

**FRAMEWORK PLAN**

**COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM**

**FOR THE**

**SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES**

**(CSP)**

**February 1994**



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**By: Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee**

**Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission**  
**Ocean Springs, Mississippi**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	iii
<b>PREFACE</b> .....	iv
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
A. Purpose of Framework Plan .....	1
B. Need for the CSP .....	1
C. Scope of the CSP .....	2
D. Constituency .....	3
<b>II. HISTORY AND STATUS OF DATA COLLECTION     AND COORDINATION ACTIVITIES</b> .....	<b>4</b>
A. Federal Data Collection Programs .....	4
B. State Data Collection Programs .....	4
C. Interstate Commission Coordination Activities. ....	8
<b>III. PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</b> .....	<b>9</b>
A. Mission Statement .....	9
B. Goals and Objectives .....	9
<b>IV. PROGRAM OPERATIONS</b> .....	<b>11</b>
A. Organizational Structure and Administration .....	11
B. Support Requirements .....	13
C. Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation .....	14
<b>V. REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>APPENDIX A</b> .....	<b>A-1</b>



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- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks
- North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources
- Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources
- South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Caribbean Fishery Management Council
- Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
- South Atlantic Fishery Management Council





## PREFACE

The purpose of this preface is to establish an historical record of the events which shaped the State/Federal Cooperative Statistics Program as it has evolved over the years. The State/Federal Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP) was devised in the late 1970s, and became fully implemented by 1984. During that process, statistics committees under the auspices of the Gulf and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commissions were formulated specifically to provide assistance to the process. As guidance to the CSP, a policy statement was developed. That policy included an objective which states "...[the CSP should] Utilize the Statistics Committee of the South Atlantic State/Federal Management Board and the Statistics Subcommittee of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission to provide direction and guidance to the regional fishery statistics program." However, that objective was never implemented by making those committees a structural part of the CSP. And no provision for including the Caribbean component into the CSP was made.

Upon implementation of the CSP, an annual workshop including all CSP participants and interested observers (Council representatives and other agency personnel), was instituted and the workshop effectively took the place of the committees' envisioned function. Since the beginning of the CSP, membership on the interstate commissions' statistics committees changed, along with changes in personnel involved in the CSP and the annual workshop. Over the nine years of the CSP, the collective institutional awareness of the original relationship of the committees to the CSP was lost. New personnel were not aware, nor were they informed, that they were expected to play a formal role in the CSP.

The CSP annual workshop has been a forum for informal agency presentations. It has never functioned, nor has it ever been structured, to provide operational and policy guidance to the CSP. As an outcome, the results of the annual workshop have never had the effect of implementing change or facilitating the resolution of problems. It is important to note that there is inadequate administrative record to document the proceedings or accomplishments of the annual workshop.

In mid-1991, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission's (GSMFC) Technical Coordinating Committee Data Management Subcommittee began to review the collection and management of commercial fisheries statistics and information. Their conclusion was that a formal review of all such programs should take place in an effort to design an integrated program to satisfy data and information needs to manage fisheries. That initiative has been named the Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN). As a part of that initiative, the Subcommittee began an effort to become more integrally involved in the CSP, again with no foreknowledge that such an arrangement had been designed in the early 1980s. That effort resulted in a 1992 administrative proposal from the GSMFC to the Southeast Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for funding to assist the GSMFC Data Management Subcommittee in providing technical and policy guidance and recommendations to the CSP. That request was denied pending further program review and planning.

In March 1992, the NMFS conducted a formal review of the CSP. Among several recommendations resulting from the CSP review report, the review panel stated that communication and coordination of the CSP had been inadequate to maintain programmatic cohesion. Specifically, the report indicated that the annual CSP workshop had not been used effectively by the program participants, resulting in the lack of communication and coordination. It was implied that the participants had not come to the workshops prepared to resolve problems. It is important to note that responsibilities of program participants had not been established beyond the cooperative agreements negotiated between the NMFS and individual states. Further, the report recommended that additional review groups should be utilized to increase the level of coordination and communication within the CSP and all participants. Another important finding of the review panel was that CSP goals and objectives needed to be revised to provide structure to the CSP in light of evolving fishery conditions and management activities.

