



# NEWSCAST

The Newsletter of the Marine Recreational Information Program

**NOAA  
FISHERIES**



## March 2, 2012 IN THIS ISSUE

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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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### For More Information:

**Leah Sharpe**  
(301) 427-8205  
[leah.sharpe@noaa.gov](mailto:leah.sharpe@noaa.gov)

## NOAA Explores Approaches for Providing More Timely Recreational Fisheries Information

Today NOAA Fisheries is releasing the findings and recommendations of its data timeliness project. The project looked at how we might deliver data in a more timely fashion, what tradeoffs would be involved in enhanced timeliness, and what alternatives might exist to more closely match management actions to the current release schedule. Access to more timely fisheries information would allow anglers and managers to adjust their actions in response to in-season data. This could give users a clearer understanding of how their actions and the catch estimates are related and enable better control of catch and a more adaptive management approach.

The project included a two-day workshop that brought scientists, fishermen, and stakeholders together to identify and evaluate options for improving the timeliness of information availability. These options included reducing lag times between data collection and delivery, shortening the length of sampling waves, and using forecasting techniques for producing in-season projections of recreational catch and effort. Key recommendations for improving data timeliness arising from this workshop include:

- **Consider moving from two-month sampling waves to one-month sampling waves, especially during peak seasons for key fisheries.** MRIP catch and effort survey designs should have the flexibility to produce monthly catch and effort estimates.
- **Consider reducing lag time between the end of the sampling wave and the release of catch estimates.** Participants felt that lag times could be reduced by up to two weeks without a significant reduction in data quality or the accuracy of the estimates.
- **Support development of models for reliably forecasting in-season catch and effort estimates.** These models could produce projections from partial effort survey results as well as use more timely catch information from one mode of fishing to project recreational landings from other fishing modes.
- **Test and develop innovative methods for data collection.**
- **Consider adapting management to data constraints rather than adapting data to management needs.** Anticipated improvements in data timeliness will reduce but not eliminate management uncertainty. Risks associated with uncertainty could be reduced by alternate management approaches (e.g., setting

Annual Catch Targets below Annual Catch Limits).

These recommendations, particularly the shift to one-month waves will result in increased costs. As several major MRIP improvements (e.g., the implementation of new intercept survey and effort designs) are yet to come, and the costs of these improvements is not fully known, the additional cost of implementing one-month waves will likely need to be weighed against the cost of other anticipated MRIP improvements.

Next steps include:

- **Develop a simulation model to evaluate the trade-offs in timeliness, cost, and precision between two- and one-month sampling waves.** The MRIP Operations Team is currently reviewing a proposal to develop this simulation model. The model would allow for more informed decisions regarding sample allocation. If limited funding prevents a complete shift to one-month waves, this work could also help identify key regions and key times of year where one-month waves would have the greatest benefit.
- **Examine the costs associated with reducing lag time by two weeks.** These costs include increased data processing costs to speed up data availability and additional agency resources to speed up the estimation process.

The decision to shift to one-month sampling waves and to reduce lag time is a complex one, requiring trade-offs among timeliness, data quality, and costs. Our next steps will help determine where and when the move to increase timeliness would be most effective and worth the resulting increase in cost and reduction in data quality.

The complete workshop report is available at [www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov](http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov), or for more information, contact Ron Salz at [ron.salz@noaa.gov](mailto:ron.salz@noaa.gov).

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## Condensed Version of MRIP Catch Re-estimation Video Available

At the request of our regional partners and other stakeholders, we are releasing a trimmed-down version of our catch re-estimation video. This three minute version of the video was created to communicate the key elements of the re-estimation process as concisely as possible.

Both the shorter and longer versions of the video are available at [www.CountMyFish@noaa.gov](http://www.CountMyFish@noaa.gov) . If you, or your organization, would like one of the MRIP videos tailored to your specific needs, contact Forbes Darby at [forbes.darby@noaa.gov](mailto:forbes.darby@noaa.gov) or (301) 427-8528.

Stay tuned for more updates on these, and other MRIP developments, in the March newsletter.

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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).

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[NOAA's Marine Recreational Information Program](#) | [Leah.Sharpe@noaa.gov](mailto:Leah.Sharpe@noaa.gov)

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