

# EAST COAST CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIO PLANNING

An initiative designed to prepare fishing communities and fishery managers for an era of climate change

Starting in 2021, the management bodies shown on the right are collaborating on a multi-year scenario planning initiative along the entire US Atlantic seaboard.



**Fishing communities and managers have always faced a world of uncertainty.** Ocean conditions change frequently and often unpredictably. Adapting to fierce storms, fish showing up in new places or disappearing from accustomed ones, unusually warm (or cold) water, and other changes have always been a part of life for those on or around the ocean.

The coming decades promise to be more challenging than the past. Climate change is a growing threat to marine fisheries worldwide. On the East Coast of the United States, some species have already experienced climate-related shifts in distribution, abundance, and productivity. A continuation – or acceleration – of these changes has the potential to strain existing fisheries management and governance systems.

In an era of climate change, we cannot be exactly sure of the conditions we might face in 20 years' time. But one thing is certain: all those involved in fisheries need to prepare for different, unexpected futures.

## HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED



**Attend a kick-off webinar**



**Complete a questionnaire**



**Keep informed**

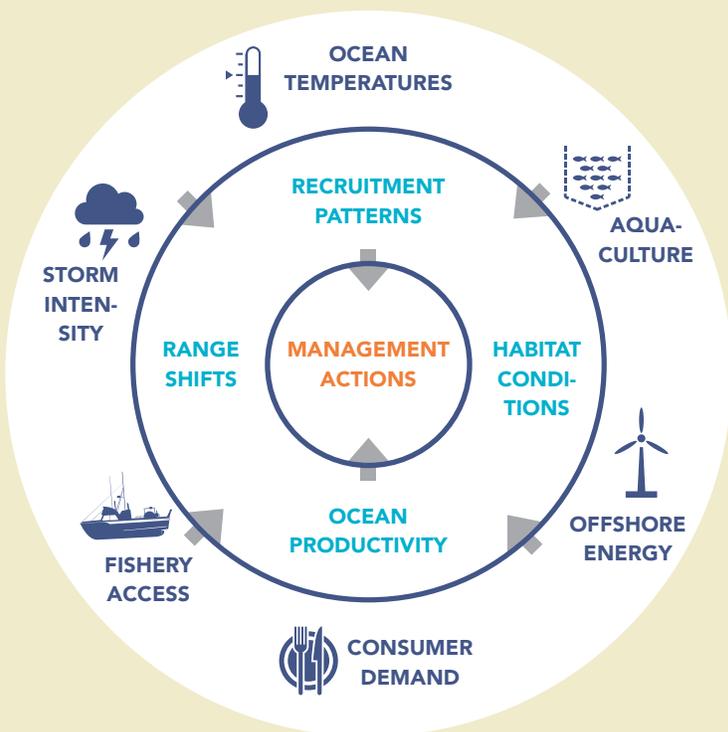
See Page 4 for more details.



To help stakeholders and fishery managers prepare for an era of climate change, we are conducting a scenario planning project. Scenarios are different stories about how the world might turn out tomorrow. Instead of trying to predict the future, scenario planning encourages us to think about all the factors that could shape the world of East Coast fishing by 2040.

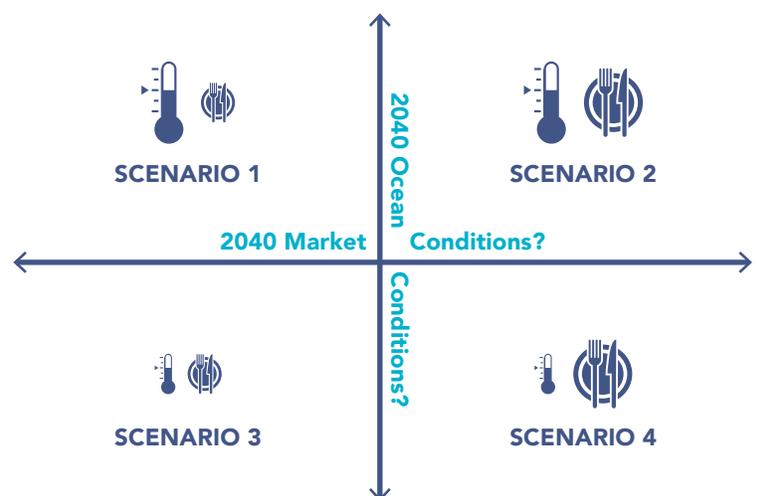


## What could shape East Coast fishing by 2040?



What other factors would you include?

