

# NOTICE OF OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET ACTION

Date 02/08/2013

Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL: Simon Szykman

FOR CLEARANCE OFFICER: Jennifer Jessup

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, OMB has taken action on your request received 12/21/2012

ACTION REQUESTED: New collection (Request for a new OMB Control Number)

TYPE OF REVIEW REQUESTED: Regular

ICR REFERENCE NUMBER: 201212-0648-011

AGENCY ICR TRACKING NUMBER:

TITLE: Marine Recreational Information Program Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey

LIST OF INFORMATION COLLECTIONS: See next page

OMB ACTION: Approved with change

OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 0648-0659

The agency is required to display the OMB Control Number and inform respondents of its legal significance in accordance with 5 CFR 1320.5(b).

EXPIRATION DATE: 02/29/2016

DISCONTINUE DATE:

BURDEN:	RESPONSES	HOURS	COSTS
Previous	0	0	0
New	34,000	2,550	0
Difference			
Change due to New Statute	0	0	0
Change due to Agency Discretion	34,000	2,550	0
Change due to Agency Adjustment	0	0	0
Change due to PRA Violation	0	0	0

TERMS OF CLEARANCE:

OMB Authorizing Official: Dominic J. Mancini  
Acting Deputy Administrator,  
Office Of Information And Regulatory Affairs

## List of ICs

IC Title	Form No.	Form Name	CFR Citation
MRIP Access Point Angler Intercept Survey	NA, NA	MRIP Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, APAIS screening script	

# PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION

**Please read the instructions before completing this form. For additional forms or assistance in completing this form, contact your agency's Paperwork Clearance Officer. Send two copies of this form, the collection instrument to be reviewed, the supporting statement, and any additional documentation to: Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Docket Library, Room 10102, 725 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20503.**

1. Agency/Subagency originating request	2. OMB control number <span style="float: right;">b. <input type="checkbox"/> None</span> a. _____ - _____
3. Type of information collection ( <i>check one</i> ) a. <input type="checkbox"/> New Collection b. <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of a currently approved collection c. <input type="checkbox"/> Extension of a currently approved collection d. <input type="checkbox"/> Reinstatement, without change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired e. <input type="checkbox"/> Reinstatement, with change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired f. <input type="checkbox"/> Existing collection in use without an OMB control number For b-f, note Item A2 of Supporting Statement instructions	4. Type of review requested ( <i>check one</i> ) a. <input type="checkbox"/> Regular submission b. <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency - Approval requested by _____ / _____ / _____ c. <input type="checkbox"/> Delegated
7. Title	5. Small entities Will this information collection have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8. Agency form number(s) ( <i>if applicable</i> )	6. Requested expiration date a. <input type="checkbox"/> Three years from approval date b. <input type="checkbox"/> Other Specify: _____ / _____
9. Keywords	10. Abstract
11. Affected public ( <i>Mark primary with "P" and all others that apply with "x"</i> ) a. ___ Individuals or households d. ___ Farms b. ___ Business or other for-profit e. ___ Federal Government c. ___ Not-for-profit institutions f. ___ State, Local or Tribal Government	12. Obligation to respond ( <i>check one</i> ) a. <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary b. <input type="checkbox"/> Required to obtain or retain benefits c. <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory
13. Annual recordkeeping and reporting burden a. Number of respondents _____ b. Total annual responses _____ 1. Percentage of these responses collected electronically _____ % c. Total annual hours requested _____ d. Current OMB inventory _____ e. Difference _____ f. Explanation of difference 1. Program change _____ 2. Adjustment _____	14. Annual reporting and recordkeeping cost burden ( <i>in thousands of dollars</i> ) a. Total annualized capital/startup costs _____ b. Total annual costs (O&M) _____ c. Total annualized cost requested _____ d. Current OMB inventory _____ e. Difference _____ f. Explanation of difference 1. Program change _____ 2. Adjustment _____
15. Purpose of information collection ( <i>Mark primary with "P" and all others that apply with "X"</i> ) a. ___ Application for benefits e. ___ Program planning or management b. ___ Program evaluation f. ___ Research c. ___ General purpose statistics g. ___ Regulatory or compliance d. ___ Audit	16. Frequency of recordkeeping or reporting ( <i>check all that apply</i> ) a. <input type="checkbox"/> Recordkeeping b. <input type="checkbox"/> Third party disclosure c. <input type="checkbox"/> Reporting 1. <input type="checkbox"/> On occasion 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-annually 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Annually 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Biennially 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) _____
17. Statistical methods Does this information collection employ statistical methods <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	18. Agency Contact (person who can best answer questions regarding the content of this submission)  Name: _____ Phone: _____

## 19. Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

On behalf of this Federal Agency, I certify that the collection of information encompassed by this request complies with 5 CFR 1320.9

**NOTE:** The text of 5 CFR 1320.9, and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3), appear at the end of the instructions. *The certification is to be made with reference to those regulatory provisions as set forth in the instructions.*

The following is a summary of the topics, regarding the proposed collection of information, that the certification covers:

- (a) It is necessary for the proper performance of agency functions;
- (b) It avoids unnecessary duplication;
- (c) It reduces burden on small entities;
- (d) It used plain, coherent, and unambiguous terminology that is understandable to respondents;
- (e) Its implementation will be consistent and compatible with current reporting and recordkeeping practices;
- (f) It indicates the retention period for recordkeeping requirements;
- (g) It informs respondents of the information called for under 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3):
  - (i) Why the information is being collected;
  - (ii) Use of information;
  - (iii) Burden estimate;
  - (iv) Nature of response (voluntary, required for a benefit, mandatory);
  - (v) Nature and extent of confidentiality; and
  - (vi) Need to display currently valid OMB control number;
- (h) It was developed by an office that has planned and allocated resources for the efficient and effective management and use of the information to be collected (see note in Item 19 of instructions);
- (i) It uses effective and efficient statistical survey methodology; and
- (j) It makes appropriate use of information technology.

If you are unable to certify compliance with any of the provisions, identify the item below and explain the reason in Item 18 of the Supporting Statement.

Signature of Senior Official or designee

Date

Agency Certification (signature of Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Line Office Chief Information Officer, head of MB staff for L.O.s, or of the Director of a Program or StaffOffice)

Signature

Date

Signature of NOAA Clearance Officer

Signature

Date

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**MARINE RECREATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAM ACCESS-POINT ANGLER**  
**INTERCEPT SURVEY**  
**OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-XXXX**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

This request is for a new information collection.

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.**

Collection of recreational fisheries catch and effort data is necessary to fulfill statutory requirements of Section 303 of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (16 U.S.C. 1852 et. seq.) and to comply with [Executive Order 12962](#) on Recreational Fisheries. Section 303 (a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act specifies data and analyses to be included in Fishery Management Plans (FMPs), as well as pertinent data that shall be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce under the plan.

Traditionally, recreational fishing catch data (numbers and species of fish) have been collected through the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS) Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS), an in-person site-day sampling survey of recreational anglers who have completed fishing for the day (OMB Control No. 0648-0052). In recent years, the precision and accuracy of the catch statistics have been questioned due to changes in fisheries management and the need for more accurate statistics at greater levels of resolution. To address concerns about the MRFSS, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) commissioned a review of its marine recreational fishing surveys by the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academies of Science. The NRC Review concluded that existing recreational fishing surveys are inadequate for sampling the universe of anglers and for determining their catch and effort (NRC, 2006).

Specific recommendations and conclusions from the NRC Review include the following:

- “Both the telephone and access components of the current approach have serious flaws in design or implementation and use inadequate analysis methods that need to be addressed immediately.”;
- “... the estimation procedure for information gathered onsite does not use the nominal or actual selection probabilities of the sample design and, therefore, has the potential to produce biased estimates of both the parameters of interest and their variances”;
- “The field personnel have considerable latitude in how they go about intercepting anglers.”;
- “... errors in estimating the expected angling intensity and failure to account for expected angling intensity in the estimation process can lead to both increased variance and bias in the CPUE estimates.”.

NMFS has addressed these concerns by implementing the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). The MRIP program has used a combination of expert consultants, partner

statisticians and survey managers, and staff to design and test new survey methodologies for catch and effort data collections and estimation. The MRIP APAIS is the result of external review and re-design of the MRFSS' APAIS by expert survey statisticians and addresses the issues of field sampler influence, potential bias in sampling low-use sites, unknown sampling probabilities due to haphazard site selection and re-scheduling of site-days, and design and estimation inconsistencies.

A review of the MRFSS APAIS sampling and estimation methodologies identified potential sources of error in the designs (Breidt et al. 2011). It was noted the weighted estimation method will only provide correct estimates of mean catch rates “when the sampling, data collection, and data processing for the APAIS are conducted in accordance with the documented sampling design”. Errors could be introduced into the weighted estimator if the data structure is not arranged to accurately reflect the stratified, probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) multistage sampling design, or if the field samplers misinterpret the sampling and measurement protocols. More formalized sampling protocols with stricter control of sampler behavior are needed to ensure that a probability sample is consistently obtained and potential biases are eliminated or minimized.

