

Statewide Ecosystem Assessment of Coastal and Aquatic Resources



Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection

“Conserving and restoring Florida’s coastal, aquatic and offshore resources for the benefit of people and the environment.”

The Statewide Ecosystem Assessment of Coastal and Aquatic Resources (SEACAR) is a collaborative process that involves local, state and federal natural resource

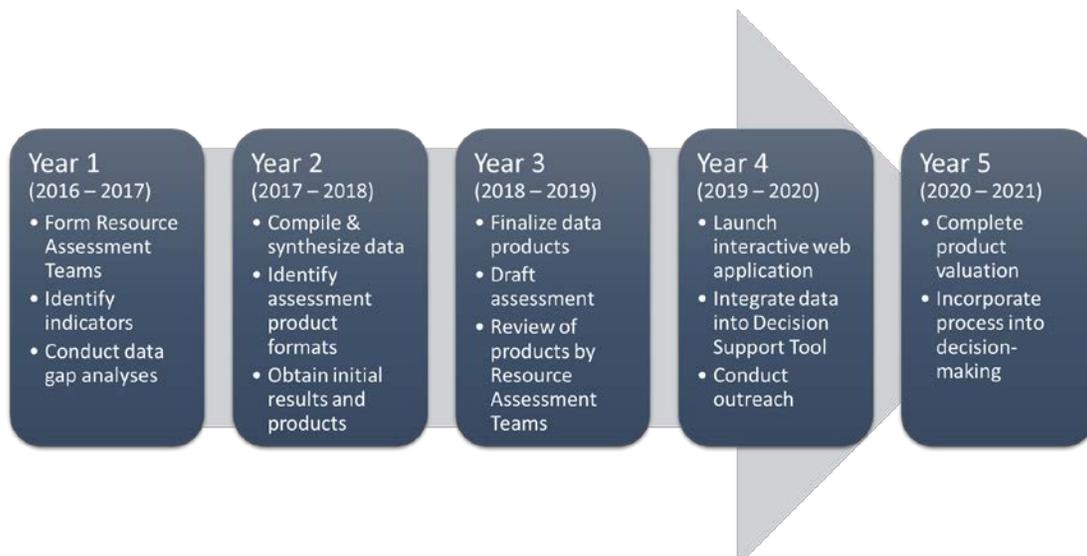
managers, data providers, researchers and partners to identify and assess ecological indicators and to develop decision-support tools to better understand the status of aquatic resources.

Current knowledge of coastal processes and scientific data obtained from inventory and monitoring programs around the state will help determine **ecosystem status and trends** based on identified **ecological indicators**.

Goals

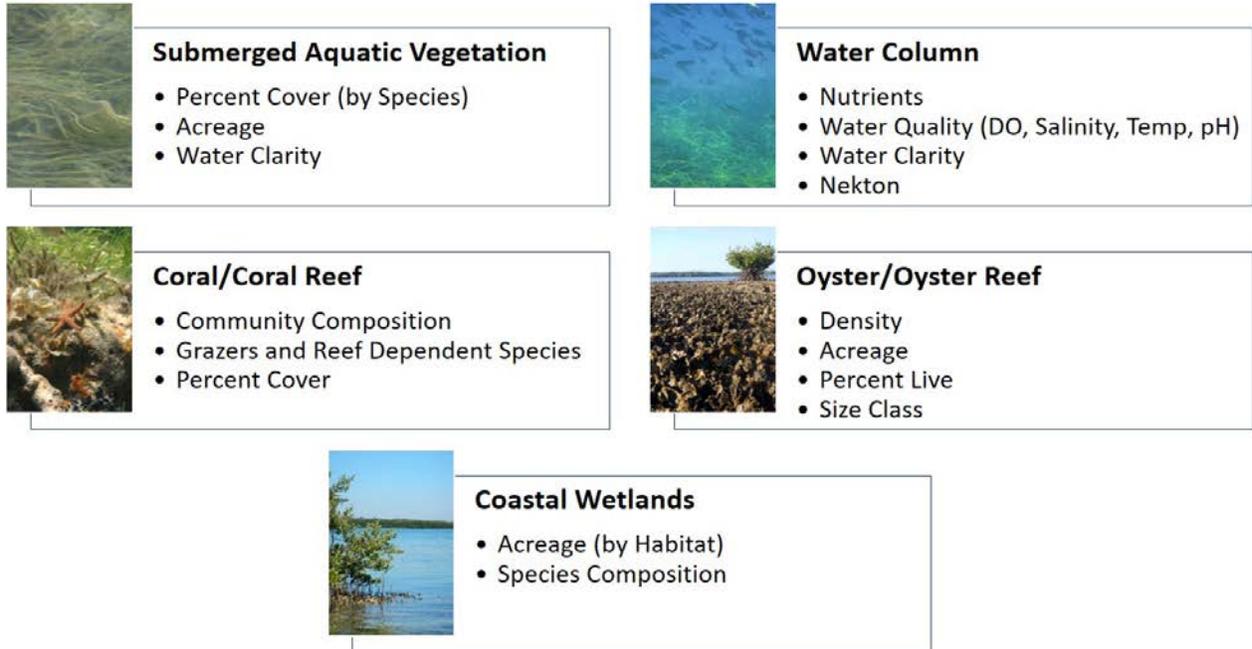
- Establish ecological indicators using current knowledge, for habitats in the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection’s managed areas.
- Analyze status and trends of coastal resources at a locally relevant scale, to support state and local programs, planning and decision-making.
- Communicate relevant statuses and trends to local and state decision-makers, providing best available science.
- Integrate data into a decision-support tool that promotes ecosystem-based resource management.

Timeline



SEACAR Submerged Habitats and Ecological Indicators

Ecological indicators, within five submerged habitats, were identified by SEACAR Resource Assessment Teams. Indicators show statewide and site-specific trends over time, illustrate habitat change over time driven by biotic and abiotic factors, which define community structure, and allow data to directly inform local and state planning and management decisions.



Project Guidance

SEACAR will...

1. Identify long-term ecosystem conditions, of specific submerged habitats, in Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection's managed areas.
2. Identify ecological indicators.
3. Allow for expansion of indicators in the future.
4. Determine the frequency of habitat index assessment to allow for adaptive management.
5. Identify data gaps.
6. Use existing data.
7. Incorporate assessment information into a decision-support tool/system.

SEACAR will not...

1. Identify the cause(s) of enhancements or declines in ecosystem health.
2. Collect new data.
3. Evaluate areas beyond Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection's management during the five-year pilot.
4. Set targets or thresholds.