

## RECREATIONAL FISHERIES ECONOMICS REVIEW

**Background** NOAA Fisheries (NMFS) has collected socioeconomic data from recreational anglers every year since 1994. Data collection has rotated across regions and primarily includes three types of surveys, each of which addresses a different management issue: trip expenditure surveys, which are used to determine economic activity (sales and employment) generated by recreational fishing; economic value surveys, which are used to assess the value of access to the resource, conduct damage assessments, and measure the benefits of improving fishing quality; and stated preference surveys, which are used to assess angler preferences for management options. Other surveys include for-hire cost and earnings surveys, participation surveys, subsistence surveys, an oyster habitat valuation survey and an on-water fishing location choice survey. All surveys collect demographic data on survey respondents.

Recently, NMFS requested the National Research Council (NRC) to review its recreational fisheries monitoring program. The report included a review of NMFS' recreational fisheries economics program (see "Chapter 5 Human Dimensions" of the NRC report, "*Review of Recreational Fisheries Survey Methods*." This review included a summary of NMFS' recommendations of the types of data NMFS should be collecting on anglers for management purposes, recommendations on survey platform and survey frame.

**Center for Independent Experts (CIE) Program Review** NMFS has commissioned a follow-up review through the CIE to assess the current recreational fisheries economics program and, in particular, evaluate the extent to which NMFS has made progress on addressing the NRC recommendations. Specifically, the CIE has been asked to:

- A. Evaluate the NMFS expenditure, valuation, and conjoint surveys for strengths and weaknesses of the survey methods, potential biases, and recommendations for improvement.
- B. Evaluate the degree to which NMFS recreational economic data collections from 2000-2006 meet the recommendations included in "Chapter 5 Human Dimensions" of the NRC report, "*Review of Recreational Fisheries Survey Methods*."
- C. Assess whether the suite of economic models currently employed by NMFS address management information needs.
- D. Evaluate, given budget constraints, whether the approach NMFS is currently using for recreational economic data collection is providing "best value," i.e., for a given level of investment in data collection and assessments, NMFS provides the most timely, accurate, and complete scientific advice on the economic value of recreational fishing and the economic effects of regulatory actions. Reviewers shall provide recommendations on program priorities assuming level funding and a 5% increase in funding.