



# 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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### For More Information:

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## NOAA Seeks Feedback on Angler Registry Rule Changes

The public is invited to comment on proposed amendments to the National Saltwater Angler Registry final rule. NOAA Fisheries determined that minor revisions to the registry rule are needed to clarify and update certain provisions. Comments are being accepted through April 6, 2012.

Based on experience to date in implementing the registry, NOAA Fisheries proposes changes which will:

- Eliminate duplicative permitting and registration requirements for holders of Main Hawaiian Islands Non-commercial Bottomfish Permits;
- Allow states that exempt minors under the age of 17 from the state license or registration requirements to be eligible for Exempted State designation;
- Allow new anglers to fish for a day without a license, such as during a "free fishing day", without impacting the eligibility of the state's exempt designation;
- Allow the U.S. Virgin Islands to be designated as an Exempted State under the qualifying regional survey option of the rule; and
- Clarify and update various provisions of the rule.

Read the complete text of the proposed changes and learn more about submitting comments in the [Federal Register notice](#).

In 2010, NOAA Fisheries launched the National Saltwater Angler Registry. At that time many saltwater recreational fishermen were required to register with the new federal registry before going fishing.

By 2011 every coastal state and territory - with the exception of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands - had an agreement in place to share information with NOAA Fisheries about their state's licensed, permitted, or registered recreational fishermen (having achieved so-called "exempted state designation").

Today, NOAA Fisheries is utilizing the registry to test improved methods for surveying anglers' trip activities. For more information on the Angler Registry, visit [www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov](http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov).

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## What's Coming Next?

Following on the recent release of the new catch estimation methodology, MRIP plans to implement a number of improvements that will not only change the way we perform calculations with the data, but improve the way we collect and use them. All of these improvements are working toward the same goal of producing more accurate estimates that every stakeholder can trust.

Here is a brief description of our key next steps:

- **Evaluate the needs and procedures for incorporating MRIP estimates into stock assessments.** In late March, MRIP and SEDAR (Southeast Data and Assessment Review Program) will co-host a Calibration Workshop where fisheries scientists and managers will come together to determine if a new methodology can be developed to apply correction factors to MRFSS-based estimates of recreational catch and effort prior to 2004.
- **Implement an improved dockside intercept survey.** Beginning in 2013, MRIP will change the way we collect catch information by addressing the potential sources of bias in the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey. This means that samplers will now visit sites in a predetermined order and stay there for a predetermined amount of time. Samplers will maximize the number of site-days sampled, including low-activity sites, instead of maximizing the number of interviews conducted. MRIP will also conduct sampling at night.
- **Incorporate use of National Saltwater Angler Registry data.** The Registry, which NOAA Fisheries launched in 2010, was created to serve as a national phonebook of recreational saltwater anglers. MRIP is currently testing different survey designs to determine the best way to use the registry information. MRIP is comparing the effectiveness telephone surveys, mail surveys and surveys that include both telephone and mail data collection.
- **Determine the best way to use self-selecting survey data.** Self-selecting surveys give anglers the opportunity to provide information about how often they're fishing and what they're catching. A number of regional, state, and non-governmental programs are already conducting self-selecting surveys. In conjunction with these programs, MRIP is evaluating the appropriate uses of data collected through these types of surveys. View materials from last week's volunteer angler data workshop hosted by MRIP and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Stay tuned for more updates on these, and other MRIP developments, in the March newsletter.

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## 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](mailto:Leah.Sharpe@noaa.gov).

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