During the 1992 CSP workshop, participants pursued the task of revising CSP goals and objectives. Part of that exercise focused on organizational structure, and specifically the use of additional review groups to provide communication and coordination within the CSP. It was the consensus of the participants that the statistics committees of the Gulf and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commissions and the Scientific and Statistical Committee of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council should serve as the primary panels, through their respective institutional structures, to provide guidance and direction to the CSP and to become active partners in resolving issues and problems which are identified by participants.

Since the 1992 CSP workshop, several additional CSP meetings have occurred, culminating in the development of this Framework Plan. The Framework Plan provides program guidance for administrative/coordination and operational components of the program. Through implementation of the Framework Plan, communication among CSP participants will be facilitated, as will the ability to address the changing needs of fisheries management.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Purpose of Framework Plan**

This document presents a Framework Plan for the State/Federal Cooperative Statistics Program for the Southeast Region of the United States. This Framework Plan is a combined effort of state, territorial, and federal agency representatives and presents the CSP mission, goals, and objectives. It broadly describes how the program will be organized, operated, and managed. The CSP is a cooperative effort among agencies that manage commercial fisheries resources. These agencies have an interest in and the need to collect, manage, and disseminate statistical data and information on the region's commercial fisheries. The CSP is designed to provide sound scientific information on catch, effort, and participation that managers need to prudently conserve and manage commercial fisheries resources in the Southeast Region.<sup>1</sup>

### **B. Need for the CSP**

Commercial fisheries are extremely important in the Region. In 1992, commercial landings were 1.4 billion pounds valued at \$652 million (ex-vessel). Because of the Region's productive marine fishery resource base, commercial landings in the Southeast (excluding the Caribbean) account for about 15% of the nation's total commercial harvest (NMFS, 1993).

Management of the Region's fisheries is complicated by their migratory nature. Movements along shore bring many stocks under the jurisdictions of multiple neighboring states. Furthermore, many species move between inshore and offshore habitats during different stages of their lives and therefore come under both state and federal jurisdiction at various times. Thus, several fishery management agencies often regulate the same resource or stock. All the agencies face the same problem of conserving important marine resources, while at the same time providing fishing opportunities to their constituents.

Precise catch and effort statistics are fundamental for assessing the influence of fishing on stocks. Information on the harvest, fishing effort, and seasonal and geographical distribution of the catch and effort is required to develop rational management policies and plans. Accurate and timely catch statistics, along with biological, sociological, and economic studies, are integral components of a long-term data series needed for fishery modeling and forecasting. Ideally, the detection of population trends requires statistical data collected over the geographic range of the stock and for a time period that is several times longer than the average life span of the animal.

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<sup>1</sup>The Southeast Region (the Region) includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The vital information needed to meet minimum management information requirements is lacking for many important fishery resources in the Region. This deficiency has been recognized by management agencies and attempts have been made to improve and expand current efforts. Although considerable progress has been made in the collection of fishery statistics, the continuing changes in the nature and status of marine commercial fisheries in the Region and the increasingly complex management regimes are creating ever-increasing demands for more comprehensive, accurate, and timely data.

A long-standing partnership exists among fishery management organizations in the Region which have similar or related mandates to conserve and manage living marine resources in their respective jurisdictions and areas of responsibility. The Region's fishery management agencies recognize the need for and benefits of a cooperative program for commercial statistics.

### **C. Scope of the CSP**

The CSP currently includes four separate data collection activities: 1) monthly landings, 2) South Atlantic shrimp, 3) Gulf of Mexico shrimp, and 4) the Trip Interview Program. The following is a brief description of these data collection activities.

#### **Monthly Landings**

The purpose of this data collection activity is to provide monthly data on the amount and value of all marine resources landed and sold through commercial markets in the United States. These data are combined with similar data that are collected from other regions within the NMFS and are used to provide information on the amount that commercial fisheries contribute to the national income.

#### **South Atlantic Shrimp**

Similar to monthly landings statistics, South Atlantic shrimp statistics are collected to determine the contribution to national income that is provided by these resources. In addition, quantity and value are collected in more detail than monthly landings, and data on fishing effort is included to support state, and to a lesser extent federal, management of the shrimp resources in the South Atlantic area.

#### **Gulf of Mexico Shrimp**

The Gulf of Mexico shrimp data collection program was designed to provide information on fishing effort and location for individual fishing trips. As a result, the landings (quantity and value) data are collected from dealer records and the effort and location information are collected via interviews with fishermen. In addition, quantity and value are collected in more detail than monthly landings.

