



The Newsletter of the Marine
Recreational Information Program

Newscast

GulfFIN Releases Regional Implementation Plan

The Gulf Fisheries Information Network (GulfFIN) recently completed its [MRIP Regional Implementation Plan](#), outlining regionally determined priorities for improving recreational fishing catch and effort data. [GulfFIN](#) – a collaborative organization that brings together state, regional, and federal partners to improve data collected from recreational fisheries – is the first regional entity to complete this process, a significant milestone in the move toward regionally driven implementation of MRIP-certified methods.

Prioritized Activities

GulfFIN's plan includes a suite of activities that will be prioritized based on available funding. Top priorities directly relate to the primary strategic goal of increasing the quality and amount of data used in stock assessments and fisheries management. They include:

- Full funding for general surveys (Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, Fishing Effort Survey, For Hire Survey) at base sampling levels;
- MRIP-certified specialized catch and release surveys;
- Improved timeliness of recreational catch and harvest estimates;
- Redesigned biological sampling program integrated with recreational catch sampling and expanded to include the Atlantic Coast of Florida;
- For-hire electronic logbook implementation and validation;
- Improved recreational fishery release data; and
- Improved spatial resolution and technical guidance for post-stratification of MRIP estimates.

GulfFIN is committed to working harder to provide better data that feeds into stock assessment and management, but needs the resources to do so. Without additional funding allocated toward data collection, sample size could be reduced due to

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The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is the state-regional-federal partnership responsible for developing, improving, and implementing surveys that measure how many trips saltwater anglers take, and how many fish they catch. This vital information - combined with other data, such as commercial catch and biological research - enables scientists and managers to assess and maintain sustainable U.S. fish stocks.

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 Dave Bard at david.bard@noaa.gov.

To learn more about improvements MRIP is making, visit our website at countmyfish.noaa.gov.

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loss of field samplers, and precision of catch estimates could be affected.

Throughout its history, GulfFIN has collaborated closely with MRIP. It has played a leading role in studies to improve the MRIP general surveys and develop new surveys to supplement MRIP. The GulfFIN Regional Implementation Plan is closely aligned with MRIP's five-year Strategic Plan.

Inaugural Regional Implementation Plans

These inaugural Regional Implementation Plans represent a significant evolution in the course of MRIP, clearly establishing that each region will take the lead role in determining which survey methods are most suitable for their science, stock assessment, and management needs. MRIP will use these plans to develop a national inventory of partner needs and associated costs, and annually specify priority-setting criteria for supporting those needs

The various FINs, or equivalents, serve as Regional Implementation Teams, convening data collection and fishery management partners to build consensus on priorities, intended outcomes, and next steps. These teams include participants from the NOAA Fisheries Regional Offices and Fisheries Science Centers, NOAA Fisheries Headquarters Offices, the Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions, the States, and Regional Fishery Management Councils.

Each Regional Implementation Plan will provide an analysis of existing programs, detail priorities for coverage, resolution, precision, and timeliness, identify strategies for implementing improved methods, outline processes for integrating data from different sources, and include budget estimates. Every plan will be submitted for a comprehensive review and approval process by MRIP's Executive Steering Committee.

From a national perspective, these plans will serve to guide MRIP decision-making regarding ongoing research priorities and implementation budget allocation. The Regional Implementation Plans are "living documents," which will be adjusted as necessary based on changing science and management needs, and budget availability, and will be updated every five years.

Applying this collaborative approach to the development and launch of the Regional Implementation Plans is critical to improving recreational fishing data collection efforts and ensuring fishing opportunities for generations to come.