This request is to implement a new Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey process that will eliminate sources of bias in the current MRFSS APAIS, and provide more accurate estimates of catch-rates with improved estimates of total variance. The new APAIS will be implemented in Maine through Florida on the Atlantic Coast, and in Florida through Louisiana on the Gulf Coast, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. On the Atlantic Coast, Maine and New Hampshire will be surveyed in three waves per year (May-Jun, Jul-Aug, Sep-Oct), Massachusetts-Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia will be surveyed in 5 waves per year (Mar-Apr – Nov-Dec), and North Carolina, the Gulf States, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico will be surveyed in all 6 waves per year (Jan-Feb – Nov-Dec). These specific sampling periods by state or region encompass the majority of the recreational fishery seasons. Prior surveys indicated recreational fishing outside these periods was rare, contributed a very small percentage of annual landings of managed fishes, and would be disproportionately expensive to estimate precisely. The period of this request is for 2013 – 2015. This new APAIS will be based on the current MRFSS angler interview and will become the new ongoing data collection program.

**2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.**

The MRIP APAIS estimates catch per trip by species. This information is combined with effort data collected through offsite surveys of fishing effort to estimate total catch by species. These recreational fishing catch and effort estimates are used on an ongoing basis by NMFS, regional fishery management councils, interstate marine fisheries commissions and state natural resource agencies in developing, implementing and monitoring fishery management programs, per statutory requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Catch and effort statistics are fundamental for assessing the influence of fishing on any fish stock. Accurate estimates of the quantities

taken, fishing effort, and both the seasonal and geographic distributions of the catch and effort are required for the development of regional management policies and plans.

The MRIP APAIS will provide more accurate recreational fishing catch and catch-rate data by eliminating or reducing the biases associated with the previous MRFSS APAIS. The APAIS uses site clusters and time intervals to dictate where and when the field interviewer collects data, eliminating sampling site and time choices by the field staff, thus eliminating sources of potential bias and unknown probability of selection. The angler counts obtained as an element of data collection will be used to compute the weight for each sample, thus eliminating the need to use the 'expected' angler activity as a weighting mechanism, another potential source of bias. Therefore, this new survey will allow estimation of recreational fishing catch-per-unit-effort with improved accuracy based on the survey design and improved precision for favored species/regions to meet assessment, monitoring, and management needs.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Fisheries will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. The data collected by the APAIS will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.**

The surveys will be conducted in person and responses recorded on paper forms. At the discretion of the contractor conducting the field interviewing the responses may be captured through optical character recognition (OCR) if scannable forms are used, which would greatly increase the accuracy and efficiency of data collection. Otherwise, manual key-entry of survey data will be used. Potential pilot studies to support electronic capture using laptop or tablet PCs, smartphones, or handheld data loggers will be investigated pending available fund identification.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

NMFS collaborates with state natural resource agencies and regional interstate fisheries commissions on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts to ensure that recreational fisheries data collections are not duplicative. Every five years, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) of the U.S. Department of the Interior conducts the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (OMB Control No. 1018-0088). This survey collects minimal information about annual recreational saltwater fishing activity within the context of additional recreation activities. That survey does not provide the spatial or temporal resolution needed by managers of fishery resources to monitor and manage recreational fisheries landings.

The MRIP APAIS Head Boat mode sampling and estimation overlaps with the Southeast Head Boat Logbook Program (SEHB) conducted by the Beaufort Laboratory of the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center (OMB No. 0648-0016). The SEHB includes only head boats that typically target reef-fish species, whereas the APAIS coverage includes all identified head boats in the region, regardless of target or landed species. Estimates of head boat effort are produced by the NMFS For-Hire Survey (OMB No. 0648-0052) and will be complemented by the catch rate data collected by this APAIS for production of catch estimates for the known fleet universe. The APAIS methods of at-sea interviews of head boat anglers includes direct observations of the discarded catch, identification of discarded fish to species by trained interviewer/observers, evaluation of discard disposition, and length measurements of discarded fish. This information is not available in the SEHB logbooks.

**5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

The respondents are individual recreational fishers and, by definition, are not businesses. Therefore, no small businesses will be impacted by this survey design or conduct.

**6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.**

If the survey is not conducted, NMFS will not have recreational fisheries catch information from a majority of saltwater anglers to support fishery stock assessments and management. An ongoing survey of recreational anglers is required to monitor changing conditions in the fishery and support modifications in fishery regulations both within fishing seasons and among fishing years. In addition, a continuous time series of data is scientifically essential to assess the impact of recreational fishing on fish stocks.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.**

The collection is consistent with OMB guidelines.

**8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

A Federal Register Notice on what was intended to be a revision of OMB Control No. 0648-0052, with these surveys added, published on March 9, 2012 (77 FR 14348) solicited public comment on this revision. No comments were received.

MRIP is a collaborative effort among government agencies, independent scientists, recreational fishing groups and conservation organizations to ensure scientifically rigorous collection of appropriate information that meets manager and stakeholder needs. Subsequently, NMFS staff maintains regular communication with customers, through workshops, workgroup meetings and one-on-one consultations, to ensure that needs for recreational fishing statistics are being met. For example, MRIP hosted a workshop in March 2011 with data customers to discuss data collection alternatives and tradeoffs among alternatives for increasing the timeliness of recreational fishing catch and effort estimates. Outcomes of the workshop are summarized in a final workshop report:

[https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/mdms/doc/32Recreational\\_Data\\_Timeliness\\_FINAL\\_Report.pdf](https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/mdms/doc/32Recreational_Data_Timeliness_FINAL_Report.pdf)

**9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

This data collection will not include any incentives to prospective respondents.

**10. Describe any assurance or confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

As stated on the instruments, responses are kept confidential as required by section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens and [NOAA Administrative Order 216-100](#), Confidentiality of Fisheries Statistics, and will not be released for public use except in aggregate statistical form without identification as to its source. Section 402(b) stipulates that data required to be submitted under an FMP shall be confidential and shall not be released except to Federal employees and Council staff responsible for FMP monitoring and development or when required under court order. Data such as personal addresses and phone numbers will remain confidential.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

No sensitive questions are asked.

**12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.**

The Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey will be completed by approximately 102,000 respondents resulting in a total estimated burden of 7,650 hours (102,000\*4.5 minutes/60 minutes = 7,650). The expected number of respondents is based on the results of previous MRFSS angler intercept surveys in the regions the MRIP APAIS is to be conducted (Maine – Louisiana, Puerto Rico, Hawaii). An hourly rate of \$22.77 is based on the average for all civilian workers from the January 2011 National Compensation Survey (<http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ocs/sp/nctb1477.pdf>). A total of 7,650 burden hours are anticipated, resulting in a labor costs to respondents of approximately \$174,191. **Annualized responses: 34,000, hours: 2,550 and labor costs: \$158,064.**

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).**

This data collection survey will incur no cost burden on respondents beyond the costs of response time.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.**

Annual cost to the Federal government is approximately \$2,800,000: \$2,500,000 in data collection costs and \$300,000 in professional staff, overhead and computing costs.

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.**

This is a new program.

**16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.**

Each year, NMFS administers recreational fishing surveys for six discrete, two-month reference waves, beginning with wave 1 (January/February) and continuing through wave 6 (November/December). The MRIP APAIS will be administered for six successive waves per year, for 3 years, beginning with wave 1 (January/February), 2013 and continuing through wave 6, 2015.

All data collected and analyzed will be included in table format available on the Web page of the Fisheries Statistics Division, Office of Science and Technology, National Marine Fisheries Service. The Web site address is <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/recreational>. Data from this survey may support research and analyses to be presented at appropriate professional meetings (e.g. American Fisheries Society, Joint Statistical Meetings) and may be submitted for publication in appropriate statistical or fisheries peer-reviewed journals. Summary marine recreational fishery catch statistics produced using data from this survey are included in the annual publication by NMFS, Fisheries of the United States (e.g. FUS 2010).

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.**

Not Applicable.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.**

Not Applicable.

## References

Fisheries of the United States, 2010 (2011) U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Science and Technology, USGPO, August 2011, <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/fus/fus10/index.html>

National Research Council (2006). *Review of Recreational Fisheries Survey Methods*. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press.

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
MARINE RECREATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAM  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-XXXX**

**B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS**

**1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g. establishments, State and local governmental units, households, or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form. The tabulation must also include expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted before, provide the actual response rate achieved.**

1.1. MRIP Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey

The MRIP Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) is a bi-monthly (wave), in-person survey designed to estimate the catch rates, by species, catch category (harvested or released alive), and mode (Charter Boat, Party Boat, Private or Rental Boat, Shore fishing), of anglers participating in marine recreational fishing in the study states. The APAIS will be conducted for six, two-month waves in 17 states bordering the Atlantic Coast and Gulf of Mexico, with the exception of Texas, as well as in Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and Hawaii. The universe for the APAIS is the estimated 5-20 million (median:12.5 million) marine recreational fishing trips that are taken during each wave. From this universe, we sample approximately 7,000 - 27,000 completed fishing trips, resulting in 6,800 – 25,800 completed interviews per wave.

