

Southeast Regional Office 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.

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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 working toward more reliable and trusted data for the future.

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. 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 in the Southeast Region

MRIP is a series of regionally-based data collection programs, all adhering to a set of rigorous national standards. We are working alongside the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and Southeast Regional Office to implement improvements to the way data is collected and reported. Key MRIP projects and activities in the Southeast include:

- In November 2013, MRIP and a group of stakeholders representing federal, regional, and state fisheries scientists and managers, along with independent experts, gathered to discuss and develop plans to enhance red snapper estimates. This workshop, and subsequent progress, is a major step in addressing perceived shortcomings of current data and management decisions. Since the initial workshop, four pilot projects have been identified and are already underway, making this a substantial effort and commitment by MRIP and its Gulf partners.
- Once additional pilot work on for-hire trip reporting methods has been completed, it will be necessary to make decisions whether to use sampling and estimation methodology equivalent to that being used for shore and private boat modes, or to switch to electronic logbook-based design for the charter boat mode, or other combinations, working with all the partners in the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) and Gulf FIN (Fisheries Information Network).

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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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Implementation in the Southeast Region

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- New weighted estimation methods have been completed and adopted for estimation of catch rates from intercept data.
- Key decisions for shore and private boat mode intercept survey, and headboat survey catch and effort design have been made.
- MRIP is developing model tools to enable evaluation of the tradeoffs among cost, precision, and timeliness for delivery of preliminary estimates.

Ongoing MRIP-funded Projects in the Southeast Region

- **Improving Louisiana's angler contact information going into the National Saltwater Angler Registry** will develop outreach materials and extension personnel will attend events geared toward saltwater recreational anglers to explain the need to maintain current license information and provide anglers with easy to follow instructions for online validation of contact information to a form used on the spot to complete their contact information.
- **Recreational Angler and For-Hire Electronic Census Reporting of Red Snapper Catch Data in Alabama (Year 2)** will refine the reporting methods and field validation protocols developed in 2014 for a mandatory reporting system to report red snapper landings by Alabama private recreational and for-hire vessels. The recreational project will determine relative rates of recreational red snapper anglers using public or private access sites and generate estimates of overall effort for these two groups, investigate the use of remote monitoring technology at major public access sites to determine how much influence weather has on daily participation rates, and evaluate the potential of the entire reporting system to be used as an in-season quota monitoring tool and compare results from the first year of the program. The for-hire project will validate for-hire vessel trips with red snapper to calculate a non-reporting rate to adjust reported landings and evaluate the potential of the entire reporting system as an in-season quota monitoring tool, and compare results from the first year of the program.
- **Internet based angler logs as a source of fishery dependent data** will provide guidelines for the establishment and upkeep of panel-based e-logs that are consistent with MRIP goals and augment rather than compete with MRIP data. By providing guidelines for minimum data requirements and standards for considered inclusion in stock assessments, expectations by users and developers can be realistically set.
- **For-Hire Programs: Inventory, Certification, & Integration Planning** will update the Atlantic coast inventory of for-hire data collection programs. The updated inventory will include clarification of program requirements and data needs to support agency specific objectives, providing background for a workshop to identify opportunities to promote data availability, improve data timeliness, and reduce the reporting burden by integrating the various data collection programs in a statistically valid design.

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Ongoing Projects in the Southeast Region

