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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

NOAA hosts Recreational Data Timeliness Workshop

Scientists, managers, and anglers met in St. Petersburg, FL on March 15 and 16 for a workshop aimed at expanding efforts to produce timely recreational fishing data.

Concerns regarding the timeliness of the data, especially with respect to its impact on Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures, served as a discussion point among representatives from NOAA Fisheries, the Councils, Commissions, States, and the recreational community. [Workshop participants](#) looked at scientific and management strategies for improving the timeliness of catch data and meeting our Congressional mandates for setting Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures.

The Recreational Data Timeliness Workshop is part of MRIP's larger effort to improve the collection and reporting of recreational fishing data. A [video blog](#) from the conference is available at www.countmyfish.noaa.gov, where we'll also be posting a workshop summary and copies of presentations as they become available.

2011 estimates debut new methodology

On March 14, NOAA Fisheries accepted recommendations from the MRIP Operations Team and Executive Steering Committee to adopt a new method for estimating catch data from the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey.

Later this spring, NOAA will release the first wave of MRIP data using this new method, which addresses one of the major concerns of the National Research Council's evaluation of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey, or MRFSS. The NRC noted that the estimation design was not synched up with the sampling design, leading to unpredictable biases in the estimates.

This new methodology will be applied to historical MRFSS surveys dating back to 2003, results of which will be released later this spring, as well as to all future estimates beginning in early 2011.

estimates, but does so through a process grounded in the principles of transparency, accountability and engagement.

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Project addresses bias in intercept surveys

In partnership with the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, NOAA Fisheries is analyzing findings from an improved sampling design for the intercept survey that was pilot tested in 2010.

The new survey design addresses a number of assumptions present in the current MRFSS intercept survey. For example, concern has existed that, under the MRFSS survey, samplers were more likely to sample people with fish than people without. Under the new sampling design, samplers work during specific, assigned parts of the day and night and sample all anglers that finished fishing during those periods.

NOAA Fisheries anticipates modifying sampling procedures based on the findings from the pilot project, and is working with the Operations Team to investigate the feasibility of implementing the procedures in other states in late 2011 and into 2012.

MRIP staff provides updates and continues dialogue

Pres Pate, Chair of the MRIP Operations Team, sat down with state fishery managers in March to provide program updates. He met with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission in Houston, TX on March 14-16 and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission in Alexandria, VA on March 21-24.

Providing updates to the Commissions and Councils are a regular feature of an ongoing dialogue between MRIP and fisheries managers and scientists. This month's briefings focused on the upcoming launch of new the estimation methods.

Operations Team to recommend 2011 project funding

On April 15, the Operations Team will meet to review and evaluate 2011 MRIP pilot project proposals submitted by the various project teams. For more information about proposed projects and priorities, contact Pres Pate at ppate@ec.rr.com.

Project Peek: Catch card pilot program launches in Puerto Rico

NOAA Fisheries announced testing of a new catch card census program in Puerto Rico. The program, which runs through the end of 2011, aims to improve the accuracy of estimates of Atlantic billfish and swordfish landed by recreational anglers. A project report is expected in early 2012.

For more information, contact the project lead, Michelle Scharer Umpierre at michelle.scharer@upr.edu.

Q&A: National Saltwater Angler Registry

Q: I've heard some conflicting information about who has to register with the National Saltwater Angler Registry. Can you clear up the confusion?

A: You may have heard that New Jersey's governor signed legislation to authorize the creation of a state-issued saltwater fishing registration in February. Until this program is in place and an agreement is signed with NOAA, New Jersey saltwater anglers must still register with the National Saltwater Angler Registry.

In March, New York repealed its \$10 state saltwater fishing license in favor of a free registry. Despite this change at the state-level, NOAA's agreement with New York remains in place, meaning anglers will not need to register with the National Saltwater Angler Registry if they're in compliance with the new state registration requirement. NOAA expects that New York State will be able to modify its agreement with NOAA to send its new registry data, and therefore retain its exempted state designation.

Changes in the status of New Jersey, New York, or any other state will be posted on www.countmyfish.noaa.gov as soon as they occur.

Most anglers are automatically registered with NOAA when they get a state saltwater fishing license or registration. That's because every state or U.S. territory EXCEPT Hawaii, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have created programs to register their anglers and share that data with NOAA. Residents in any state or territory other than Hawaii, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands also DO NOT need to register with NOAA if they're not required by the state to register or purchase a fishing license, as is sometimes the case with active-duty military or other individuals.

If you're still not sure or need to register, please visit www.countmyfish.noaa.gov.

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
