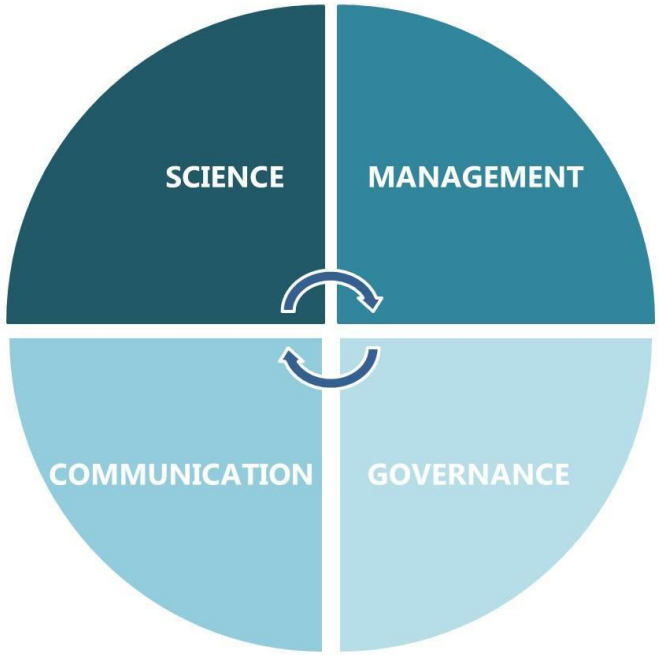
**Dr. Michelle Duval**

***Chair,***

***South Atlantic Fishery Management Council***

# Visioning Project: *Background*

- Stakeholder concerns about current management strategies for **snapper grouper fishery.**
- Council wants to develop **new management ideas and solutions.**
- Cooperative, **stakeholder driven process** to gather input.
- **Four Goal Areas** – *Science, Management, Governance, & Communication*



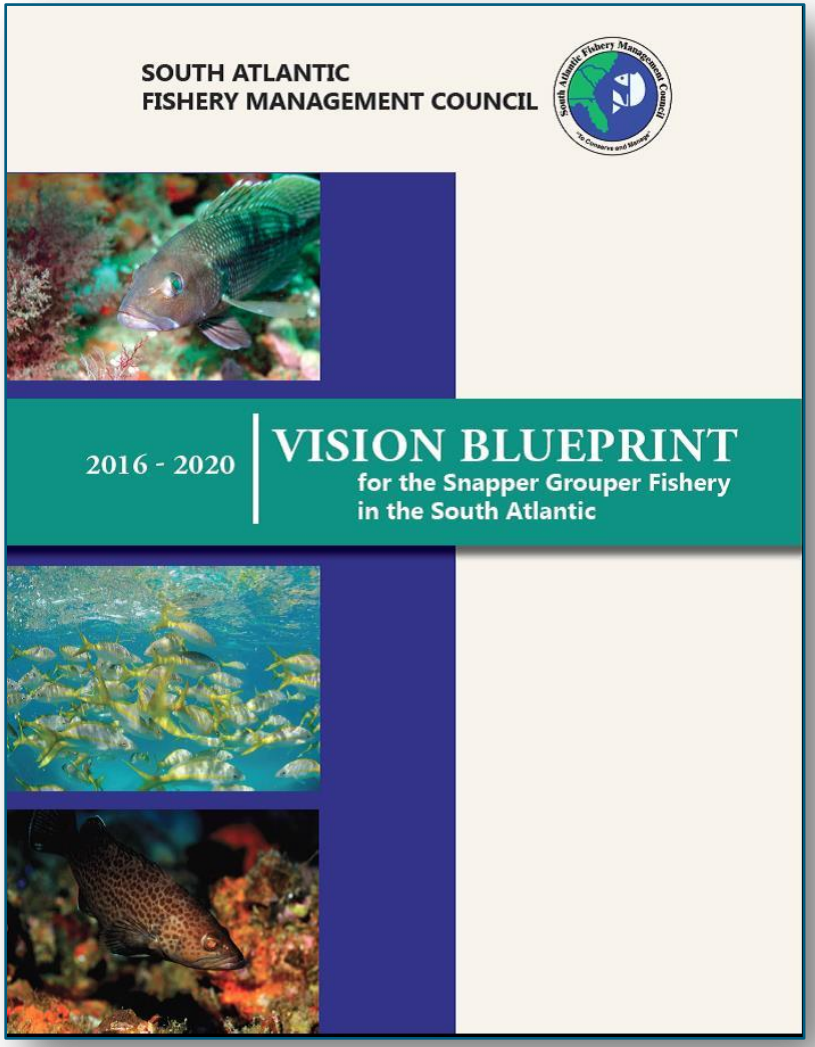
# Visioning Input:
# *Data/Science Issues in the Region*

- **Reporting –** ***Lacking in recreational sector and redundancy in commercial; not using new technology;***
- **Science/Stock Assessments –** ***Lack of Trust, Accuracy, Timeliness, not matching what fishermen are seeing on the water***
- **Data Collection –** ***MRIP problems***
- **Research –** ***Need for more cooperative; citizen science***
- **Too Many Discards – too many fish floating off**

