



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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Q&A: What role will emerging technologies, like smartphones and tablets, play in fisheries data collection?

MRIP has conducted a number of projects evaluating the expanded use of technology to enhance the accuracy and timeliness of data collection. As with every step in the MRIP process, we remain committed to ensuring that any method we put into use has been thoroughly tested and independently reviewed to assure that it meets the rigorous scientific standards required to produce valid estimates.

MRIP is working to remain on the leading edge of reporting technology, while vetting each advance to ensure it is an efficient and effective method. To this end, we have funded a number of pilot projects in different regions in the U.S. to determine which electronic technologies are effective solutions for recreational fisheries data collection needs, and how they can be most effectively used.

Our studies to date have found that emerging electronic reporting technologies often present the opportunity to collect fisheries data more efficiently and produce estimates that are more accurate and timely. At the same time, there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to electronic reporting. Each region, mode and even species can have unique attributes that impact the way data can be collected. Specific examples include:

- Our study testing the use of electronic logbooks for headboats in the Southeast found that they improved the timeliness of data delivery due to better quality control, reduced data handling, and more secure data delivery. The study estimated that annual data summaries would be available to managers about 2 months earlier than with the paper-based system. The project team recommended that an electronic reporting system be implemented for all headboats in the southeastern U.S. and, as a result, the recommended system was deployed in 2013.
- Our study testing the use of electronic logbooks in the Gulf of Mexico found that quality control features built in to the reporting system could prevent data entry errors and that weekly submission of individual trip reports was sufficient to produce precise and timely catch and effort statistics. The study determined that increased enforcement authority was needed to achieve sufficient response rates, and that logbook reports should be combined with field validations in order to address issues of recall bias and other

reporting inaccuracies.

- In California, we are currently testing a system that will allow samplers to input anglers' answers to survey questions using a handheld device. The goals of the project are to determine whether electronic reporting can reduce the time it takes to: collect and enter data; reduce errors that can occur from transcribing handwritten responses; and increase the accessibility of data for immediate short-term needs.
- We are working on two projects using cameras to collect discard information from private boats. On the West Coast, disposable cameras are being distributed to private boat anglers, and in Florida we are working on developing a portable camera system that can be temporarily installed on a private boat.
- Beginning this year, MRIP is working with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Snook and Game Foundation to determine whether information collected from the iAngler smartphone application and web-based Angler Action program can be used to augment MRIP data and estimates.

For a complete list of MRIP projects evaluating electronic reporting programs, visit the [Project Database](#) and search for the keywords "electronic reporting."

In the Next Newscast:

Upcoming changes to the National Saltwater Angler Registry

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.