#### Trip Interview Program (TIP)

The primary purpose of TIP is to provide size information for stock assessments of federal, interstate, and state managed species. The program also provides information on the species composition, quantity and price for market categories, age information, and catch-per-unit effort for trips that are sampled.

#### **D. Constituency**

The constituency served by the CSP are state and federal agencies in the Region concerned with conservation and management of marine recreational fisheries. Primary data users will be the MOU signatories that assess stocks, forecast trends, and monitor fishery regulations. These include the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, state fishery management agencies, fishery management councils and interstate marine fisheries commissions. Also benefiting from the CSP information will be other agencies responsible for the conservation and management of living marine resources in the Region. The CSP partners are authorized by various federal and state statutes to collect commercial data in accord with their missions to conserve and manage living marine resources.

## **II. HISTORY AND STATUS OF DATA COLLECTION AND COORDINATION ACTIVITIES**

### **A. Federal Data Collection Programs**

The collection of statistics for commercial fishing in the United States began in the late 1800s under the auspices of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, the predecessor to the NMFS. These early statistics were comprised mostly of monthly landings for broad market categories of marine and some freshwater species. In the mid-1950s, a program was initiated to collect detailed data on the amount and value of shrimp landings by species and size for individual fishing trips in the Gulf of Mexico.

In the late 1970s, the concept of cooperative data collection and/or statistical programs was discussed and outlined by the NMFS. Between 1981 and 1984, formal cooperative agreements (or Memorandum of Understanding) were agreed to and signed by the NMFS and all states, commonwealths and territories in the Region. The U.S. Congress appropriated \$1.7 million to support the collection of basic fishery statistics in the Region through this state/Federal cooperative program.

With this additional funding, two statistics programs were added to the existing monthly landings and Gulf shrimp statistics programs. In the South Atlantic region, a program to collect shrimp landings and effort data for individual trips was implemented. The second program consisted of on-site interviews by trained fishery reporting specialists (port agents) to collect fishing effort and location information, species identification and length-weight measurements for individual fish.

The CSP consists of three types of fisheries statistics (actually four distinct programs) - monthly landing statistics, shrimp statistics for individual fishing trips (a program in the South Atlantic and a separate program for the Gulf of Mexico), and biostatistic data (also known as the Trip Interview Program). The data collection activities that are performed by state personnel are described in Section B that follows. The NMFS personnel collect detailed shrimp statistics in the Gulf of Mexico, except for parts of Alabama and Mississippi, and monthly landings statistics in parts of these two states. The NMFS personnel also collect bioprofile data in Texas, Georgia and Florida.

### **B. State Data Collection Programs**

Individual states have conducted surveys to provide information for the management of important commercial species within their jurisdictions.

### North Carolina

Cooperative data collection activities began in North Carolina in 1978. Data collection programs included monthly landings, detailed shrimp, and TIP. Sampling was conducted using standard NMFS procedures and was based on voluntary reporting by seafood dealers. In 1982, TIP was no longer funded by the CSP. North Carolina continued to collect biostatistical data under other funding and makes it available upon request. In early 1993, detailed shrimp data collection stopped due to funding restrictions, and TIP data collection will end late in 1993 for the same reason. Starting January 1994, North Carolina will go to a trip ticket system with mandatory reporting.

### South Carolina

Shrimp data collection began in 1977, and collection of general canvass data began in 1982. Mandatory monthly dealer reporting has been required since 1982, as well. In lieu of these reports, dealers can participate in daily ticket systems for shrimp and finfish. TIP was included in the CSP beginning in 1984. Mandatory daily reporting of shellfish by area harvested began in 1987. In 1988, the second of two consecutive budget cuts forced the removal of TIP from the cooperative agreement, but other sources of revenue allowed bioprofile sampling to continue. In 1990, all data collection activities in South Carolina were evaluated and modified, including implementation of a weekly summary shrimp ticket, a weekly summary shellfish report, and a complete overhaul of in-house data management programming. TIP was reinstated to the South Carolina cooperative agreement in 1992 as a result of a funding add-on. Since 1977, all data collected by South Carolina have been key entered and edited in-house before transmission to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC).