Table 1. Marine Recreational Angler-Trip Intercept Sampling

Universe Size	10,000,000 angler-trips per wave <sup>1</sup>	
Complete Surveys	wave 1: 6,800	wave 4: 25,800
	wave 2: 12,800	wave 5: 21,000
	wave 3: 23,700	wave 6: 11,900 <sup>2</sup>

Table 2. APAIS Response Rates, 2009-2011

Region	Non-Response (%)	Response (%)
North Atlantic	7.8	92.2
Mid Atlantic	8.0	92.0
South Atlantic	2.3	97.7
Gulf of Mexico	2.5	97.5

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<sup>1</sup> The size of the sample universe for each wave varies throughout the year from 5 million fishing trips to more than 20 million fishing trips.

<sup>2</sup> Annual total angler-intercepts obtained is approximately 102,000 (2009-2011).

Response rates for the APAIS will be maintained at the high levels achieved to date with the current version of the intercept survey, through intensive interviewer training and monitoring, and stakeholder outreach efforts.

**2. Describe the procedures for the collection, including: the statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection; the estimation procedure; the degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification; any unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

A critical review conducted by the National Research Council (2006) identified problems in the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) that the NOAA Fisheries Service has conducted for many years as a component of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS). The APAIS had been using a stratified, multi-stage cluster sampling design to collect catch data from anglers at fishing access sites, but the survey estimators and measures of precision were not accounting for the complex design. In addition, the sampling protocols for the APAIS had combined formal randomization with subjective decision-making in ways that further complicated the development of statistically valid, defensible estimators and measures of precision. Finally, the spatiotemporal sampling frame used for the survey was incomplete and did not provide adequate coverage of angler fishing days ending at night.

Breidt et al (2011) noted the weighted estimation method will only provide correct estimates of mean catch rates “when the sampling, data collection, and data processing for the APAIS are conducted in accordance with the documented sampling design”. Errors could be introduced into the weighted estimator if the data structure is not arranged to accurately reflect the stratified, probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) multistage sampling design, or if the field samplers misinterpret the sampling and measurement protocols. More formalized sampling protocols with stricter control of sampler behavior are needed to ensure that a probability sample is consistently obtained. Chromy, et al (2009) stressed that “it is necessary to know the probability of selection of each unit (landing site, vessel trip, angler, or fish) interviewed or observed”. Breidt, et al (2011) pointed out that a re-design of the APAIS would (1) make it much less complicated to determine the true sample selection probabilities, (2) eliminate the need for model-based weighting methods, and (3) provide a means for a strictly design-based approach to unbiased estimation.

The APAIS is based upon a stratified, multi-stage cluster design. Samples are selected from a comprehensive, spatio-temporal list of site-days, constructed by crossing a list of publicly-accessible fishing sites/landing sites with a list of available sampling days within a two-month wave.

### 2.0.1. Sample Design

The primary sampling unit (PSU) is a site-day that comprises a combination of a selected fishing site with a selected day. Within strata, a sample of site-days is selected from a frame consisting of all possible combinations of site-days by a probability proportional to size without replacement sampling scheme, where the size measure for a given PSU is a prediction of the mean number of angler fishing trips that an assigned interviewer would encounter.

The number of stages of sampling in the APAIS is dependent on the type of fishing activity. Sampling of boat fishing activity occurs in three stages in which the secondary sampling unit (SSU) is boat trips within the selected site-day (PSU) and the tertiary sampling unit (TSU) is angler trips within the intercepted boat trip (SSU). Sampling of shore fishing activities occurs in two stages in which the SSU is angler trip within the selected site-day (PSU).

For each wave, sampling of PSU's is stratified by state, month, kind of day (weekend or weekday), six-hour time interval and fishing mode. Stratum variables were selected to maximize sampling efficiency while ensuring adequate sampling coverage and sample size among geographic regions, seasons and time intervals.

### 2.0.2. Estimation/Weighting

The base weight for each PSU is equal to the inverse of its selection probability. Where a census is achieved at the 2nd and/or 3rd stage of sampling, the final weights for each intercepted trip are equal to the PSU weight. When a census is not possible, sample weights are adjusted by 2nd/3rd stage selection probabilities. Estimates of catch-per-trip, by species, are calculated as weighted means of counts of fish reported per intercepted trip using the final sampling weights.

### 2.1. Data Collection Procedures

The Intercept Survey will be conducted in the Atlantic states (ME - GA) and the Gulf states (FL - LA) by two-month sample waves. Not all states and modes are sampled in each wave. Atlantic Coast sampling will be conducted in NC in Jan/Feb, MA – GA in Mar/Apr, ME -GA in May/Jun, Jul/Aug, and Sep/Oct waves, and in MA to GA in Nov/Dec. In Jan/Feb only Shore, Private or Rental Boat, and Charter Boat angling will be surveyed in North Carolina. All survey modes will be sampled in wave 2 in MA to GA, and all modes in all Atlantic states will be sampled in waves 3 – 5. In wave 6, all modes will be surveyed in NY – GA, and shore, private/rental boat, and charter boat modes will be sampled from MA, RI, and CT. The survey is not conducted in wave 6 in ME and NH. All modes and all waves are sampled in the Gulf States. Although Florida is considered a Gulf State, both coasts are sampled by the APAIS. These specific sampling periods by state or region encompass the majority of the recreational fishery seasons. Prior surveys indicated recreational fishing outside these periods was rare, contributed a very small percentage of annual landings of managed fishes, and would be disproportionately expensive to estimate precisely.

The two main data collection tasks of the APAIS are counts of completed angler fishing trips and angler-intercept interviews. Only saltwater recreational fishing trips are included in the APAIS. The sample size is defined as the total number of assignments completed or primary sampling units (PSUs, defined as the combinations of cluster-calendar day-time interval) visited rather than the number of interviews attained. The angler interviews are obtained by intercepting marine recreational anglers at shore (SH), private/rental boat (PR), and charter boat (CH) access points. Sampling in the party (or head) boat (HB) mode will include riding on the boats during fishing days (no overnight fishing trips will be sampled). The interviews will ask anglers about their fishing day and obtain some demographic data about the angler.

The clustering of sites allows for more efficient sampling of a larger number of sites, maintains the cost-effective emphasis of the prior MRFSS design, and removes sampler discretion, therefore minimizing individual site-selection bias. The pre-determined maximum number of sites in a given cluster is three. To remove sampler discretion, all sites within the cluster will be visited in the order specified during the assignment draw process. In addition the sample period is set at a maximum of two hours at each site, after which time the sampler is required to move to the next site. For two-site clusters samplers will spend three hours at the first site and sample the second site from time of arrival until the time interval ends. At a single site cluster the sampler will remain at the site for the entire 6-hour time interval.

The following criteria are used for clustering:

- Sites with a pressure code of “5” or greater<sup>3</sup> would not be clustered with other sites (i.e. single site cluster);
- Sites with a pressure code of “4” or less could be clustered with up to two additional sites;
- Driving time between any two sites within a single cluster must be less than 60 minutes;
- Total driving time for the entire cluster should be minimized;
- Clusters will contain sites only within the same county;
- Sites will be clustered by strata (county/month/mode) such that all sites within the cluster are required to have some level of fishing pressure in that strata; and
- In addition to county/month/mode, clusters should be time interval specific since individual site pressures will vary across intervals (e.g., a high pressure site may be a single site cluster from 2:00PM-8:00PM but clustered with other sites from 8:00PM-2:00AM; some sites will not have any mode-specific fishing activity in one or more time intervals).

Although more time consuming, clustering by time interval was necessary to avoid scenarios where two or more very low pressure sites are clustered during daytime intervals but only one of the sites has nighttime activity. Clustering by time interval guarantees that all sites within the cluster will have some associated fishing pressure.

## 2.2. Estimation Methods for Catch Rates and Proportions in APAIS

*Stratification.* Stratify population into  $h = 1, \dots, H$  strata. Each stratum is defined by Mode, State, Year, Wave, Region, Month, KOD, and Interval.

Modes are Beach-Bank (BB), Man-Made Structures (MM), Charter Boat (CH), and Private/rental boat (PR).

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<sup>3</sup> Expected activity per site is coded using ‘pressure’ categories. These numeric codes represent a range of anglers expected to complete fishing in a specific mode during the sample period and are non-uniform. ‘0’=1-4 anglers; ‘1’=5-8 anglers; ‘2’=9-12 anglers; ‘3’=13-19 anglers; ‘4’=20-29 anglers; ‘5’=30-49 anglers; ‘6’=50-79 anglers; ‘7’=80 and greater anglers; ‘9’=fishing mode not present.

Efficient sampling of the coastal counties of a state may require sub-state regions. These regions will be defined by state, but most states will be sampled as a single geographic region.

KOD is kind of day or day type, that is, weekday (WD) and weekend (WE).

Interval is any of 6-hr blocks (2AM-8AM, 8AM-2PM, 2PM-8PM, 8PM-2AM) within a 24-hr day.

