MRIP At-a-Glance

What is MRIP?

The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is a collaboration of fisheries scientists and managers, independent statisticians and researchers, and other recreational fishing stakeholders working to achieve complementary, equally important goals:

- **Provide timely, scientifically sound estimates** that fishery managers, stock assessors, and marine scientists need to ensure the sustainability of ocean resources.
- **Address regional and stakeholder needs and concerns** about recreational fishing catch and effort estimates.
- **Build greater confidence** in the data, and the science behind it, among those responsible for evaluating and managing fishery health, and the millions of individuals whose lives and livelihoods are impacted by recreational fishing.

How does MRIP work?

MRIP is designed to be an ongoing process of evaluation, testing and implementation of improvements to our survey methods. By the very nature of evolving science, fishing trends and factors impacting fishery health, MRIP must continue to be fluid, dynamic and responsive to change.

Current MRIP priorities and activities are outlined in the annual MRIP Implementation Plan. The Plan was first published in October 2008, and has been updated each year since. The Plan is publicly available on the MRIP website (www.countmyfish.noaa.gov).

What has MRIP accomplished?

Guided by an independent review of our survey methods by the National Research Council (NRC), key milestones to date include:

- **Re-estimation of historical catch data** to correct a "mismatch" identified by the NRC between our data collection and estimation processes.
- **National Saltwater Angler Registry**. Working mostly through state programs, we now have a national "address book" of most saltwater fishermen, significantly enhancing our ability to contact anglers for our effort surveys.
- **New Angler Catch Surveys**. We have reduced potential for bias in our in-person catch surveys by making sampling assignments more rigorous and adding protocols such as sampling both day and nighttime fishing trips.
- **Public Access Fishing Site Register**. This online database, listing characteristics of every fishing site from Maine to Louisiana, enables us to create efficient, statistically sound assignments for our catch surveys.
- **New Effort Surveys**. Beginning in 2015, we are starting the process of transitioning from a phone survey to a mail survey for our effort estimates. Studies have clearly indicated that mail surveys will be better, but there are numerous factors to evaluate before switching from one survey to another.

Complete details of MRIP's numerous pilot studies and their results are available on the MRIP website, www.countmyfish.noaa.gov

What's next for MRIP?

As implementation progresses on these and other high-priority improvements to our surveys, we are able to begin addressing additional stakeholder needs. For instance, we are working with our regional partners to identify key areas of focus, such as increasing the precision of our estimates. We are also evaluating various electronic reporting and data collection technologies, such as the use of smartphone applications. Each decision to invest in one priority over another comes with tradeoffs; tradeoffs that are best balanced through the MRIP approach of bringing the right tools, people and relationships to the table.

NOAA FISHERIES

NOAA Fisheries is an agency within the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our nation's economic, social, and environmental needs. NOAA Fisheries Service provides world-class science and stewardship.

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