### Georgia

In Georgia, cooperative data collection was phased in from 1978 to 1982. By 1984, Georgia collected monthly general canvass landings statistics, detailed shrimp statistics for individual trips, assisted with TIP data collection, and processed their annual commercial trawlers license computer files. The cooperative agreements with Georgia never included TIP data collection as a primary state responsibility, only as assistance to local NMFS personnel. This data collection has always been spearheaded by SEFSC personnel located in Georgia. In 1987 and 1988 the funding was reduced due to NMFS funding cuts. Georgia absorbed the funding cuts by dropping TIP assistance, eliminating certain administrative commitments (notably the publication of monthly statistical bulletins) and subsidized salaries of administrative staff assigned with the cooperative agreements. Georgia continues to collect both general canvass and detailed shrimp data and provide edited data to the SEFSC.

### Florida

In 1984, funding was increased to help subsidize the development of the trip ticket system, as well as employing a port agent in West Palm Beach and another agent in the upper Keys.

These two agents collected size frequency data for specific target species. In 1986, the funding for the agent in West Palm Beach was eliminated, and the SEFSC employed a full-time agent in that area. The 1987 and 1988 budget cuts reduced the funding to Florida. Because of these cuts, TIP data collection was eliminated from the agreement. However, Florida continued to collect size frequency data as part of other research projects. In 1989 and 1990, additional funds were available from the NMFS, and these funds were used to continue the TIP data collection in the Keys.

### Alabama

Partial year funding went to Alabama in both 1982 and 1983, and the total base funding of \$89,200 was in place in 1984. Under this agreement, Alabama provided port agents for all of the state except the Bayou La Batre area which is covered by a NMFS port agent. The Alabama port agents collected general canvass, detailed shrimp and TIP for their respective areas. In 1987 the funding was reduced to \$85,600 and further reduced to \$80,200 in 1988. Alabama continues to provide data collection coverage for all of the state except Bayou La Batre, and absorbed these cuts by subsidizing administrative and other staff costs.

### Mississippi

Partial year funding went to Mississippi in both 1982 and 1983, and the total base funding was in place in 1984. Under these agreements, Mississippi provided port agents in Harrison and Hancock Counties, and the SEFSC had an agent to cover the remainder of the state. The port agents collected all three types of statistics for their respective areas. In addition, Mississippi agents also collected size frequency data for state-managed species, such as mullet, black drum and seatrout. In 1987 and 1988 funding was reduced due to NMFS budget cuts. Mississippi continues to provide data collection coverage for the original two counties, and absorbed the cuts by subsidizing some of the indirect costs and reducing the amount of size frequency data that are collected for state-managed species.

### Louisiana

The agreement with Louisiana from 1983-1992 sub-contracted data collection to Louisiana State University, Center for Wetland Resources. Beginning in 1993, Louisiana provides state personnel to obtain data. In 1984 funding was increased to include bioprofile data from federally-managed species (mackerels and reef fishes), state-managed species (black drum, mullet, seatrout) and commercial inshore shrimp statistics. This same array of statistics was included in the 1985/1986 agreement. However, the 1986/1987 agreement was modified, and the collection of inshore shrimp statistics was dropped from the agreement. In 1987 and 1988 funding was reduced, which resulted in part-time employment of several of the port samplers. Supplemental funds in 1989 and 1990 were used to increase the amount of TIP data that were collected.



## Texas

Texas has collected landings statistics since 1936. Formal cooperative data collection activities with the NMFS began in 1985. Texas provided monthly landings and value statistics for commercially harvested fish and shellfish (other than shrimp) that were landed and sold within the state. Shrimp statistics were collected by the NMFS and the two agencies exchanged the data. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) data collection did not include individual trip information such as effort. In 1986, the agreement funding was increased and these funds were used by TPWD to assist in the development and implementation of a coastwide dockside commercial vessel intercept program. In 1988, the funding was reduced and only covered 9 months (July 1988 through March 1989). In 1990, funds were further reduced. Texas continued to provide monthly landings statistics, but the commercial intercept program was discontinued in March 1991. Evaluation of the project is currently in progress.