*Stage I weight.* Cluster-days are sampled within stratum via ppswor and assigned to samplers as an assignment. Let  $s = \{a_i | i = 1, \dots, n_h\}$  denote the set of samples. Probability of drawing one assignment is

$$\Pr(s = a_i) = \frac{z(a_i)}{\sum_{i=1}^{N_h} z(a_i)} \quad (1)$$

where  $z(a_i)$  is the pressure of the  $i$ th assignment (i.e., cluster-day) and  $N_h$  is total number of cluster-days in the  $h$ th stratum. The inclusion probability of the  $i$ th cluster-day (or assignment) is  $\pi_{I,hi}$ .

$$\pi_{I,hi} = \sum_{i=1}^{N_h} \frac{z(a_i)}{\sum_{i=1}^{N_h} z(a_i)} I(a_i \in s) \quad (2)$$

where  $I(a_i \in s) = 1$  if  $a_i \in s$  is true and 0 otherwise. The Stage I weight is

$$w_{I,hi} = \pi_{I,hi}^{-1}. \quad (3)$$

*Stage II weight.* A cluster includes up to three sites ( $j = 1, \dots, J_i$  where  $J_i \leq 3$ ). All sites within a sampled cluster must be visited at least once within the 6-hr interval,  $\Delta(T_1, T_2)$ , where  $T_1$  and  $T_2$  respectively are the lower and upper boundaries of each 6-hr interval (see *Stratification*). Site visiting is divided into several disjoint time-windows. Each window has specialized activities of the sites: intercepts, counts, intercepts-and-counts (both), and travel.

An example of assignment  $i$  that consists of two sites (Sites A and B) in an assignment is given below. In the 6-hr interval, sampler's activity is specified by  $k = 1, \dots, 6$  windows as shown in the table. Site A is visited in two different windows,  $t_1-t_3$  and  $t_6-t_7$ . The first visit of Site A has two different activities, intercepts in window  $t_1-t_2$  and counts in window  $t_2-t_3$ . During the second visit of Site A (window  $t_6-t_7$ ), as well as Site B (window  $t_4-t_5$ ), the sampler conducts intercepts-and-counts (both).

Time-window ( $k$ )	(1) $t_1-t_2$ 0800-0930	(2) $t_2-t_3$ 0930-1000	(3) $t_3-t_4$	(4) $t_4-t_5$ 1000-1200	(5) $t_5-t_6$	(6) $t_6-t_7$ 1230-0200
Time spent	$\Delta(t_1,t_2)=1.5$	$\Delta(t_2,t_3)=0.5$	$\Delta(t_3,t_4)$	$\Delta(t_4,t_5)=2$	$\Delta(t_5,t_6)$	$\Delta(t_6,t_7)=1.5$
activity	Site A intercepts	Site A counts	Travel	Site B both	Travel	Site A both
Angler intercepts	$I_A(1) = I_A(t_1,t_2)$ $= 8$	0		$I_B(4) = I_B(t_4,t_5)$ $= 5$		$I_A(6) = I_A(t_6,t_7)$ $= 6$
Obs. departures	0	$D_A(t_2,t_3) =$ 10		$D_B(t_4,t_5) = 7$		$D_A(t_6,t_7) = 10$

The data values for this table can be obtained from Assignment Summary Form (ASF),  
 Angler Intercepts ( $k$ ) = ints( $k$ ) + other3( $k$ ) + other4( $k$ ) + other5( $k$ )  
 Obs. Departures( $k$ ) = Confirmed( $k$ ) + Unconfirmed ( $k$ ) for  $D_A(t_2,t_3)$   
 Obs. Departures( $k$ ) = Confirmed( $k$ ) + Unconfirmed ( $k$ ) + Angler Intercepts ( $k$ ) for  
 $D_A(t_6,t_7)$  and  $D_B(t_4,t_5)$

where  $k$  is the time window that sampler involves in counts, intercepts, or both.

The Site B is visited only once and the site weight computed by

$$w_{B,k|i} = w_{B,4|i} = \frac{D_B(t_4,t_5) \Delta(T_1,T_2)}{I_B(t_4,t_5) \Delta(t_4,t_5)} = \frac{7 \cdot 6}{5 \cdot 2} = 4.2 \quad (4)$$

The first visit to Site A has two activities in two disjoint windows: intercepts in  $t_1-t_2$  and counts in  $t_2-t_3$ . It is necessary to use  $D_A(t_2,t_3)$  for estimating  $D_A(t_1,t_2)$  assuming that observed departures are uniformly distributed over ( $T_1, T_2$ ) interval:

$$\widehat{D}'_A(t_1, t_2) = \frac{\Delta(t_1,t_2)}{\Delta(t_2,t_3)} D_A(t_2, t_3) = \frac{1.5}{0.5} \times 10 = 30 \quad (5)$$

If  $\widehat{D}'_A(t_1, t_2) < I_A(t_1, t_2)$ , set  $\widehat{D}'_A(t_1, t_2) = I_A(t_1, t_2)$ . The estimate of total departures in  $t_1-t_2$  window is  $\widehat{D}_A(t_1, t_2) = I_A(t_1, t_2) + \widehat{D}'_A(t_1, t_2) = 8 + 30 = 38$ . Once the total departures in  $t_1-t_2$  ( $k = 1$ ) is estimated, the weight of the first visited Site A is

$$w_{A,1|i} = \frac{\widehat{D}_A(t_1,t_2) \Delta(T_1,T_2)}{I_A(t_1,t_2) \Delta(t_1,t_2)} = \frac{38 \cdot 6}{8 \cdot 1.5} = 19 \quad (6)$$

For the second visit of Site A in  $t_6-t_7$  window ( $k = 6$ ), the weight is

$$w_{A,6|i} = \frac{D_A(t_6,t_7) \Delta(T_1,T_2)}{I_A(t_6,t_7) \Delta(t_6,t_7)} = \frac{16 \cdot 6}{6 \cdot 1.5} = 10.67 \quad (7)$$

The final weight of Site A is a linear combination of  $w_{A,1|i}$  and  $w_{A,6|i}$ , in proportion to the length of time spent on two visits of Site A:

$$w_{A,\cdot|i} = \frac{\Delta(t_1,t_2)}{\Delta(t_1,t_2)+\Delta(t_6,t_7)} w_{A,1|i} + \frac{\Delta(t_6,t_7)}{\Delta(t_1,t_2)+\Delta(t_6,t_7)} w_{A,6|i} \quad (8)$$

$$= \frac{1.5}{1.5+1.5} 19 + \frac{1.5}{1.5+1.5} 10.67 = 14.84(8)$$

where  $\cdot$  indicates the combination of Site A in two time windows. Intuitively,

$$w_{B,\cdot|i} = w_{B,4|i} \quad (9)$$

In cases where angler intercepts = 0 but observed departure  $\neq$  0, replace angler intercepts = 1 in the calculation of site weights. This replacement is artificially and only for the estimation of total effort. For the estimation of catch rate, this replacement should not be used. Other cases of revisits and design changes can follow the approaches given in this example.

*Effort.* Note that the effort in this section is estimated from intercept survey (Assignment Summary Files). This effort is served for stratum weights when stratum catch rates and other similar statistics are estimated. For total catches, the efforts are estimated from CHTS and/or FHS data.

Effort is expressed by number of angler-trips. Total effort of Site- $j$  in the assignment is estimated by

$$\hat{t}_{x,hij} = w_{j,\cdot|i} \sum_{k \in j} I_j(k|i) \quad (10)$$

where  $k \in j$  indicates sampler work at Site- $j$  in the window- $k$ . Total effort of the  $i$ -th cluster day (PSU of the assignment) is the sum of effort of all sites in the cluster-day:

$$\hat{t}_{x,hi} = \sum_{j=1}^J \hat{t}_{x,hij} \quad (11)$$

Using the example, the effort from the two sites during the 6-hr interval is calculated by

Site ( $j$ )	Intercepts ( $\sum_{k \in j} I_j(k i)$ )	$w_{j,\cdot i}$	Effort ( $\hat{t}_{x,hij}$ )
A	$8 + 6 = 14$	14.84	207.76
B	5	4.20	21.00
total effort of the $i$ -th assignment ( $\hat{t}_{x,hi}$ )			228.76

Total effort in the  $h$ th stratum:

$$\hat{t}_{x,h} = \sum_i^{n_h} w_{I,hi} \hat{t}_{x,hi}$$

*Catch Rates.* The total A-type catch of a species for boat-based fishing is estimated by

