



NEWSCAST

The Newsletter of the Marine Recreational Information Program

**NOAA
FISHERIES**



November 2011

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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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Tracking Discards the Subject of New MRIP Video

Getting an accurate count of released fish has always been a challenge. The current surveys rely entirely on an angler's memory. A new MRIP project is looking at a better way to capture this valuable information. Fishermen are working alongside scientists from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission to pilot test a simple camera system to capture releases on video. Camera systems have been outfitted on a range of private sport fishing boats in the St. Pete, Florida, area since this past summer. To learn more about this project, view the video at www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov or contact Chris Bradshaw at Chris.Bradshaw@MyFWC.com.

NOAA Testing Angler Logbooks in North Carolina and Florida

NOAA's current surveys collect catch data at public sites like piers, marinas, or beach access points, generally during daytime hours. As a result we may be missing the activities of anglers whose trips originate from private land or who may fish only at night. To help identify differences between public and private access fishing that may lead to bias in survey results, NOAA has selected panels of anglers in North Carolina and Florida to keep logbooks of their activities.

To ensure complete coverage of the angling population, participants were drawn from two different lists (state fishing license holders and all residential addresses within the two states) and pre-screened. Selected anglers are provided a paper logbook to record trip information and will be contacted regularly to provide information either online or via an automated telephone interview. The pilot project begins this month and will run for one year. For more information, please contact Rob Andrews at Rob.Andrews@noaa.gov.

Release of Revised MRIP Catch Estimates Pending

NOAA anticipates the release of revised catch estimates for the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts in early 2012. The estimates will be produced using a new, peer-

reviewed MRIP catch estimation methodology, which will yield more accurate results by eliminating numerous sources of potential bias that could skew the survey results high or low. The revised estimates of catch will date back to 2004.

Until the revised estimates are released, NOAA will continue to produce wave estimates using the current MRFSS method. Preliminary catch estimates for Wave 4 of 2011 are now online. You can query these estimates on our website at <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/recreational/queries/index.html>.

Updating Stakeholders on Progress

MRIP staff has provided project updates to a number of key stakeholders in recent weeks, including the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and NOAA's Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, among others.

Reader Q&A: Angler Registries

Question: "When will MRIP begin using the angler registry information collected from the states?"

Answer: The short answer is, we already have. See the example above about the angler diary project. But one thing we've stressed in the MRIP process is that before we start using any new method broadly, we first have to conduct rigorous testing to make sure it works, and that it works better than what we've used in the past. Currently, we're using the angler registry information collected from the states in three key ways: verifying that the information is suitable for use in our surveys, determining the most effective sampling frame, and determining the most effective sampling mode.

Suitability

We are reviewing the data we have received from states to make sure it is thorough, accurate, and contains all the information we need to contact active anglers.

Sampling Frames

The "sampling frame" is the list from which we choose which anglers to contact. We know that there are inefficiencies and missed anglers inherent in the Random-Digit-Dialing frame we have traditionally used to contact anglers. But before completely switching over to the angler registry, we need to make sure that the new frame is more effective at reaching anglers.

Sampling Mode

The "mode" is the way we contact anglers: via telephone, by mail, by asking

anglers to participate in panels, or some combination of means. Our studies - and those of others in the field - have shown that phone surveys may not be as effective at getting information as other means. We will use the angler registry information as a sample frame to contact anglers in multiple ways and test which one gives the best results.

In its 2006 review, the National Research Council (NRC) stressed the importance of using the most scientifically sound methods possible to collect and use data. MRIP is replacing past assumptions about data collection with our comparison tests and evaluations, which will help to ensure we are using the data in the best way. Once we know the best way to determine who to contact and how to contact them, we will be able to most effectively use the angler registry information collected from the states.

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.