

MRIP Executive Steering Committee Meeting, February 28, 2011  
Meeting Summary

The meeting was held by conference call at 3:00 pm EST on February 28, 2011. In Attendance were:

- Members: John Boreman, Ph.D. (Chair); Gordon Colvin (Executive Secretary); Ned Cyr, Ph.D.; Larry Simpson; Nancy Thompson, Ph.D.; Russell Porter for Randy Fisher; Vince O'Shea
- Participants: Josh Demello for Kitty Simonds; Ken Franke; Miguel Rolon
- NOAA Fisheries Staff: Preston Pate, Dave Van Voorhees, Ph.D.; Forbes Darby

I. Report of the Operations Team regarding proposed adoption of a new method for estimating recreational catch from angler intercept data.

Operations Team (OT) Chair Preston Pate addressed the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) on the subject of the proposed new method for estimating catch. Mr. Pate reviewed his 11 February 2011 memorandum to the ESC, and referred to the final report of the Re-estimation Project Team entitled *A Report of the MRIP Sampling and Estimation Project: Improved Estimation Methods for the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey Component of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey*, both of which had been distributed to the ESC prior to the meeting.

Mr. Pate noted that the final report outlines proposed changes to estimation procedures for the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) that will ensure that estimation methods being applied to the APAIS are statistically valid. The methodology can be used to produce reliable estimates from historical MRFSS APAIS data from 2003 to the present by using a combination of design-based and model-based estimation methods, as well as for future, design-based surveys. The improved methodology is design-unbiased and will provide a correct estimation method for mean catch rates when the sampling, data collection, and data processing for the APAIS are conducted in accordance with the documented sampling design. In fact, much of the "Discussion" section of the report describes flaws in the current APAIS design, how such flaws interject bias into estimates if not properly accounted for, and how new surveys need to be designed to eliminate potential biases. Mr. Pate noted that many of the recommended improvements to the intercept survey design are being tested in a survey design pilot project being conducted in NC, and that the results of that pilot project will likely lead to a recommendation to implement a revised intercept survey design as early as late fall 2011.

Mr. Pate stated that this project is highly significant because it represents the first proposed change to the methods used to generate recreational catch statistics produced via MRIP, and addresses a high priority concern of the NRC reviewers and the OT.

Mr. Pate reported that the final report was evaluated by three independent peer reviewers. The project team subsequently addressed the reviewers' comments and questions. The peer review comments and the project team's responses were provided to the ESC. The members of the OT concluded that the project team responded completely and effectively to all peer review

comments.

Accordingly, Mr. Pate reported that the members of the OT have expressed their support to the ESC for the estimation methodology described in the project team's report, for its certification for use in future surveys, and for application of the methodology to historical MRFSS data consistent with the necessary adjustments in the historical survey design.

Discussion:

Dr. Thompson suggested that NMFS should be prepared to address the particulars of the peer review comments more specifically. Dr. Van Voorhees, in consultation with the other members of the Project Team, will prepare suggested responses for outreach purposes and responses to any inquiries we may receive.

Mr. Porter asked if the North Carolina pilot project will include an evaluation and comparison of implementation costs of the new and old methods. Mr. Pate responded that it will.

Dr. Thompson noted that the expected increase in variance of the catch estimates resulting from use of the new estimation method could affect the uncertainty factors used by the Councils' SSCs in setting ABCs and recommending ACLs. Dr. Boreman noted that, by better documenting and addressing sources of potential bias in the estimation process, one aspect of uncertainty would be improved. It was generally agreed that it would be advisable to make sure that SSC members were part of the outreach and consultation process for implementation of the new method.

Mr. Colvin outlined the rollout process planned for the implementation of the new method. In particular, he noted the recent establishment of an internal NOAA Team and an internal/external Observer Team that will work with MRIP leadership to identify and address issues associated with deployment of the new method and with computing the revised 2003 to 2010 estimates.

Mr. O'Shea stated that some of the Atlantic coast states have expressed concerns about the potential increased cost of the new intercept survey design and its potential to reduce the amount of biological data collected with current sampling effort. He also stated that some of the state contacts were concerned about the apparent pace of the effort to move forward with this revision. Mr. Pate, Mr. Colvin, and Dr. Van Voorhees all stated that MRIP would work carefully with our partners and our contractors to coordinate an appropriate process for implementing any changes in the intercept survey design. It is premature to begin this process until the final project report is completed and approved by the OT, but it would be helpful to begin developing a rollout plan and preliminary state consultations very soon.

Action:

None of the ESC members objected to forwarding a recommendation to NMFS **supporting implementation of the new estimation method and its use to prepare estimates of recreational catch from APAIS data beginning in calendar year 2011, and to compute and publish revised estimates of recreational catch for the years 2003 to 2010, the previous**

**years in which the current APAIS design has been conducted.**

II. Review of MRIP Spending History and FY 2011 Spend Plan

Dr. Van Voorhees distributed an updated spreadsheet *Spending History for the Marine Recreational Information Program* and outlined changes made to the FY 2011 Planned spending column since the last ESC meeting. It was also noted that the OT has received and will now be evaluating proposals for FY 11 project funding. FY 11 projects proposed to date total over \$3.3 million. Once the OT completes its review, it will submit funding recommendations to the ESC for decision, approximately a month from now.

Further discussion and any ESC recommendations on the FY 11 spending priorities will take place after the OT project funding recommendations and Congressional action on the FY 11 budget have been completed.

III. Discussion of ESC Membership

Mr. Colvin reviewed Dr. Boreman's 16 February 2011 e-mail to the ESC that defined ESC members and participants and the roles of each. Similar messages will be sent to the Operations, Registry and Communication and Education Teams. Also, the MRIP website has been updated to reflect these changes. There were no questions or concerns identified by the ESC members and participants.