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{t}_y^A &= \sum_{h=1}^H \hat{t}_{y,h} & \hat{t}_{y,h}: \text{est. total catch for startum } h \\ &= \sum_{h=1}^H \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} w_{I,hi} \hat{t}_{y,hi} & \hat{t}_{y,hi}: \text{est. total catch for assignment } i|h \\ & & w_{I,hi}: \text{stage I weight} \\ & & n_h: \text{number of sites in assignment } i|h \\ &= \sum_{h=1}^H \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \sum_{j=1}^{J_i} w_{I,hi} \hat{t}_{y,hij} & \hat{t}_{y,hij}: \text{est. total catch for site } j|hi: \text{ see (10)} \\ & & J_i: \text{number of sites assignment } i|h \\ &= \sum_{h=1}^H \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \sum_{j=1}^{J_i} w_{I,hi} \left( \hat{t}_{x,hij} \frac{\sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} \hat{t}_{y,hijb}}{\sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} t_{x,hijb}} \right) & \hat{t}_{y,hijb}: \text{est. total catch for boat-trip } b|hij \\ & & t_{x,hijb}: \text{PARTY, number of anglers on boat-} \\ & & \quad \text{trip } b|hij \\ & & \frac{\sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} \hat{t}_{y,hijb}}{\sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} t_{x,hijb}} = \hat{y}_{hij}: \text{est. catch per angler-trip} \\ & & \quad \text{for site } j|hi \\ & & \hat{t}_{x,hij}: \text{est. total anglers for site } j|hi; \text{ see (11)} \\ & & b_{hij}: \text{number of sampled boat-trips for site } j|hi \\ &= \sum_{h=1}^H \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \sum_{j=1}^{J_i} \sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} w_{I,hi} \left( \frac{\hat{t}_{x,hij}}{\sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} t_{x,hijb}} \right) \hat{t}_{y,hijb} \\ &= \sum_{h=1}^H \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \sum_{j=1}^{J_i} \sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} w_{I,hi} \left( \frac{\hat{t}_{x,hij}}{\sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} t_{x,hijb}} \right) \left( t_{x,hijb} \frac{\sum_{g=1}^{g_{hijb}} y_{hijbg}}{\sum_{g=1}^{g_{hijb}} x_{hijbg}} \right) \\ & & y_{hijbg}: \text{number of fish for angler-group } g|hijb \\ & & x_{hijbg}: \text{contributors for angler-group } g|hijb \\ & & \frac{\sum_{g=1}^{g_{hijb}} y_{hijbg}}{\sum_{g=1}^{g_{hijb}} x_{hijbg}} = \hat{y}_{hijbg}: \text{est. catch per angler-trip} \\ & & \quad \text{for boat-trip } b|hij \\ & & g_{hijbg}: \text{number of sampled angler-groups for} \\ & & \quad \text{Boat-trip } b|hij \\ &= \sum_{h=1}^H \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \sum_{j=1}^{J_i} \sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} \sum_{g=1}^{g_{hijb}} w_{I,hi} \left( \frac{\hat{t}_{x,hij}}{\sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} t_{x,hijb}} \right) \left( \frac{t_{x,hijb}}{\sum_{g=1}^{g_{hijb}} x_{hijbg}} \right) y_{hijbg} \quad (12) \end{aligned}$$

To estimate total B-type catches of boat-based fishing, substitute  $x_{hijbg} = 1$  and

$\sum_{g=1}^{g_{hijb}} x_{hijbg} = g_{hijb}$  into the above equation to obtain:

$$\hat{t}_y^B = \sum_{h=1}^H \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \sum_{j=1}^{J_i} \sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} \sum_{g=1}^{g_{hijb}} w_{I,hi} \left( \frac{\hat{t}_{x,hij}}{\sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} t_{x,hijb}} \right) \left( \frac{t_{x,hijb}}{g_{hijb}} \right) y_{hijbg} \quad (13)$$

The shore-based fishing does not involve boat-trip sampling stage. Explicitly,  $t_{x,hijb}$  and  $\sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} t_{x,hijb}$  are removed out of the equations for  $\hat{t}_y^A$  and  $\hat{t}_y^B$ . Alternatively, one can treat each individual interview (either an angler-group for A-type catch or an angler for B-type catch) as a boat-trip. Therefore,  $b_{hij} = 1$  and  $t_{x,hijb} = 1$ , and thus,  $\sum_{b=1}^{b_{hij}} t_{x,hijb} = 1$ , which implicitly cancels out the boat-trip stage from the equations for shore-based fishing.

*Proportions.* Apply the equation of  $\hat{t}_y^B$  for estimation of proportions. For example, if one intends to estimate proportion of angler-trips fish in area 1, one will set  $y_{hijbg} = 1$  if angler reports fishing in area 1 and  $y_{hijbg} = 0$  otherwise. Proportion of in-frame anglers follows the same approach.

*Variance.* The variance of PSU (= cluster-day or assignment) is the dominant component and is estimated by linear approximation.

*Total efforts:* Total effort is estimated from CHTS data. The raw estimates of total effort in angler-trips are adjusted by proportions of resident-to-trip County and proportions of in-frame anglers (non-coastal and out-of-state anglers), and partitioned into three fishing areas (in-land, state and federal waters).

*Total catches* = catch rate  $\times$  total effort by species in mode-state-region-year-wave-area stratum.

**3. Describe the methods used to maximize response rates and to deal with nonresponse. The accuracy and reliability of the information collected must be shown to be adequate for the intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided if they will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.**

The expected response rates for the APAIS are all above 90%, however we will be working closely with the MRIP Communication and Education Team to produce outreach and education materials to keep all potential respondents informed about what the survey is, how it has evolved into the 2013 APAIS, how the data are used, and the importance of participation in the surveys. These materials will include pamphlets and information cards (business card size with URL for more information online) to be distributed to anglers and the general public using the sampled access points. Directed informative presentations (websites, podcasts, webinars) are available on agency websites and/or will periodically be hosted by the NMFS, as well as occasional in-person slide and video presentations to organizations (upon invitation) and hosted public meetings.

**4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Tests are encouraged as effective means to refine collections, but if ten or more test respondents are involved OMB must give prior approval.**

No additional testing is planned.

**5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design, and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.**

Statistical support was provided by the following:

F. Jay Breidt, Colorado State University,  
James R. Chromy, RTI International,  
Dr. Thomas Sminkey, Statistician (biology), NOAA Fisheries Service, Office of Science and Technology, 301-427-8177 is the point-of-contact for the Agency.

## **References**

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Screening Questionnaire for survey eligibility

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I represent (CONTRACTOR NAME). We are conducting a survey of marine recreational anglers for the National Marine Fisheries Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce. I'd like to ask you a few questions about your fishing.

1. Was the primary purpose of your trip today for recreation; that is, for fun and relaxation, or was it to provide income either from the sale of fish or from the sale of the fishing opportunity?

Recreation → Continue

To provide income → Thank angler and end interview, angler not eligible

2. Were you saltwater fishing today? By saltwater fishing, I mean fishing in oceans, sounds or bays, or in brackish portions of rivers.

Yes → Continue (if in Maine, ask 2a)

No → Thank angler and end interview, angler not eligible

2a. (MAINE ONLY) Was the majority of your fishing in Canadian waters?

Yes → Thank angler and end interview, angler not eligible

No → Continue

3. Were you fishing for finfish today?

Yes → Continue with question 4

No → Continue with question 3a

3a. Did you catch any finfish today?

Yes → Continue

No → Thank angler and end interview, angler not eligible

4. Have you completed your saltwater fishing today (all modes/sites except Beach/Bank Shore sites – see Incomplete Trip Interviewing)?

Yes → Angler is eligible, start main questionnaire

No → Continue

5. Will you still be fishing from a (SPECIFY MODE, e.g. your boat; shore)?

Same mode → Thank angler and end interview, angler not eligible

Different mode → Angler is eligible, start main questionnaire

## Screening Question Rationale

Q1 This question is necessary to determine whether the angler meets the "recreational" criteria. A "to provide income" response to the question would end the screening -- the angler is not a recreational angler. A "recreation" response to Item 1 would lead to Item 2. Interviewers must ask about the original intent for the particular trip taken that day, regardless of the type of fishing license possessed. An angler may sell his catch for expenses incurred even though his primary purpose was recreation. This type angler would be eligible for the APAIS.

Q2 This question is to verify the angler was fishing in saltwater. An angler is a saltwater angler if he/she thinks he/she is a saltwater angler. At sites where both freshwater and saltwater fishing could be accessed (e.g. river boat ramp sites), the interviewer must ask each angler whether they were freshwater or saltwater fishing. Anglers who say they were freshwater fishing are not eligible for the survey and should not be interviewed.

Q2a. In northern areas of Maine, if an interviewer has reason to believe that an angler may have spent time fishing outside of United States waters (boat anglers), the interviewer should also ask if the angler fished in Canadian waters. If the majority of his/her effort was not in United States' waters, the angler is not eligible for an interview and the screening should be terminated.

Q3 This question is to verify the fishing trip targeted finfish, that is, the fishing trip was directed at fish with fins. Note that a person does not have to have caught a finfish to participate; he/she must only have been fishing for finfish.

Q3a Shell fishermen (or any invertebrate target such as octopus, squid, etc.) may have landed finfish although that was not the primary target. These shell fishermen are eligible if one or more finfish were incidentally landed.

Q4 All saltwater anglers are asked whether they have completed their fishing for the day. If the response is "yes," the angler is eligible for the survey and the interviewer should start the main Intercept Questionnaire.

Q5 Anglers are not eligible for this survey if they are planning to continue fishing from the same mode later in the day, whether they plan on fishing from the intercept site or some other location. Separate modes of recreational fishing so are considered separate fishing trips, even if more than one mode of fishing occurred on the same day.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 4.5 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other suggestions for reducing this burden to APAIS Project Manager, Rm. 12358, NOAA Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Hwy., Silver Spring, MD 20910.

This is a voluntary survey, and responses are kept confidential as required by section 402(b) of the Magnuson- Stevens Act and NOAA Administrative Order 216-100, Confidentiality of Fisheries Statistics, and will not be released for public use except in aggregate statistical form without identification as to its source. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subjected to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

2. ASSIGNMENT NO.

6. INTERVIEWER TIME     *Time this interview was completed*

3. INTERVIEWER ID

4. YR/MO/DAY       /

7. STATE CODE 8. COUNTY CODE 9. SITE CODE

5. INTERCEPT NO.

10. INTERVIEW STATUS (Key Item = \*)

- 1  Questionnaire Complete
- 2  Refused Non-Key Item
- 5  Refused Key Item

**READ PRIVACY ACT:** This study is being conducted in accordance with the privacy act of 1974. You are not required to answer any question that you consider to be an invasion of your privacy.

