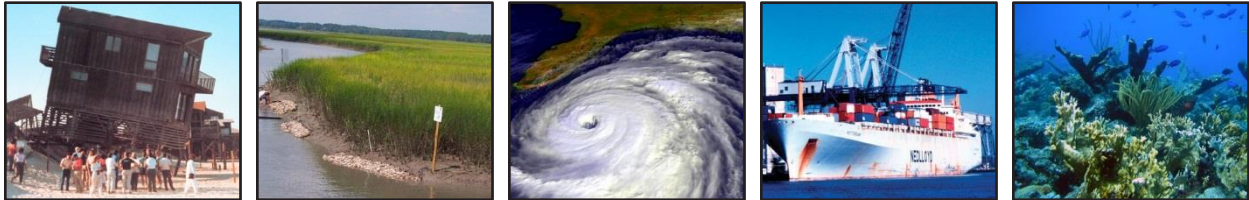




# NOAA's Southeast and Caribbean Region

## Science, Service, and Stewardship

From the Carolinas to the Florida Keys and the U.S. Caribbean, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is working with partners and stakeholders to address both national priorities and the critical challenges that define this region.



### NOAA Priorities Addressing Regional Issues

- **Ensuring Healthy Oceans**

Coastal and marine habitats in the Southeast and Caribbean region are threatened by land use changes and increased demands on water supplies. Commercially important fish stocks are already classified as overfished, and others are subject to overfishing. NOAA is working with local agencies, communities, and researchers to better understand habitats and ecosystem processes (including human elements) and develop protection and management strategies that promote ecosystem sustainability.

- **Enabling Climate Adaptation and Mitigation**

Low-lying coastal areas, intense population growth, valuable fisheries, and fragile coral reef systems are some of the characteristics that make this region particularly vulnerable to impacts from climate change. Considerations for this region include sea level rise, coastal erosion, ocean acidification, elevated water temperatures, changes in precipitation, drought, and more frequent weather events such as storms and flooding. NOAA is working directly with stakeholders to meet their needs for credible information, tools and techniques related to local- and region-specific impacts and adaptation strategies.

- **Supporting a Weather-Ready Nation**

NOAA is helping residents and businesses in this region prepare for and respond to high-impact weather events, including hurricanes, severe thunderstorms and tornadoes, crippling snow and ice storms, drought, and flooding. Efforts are focused on reducing the societal impacts, improving water resource management, improving transportation efficiency and safety, and working with the public health sector to identify linkages among human health, weather, water, and climate to improve the health of people and communities.

- **Promoting Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies**

Over 50 million people live in the Southeast and Caribbean region (2018), with coastal counties providing almost half the economic activity. With increasing demands on resources, coastal communities must balance environmental and economic considerations. NOAA is working with stakeholders to increase resilience and productivity in the region through comprehensive planning, improved water quality, marine transportation, and reduction of impacts from hazards.

## Improving Services Regionally – NOAA's Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team



To improve NOAA's responsiveness to challenges and priorities of this region, the **NOAA Southeast and Caribbean Regional Team (SECART)** fosters stronger collaborative ties internally and with partners and constituents; works with constituents to evaluate and improve NOAA products and services; and promotes awareness and understanding of NOAA's regional capabilities, services, and priorities.

For FY19-22, SECART has identified three priority areas: 1) Improve efficiency and effectiveness of NOAA's mission execution through enhanced collaboration across NOAA Line Offices and with partners; 2) Improve economic, environmental, and social resilience of communities to weather, water, and climate impacts; and 3) Promote the sustainability of the region's living marine resources and habitats as key contributors to the nation's economy.

### Examples of SECART FY20 Activities

- SECART will continue its successful **Resilience Webinar Series** to educate key partners and constituents about improvements in NOAA forecast products such as hurricane and storm surge forecasts and graphics, seasonal climate outlook, and other phenomenon that may affect the region. Over the past two years, the reach of this project has grown by increasing the scope of the webinars and including Spanish language versions.
- **Mapping of coastal and offshore bottom resources** is conducted by multiple offices within NOAA, other Federal agencies, state agencies, and private and non-profit entities, often with different objectives (e.g., navigation, fisheries habitat, sand resources, etc.). SECART brought these partners together to share past, current, and future mapping efforts, and has captured this information in a [report](#). During FY20, NOAA will complete an online seafloor mapping tool which will reduce redundancy and prioritize areas to meet management objectives.
- The Southeast and Caribbean Region has endured significant impacts from storms and flooding over the past several years. SECART hosted three workshops that resulted in effective sharing of NOAA roles, assets, and expertise related to disaster response, recovery and preparedness efforts. In FY20, SECART will host an **All Hazards Workshop** to improve awareness and coordination among NOAA and partners involved in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.
- The Florida Reef Tract is currently in the midst of an epidemic of a newly identified coral disease referred to as **Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD)**. This particular disease is characterized by rapid tissue loss and high mortality rates. First identified on Florida's reefs in 2014, it has now been reported throughout much of the Caribbean region. The University of the Virgin Islands will conduct a training (Nov 2019) in the USVI on the detection of and response to SCTLD. SECART funding will allow key researchers and coral reef managers from Puerto Rico to participate in the training and increase their ability to detect SCTLD so that early intervention action can be taken.

To learn more about SECART and other NOAA activities, products, services, partnerships, and assets in the Southeast and Caribbean region, contact the Southeast and Caribbean regional coordinator, Geno Olmi ([Geno.Olmi@noaa.gov](mailto:Geno.Olmi@noaa.gov)). <http://www.regions.noaa.gov/secar/>