

State-Federal Partnerships for Enhancing Red Snapper Estimates

WHAT?

- MRIP is working with the regional Fisheries Information Networks, Councils and Commissions, state agencies, and other partners to enhance our recreational fisheries surveys to meet the needs of managers, scientists, stock assessors, and stakeholders.
- In the states of **Alabama**, **Florida**, **Mississippi**, and **Texas**, managers have specifically asked if there are ways to get more precise catch estimates for red snapper, a federally managed species with a Gulfwide quota, across shorter timeframes and for smaller areas.

WHY?

- Fisheries like red snapper – where a lot of fishing takes place over a short amount of time – represent a special challenge for scientists and managers. In the first place, it's difficult to sample enough anglers during the brief season to produce precise estimates of catch. In addition, under current methods, estimates cannot generally be produced until after the season is finished.

HOW?

- Since 2013, MRIP and the states of Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and Texas have been working together to test supplemental data collection programs that complement the MRIP survey to meet each state's particular red snapper data needs.
- In Louisiana, a new general survey design for all recreational fishing, LA Creel, has been developed by the state.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Alabama and Mississippi have completed initial testing of their new surveys. They are now undergoing MRIP-supported peer reviews to determine if any survey design improvements are needed prior to certification and full implementation.
- Florida and Texas are continuing their pilot studies in 2016. The states will evaluate the pilot results and decide on next steps in 2017.
- Meanwhile, NOAA Fisheries and our partners have begun developing methods to integrate data from the supplemental surveys into MRIP estimates.
- LA Creel ran alongside MRIP for benchmarking purposes through 2015. The Louisiana survey recently underwent an independent peer review. The results are being evaluated as part of the MRIP certification process.
- Prior to final implementation of any new survey method, detailed transition plans will be developed to ensure the smooth integration of the supplemental estimates into ongoing management, science, and stock assessment processes.

STATE PILOT PROJECTS AT A GLANCE



ALABAMA. All vessels landing red snapper in Alabama are required to report the landings through the Alabama Snapper Check program.



FLORIDA. Offshore reef fishing vessel permits are required. The permit database will serve as a red snapper survey frame.



MISSISSIPPI. One angler per vessel is required to obtain a red snapper landing permit, which includes a unique code for reporting purposes.



TEXAS. Experimenting with a statistical design that will provide expanded effort from a volunteer group using a modified version of the iSnapper smartphone app.

ESTIMATING TOTAL CATCH

Generally speaking, MRIP uses sample surveys to estimate overall fishing catch. One survey estimates effort, or the number of trips anglers take. Another estimates catch rate, or the number of fish landed and discarded on any given trip. Although the actual math is complex, essentially we arrive at an estimate for total catch by multiplying the results of the two surveys.