Through research and conversations, project participants then settle on a few key factors to form a scenario framework. By imagining what 2040 looks like in each of these quadrants, we can identify smart management actions: changes we need to make to be better prepared for challenges and opportunities ahead. For example, this might mean modifying regional governance structures, or reconsidering how we incorporate climate considerations in management plans.



Illustrative Framework



## Project Focus

The specific focus of this scenario project is twofold:

- 1 Assess how climate change might affect stock distribution, availability and other aspects of East Coast marine fisheries over the next 20 years**
- 2 Identify what this means for effective future governance and fisheries management**

The scenario process will discuss a broader set of questions relevant for all participants. How will climate change affect your activities in the decades ahead, and what should you do now to prepare for the future?

## Expected Outcomes

At the end of this initiative, currently projected by early 2023, we expect to have:

**A set of scenarios**

a few stories that describe, in qualitative terms, different ways in which a changing climate might affect the future of East Coast fisheries

**A better understanding**

of the challenges and opportunities facing fishery management in the future

**A set of near-term and long-term management priorities**

that help achieve fishery management objectives under a range of different future conditions

**Policy recommendations** for broader governance changes that improve our ability to adapt to future scenarios

**A list of** data gaps, research priorities, and monitoring needs for changing conditions

**A framework** for ongoing conversation and idea generation for all stakeholders to use

This work is not designed to create quantitative predictions about changing climate and ocean conditions. Instead, it provides a strategic tool for us to consider different future conditions and adaptation options. Similarly, it will not lead to immediate regulatory changes. Any policy recommendations emerging from this work will require further consideration and action.



## Who Will Be Involved?



RESEARCHERS &  
SCIENTISTS



FISHERY  
PARTICIPANTS



FISHERY  
MANAGERS



COASTAL COMMUNITY  
REPRESENTATIVES

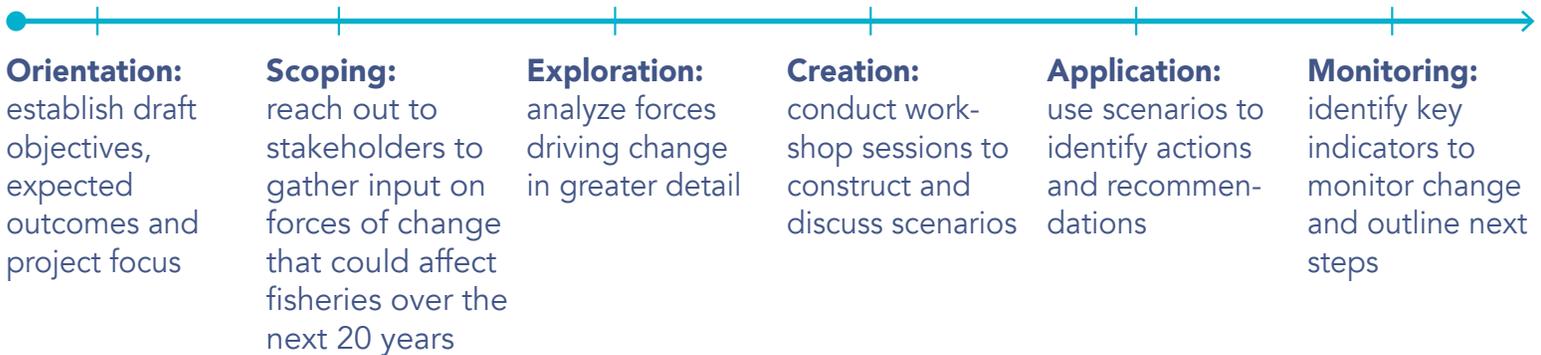


SHORESIDE  
SUPPORT



OTHER OCEAN  
USERS

## Steps in this Multi-Year Initiative



### How Can You Get Involved?

Scenario work is most effective when it includes a large number of stakeholders who bring a diverse set of ideas and expertise into the discussions and are willing to learn from each other.

**Attend a kick-off webinar,** scheduled for:

**Monday, August 30, 4-5:30pm ET**

**Wednesday, September 1, 6-7:30pm ET**

**Thursday, September 2, 10-11:30am ET**

**Complete a questionnaire** about the ways you think climate change will affect fisheries, and your work, in the future. This online questionnaire will be available at the link below in early September 2021.

**Keep informed** on developments and further opportunities to engage.

Full details found at: <https://www.mafmc.org/climate-change-scenario-planning>

