

MRIP Work Group Chairs Conference Call 7/1/2008

The call convened at 10:00AM. The following work group chairs were present: Kathy Knowlton (DMSWG), Ron Salz (HMSWG), Beverly Sauls (FHWG), Linda Barker (DAWG) and Erik Barth (ARDWG). Pres Pate and Rob Andrews were present representing the Operations Team (OT).

1. Erik Barth, from the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, was introduced as the Chair of the Angler Registry Database Work Group (ARDWG). Due to the likely relationship between future survey designs and the angler registry, Erik will be participating in future WG Chair conference calls.
2. E. Barth asked about the limitations of the registry as a survey tool if it is implemented as described in the proposed rule. R. Andrews informed the group that the consultants working with the “license survey” project team are reviewing the proposed rule and providing feedback about limitations/implications of the rule. This information will be provided to the registry team and ARDWG once it has been completed.
3. E. Barth also wanted feedback about establishing data quality standards for the registry. Some members of the ARDWG are opposed to setting hard and fast rules, which could affect the quality of the registry as a sample frame. Because it is difficult to assess the quality of contact information prior to conducting a survey, a possible mechanism for assessing quality would be to establish target response rates. Failure to achieve targets over a specified period of time would result in an as-yet-determined consequence. L. Barker suggested that Maryland has problems with retailers collecting quality telephone numbers. The inability to collect quality telephone numbers may necessitate alternate data collection modes (e.g. mail, web, etc.). As part of a pilot project in FL, the HMSWG is assessing anglers/captains willingness to participate in online surveys, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. The need to distinguish between land-line telephone numbers and cell phone numbers was also discussed. The angler license directory pilot survey in the Gulf of Mexico is currently excluding likely cell-phone numbers (known cell phone area code/exchanges) due to the higher cost of calling cell phones (higher cost is associated with legislation prohibiting the use of computers to call cell phone numbers). Approximately 11% of the numbers provided in the gulf sample frames are thought to be cell phone numbers.
4. P. Pate provided an updated of recent OT activities. The registry rule has been published and is currently open for public comment. The MRIP team leads recently completed a listening session in AK. The final regional listening sessions is scheduled for late July in Puerto Rico.
5. Project Updates:
 - HMSWG: 1) Tournament Project: Project includes a census of HMS-registered tournaments from ME-VA (overlap of current LPS coverage area). A graduate student from UMass Amherst has been solicited to help with data collection. Data

collection is similar to the Recreational Billfish Survey, but includes all HMS species. The project will be completed in late 2008 or early 2009. 2) SE HMS Characterization: Characterization of HMS fisheries in the southeast region (excluding FL). A data collection contract has been awarded to Strategic Research Group. Data collection is scheduled to begin sometime between mid August and early September. It is anticipated that data collection will be completed and a report submitted to the OT in late 2008 or early 2009. 3) Puerto Rico HMS: Funds have been transferred from GSMFC to Puerto Rico DNER. A draft telephone survey questionnaire has been developed. A decision was made to hold off on administering the telephone survey until after the blue marline season (October). A report will be submitted to the OT in late 2008 or early 2009. 4) FL Pilot Projects: Data collection has begun for both the charter-category and angling-category surves. In the charter category portion of the project, more than 150 field interviews have been completed. The angling category telephone survey has resulted in response rates between 65-75% and good cooperation rates. Data collection will cover a 12 month period for both the charter- and angling-category surveys.

- FHWG: 1) For-Hire Data Collection in Puerto Rico: Project got a late start due to funding hold-up (described above). PR DNER staff are working with a contractor to design a data collection program. 2) Documentation and Review: Three consultants have been retained to conduct the review. A meeting with the reviewers has been scheduled for mid August at the PSMFC offices in Portland, OR. The meeting will result in an outline plan of the reviewer's final report. It is anticipated that a final report will be submitted to the OT in early fall.
- DAWG: Consultants have been retained for all projects, and meetings and/or conference calls with the consultants have taken place for all projects. 1) Sampling and Estimation: A meeting with consultants was held in Silver Spring in late May. The project team has received a report from the consultants documenting major issues with sampling/estimation procedures, as well as first steps to improve data collections. A follow-up conference call was conducted on 6/30. 2) Discard Project: A conference call was conducted with a consultant. This project has potential overlap with the Private Access/Night Fishing project and may be integrated. 3) Private Access/Night Fishing: Project team met with consultants in early June. A follow-up conference call will be conducted on 7/10. 4) License Frame: Project team met with consultants in late June. The consultants are providing a follow-up report describing next steps in mid July.
- DMSWG: 1) Documentation: Most (75-80%) of the data from the "large" data collection programs has been entered into MDMS. Data entry for these programs should be completed by first or second week of July. Information from state programs is lagging behind due to time constraints of state personnel. 2) Requirements Document: The project team has started laying out plans for integrating datasets. The current plan is to develop a distributed system based upon existing systems.

6. K. Knowlton mentioned that the next MRFSS wave review meeting will be held October 29-30 in Baltimore. This might provide a good opportunity for the WG Chairs to convene (if necessary).

7. P. Pate led a discussion about future project ideas. Priorities for funding future projects may include undeveloped OT priorities, regional issues identified during listening sessions, implementation of pilot projects developed during current project cycle, and feedback from the working groups. The OT may request ideas for projects from the working groups in the future. K. Knowlton requested that project plans from the regions be submitted directly to the OT rather than funneled through the working groups. The mechanism and timing for soliciting future project plans has not yet been determined.