## Puerto Rico

Initial funding for part of 1982 and 1983 was provided to Puerto Rico for data collection activities. In 1983 the base funding was supplemented to collect billfish statistics from recreational fishing in the Puerto Rico. This funding included 5 port agents to collect statistics from the commercial fisheries via their trip ticket system and an additional 2 agents to collect billfish statistics. Bioprofile data from reef fish, spiny lobster and oceanic pelagic species were collected by the port agents. In 1984 the funding was reduced and by 1985 the supplemental funding was eliminated. Because of these reductions, billfish data collection was discontinued. In 1986 the funding was reduced, but data collection was supplemented by Federal funding under the PL 88-309 program. In 1989 the cooperative statistics funding was further reduced due to budget cuts. During the past several years, the funding support has been provided by Federal grants from the Inter-jurisdictional Fisheries Program.

## U.S. Virgin Islands

Partial funding for 1982/1983 was used to hire two port agents for St. Thomas and St. John Islands. The agents collected bioprofile data from reef fishes and spiny lobsters. Under this agreement, the U.S. Virgin Islands also provided annual landings statistics from their annual license renewal reporting requirements. A small amount of this funding was allocated to collecting billfish statistics from the recreational fishery. In 1983, the funding was increased, and both the billfish and bioprofile data collection programs were expanded. In 1984, the funding was reduced to the base amount, and the billfish data collection was eliminated. The cooperative statistics funding was supplemented in 1987, but funding had to be reduced in 1988 due to two NMFS budget cuts. Base funding was provided for the 1990/1991 agreement. Because of Hurricane Hugo and the devastation to the Islands, data collection had to be suspended and funding was not provided for this period. Beginning in 1991, monthly landing reports and trip interviews have been provided.

## **C. Interstate Commission Coordination Activities**

In an effort to address interjurisdictional fisheries problems, the interstate commissions were created by Congress to promote the better utilization of fisheries by developing joint programs for the promotion and protection of such fisheries. Each commission maintains a professional staff who administer, coordinate and implement these programs.

### **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**

Since the inception of the CSP, the ASMFC has provided administrative support to the South Atlantic Cooperative Statistics Committee (NC-FL) at no cost to the program. In recent years, travel funds (2K-4K per annum) have been contributed to the program through ASMFC's Interstate Fisheries Management Program (ISFMP) to support state personnel travel to South Atlantic Cooperative Statistic Committee meetings and workshops. Activities of the South Atlantic Cooperative Statistic Committee are reported to and reviewed by the South Atlantic State Federal Board, the ASMFC's Management and Science Committee, and ISFMP Policy Board.

### **Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission**

Since the inception of the CSP, the GSMFC has provided administrative support to the Data Management Subcommittee (name changed in 1988) at no cost to the program. Since 1987 dedicated funds to support subcommittee activities were made available, again at no cost to the program. Through this mechanism, limited informal input into the CSP operations has been provided to the NMFS.

### **III. PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **A. Mission Statement**

The mission of the State/Federal Cooperative Statistics Program is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate landings (including finfish and shellfish) and bioprofile information for marine commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region.

#### **B. Goals and Objectives**

**Goal 1: Manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial fishery statistics program for the Southeast Region.**

**Objective 1:** Establish a Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee responsible for 1) development of strategic and operations plans; and 2) providing direction, guidance and evaluation for the CSP on a continuing basis.

**Objective 2:** Utilize the South Atlantic Statistics Committee of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Data Management Subcommittee of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Scientific and Statistical Committee of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council and, as appropriate, representatives of Fishery Management Councils and other interested parties to accomplish working group tasks and provide advice to the CSP.

**Objective 3:** Maximize effective utilization of available funds and personnel for data collection and processing.

**Objective 4:** Establish and maintain cooperative agreements that are consistent with goals and objectives of the CSP.

**Objective 5:** Distribute program information to the program participants and to interested parties.

**Objective 6:** Conduct a program evaluation by an outside review team every 5 years.

**Goal 2: Collect State/Federal marine commercial fishery information for the Southeast Region.**

**Objective 1:** Collect landing statistics and bioprofile data (size and age composition, etc.) at a level needed for management of marine resources.

**Objective 2:** Promote uniformity of data element definitions and comparability of data collection methods and procedures.

**Objective 3:** Provide for regular assessment of the quality of the data collected through reviews, edits, and verification procedures.

**Objective 4:** Eliminate duplication between state and federal data collection activities.

**Objective 5:** Protect the confidentiality of personal and business information that is submitted by the public, as required by state and/or federal law.

