



NEWSCAST

The Newsletter of the Marine Recreational Information Program

**NOAA
FISHERIES**



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The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is the way NOAA Fisheries is counting and reporting marine recreational catch and effort. It is a customer-driven initiative that not only produces better estimates, but does so through a process grounded in the principles of transparency, accountability and engagement.

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New Jersey Implements Free State Angler Registry

On Wednesday, May 4, New Jersey implemented a new saltwater angler registration program. New Jersey saltwater anglers who obtain the new, free, state-issued saltwater registration will no longer need to register with NOAA's National Saltwater Angler Registry. Through an agreement between NOAA and the State of New Jersey, state-registered anglers will be included in the national registry automatically. Check out the new state registry at www.SaltWaterRegistry.nj.gov.

The addition of New Jersey to the "exempted state" list means that only saltwater anglers fishing in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands need to register separately with NOAA in 2011. In addition, only those anglers who DO NOT have a saltwater recreational fishing license from an exempted state, or who LIVE in an exempted state but are NOT required to have a license (as is sometimes the case for active-duty military and others) must register with NOAA if they fish in Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

New Estimates to be Available by Late July

Final Gulf and Atlantic Coast recreational catch estimates for 2010 and preliminary Wave 1 and 2 estimates for 2011 will be available around late July, as staff works through the final stages of applying a new MRIP method for estimating catch using Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) data. As the timing for final estimate posting becomes clearer, the expected posting date will be updated on our online query site at <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/recreational/queries/index.html>.

Catch estimates for the years 2003 to 2009 will also be recalculated using the new estimation method, and will be updated at the same time as the final 2010 and 2011 Wave 1 and 2 estimates.

This new methodology addresses one of the major concerns of the National Research Council's (NRC) evaluation of the MRFSS. The NRC noted that the MRFSS estimation method was not correctly matched with the sampling design, leading to potential bias in the estimates.

Please direct questions to the Fisheries Statistics Division at: st1rec@noaa.gov.

Brochure Now Available

We're often asked by anglers, "How is my catch counted?" MRIP's Communication and Education Team developed a brochure to answer many of these commonly asked questions about data collection, reporting and what's new under MRIP. The brochure is available for download within the Outreach Toolkit at www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov.

Also, the brochure can be regionally customized and is available for co-branding with any of our partner organizations. For more information, contact Forbes Darby at forbes.darby@noaa.gov.

On the Road

Gordon Colvin, MRIP Program Manager, sat down with federal fishery managers from the Fishery Management Councils and NOAA Fisheries at the biannual Council Coordination Committee meeting in May to provide program updates. Gordon also presented at the annual Fisheries Leadership and Sustainability Forum in Beaufort, NC, where he spoke about MRIP in terms of catch monitoring and accounting. Next week, the Mid-atlantic Fishery Management Council will receive an MRIP update during their summer meeting.

Executive Steering Committee Approves 2011 Pilot Projects

The Executive Steering Committee completed their review and evaluation of 2011 MRIP pilot project proposals recommended for funding by the Operations Team during its April 15 meeting. The list of funded projects will be posted shortly at www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov. Project teams will develop detailed project plans with work likely beginning this fall. For more information about projects and priorities, contact Gordon Colvin at gordon.colvin@noaa.gov.

Project Peek: Gulf of Mexico For-hire Electronic

Logbook

A pilot project to test the feasibility of electronic trip reporting in the Gulf of Mexico is currently underway in select ports in Texas and Florida. Currently, for-hire survey information is only used by NOAA to determine effort, or how many trips you take and how many people you take on each trip. The electronic logbooks record both the effort and the catch - the number, size and species of fish landed on a given trip, along with how many were kept, and how many were released.

Thanks to the efforts of local for-hire captains, compliance with the new logbook requirement in the three pilot project states is strong. Texas has long had near 100% compliance while Florida has improved in recent months to around 80%.

Data entered into the electronic logbooks are being validated by onboard and dockside observers who randomly sample vessels as they land. Data entry of observed data is nearly complete and will allow researchers to begin comparing the consistency between logbook and validation data.

For more information, contact project leads Dave Donaldson, ddonaldson@gsmfc.org, or Beverly Sauls, beverly.sauls@myfwc.com.

Reader Q&A: State Registries

Q: *How are the state registries being used? Is the Coastal Household Telephone Survey still being used as a way to capture effort data?*

A: Working in close cooperation with the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, NOAA Fisheries has been using state registry information in a series of pilot projects comparing different phone and mail survey approaches for determining angler effort. Through this work, we've discovered that phone surveys based on state registry data may not - by themselves - be sufficient to give us a complete sample frame of anglers to randomly survey. There are gaps in some state licenses, such as the North Carolina's fishing pier exemption, that we need to account for. In response, the MRIP team is investigating ways to supplement that registry-based phone survey with a mail component (using a post office master address file) to ensure we're getting a representative sample from the universe of anglers.

Once our scientists are confident the approach is efficient and effective, we will implement it and move permanently away from the current random-digit dial survey method. In the meantime, the license information provided by North Carolina (and other states) is being used to actively improve our effort survey approaches.

Ask MRIP

Do you have questions about MRIP or our surveys? Ask us and we'll answer your question in an upcoming newsletter. If you've got a question about MRIP that you'd like answered, please e-mail Leah Sharpe at Leah.Sharpe@noaa.gov.

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