

# Highly Migratory Species MRIP Fact Sheet



## NOAA FISHERIES

**NOAA Fisheries** is an agency within the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our nation's economic, social and environmental needs. The NOAA Fisheries Service provides world class science and stewardship.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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[www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov](http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov)

## Marine Recreational Information Program

The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is the new way NOAA Fisheries is collecting, analyzing and reporting recreational fishing data. The program brings scientists, managers, fishermen, state and federal agencies, and other stakeholders together to evaluate the way we've done things in the past and constantly work toward more reliable and trusted data.

A 2006 independent review of NOAA Fisheries data collection methods serves as the blueprint for improvements under MRIP and priorities for moving forward. These are evaluated on an ongoing basis and presented annually in MRIP Implementation Plan updates. Plan updates are available at [www.countmyfish.noaa.gov](http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov). Milestones to date have included:

-  Creation of the National Saltwater Angler Registry, currently being tested for use as a component in replacing the Coastal Household Telephone Survey.
-  The re-estimation of catch estimates to correct for potential sources of bias in the way we have historically collected data from anglers.
-  Completion of a comprehensive, online, interactive register of all recreational fishing sites from Maine to Louisiana. This was the first implementation step in our complete overhaul of angler catch surveys.
-  An improved angler catch survey that removes potential sources of bias from our survey design by sampling during all parts of the day and reducing sampler latitude regarding which sites to sample and in what order.

## Implementation for the Highly Migratory Species

Atlantic highly migratory species are included in a separate "MRIP Region" due to the unique distribution and management structure for these fisheries. The HMS stocks are widely distributed in U.S., foreign, and international waters, including all five Council Regions covering the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean and Atlantic. For the most part, Atlantic HMS are managed separately from other Magnuson-Stevens Act-managed fisheries, with a distinct group of management partners. This includes a substantial international management component under the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. MRIP works alongside the Atlantic HMS Management Division to implement improvements to the way data are collected and reported. Key MRIP projects and activities focused on HMS include:

-  Characterizing the recreational HMS fisheries in the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean.
-  Exploring census-based approaches to estimate recreational landings of key managed species, such as bluefin tuna.
-  Developing improved survey design and estimation methods for the Large Pelagic Survey.

Moving forward, MRIP is establishing a dialogue with key partners (NOAA Fisheries HMS Division, HMS Advisory Panel, NOAA Fisheries Office of International Affairs, ACCSP, GulfFIN) to make decisions on improving HMS data collection.

# MRIP-funded Projects for Highly Migratory Species



## NOAA FISHERIES

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) is the new way NOAA Fisheries is counting recreational catch.

MRIP is about:

- Getting better numbers through better science and statistics.
- Building greater confidence by involving anglers and others in every step of the process.
- Providing in-depth public access so people can see for themselves what we're doing, why we're doing it, and help guide our course.

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### Ongoing Projects

- **Additional Large Pelagics Telephone Survey (LPTS) Data Collection to Address Potential Biases with the Large Pelagics Intercept Survey (LPIS)** is increasing sample sizes and expanding catch questions in the LPTS, allowing for more meaningful comparisons of catch rates (and other trip attributes) across different types of fishing activities (e.g., public vs. private access fishing trips). This will result in a better understanding of bias in the LPIS resulting from non-coverage and other potential sources of error.
- **Non-response Bias Study for the Large Pelagics Telephone Survey** is conducting a follow-up study of the effects of non-response in the LPTS to determine how non-response affects the accuracy of the data. The project report will identify steps to improve data quality.
- **Review of Current Sampling and Estimation Methods for the Large Pelagic Survey** is developing new estimation methods. Recommendations for improvements to the intercept and telephone surveys should be completed in 2014, followed by a pilot study.

### Completed Projects

- **Evaluation of the Sampling Distribution of Tournament Versus Non-Tournament Trips in the Large Pelagics Survey** tested if we correctly sampled highly migratory species (HMS) tournaments as part of the existing Large Pelagic Intercept Survey and proposed alternative data collection methodologies.
- **Florida Highly Migratory Species Private Angler Telephone Survey** tested a telephone survey of anglers who fish for HMS in Florida to develop recommendations for future data collection programs. The goal is to improve the accuracy and precision of HMS recreational fisheries information in the Southeastern United States.
- **Highly Migratory Species For-Hire Survey: Florida Pilot Study** tested weekly field and telephone surveys to better identify for-hire trips that target and/or catch HMS in Florida. This project recommended using a specialized survey for monitoring the HMS for-hire fishery in the Southeastern United States.
- **Massachusetts Recreational Bluefin Tuna Landings Census Pilot** designed and tested a new census-based data collection program for the Massachusetts recreational bluefin fishery aimed at improving compliance with the current system. The final report summarizing the results of the project is now available.
- **Pilot Study to Characterize Recreational Highly Migratory Species Fisheries in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico** identified the size and characteristics of the HMS recreational fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. The project team used this characterization of the fishery to form recommendations for improving the way we collect information from anglers and captains who fish for HMS in these regions.
- **Highly Migratory Species Recreational Fisheries Catch Card Pilot Program in Puerto Rico** developed and tested a recreational HMS data collection program in Puerto Rico to improve estimates of billfish and swordfish landings.

For more information about these MRIP-funded projects and others, please visit [www.countmyfish.noaa.gov](http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov).