



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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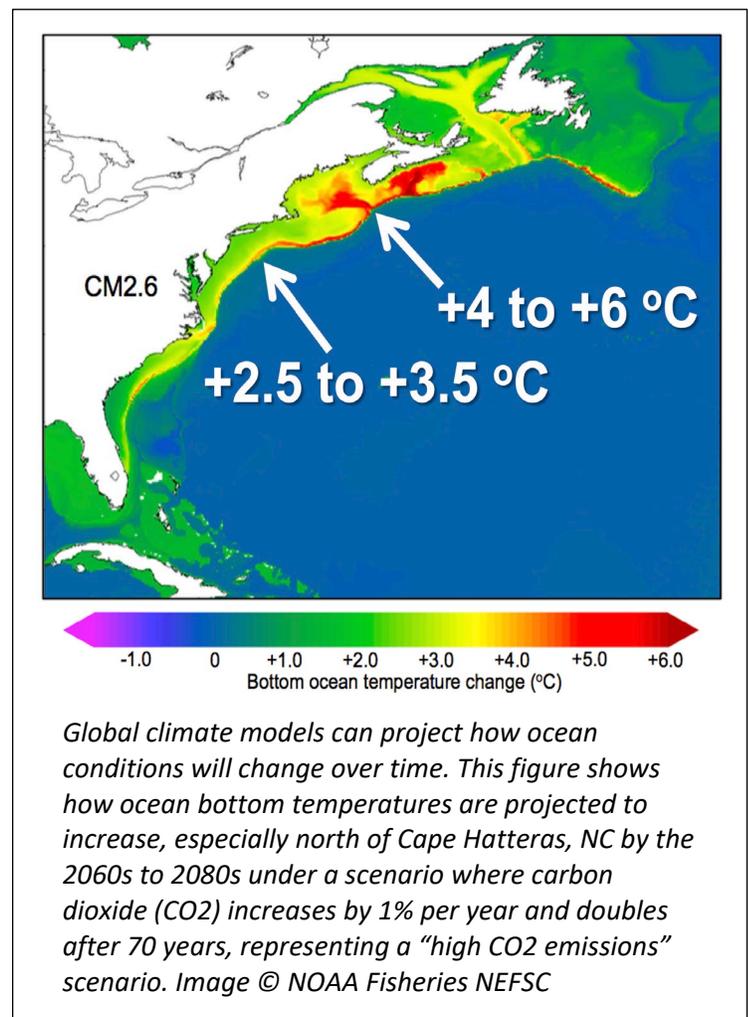
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Climate Change Scenario Planning: Input Needed to Prepare for Uncertainty in Ocean Conditions and Fisheries

On the East Coast of the United States, some species of fish are already experiencing climate-related shifts in distribution, abundance, and productivity. Although the future is uncertain, a continuation or acceleration of climate change has the potential to strain our existing fisheries management system and alter the way fishermen, scientists, and the public interact with the marine environment.

In order to begin preparing for this possibility, management bodies along the entire Atlantic seaboard have teamed up to launch a project called [East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning](#). Scenario planning is a way of exploring how fishery management may need to evolve over the next few decades in response to climate change. Here is the [introductory brochure](#).

The initiative is being organized by a [Core Team](#) of representatives from the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and NOAA Fisheries.



The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species.

Weigh In! Stakeholder Input is Key to Effective Scenario Planning

The team has lined up three kick-off webinars:

- [Monday, August 30, 2021; 4 – 5:30 PM](#)
- [Wednesday, September 1, 2021; 6 – 7:30 PM](#)
- [Thursday, September 2, 2021; 10 – 11:30 AM](#)

Please register at the links above. The webinars will introduce stakeholders to the overall initiative, explain the benefits of participating in the process, outline additional ways to become involved, and begin collecting stakeholder input.

An online questionnaire will be available soon to serve as an additional tool to collect input; visit the [Scenario Planning webpage](#) for updates.

Next Steps and Expected Outcomes

Over the next year, the scenario planning organizations will be bringing together fishery participants, fishery managers, researchers, and other stakeholders to discuss climate change issues. The intent is to emerge with ideas and recommendations for how fishery management can adapt to climate change. Nothing will happen immediately. Managers will need to discuss the recommendations from the scenario planning project to determine next steps.



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Ocean Conditions Related to Climate Change

How will climate-related changes impact:

- Ocean temperatures and ocean acidification
- Storm frequency and intensity
- Upwelling, currents, and sea levels
- Frequency and size of harmful algal blooms
- Fish habitat, fish distribution, and availability of prey species

Factors Complicating Climate Change Planning

While not directly related to climate change, competing demands for ocean uses and other factors may complicate scenario planning. Potential factors include:

- Offshore wind farms and aquaculture projects
- Possible shifts in fish consumption habits
- Potential changes to emission standards for vessels and other transportation forms

This initiative is an exercise in preparing for the future under a variety of “what if” scenarios.

All of these factors – and more – could affect fisheries in an era of climate change. Scenario planning lets us envision how these forces could combine into different future situations and identify changes we need to make to be better prepared for challenges or opportunities ahead.

Organizations Working on East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning



New England
Fishery Management
Council



NOAA
FISHERIES