\*11. Would you say you were fishing from...

- SH { 0  Pier
- 1  Dock
- 2  Jetty, Breakwater, Breachway
- 3  Bridge, Causeway
- 4  Other Man-made Structure (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5  Beach or Bank (For Beach Bank only – additional hours required in Q16)
- HB 6  Head Boat
- CH 7  Charter Boat
- PR { 8  Private Boat
- 9  Rental Boat

16. (Ask if Beach or Bank) How many additional hours do you expect to fish from shore today? That is, how many more will you actually have your gear in the water?

Additional BB hours (only if Q11 =5)  
 Not fishing from beach or bank

17. Were you fishing for any particular kinds of fish today? If Yes, what kinds?

No Particular Species/ Anything

1st Target \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Target \_\_\_\_\_

\*12. Was most of your (specify mode) fishing effort today in the ... (Select only one)

- 1  Ocean/gulf/open bay
- 2  Sound (Other than those specified)
- 3  River (Other than those specified)
- 4  Bay (Other than those specified)
- 5  Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- V  Cape Cod Bay
- A  Narragansett Estuary
- B  Buzzards Bay Estuary
- C  Long Island Estuary
- D  Hudson/Raritan Estuary
- E  Delaware Estuary
- F  Chesapeake Estuary
- G  Albemarle/Pamlico Estuary

Code Q13 as "8."

18. Not counting today, within the past 12 months, that is since (insert month) of last year, how many days have you gone saltwater sport finfishing in this state or from a boat launched in this state?

No. of days

998  Don't Know

999  Refused

19. Not counting today, within the past 2 months, how many days?

No. of days

998  Don't Know

999  Refused

\*20. What is your state and county of residence? If county unknown ask: What city or town do you live in?

State Code; Name: \_\_\_\_\_

County Code; Name: \_\_\_\_\_

BOX A. If response to Q11 is SH mode AND response to Q12 is "ocean/gulf/open bay" code Q13 as "1," 3 miles or less. (If response to Q12 is "2" through "G," code Q13 as "Not Applicable")

\*13. Was that

- 1  Three Miles or Less from Shore 8  Does not apply
- 2  More than Three Miles

14. What type of gear was primarily used? (Select only one)

- 01  Hook and Line 07  Trap
- 02  Dip Net, A-frame 08  Spear
- 03  Cast Net 09  Hand
- 04  Gill Net 10  Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 05  Seine 98  Unknown
- 06  Trawl 99  Refused

15a. To the nearest half-hour, how many hours have you spent (specify mode) fishing today? That is, how many hours have you actually spent with your gear in the water?

Code as "99.9" if DK or Refused

15b. [If NOT SH, ask] To the nearest half-hour, how many hours have you spent on the boat, away from the dock, today?

Not Applicable – SH mode

Code as "99.9" if DK or Refused

21. What is the zip code of your residence?

ZIP code

99997  Foreign Country

99998  Don't Know

99999  Refused

22. Do you live in a private residence, or in some type of housing such as a dorm, barracks, nursing home or rooming house?

1  Private Residence

2  Institutional Housing – Code Q23 as "8"

8  Don't Know

9  Refused

23. At which of the following types of addresses does your household currently receive residential mail? Mark all that apply.

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| YES                      | NO                       |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Street address with a house or building number                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Address with a rural route number   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | U.S. Post Office box (P.O. Box)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Commercial mail box business (such as Mailboxes, Etc., or Mailboxes Are Us) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (Specify) _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> Refused                                 |

24. In the event that my supervisor wishes to verify that I have been conducting interviews here today, may I have your name and a phone number?

(If name and/or phone number not given, Q10 = Status 2)

- Name and/or phone number not given
- Angler aged 16 years or younger (Check both boxes)

Angler Name \_\_\_\_\_

D or N PHONE #    -    -

BOX B. [If headboat ride-along:] Is this one of the anglers you monitored for discard (Type 9) catch?  Yes  No  Not an HB ride

\*25. UNAVAILABLE CATCH Did you catch any fish that are not here for me to look at? For example, any that you may have thrown back or used for bait? **NOT GROUP CATCH - Only catch from Angler being interviewed.**

**Disposition Codes for Q25**

- 1 Thrown back alive
- 2 Used/plan to use for bait
- 3 Eaten/plan to eat
- 4 Sold/plan to sell
- 5 Thrown back dead/plan to throw away
- 6 Some other purpose
- 7

**TYPE 2 RECORDS: (CATCH UNAVAILABLE IN WHOLE FORM; FILLETS ARE UNAVAILABLE CATCH.)**

Species Name	Species Code	# of Fish	Disp.
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

\*26. Did you catch any fish while you were fishing that I might be able to look at?

- 1  Yes
- 2  No - Code Q27, Q28, Q29 as "Not Applicable"
- 3  Yes, BUT fish on another angler's form - Fill in interview # where fish are listed  
  Code Q27, Q28, Q29 as "Not Applicable"

\*29. How many anglers including yourself have their catch here? Please do not include anyone who did not catch fish. Only count those who have their catch here.

No. of Contributors 88  Not Applicable

BOX C. If Q11 is SH mode, code Q30 as "888," and Code Box D as "8."

\*27. Did you catch these yourself or did someone else catch some of them?

- 1  All Caught by Angler - Code Q28, Q29 as "Not Applicable"
- 2  Other Contributors 8  Not Applicable

\*30. How many people fished on your boat today?

No. of People 888  Shore Mode

\*28. Can you separate out your individual catch?

- 1  Yes - Code 29 as "Not Applicable"
- 2  No 8  Not Applicable

\*BOX D. If response to Q30 is 1, code as "Not Applicable." Otherwise, is this the first angler from this boat that I have interviewed?

- 1  Yes 8  Not Applicable
- 2  No - Record interview # of 1st angler in the fishing party.

\*BOX E: IS THIS VESSEL ON LIST? YES / NO WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE VESSEL? \_\_\_\_\_

Check box if vessel has no name. Record Vessel ID to determine "on list" status. If "on list" cannot be confirmed, Q10 = Status 5. (Note: This question must be completed for all charter and head boat interviews, regardless of mode of assignment).

\*31. AVAILABLE CATCH - ASK: May I look at your fish? What do you plan to do with the MAJORITY of the (species)?

**Disposition Codes for Q31**

- 3 Eaten/ plan to eat
- 4 Used/plan to use for bait
- 5 Sold/ plan to sell
- 6 Thrown back dead/plan to throw away
- 7 Some other purpose
- 8 Don't know/ didn't ask
- 9 Refused

NOTES/COMMENTS:

**TYPE 3 RECORDS: (INDIVIDUAL CATCH AVAILABLE IN WHOLE FORM)**

Species Name	Species Code	# of Fish	Length (mm)	Weight (kg)	Disp.
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
14.					
15.					

**DRAFT One-third sheet  
(front and back)**

Marine Recreational Information Program



## Does My Catch Count?

**YES.** Scientists, stakeholders, public officials and many others all have a hand in making recreational fishing regulations. But if you're a fisherman, the process ultimately revolves around you.

That's because of the many roles fishermen play when it comes to protecting ocean resources:

 **As an angler**, you're on the front line of conservation. The decisions you make about when you fish and what you keep have a real impact on the resource, and on how fisheries are managed.

 **As our "eyes and ears" on the water**, you're a major source of data. What you tell us about how often you fish and what you catch is vital information that helps us understand what's happening in the fishery.

 **As an engaged constituent**, your input at regional meetings, through your fishing club, at Council and Commission meetings, and at public forums, ensures that recreational fishermen have a voice in the management process.

**MRIP is changing the way NOAA counts catch ... to make sure YOUR CATCH COUNTS.**

**Log in. Learn more. Get involved.  
[www.CountMyFish.NOAA.gov](http://www.CountMyFish.NOAA.gov)**

Marine Recreational Information Program



## Your Catch Counts

What we learn from you is a key part of making sure fisheries are sustainable for generations to come. **Here's how:**



Your fishing activity is counted through **surveys** conducted among **thousands of recreational anglers.**



This is **combined** with other data, like **commercial catch, biological research** and **direct observation.**

The process continues as we constantly assess, and respond to, the ongoing **health and sustainability** of our fisheries.



Scientists evaluate all these factors together to **determine the health** of fisheries.



Managers work with **fishermen** and other **involved citizens** to set rules that keep **stocks sustainable.**



Their evaluations go to the **councils** and **commissions** that **manage fisheries.**

**Log in. Learn more. Get involved.  
[www.CountMyFish.NOAA.gov](http://www.CountMyFish.NOAA.gov)**

## DRAFT Wallet card (front and back)



**Thank You!** *By participating in this survey, you're helping keep recreational fisheries sustainable.*

-  You're our **"eyes and ears" on the water** – what we learn from you is critical to understanding the health of fisheries.
-  You're on the **front line of conservation**. You can have a real impact on our oceans and how they're managed.
-  **Your input** helps ensure that regulations are working ... and that stocks stay vibrant enough to keep Americans fishing.

