



# NEWSCAST

The Newsletter of the Marine Recreational Information Program

**NOAA  
FISHERIES**



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The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is the way NOAA Fisheries is counting and reporting marine recreational catch and effort. It is a customer-driven initiative that not only produces better estimates, but does so through a process grounded in the principles of transparency, accountability and engagement.

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## Update on MRIP Catch Estimation Methodology

NOAA is continuing its evaluation of new recreational catch estimates calculated using an improved, peer-reviewed methodology. The new estimation method - which will produce revised estimates of catch dating back to 2004 - will yield more accurate estimates by eliminating numerous sources of potential bias that could skew the survey results high or low.

The MRIP team, in association with NOAA leadership, regional staff, and stakeholders are performing quality checks on the data, computer coding and programming; conducting a parallel evaluation of estimates produced by the new and old methodologies; and planning for the incorporation of new estimates into ongoing and upcoming stock assessment and management processes.

It is impossible to know what the MRIP estimates will look like until we complete the quality checks and run the new estimates. We anticipate this work to be completed by early 2012. In the meantime, NOAA will continue to produce wave estimates using the current MRFSS method. You can query these estimates on our website at <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/recreational/queries/index.html>

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## Recommendations for Monitoring HMS in the For-hire Sector

In a recent study, the MRIP Highly Migratory Species (HMS) working group discovered several opportunities to improve the way we monitor HMS catches in the for-hire sector. The project team determined that HMS fisheries in the southeast and Gulf of Mexico are highly diversified and require different approaches to adequately monitor those activities.

The project team recommended a number of potential adjustments to address current survey limitations and data gaps including:

- Introducing a specialized survey to better account for the for-hire sector's unique characteristics;
- Gathering catch data on HMS using the existing For-Hire Telephone Survey to supplement any new survey and increase sample sizes;
- Conducting a census of all landings of billfish, swordfish, and some

shark species in order to gather sufficient data on these rarely caught species; and

- Modifying the existing field intercept survey by:
  - Conducting interviews at the vessel-trip level by interviewing the captains and crew instead of for-hire passengers to get more reliable data;
  - Revising the selection of sites that get sampled in order to better collect catch data at both high- and low-activity sites; and
  - Conducting interviews during more hours of the day to better capture trips that return at different times.

The MRIP Operations Team and the Executive Steering Committee have reviewed the final report. To view the full report, please visit <http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov/projects/index.html>. For more information, contact Dr. Ron Salz at [ron.salz@noaa.gov](mailto:ron.salz@noaa.gov).

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## Looking Ahead...

Ongoing work to improve the collection and reporting of marine recreational fisheries catch data will be the focus of several symposia and presentations at the upcoming American Fisheries Society annual meeting in Seattle, WA. The meeting pulls together experts in fisheries science and management from around the globe to share experiences. Numerous MRIP team members, staff, and stakeholders will be presenting on recent work conducted through the collaborative MRIP process. For more information and to see the list of presentations, please visit <http://afs2011.org>.

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## Ask MRIP

Do you have questions about MRIP or our surveys? Ask us and we'll answer your question in an upcoming newsletter. If you've got a question about MRIP that you'd like answered, please e-mail Leah Sharpe at [Leah.Sharpe@noaa.gov](mailto:Leah.Sharpe@noaa.gov).