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-  **Private Recreational Angler Electronic Census Reporting of Red Snapper Catch Data in Alabama** is developing an electronic application which will allow private recreational anglers fishing for red snapper to report their harvest easily and conveniently. This application could provide important information about this rare-event fishery, which is difficult to sample through a general angler intercept survey. In addition to providing a reporting mechanism, the project will develop procedures to validate self-reported information and monitor reporting compliance.
-  **For-Hire Electronic Census Reporting of Red Snapper Catch Data in Alabama** aims to develop and implement a mandatory electronic reporting system, whereby representatives of for-hire vessels licensed in Alabama report catches of red snapper after each trip. The proposed reporting system will require significantly less resources to operate and reduce reporting burden compared to traditional logbook programs.
-  **Implementation of the iSnapper Smartphone Application to Collect Data Across all Recreational Sectors in the Gulf of Mexico** is testing the utility of an online application, iSnapper, as a potential supplement to MRIP data and estimates. The project will compare estimates from a panel of anglers who submit data through iSnapper to estimates obtained through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department creel survey.
-  **Development of Improved Dockside Sampling Methods for Southeast Region Headboat Survey** is developing new probability-based intercept design protocols in the Southeast Headboat Survey to produce more accurate estimates of headboat catch and reduce the number of factors that could skew survey results.
-  **Establishment of Baseline Data on the U.S. Virgin Islands Recreational Fishery** will utilize an existing vessel registration list and the federal Highly Migratory Species and Angler Registry databases for conducting mail and telephone surveys.
-  **Fishing Activity Assessment for Queen Conch and Spiny Lobster in Puerto Rico** seeks to provide answers to several questions regarding the recreational harvest and fishing effort of these species.
-  **Pilot Project, Phase II: Survey-Wide Implementation of Electronic Logbook Reporting on Headboats Operating in the U. S. South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico** is expanding electronic logbook reporting to all vessels that participate in the Southeast Region Headboat Survey to maximize participation and compliance with the survey and increase the timeliness of survey estimates.
-  **Validation Methods for Headboat Logbooks** is developing a method for verifying self-reported catch data from headboats to test methods to validate self-reported catch data and incorporate validation into survey estimates.
-  **Proportional Standard Error (PSE) and Management Uncertainty in Recreational Data Collection on the Atlantic Coast** brings together science and management to develop recommendations for PSE standards.

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Completed Projects in the Southeast Region

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The goal of the project, led by the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, is to determine how different levels of precision of the point estimates of recreational catch affect fishery stock assessment outputs, and to establish recommended PSE standards that will result in levels of scientific and management uncertainty that meet the needs of fishery managers.

Completed MRIP-funded Projects in the Southeast Region

-  **Finalize Design of MRIP Fishing Effort Surveys** tested the effectiveness of a revised effort survey sampling design, as well as the feasibility of a single-frame, stratified sampling design for collecting recreational fishing effort data and estimating fishing effort by mode.
-  **Pilot Study to Test the Feasibility of Electronic Logbook Reporting in Gulf of Mexico for For-hire Vessels** tested logbook reporting of catch and effort for Federally permitted for-hire vessels in three areas of FL and TX.
-  **Cooperative Design of a Logbook Reporting Program for the Gulf of Mexico** designed protocols for logbook data collection, including validation of self-reported data for for-hire vessels. This project worked toward creating a data collection program that provides more complete and timely fishing information for for-hire fisheries.
-  **Implementation of Improved Protocols for the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey** eliminated potential design biases in the APAIS by removing sampler latitude in site and mode selection, assigning samplers to specific time blocks, conducting intercepts during all day parts, including trips ending at night, and incorporating other changes.
-  **Evaluation of Recreational Fishing Sampling and Estimation Methods in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands** reviewed ongoing and past data collections in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and explored alternative data collection designs that support fisheries management. The project evaluated past recreational fishing surveys, assessed regional needs, and evaluated survey options for collecting recreational fishing data.
-  **Pilot Study to Characterize Recreational Highly Migratory Species Fisheries in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico** identified the size and characteristics of the highly migratory species recreational fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. The project team used this characterization of the fishery as a basis for improving the way we collect information from anglers and captains who fish for highly migratory species in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic.
-  **Video Assessment of Recreational Discards** tested the use of onboard video cameras to gather more information about released catch, including species, size, and release condition.
-  **Puerto Rico For-Hire Data Collection** developed and tested an electronic logbook reporting program for for-hire vessels in Puerto Rico to create a data collection program that improves data quality and precision.