**Log in, learn more, and get involved: [www.CountMyFish.NOAA.gov](http://www.CountMyFish.NOAA.gov)**

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## DRAFT Tackle box/trailer/bumper sticker





## **NOAA FISHERIES**

**The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) is the new way NOAA Fisheries is counting recreational catch.**

MRIP is about:

- Getting better numbers through better science and statistics.
- Building greater confidence by involving anglers and others in every step of the process.
- Providing in-depth, open access so people can see for themselves what we're doing, why we're doing it, and help guide our course.

**Without samplers, this program does not work.**

YOU get the data that fuels the science to effectively manage fisheries. When the opportunity presents itself, you can help set the tone for angler trust and engagement. Please use this handout as a guide for helping recreational anglers better understand MRIP.

# **Simple Guide to Answering Questions about MRIP**

## **Succinctly answer the “what” and “who” questions**

**What are you doing?**

*I'm surveying fishermen for MRIP to help make sure we have an accurate accounting of recreational fishing activity.*

**What is MRIP?**

*MRIP is a program that collects information about recreational fishing activity for NOAA ... the agency responsible for making sure fishing is sustainable.*

**Who do you work for?**

*I work for (name), but we're all part of a larger, national effort called MRIP, the new program for accurately counting recreational catch.*

## **Refer anglers to handouts for “why” or “how” questions**

Your job role will remain focused on data collection, not outreach. There are other people who can give complete, in-depth answers to questions like:

- **Why do you do surveys instead of talk to everyone?**
- **How, specifically, is this information used?**
- **Why haven't I ever been sampled before?**

**You can answer:**

*That's a great question and it's important that you get a straight answer. But I'm not the best person to do that. I'd love to give you this card that has a bit more information that helps explain all this, and a website, [www.countmyfish.noaa.gov](http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov), where you can get lots more information and talk directly with the people who run the program.*



## 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 provides world class science and stewardship.



### 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](http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov)

## 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 weight 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 catch rates 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 conduct 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.

# New Angler Catch Survey Collects More Accurate Data



## NOAA FISHERIES



### Example Assignment

**Sampling Date:** June 24, 2013

**Time Interval:** 2p.m. to 8p.m.

**Mode:** shore

**Site Cluster:** 3 sites, medium pressure



**2:00pm**

Arrive at Site 1 in cluster.

Count & interview all anglers.

After 2 hours, depart site.



**4:22 p.m.**

Arrive at Site 2 in cluster,  
after drive time.

Count & interview all anglers.

After 2 hours, depart site.



**6:38 p.m.**

Arrive at Site 3 in cluster,  
after drive time.

Count & interview all anglers.  
At 8 P.M., conclude  
interviews.

Assignment is complete.



[www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov](http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov)

### How does NOAA Fisheries collect catch data?

The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is the new way NOAA Fisheries is collecting, analyzing and reporting recreational fishing data. MRIP gathers catch information by conducting angler catch surveys at public access fishing sites. Our samplers are assigned to a specific site during a specific time of day. Their job is to interview and count all anglers at the site. During an interview, they measure and weigh all landed fish and ask how many of each species the angler released.

A sampler interviews all eligible anglers at an assigned site. It's just as important to interview anglers who didn't catch any fish as it is to interview anglers who caught many fish. Both types are needed to produce representative samples of all anglers.

### Why were new protocols developed?

The new angler catch survey procedures are based on recommendations made in an independent review of NOAA Fisheries' data collection methods and tested in a pilot study. The new survey procedures do a better job of accounting for all completed trips, such as those with zero catch, and remove potential sources of bias from our survey design. We are sampling during all parts of the day and reducing sampler latitude regarding which sites to sample and in what order.

The new survey also ensures the way we collect data complements the way we use it to produce estimates of catch. Our sampling methods had previously focused on maximizing the number of completed fishing trips sampled. We will now focus our efforts on maximizing the number of site days sampled.

### What will be different?

- Samplers will be sampling during all parts of the day, including at night.
- Samplers will stay at a specified location for a specified amount of time regardless of the amount of fishing activity.
- Each sampling assignment will include a specific site cluster, a specified order in which to visit sites in that cluster, one fishing mode and a time interval.

**There may be instances when our samplers are at a fishing site where there isn't much activity. These samplers are fulfilling a vital role because accurately documenting low-activity sites helps ensure representative estimates.**

### Sampling in Practice

A sampler's assignment includes a sampling date, a specific six-hour time block, a site cluster, the order of sites to visit within the cluster, and the specific fishing mode for intercepting anglers. They stay on-site for the duration of an assignment and count ALL completed trips and sample as many eligible anglers as possible.

#### What is a "site cluster?"

A group of sites with similar characteristics. Each cluster contains 1-3 sites. Sites are clustered by:

- Mode (shore, boat, for-hire)
- Level of fishing activity, or "pressure"
- Geographic proximity

## Key Takeaways for the Improved Angler Catch Survey

- We've REMOVED POTENTIAL FOR BIAS from our sampling design by controlling all variable selections in the sample selection program.
- We're sampling during EVERY part of the day, including nighttime periods, during both weekends and weekdays.
- We will CONTINUE to intercept ALL eligible trips, regardless of catch. No-catch trips are equally valuable sources of data as trips with large catches.
- We are NOT using a quota-based system to measure "completed site day assignments"; we need ALL ACTIVITY from a given assignment to make unbiased estimates.
- The new sampling methods are part of a much broader, top-to-bottom overhaul to both improve the quality of our estimates and improve stakeholder confidence.
- Future improvements to the catch surveys will address finer-scale customer needs, such as greater timeliness for estimate production and improved geographic resolution of estimates.
- Each decision comes with a cost. Greater precision requires more sampling, which in turn requires the investment of more resources.



## 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. The NOAA Fisheries Service provides world class science and stewardship.

The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is the new way NOAA Fisheries is collecting, analyzing and reporting recreational fishing data. MRIP gathers catch information through in-person surveys of anglers taken at the completion of a fishing trip.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Program: Gordon Colvin**

[gordon.colvin@noaa.gov](mailto:gordon.colvin@noaa.gov)  
(240) 357-4524

**Outreach: Forbes Darby**

[forbes.darby@noaa.gov](mailto:forbes.darby@noaa.gov)  
(301) 427-8528



[www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov](http://www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov)



## NOAA FISHERIES

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) is the new way NOAA Fisheries is counting recreational catch.

MRIP is about:

- Getting better numbers through better science and statistics.
- Building greater confidence by involving anglers and others in every step of the process.
- Providing in-depth, open access so people can see for themselves what we're doing, why we're doing it, and help guide our course.

Questions or concerns? Please contact Forbes Darby at (301) 427-8528 or [forbes.darby@noaa.gov](mailto:forbes.darby@noaa.gov).



# MRIP Angler Catch Surveys

## Information for Law Enforcement

### What We Do

MRIP gathers catch information from anglers by conducting angler catch surveys at recreational fishing sites. Our samplers are assigned to a specific site during a specific time of day. Their job is to count and interview all anglers at each site and measure and weigh all catch. Because it is important that we survey ALL potential fishing sites, there may be times when a sampler is on-site observing “zero activity.” This is an important part of the job.

### Why We Conduct Dockside Surveys

Our voluntary surveys are conducted to gather accurate information about what anglers are catching, which is vital for producing scientifically sound recreational fishing estimates. These data, when combined with other fisheries information, form the basis for the fishing regulations you enforce.

### Who Conducts Dockside Surveys

A team of trained field samplers conduct 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.

### Do Samplers Report Fishing Regulation Violations?

No. A sampler's ONLY job is to count and interview all anglers during their specific assignment period, and to weigh and measure all the fish they observe. We do not collect any personal information from the angler being sampled, nor check for licenses, registrations or permits. This is to maximize compliance with our voluntary survey to ensure we're collecting the most accurate information possible.

### How We Can Work Together

While we understand that our role as data collectors and your role as law enforcement are very different, they can often appear similar to anglers at fishing sites. In an effort to avoid confusion, we have encouraged our samplers to explain they are not members of law enforcement when asked by anglers. We have also asked our field samplers to let you know when sampling is going to take place at a given site, so that our samplers can work with you to decide how to best work alongside one another.



# NOAA FISHERIES

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) is the new way NOAA Fisheries is counting recreational catch.

MRIP is about:

- Getting better numbers through better science and statistics.
- Building greater confidence by involving anglers and others in every step of the process.
- Providing in-depth, open access so people can see for themselves what we're doing, why we're doing it, and help guide our course.

Questions or concerns?  
Please contact Forbes Darby  
at (301) 427-8528 or  
[forbes.darby@noaa.gov](mailto:forbes.darby@noaa.gov).

[www.countmyfish.gov](http://www.countmyfish.gov)



## MRIP Angler Catch Surveys

### Information for Marinas and For-Hire Operators

#### Why are my customers getting interviewed on the dock?

MRIP gathers catch information from anglers by conducting angler catch surveys at recreational fishing sites. These voluntary surveys are conducted to gather accurate information about what anglers are catching, which is vital for producing scientifically sound recreational fishing estimates. These data, when combined with other fisheries information, form the basis for fisheries management decisions.

