



NEWSCAST

The Newsletter of the Marine Recreational Information Program

NOAA
FISHERIES



November 4, 2013 IN THIS ISSUE

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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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2013-2014 Implementation Plan Update Outlines Shift to MRIP's Implementation Phase

Overview

Along with milestones from the previous year and priorities for 2014 and beyond, the 2013 MRIP Implementation Plan Update outlines steps we are taking to manage a significant transition in the program. As we finalize the evaluation of our existing data collection and estimation methods, and begin completing the comprehensive process of testing and certifying improved methods, a key focus of MRIP will now be on helping with the implementation and scaling up of these improvements for use in the field.

A key step in successfully initiating this transition has been a decision by the [MRIP Executive Steering Committee](#) to expand the ESC's role beyond research and development priority-setting and review of pilot projects results. The ESC will now also be serving an overview role in the implementation of new methods, with responsibilities including:

- Seeking feedback from regions on progress in implementation and any problems being encountered;
- Determining if regional needs are being met and capturing information gaps; and
- Identifying ways that MRIP can provide assistance in filling in those gaps.

2013 Milestones

Among the key MRIP achievements for 2013 included in the Implementation Plan Update are:

- **New APAIS Protocols.** One of the most visible initiatives was the implementation of the new Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, beginning in Wave 2. These are the "dockside" catch surveys MRIP conducts at the end of fishing trips to measure recreational catch on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The new protocols remove potential sources of bias from our sampling process, which was a chief concern raised by the National Research Council in its 2006 review of our survey methods.
- **Online Site Register.** Key to the process of activating our new survey protocols was developing an online, interactive Site Register of every recreational fishing access point from Maine to Louisiana. Working extensively with our state partners, the Site Register

captures and catalogues the numerous interconnected details required to make efficient and statistically sound site assignments. The register is updated using information from samplers, our state partners and crowd-sourced information that comes in from public users.

- **Expanded regional efforts.** Recognizing that the management needs of different regions and fisheries can vary dramatically, MRIP was conceived as a series of regional surveys adhering to a set of rigorous national standards. In upholding that role over the past year, MRIP tested survey design improvements that had been developed based on previous studies on the Pacific Coast and in Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Ongoing Priorities

MRIP priorities for 2014 focus on continuing to catalogue and test our fundamental survey designs, monitor and adjust new methodologies we have implemented in the field, and work to meet customer needs for timeliness, precision and geographic resolution. We are currently exploring:

- Shifting from telephone surveys to mail surveys for effort estimates.
- Greater use of licensing and registration information in conducting surveys.
- Options to increase reporting efficiency for the charter boat fleet.
- How to use new and emerging technologies to make catch and effort survey more efficient and user-friendly.

MRIP is grounded in the understanding that fisheries science and management is an evolving process, with new threats and opportunities constantly emerging, and that recreational data collection needs to evolve in step. As fishing and coastal communities change, surveys that are effective today will need to be revisited again in the future. MRIP is more than a static set of surveys; it's a process that enables us to keep our data collection methods as fluid and dynamic as the fisheries that they help to manage.

In the Next Newscast:

An overview of how we are using MRIP priorities to address data collection challenges in unique fisheries.

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.

[NOAA's Marine Recreational Information Program](#) | Leah.Sharpe@noaa.gov
