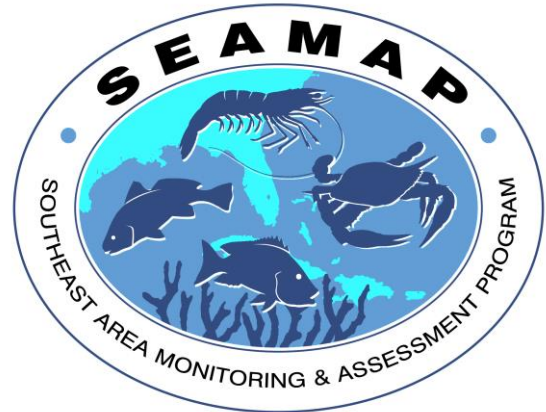


## FISHERIES SCIENCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

# *Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program – South Atlantic*

### **Active Subcommittees:**

Longline Surveys Workgroup  
Coastal Survey Workgroup  
Crustacean Workgroup  
Bottom Mapping, Fish Habitat Characterization and  
Data Management Workgroup



**Purpose:** The Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) is a cooperative state-federal program for collecting, managing and disseminating fishery-independent information needed by management and research agencies and users of living marine resources. The SEAMAP-South Atlantic component (established in 1983) is one of three regional programs, with others in the Gulf of Mexico (1981) and the Caribbean (1988).

Organizations directly involved in planning and managing the South Atlantic program are the marine fishery management agencies of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC), and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), which administers the program. Within the ASMFC, policy and fiscal matters for SEAMAP-South Atlantic are approved by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Board, the ASMFC species management board for South Atlantic fish species (red drum, cobia, Atlantic croaker, spot, Spanish mackerel, and spotted seatrout). The SEAMAP-South Atlantic Committee is the technical committee responsible for budget preparation, and plan preparation and implementation.

Three major goals have been defined for the SEAMAP-South Atlantic (SA) program:

1. To monitor, on a long-term basis, the status of living marine resources of economic, social, and ecological importance.
2. To monitor, on a long-term basis, the marine environment upon which living marine resources depend.
3. To provide for efficient management and timely dissemination of fishery-independent data.

**Membership:** The committee consists of one representative from each participating South Atlantic state (NC-FL), the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, ASMFC, and NMFS/SEFSC.

**Codifying Document:** An Operations Plan was developed in 1985 for the SEAMAP-South Atlantic program noting goals and objectives; management structure and responsibilities; activities associated with data collection, management and dissemination; and financial resources, personnel and logistic support needed for successful operation of the program. This plan and the 1981 SEAMAP Strategic Plan are the charter documents defining and guiding operations of the program.

**Type & Frequency of Meetings:** An annual SEAMAP meeting is held in late July among the three regions: South Atlantic, Gulf, and Caribbean. SEAMAP-SA convenes at the annual meeting prior to the joint session. Additional meetings of the SEAMAP-SA are held as needed throughout the year. Workgroup meetings or conference calls are scheduled as needed.

**Primary activities (Agency Lead):**

**Coastal Trawl Survey (SC)**

(FY 1989-present) Survey to monitor the distribution and abundance of critical life stages of important South Atlantic species, including penaeid shrimps, king and Spanish mackerels, sciaenids, and others, and associated environmental parameters in nearshore waters off South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, and northeast Florida sampled during three surveys each year (spring, summer, fall).

**Bottom Mapping (SAFMC)**

A project to establish a regional database describing the location and characteristics of hard bottom resources in the South Atlantic Bight. Products include development of a deepwater benthic habitat GIS and a variety of online products to search and view the compiled data.

**Fish Habitat Characterization and Assessment (SC)**

A project to contribute to and improve the quality of fishery-independent data (indices of abundance, diet and life history studies) for use in the assessment of reef fish stocks and ecosystem management. Its primary purpose is to enhance the fishery-independent reef fish data collected by MARMAP by increasing sampling in underrepresented regions of the South Atlantic area.

