

Frequently Asked Questions: Improved Angler Catch Survey

MRIP gathers catch information through in-person interviews with anglers at public access fishing sites. Our samplers count and interview all anglers at each site. During the interview, samplers measure and weigh all landed fish and ask how many of each species anglers released. The following are questions frequently asked about this survey.

Does MRIP survey anglers at private fishing sites?

Field samplers are not permitted on private property, which means we only interview anglers at public fishing access points like state-operated piers, boat ramps and parks. We have an ongoing study comparing fishing at both private and public sites to find out if there are differences like catch rates or species targeted that might impact our catch estimates. The results of this study may lead to further improvements to our angler catch survey if necessary.

Why do field samplers interview anglers who did not catch any fish?

We need a representative sample of all fishing trips, including those where lots of fish were caught and those where none were caught. If we only sampled anglers who caught lots of fish, our estimates would be skewed high. By sampling all types of trips, we gather information that truly reflects the fishing that's occurring.

Who conducts the survey?

A team of trained field samplers conducts the angler catch surveys. States either manage their own survey programs, which puts them in charge of hiring and overseeing their field samplers, or work with our federal contractor on behalf of NOAA Fisheries.

How do samplers decide where to go?

Samplers are given an assignment to visit predetermined sites in a specific order on a specific day and time. Each assignment is produced by a computer model that randomly selects sites based on certain characteristics. This ensures we get a representative sample of all types of fishing activity.

Will samplers stay at a fishing site where no one is fishing?

Strict adherence to the sampling design is imperative for collecting statistically sound data. This means a sampler is required to stay at a site for the duration of the assignment, even if there is little or no fishing activity there. This is a case where documenting no fishing activity is valuable data. It's giving us a complete picture of what's happening – or not happening – on the water.

Does sampling occur on bad weather days?

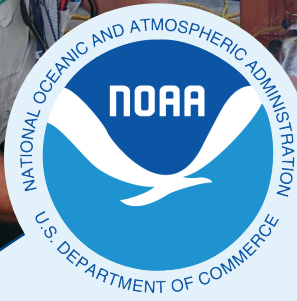
In order for our survey to be statistically rigorous, field samplers must sample according to their pre-determined assignments. That includes cases of bad weather and natural disasters, unless it poses a threat to the safety of the sampler. No-fishing days are also reflected by our effort survey, which calls anglers on the phone to find out how many fishing trips they've taken recently.

How many anglers are surveyed each year?

About 111,000 anglers are surveyed each year at fishing sites on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

What happens to the information after its collected by field samplers?

Catch data is combined with information from our effort surveys to produce an estimate of total catch. This estimate is then combined with other sources of information to assess the health of fish stocks, set catch limits and make regulations.



NOAA FISHERIES

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Program: Gordon Colvin

gordon.colvin@noaa.gov
(240) 357-4524

Outreach: Forbes Darby

forbes.darby@noaa.gov
(301) 427-8528



www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov