

Operations Team Meeting Summary **August 23, 2007**

The call convened at 2:00 PM ET. The following members were present: Pres Pate, Rob Andrews, Dave Donaldson, Jason Didden, Dick Brame, Megan Caldwell, Gary Shepherd, Mark Fisher, Ron Salz, Mike Armstrong, Richard Cody, Russell Porter, Josh Demello (for Paul Dalzell). Gordon Colvin (Registry Team) also participated in the call.

The objective of the meeting was to review the projects outlined by the working groups during the St. Pete workshop, identify non-starters and provide any other feedback to working group chairs. The team requested an update on S&T activities regarding the analysis of bias using existing data. R. Andrews stated that S&T efforts to date have focused on assessing the appropriateness of estimation procedures and that this will work will continue under the direction of the Analysis Working Group. The team suggested that assessing the impact of out-of-frame anglers in current effort surveys could be addressed with existing data. The AWG shall determine if this effort should be undertaken by working group members or independent consultants.

Following is a summary of comments for each of the projects outlined by the working groups.

Analysis Working Group

1. Evaluate whether estimation procedures appropriately match sample designs: *This project should include an analysis of all current surveys, not just MRFSS.*
2. Examine data sources and develop studies to account for anglers not in effort survey frames: *No comment.*
3. Examine data sources and develop studies to account for angler and vessel trips not included in catch survey frames: *This is a very expansive project that needs more focus. Individual components of undercoverage may require independent projects (different methodologies may be needed to assess different components of undercoverage). Priority should be given to private access fishing. AWG should work with For-Hire Working Group to address gaps in coverage in for-hire sampling frames (AWG should assume lead role).*
4. Examine potential bias associated with measurement error in catch and effort surveys: *Low priority that should be tabled for now. Current efforts should focus on minimizing measurement error through training and supervision.*
5. Analysis of bias associated with characterization of discarded catch: *This overlaps with Design Working Group project. DWG will take lead on this project with AWG input.*
6. Assess sample size / precision relationship: *Low priority for now. This issue should be tabled and readdressed once a new sampling design is in place.*

Design Working Group

1. Review dual- and/or multiple-frame surveys that use lists of licensed anglers as sample frames (such as those being conducted in the Gulf of Mexico, CA, WA, OR and AK): *This is a high priority project as we are moving in the direction of license-based surveys. Assessing gaps and deficiencies in existing methodologies is important.*
2. Examine alternate systems (logbooks, on-board cameras, observers) for collecting size and species composition of discarded catch: *DWG should take the lead on this project with input (team membership) from AWG and FHWG.*
3. Utility of providing alternate reporting modes for collecting self-reported effort data: *This project should focus on identifying and assessing the effectiveness of existing programs (within and external to fisheries and natural resource realms) that utilize multiple and/or alternate reporting options. At this time, a pilot project should not be developed solely to address this issue.*

HMS Working Group

1. Explore options and feasibility of designing a program for non-tournament sampling in the Caribbean: *No comment.*
2. HMS angling permit holder telephone survey in FL: *Need to be careful about designing fishery-specific surveys as this will result in a large number of different surveys. Initial efforts should focus on assessing gaps in existing (or standard??) data collection programs (because existing programs don't effectively cover specific fisheries) and making modifications to meet needs. Gulf FIN recently proposed a mail survey to characterize private boat HMS fishery in Gulf of Mexico. Compare utility of this approach with a telephone survey of private boat HMS anglers.*
3. LPS sampling charter boat mode in the Gulf of Mexico (including East Florida): *See comments above regarding specialized surveys. Characterizing the fishery (assessing need for independent survey) should precede complete expansion of LPS into Gulf of Mexico. Characterization would include determining the magnitude of the fishery, identifying access points (private vs. public), and identifying departure and landing times. Such information could be collected through minor modification of current FHS effort survey. This project should include FHWG input.*
4. Evaluating LPS tournament data: *No Comment*

For Hire Working Group

The FHWG requested the opportunity to submit project ideas beyond those that were submitted at the workshop. The comments below include these additional projects.

1. Analysis of reporting methodologies for for-hire fisheries: *No comment.*
2. Inventory and documentation of existing for-hire data collection programs: *No comment.*

3. Implement an improved for-hire data collection methodology in the Caribbean: *No comment.*
4. Implement for-hire data collection during un-sampled waves in the Atlantic: *Table for now. A preferred methodology should be identified prior to expansion of surveying efforts.*
5. Evaluate logbook and survey data from headboats in the Gulf and south Atlantic and conduct comparison of data collection methods: *This evaluation should be conducted as part of the analysis of reporting methodologies for for-hire fisheries (FHWG-1 above).*
6. Develop an electronic reporting system to improve timeliness of data submission and reduce reporting burden: *This project depends upon identification of a preferred methodology. An assessment of the effectiveness of electronic reporting in existing systems could be considered as part of DWG-3 or FHWG-2 above.*
7. Evaluate methods to document discards and mortality: *This proposal is included in a DWG proposal. FHWG should work with DWG (lead) and AWG on this project instead of developing a separate project.*
8. Evaluate methods to develop and maintain complete list frames for for-hire vessels: *FHWG should work with Registry Team (lead) on this project.*
9. Evaluate methods to improve data collections from small guide vessels: *This project should be combined with project #3 proposed by the AWG.*
10. Evaluate potential double reporting in commercial and recreational fisheries: *Low priority project that should be tabled.*

Data Management and Standards Working Group

The OT only considered the projects that DMSWG identified as the highest priority (Priority 1). P. Pate and R. Andrews with follow-up with the DMSWG chair to determine if the working group would like to OT to consider additional projects at this time.

1. Review and study existing recreational data collection systems to categorize a set of common data elements that exist in the effort and catch data: *Project plan should be developed but the inclusion of fishery dependent and independent data should be omitted.*
2. Identify minimum data elements and set regional/national standards for coding systems: *No comment.*

Other Business

The Angler Registry Team provided an update on its efforts. It was noted that implementation of a Federal Angler Registry, independent of State licensing programs, will result in larger gaps than existing state programs. The RT will be working with states in an effort to minimize exemptions.

The next OT face-to-face meeting will likely be the last week of November (11/26-11/30). R Andrews is exploring locations in Southern California.

Being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 ET.