**Assessment of Adult Red Drum & Coastal Sharks Populations (NC, SC, GA)**

SEAMAP-SA funds support longline surveys in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia to estimate adult red drum abundance from Pamlico Sound, NC to Cape Canaveral FL in sounds, bays, inlets, and the open ocean. Many coastal sharks are also captured in the surveys.

**Pamlico Sound Survey (NC)**

The NCDMF conducts seasonal trawl surveys in Pamlico Sound to obtain fishery-independent data on the distribution, relative abundance, and size composition of important species of finfish, crabs, and shrimp.

**Data Management (SC)**

Data management responsibilities of the SEAMAP-SA are currently housed with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR). The SEAMAP-SA is available on [www.seamap.org](http://www.seamap.org). FWC-FWRI assists SCDNR in enhancing database usability and dissemination through the creation of GIS products and an internet map service (IMS).

In 2018, SCDNR data management staff began collaborating with the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA) and Axiom Data Science Services to consider migrating the SEAMAP-SA online database to the SECOORA Data Portal.

### **Southeast Regional Taxonomic Center (SERTC) (SC)**

SERTC serves as a sample processing laboratory facility for collections generated through SEAMAP surveys. As a result of reduced funding compared to previous years, SERTC activities were restricted to mostly maintaining the collection, distributing educational materials, and assisting with species identifications.

### **Major Accomplishments:**

- **Status and Trends Benthic Surveillance Project** (FY 1982-1993) to sample for contaminants in coastal fishes and sediments.
- **Spring Benthic Resources** (FY 1985) to assess benthic resources in bottom trawls off Florida; scallop and hydroacoustical surveys, neuston sampling, and ornithological observations off the Georgia coast; trap survey for *Geryon* spp. crabs off the Florida coast.
- **Geryon Crab Project** (FY 1986-87) to determine the distribution and abundance of the golden crab, *Geryon fenneri* and other decapod species of the continental shelf.
- **Calico Scallops off North Carolina** (FY 1988-1989) to assess calico scallop stocks.
- **Shallow Water Shrimp Trawl Calibration Project** (FY 1985-1986) to demonstrate the mechanical characteristics and catch rates for coastal and estuarine bottom trawls conducted by N. Carolina, S. Carolina, and Georgia, under similar spatiotemporal conditions.
- **Shrimp Bycatch Estimates** (FY 1995) to estimate finfish bycatch in the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery.
- **Distribution of Bottom Habitats** (FY 2001) on the Continental Shelf from North Carolina through the Florida Keys.
- **Age-growth and Histology** (FY 2001 – present) of specimens collected in the shallow water trawl survey to provide vital biological information needed for fisheries management
- **Ichthyoplankton Surveys** (FY 2013 – present) Data hosting and distribution from sample collections in the Rachel Carson NERR (Beaufort bridge net), Winyah Bay NERR, and the Great Bay/Jacques Cousteau NERR.

### **Workshops and Symposia:**

**King Mackerel Conference** (January 1986) held in conjunction with the SEFSC to coordinate research needs and priorities for the species from North Carolina to Texas.

**Trawl Survey Data Workshop** (August 1994) to discuss the problems, issues, and opportunities associated with the collection and use of trawl survey data in fisheries management on the Atlantic coast.

**Blue Crab Symposium** (June 2003) convened by the Crustacean Workgroup at the Crustacean Society meeting to discuss disease, transport, genetic variability, and population status.

**Blue Crab Workshop** (November 2003) convened by the SEAMAP Crustacean Workgroup to discuss state harvest information on blue crabs and shrimp.

**History of Chairmanship:**

**Current Chair & Vice-Chair (2005 – Present):**

Chair, Roger Pugliese, SAFMC

Vice-Chair, Katy West, NC

2003 – 2004: Dale Theiling, SC

2001 – 2002: Henry Ansley, GA

1999 – 2000: David Whitaker, SC

**Staff Lead:** Sarah Murray, Fisheries Science Coordinator, [SMurray@asmfc.org](mailto:SMurray@asmfc.org)