#### Who conducts the surveys and what do they do?

A team of trained field samplers conduct 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. Samplers are assigned to a specific site during a specific time of day. Their job is to count and interview all anglers at each site and measure and weigh all catch. **Because it is important that we survey ALL potential fishing sites, there may be times when a sampler is on-site observing “zero activity.” This is an important part of the job.**

#### Why do they look at different fish on different days?

We conduct different surveys to gather catch data on different types of fish. So it may be that one day your customers are asked about common recreational species, and on another the sampler is only interested in large pelagics. This is part of a systemic program to ensure that we're gathering the right information for the right purpose.

#### Do interviewers report fishing regulation violations?

No. A sampler's ONLY job is to count and interview all anglers during their specific assignment period, and to weigh and measure all the fish they observe. We do not collect any personal information from the angler being sampled, nor check for licenses, registrations or permits. This is to maximize compliance with our voluntary survey to ensure we're collecting the most accurate information possible.

#### Am I or my customers required to cooperate?

No. However, we strongly encourage you to do so, and ask that you urge your customers to participate as well. Getting accurate information from these surveys is key to ensuring that fishing regulations are fair, effective, and capable of safeguarding the sustainability of recreational fishing – now, and for generations to come.

The required information enables NOAA to track, evaluate and report on coastal and marine habitat restoration and demonstrate accountability for federal funds. This information is used to populate a database of NOAA-funded habitat restoration, debris prevention and removal, and barrier removal projects. The database, with its robust querying capabilities, is instrumental to provide accurate and timely responses to NOAA, Department of Commerce, Congressional and Constituent inquiries. It also facilitates reporting by NOAA on the Government Performance and Results Act "acres restored" performance measure. Grant recipients are required by the NOAA Grants Management Division to submit periodic performance reports and a final report for each award; this collection stipulates the information to be provided in these reports.

## II. Method of Collection

Respondents have a choice of either electronic fillable forms or paper forms. Methods of submittal include email of electronic forms, or mailing of paper forms.

## III. Data

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0472.

*Form Number:* None.

*Type of Review:* Regular submission (extension of a currently approved collection).

*Affected Public:* Not-for-profit institutions; state, local, or tribal government; business or other for-profit organizations.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 250.

*Estimated Time per Response:* Semi-annual reports, 7 hours, 45 minutes; final reports, 12 hours, 30 minutes.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 4,145.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$0 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.

## IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques

or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: March 6, 2012.

**Gwellnar Banks,**

*Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.*

[FR Doc. 2012-5774 Filed 3-8-12; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Marine Recreational Information Program

**AGENCY:** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted on or before May 8, 2012.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at [Jjessup@doc.gov](mailto:Jjessup@doc.gov)).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to Rob Andrews, (301) 482-1805 or [Rob.Andrews@noaa.gov](mailto:Rob.Andrews@noaa.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Abstract

This request is for revision of a current information collection.

Marine recreational anglers are surveyed to collect catch and effort data, fish biology data, and angler socioeconomic characteristics. These data are required to carry out provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), as amended, regarding conservation and management of fishery resources.

Marine recreational fishing catch and effort data are collected through a combination of mail surveys, telephone surveys and on-site intercept surveys with recreational anglers. Amendments to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) require the development of an improved data collection program for recreational fisheries. To meet these requirements, NOAA Fisheries has designed and tested new approaches for sampling and surveying recreational anglers. Revision: A mail survey that samples from a residential address frame will be implemented to collect data on the number of marine recreational anglers and the number of recreational fishing trips. This survey will replace the Coastal Household Telephone Survey, which has traditionally been used to collect recreational fishing effort data. In addition, the sampling and estimation procedures for the access-point angler intercept survey have been revised to ensure better coverage and representation of recreational fishing activity.

This revision also eliminates several data collections that were implemented to test revised sampling procedures. The following data collections will be eliminated: Longitudinal Sampling for Coastal Household Telephone Survey, a Directory Frame Telephone Survey of Licensed Marine Recreational Anglers, the Angler Diary Recruitment Screening Questionnaire, and Biological Data Collection.

## II. Method of Collection

Information will be collected through mail surveys and on-site intercept interviews.

## III. Data

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0052.

*Form Number:* None.

*Type of Review:* Regular submission (revision of a current information collection).

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 611,282.

*Estimated Time per Response:* 10 minutes for mail surveys of anglers, and 5 minutes for intercepted anglers.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 66,239 (12,745 new).

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$0.

## IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including

whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: March 5, 2012.

**Gwellnar Banks,**

*Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.*

[FR Doc. 2012-5698 Filed 3-8-12; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**RIN 0648-XB068**

**Availability of Report: California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is providing this notice in order to allow other agencies and the public an opportunity to review and provide comments on the proposed adoption of the California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy (CEMP) by NMFS Southwest Region (SWR) Habitat Conservation Division (HCD). The intent of the CEMP is to help ensure consistent and effective mitigation of unavoidable impacts to eelgrass habitat throughout the SWR. The CEMP is a unified policy document for SWR-HCD, based on the highly successful implementation of the Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy, which has improved mitigation effectiveness since its initial adoption in 1991. This policy is needed to ensure effective, statewide eelgrass mitigation and will help ensure that unavoidable impacts to eelgrass habitat are fully and appropriately mitigated. It is anticipated that the adoption and implementation of this policy will provide for enhanced success of eelgrass mitigation in California. Given the success of the

Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy, the California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy reflects an expansion of the application of this policy with minor modifications to ensure a high standard of statewide eelgrass management and protection. The CEMP will supersede the Southern California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy for all areas of California upon its adoption.

**DATES:** Public comments must be received on or before 5 p.m., Pacific standard time May 8, 2012. All comments received before the due date will be considered before finalizing the CEMP.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the CEMP may be submitted by mail to the National Marine Fisheries Service, 777 Sonoma Avenue, Suite 325, Santa Rosa, CA 95409, Attn: California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy Comments. Comments may also be sent via facsimile to (707) 578-3435. Comments may also be submitted electronically via email to [SWR.CEMP@noaa.gov](mailto:SWR.CEMP@noaa.gov). All comments received will become part of the public record and will be available for review upon request.

The reports are available at <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/hcd/> or by calling the contact person listed below or by sending a request to [Korie.Schaeffer@noaa.gov](mailto:Korie.Schaeffer@noaa.gov). Please include appropriate contact information when requesting the documents.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Korie Schaeffer, at 707-575-6087.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Eelgrass species are seagrasses that occur in the temperate unconsolidated substrate of shallow coastal environments, enclosed bays, and estuaries. Seagrass habitat has been lost from temperate estuaries worldwide (Duarte 2002, Lotze *et al.* 2006, Orth *et al.* 2006). While both natural and human-induced mechanisms have contributed to these losses, impacts from human population expansion and associated pollution and upland development is the primary cause (Short and Wyllie-Echeverria 1996). Throughout California, human activities including, but not limited to, urban development, recreational boating, and commercial shipping continue to degrade, disturb, and/or destroy important eelgrass habitat. For example, dredging and filling; shading and alteration of circulation patterns; and watershed inputs of sediment, nutrients, and unnaturally concentrated or directed freshwater flows can directly and indirectly destroy eelgrass habitats. The importance of eelgrass both ecologically and economically, coupled with ongoing human pressure and potentially increasing degradation and

loss from climate change, highlights the need to protect, maintain, and where feasible, enhance eelgrass habitat.

Vegetated shallows that support eelgrass are considered a special aquatic site under the 404(b)(1) guidelines of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230.43). Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), eelgrass is designated as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for various federally-managed fish species within the Pacific Coast Groundfish and Pacific Coast Salmon Fisheries Management Plans (FMP) (PFMC 2008). Eelgrass is also considered a habitat area of particular concern (HAPC) for various species within the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP. An HAPC is a subset of EFH; these areas are rare, particularly susceptible to human-induced degradation, especially ecologically important, and/or located in an environmentally stressed area.

The mission of NMFS SWR-HCD is to conserve, protect, and manage living marine resources and the habitats that sustain them. Eelgrass is a habitat of particular concern relative to accomplishing this mission. Pursuant to the EFH provisions of the MSA, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA), and obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as a responsible agency, NMFS Southwest Region annually reviews and provides recommendations on numerous actions that may affect eelgrass resources throughout California, the only state within NMFS SWR that supports eelgrass resources. Section 305(b)(1)(D) of the MSA requires NMFS to coordinate with, and provide information to, other Federal agencies regarding the conservation and enhancement of EFH. Section 305(b)(2) requires all Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all actions or proposed actions authorized, funded, or undertaken by the agency that may adversely affect EFH. Under section 305(b)(4) of the MSA, NMFS is required to provide EFH Conservation Recommendations to Federal and state agencies for actions that would adversely affect EFH (50 CFR 600.925). NMFS makes its recommendations with the goal of avoiding, minimizing, or otherwise compensating for adverse effects to EFH. When impacts to NMFS trust resources are unavoidable, NMFS may recommend compensatory mitigation to offset those impacts. In order to fulfill its consultative role, NMFS may also recommend, *inter alia*, the development of mitigation plans, habitat distribution maps, surveys and survey reports, progress milestones, monitoring programs, and reports