# Visioning Input –
## *Support for Citizen Science*

**Common themes from stakeholders:**

- More data
- Better data
- Willingness to collect data
- Work with scientists



# What Would a Citizen Science Program Look Like?

**SAFMC Citizen Science Organizing Committee**

**John Carmichael** - *SAFMC staff*

**Amber Von Harten** - *SAFMC staff*

**Dr. Michelle Duval** -
*SAFMC Council Chair (NC)*

**Ben Hartig** -
*SAFMC Council member (FL)*

**Mark Brown** -
*SAFMC member (SC)*

**Dr. Bonnie Ponwith** -
*NMFS, Southeast Fisheries Science Center*

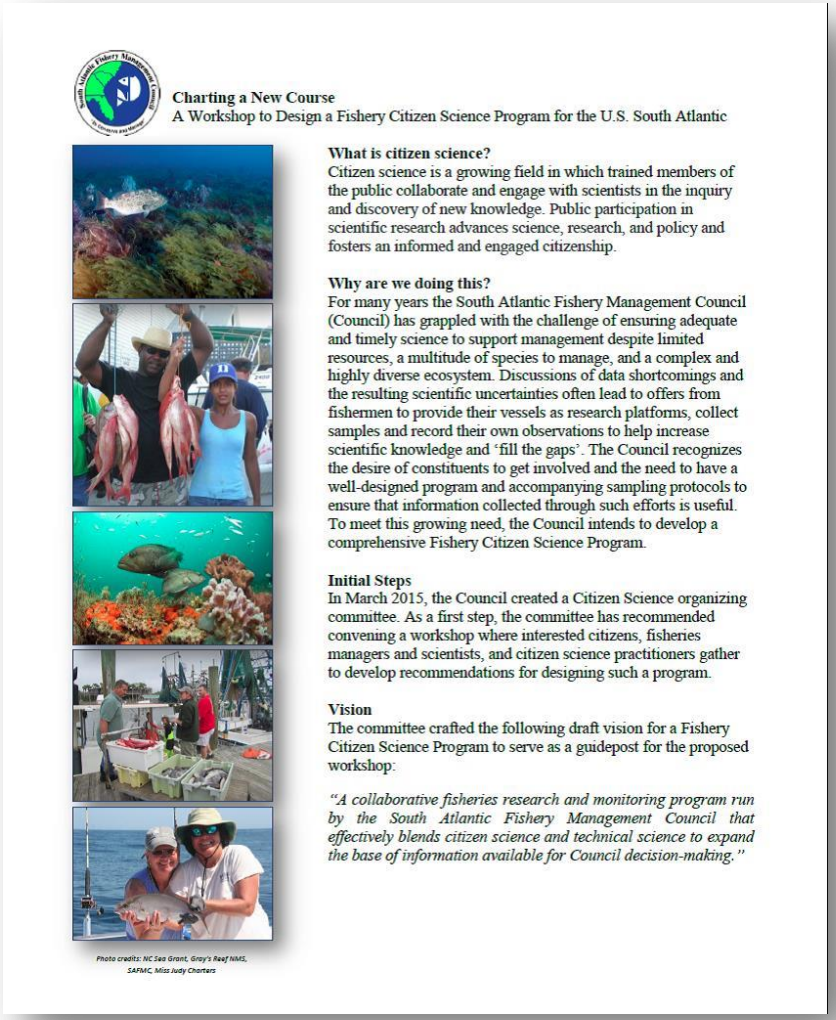
**Leda Dunmire** -
*The Pew Charitable Trusts*

## March 2015:

- ***Council discusses ways to improve and support expanded data collection efforts***

- ***Council forms Citizen Science Organizing Committee***

# What Would a Citizen Science Program Look Like?



**Charting a New Course**
A Workshop to Design a Fishery Citizen Science Program for the U.S. South Atlantic











Photo credits: NC Sea Grant, Gray's Reef NMS, SAFMC, Miss Judy Charters

**What is citizen science?**
Citizen science is a growing field in which trained members of the public collaborate and engage with scientists in the inquiry and discovery of new knowledge. Public participation in scientific research advances science, research, and policy and fosters an informed and engaged citizenship.

**Why are we doing this?**
For many years the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) has grappled with the challenge of ensuring adequate and timely science to support management despite limited resources, a multitude of species to manage, and a complex and highly diverse ecosystem. Discussions of data shortcomings and the resulting scientific uncertainties often lead to offers from fishermen to provide their vessels as research platforms, collect samples and record their own observations to help increase scientific knowledge and 'fill the gaps'. The Council recognizes the desire of constituents to get involved and the need to have a well-designed program and accompanying sampling protocols to ensure that information collected through such efforts is useful. To meet this growing need, the Council intends to develop a comprehensive Fishery Citizen Science Program.

**Initial Steps**
In March 2015, the Council created a Citizen Science organizing committee. As a first step, the committee has recommended convening a workshop where interested citizens, fisheries managers and scientists, and citizen science practitioners gather to develop recommendations for designing such a program.

**Vision**
The committee crafted the following draft vision for a Fishery Citizen Science Program to serve as a guidepost for the proposed workshop:

*"A collaborative fisheries research and monitoring program run by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council that effectively blends citizen science and technical science to expand the base of information available for Council decision-making."*

## June 2015:

- ***Council approves support for Citizen Science workshop***

## June-Dec 2015:

- ***Organizing Committee plans workshop***
- ***Partners with Sea Grant programs and Cornell Citizen Science Program Experts***

# Citizen Science Program Design Workshop: *Jan 19-21, 2016*

- **Over 55 invited participants**
- **All fishery sectors, scientists, researchers, agency staff**
- **Develop recommendations for a South Atlantic Citizen Science Program**

# Workshop Overview:

- What is Citizen Science?
- Traits of Successful Projects
- Designing Sample Projects
- Expert Guidance Themes
  - *Participants/Users*
  - *Researchers*
  - *Communication*
  - *Science Standards*
  - *Data Management*
  - *Governance*

# Next Steps:

## January – March 2016:

**South Atlantic Citizen Science Blueprint**

## March 2016:

**Council reviews Blueprint and makes recommendation about program development**

## March 2016 and beyond??

# For more information:

http://www.safmc.net/citizen-science-initiative/citizen-science-workshop

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*Photo credit: Don DeMaria*