**Goal 3: Operate an integrated marine commercial fishery data management system for the Southeast Region.**

**Objective 1:** Process State/Federal marine commercial fishery data for computer storage.

**Objective 2:** Supply, operate, and administer a regional data management system.

**Objective 3:** Maintain all data in a computerized data base that is accessible by all CSP participants.

**Objective 4:** Develop and maintain standard data management protocols and documentation for data formats, inputs, editing, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.

**Objective 5:** Protect the confidentiality of personal and business information that is submitted by the public, as required by state and/or federal law.

## **IV. PROGRAM OPERATIONS**

### **A. Organizational Structure and Administration**

The organizational structure of the CSP will consist of the Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee, Geographic Subcommittees (ASMFC, GSMFC, and CFMC), ad hoc subcommittees, technical work groups, and administrative support.

#### **Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee**

The Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee (SCSC) plans, manages and evaluates the Cooperative Statistics Program. The Committee consists of representatives of the following agencies:

- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks
- North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources
- Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources
- South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Caribbean Fishery Management Council
- Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
- South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

The SCSC will meet as frequently as necessary within funding capabilities to carry out its responsibilities. It is anticipated that most decisions of the SCSC will be reached by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the will of the SCSC shall be reached by majority vote of a quorum (simple majority of all members plus one) to determine the preferred action. Each agency represented on the SCSC will be a voting member, and each voting member will have one vote.

The duties of Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee include but are not limited to:

- Develop a framework plan;
- Develop annual operations plans;
- Provide direction, guidance and evaluation for the CSP.

## **Geographic Subcommittees**

The CSP will utilize the South Atlantic Statistics Committee of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Data Management Subcommittee of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Scientific and Statistical Committee of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council to provide review and recommendations for problem solving and programmatic enhancement to the CSP. These subcommittees will be used to provide forums for problem solving and programmatic enhancement, and address programmatic and technical needs of the appropriate geographical areas. Because meetings will involve fewer members and shorter travel distances, subcommittees will be able to meet more frequently, at lower travel costs, to deal with specific subregional and general programmatic issues.

## **Ad hoc Subcommittees**

Ad hoc subcommittees may be established as needed by the SCSC to formulate administrative policies, to serve as nominating committees for the SCSC chair and other positions, or to address other issues as decided by the SCSC. Members of these subcommittees will be members of the SCSC.

## **Technical Work Groups**

Technical work groups will be established as needed by the SCSC to carry out tasks on specific technical issues. Work groups will be appropriate for accomplishing many of the specific CSP objectives. Each group will be comprised of persons selected by the SCSC for their expertise in the specific subject to be addressed and may include members of the SCSC, as well as non-members.

Work groups will be charged in writing by the SCSC with specific tasks and may be disbanded by the SCSC when that task is completed. "Standing" work groups may also be authorized by the SCSC and be assigned a series of related tasks over a period of time.

## **Coordination and Administrative Support**

Coordination and administrative support of the CSP will be accomplished through administrative structures established in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic. This approach is successfully used by SEAMAP. Major tasks involved in the coordination and administration of the various levels of the CSP include but are not limited to:

- Working closely with the SCSC in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation;
- Implementing plans and program directives approved by the SCSC;

- Providing coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the SCSC, subcommittees, and work groups;
- Developing and/or administering cooperative agreements, grants, and contracts;
- Serving as liaison between the SCSC, other program participants, and other interested organizations;
- Assisting the SCSC in preparation or review of annual spending plans;
- Preparing annual operations plans under the direction of the SCSC;
- Preparing and/or supervising and coordinating preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings;
- Distributing approved CSP information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures as set forth by the SCSC;
- Assisting in the identification of regional and geographic needs that can be satisfied through the CSP activities; and
- Conducting or participating in other activities as identified.

## **B. Support Requirements**

The resources required for operation of the CSP can be divided into administrative support and programmatic functions. In-kind contributions by each participating agency are needed.

**Administrative Support:** Funds are needed for administrative, travel, and meeting expenses for the SCSC, geographic subcommittees, ad hoc subcommittees, and technical work groups. All groups of the CSP will meet as often as necessary. Consulting costs for statisticians and other experts selected to participate on work groups may be necessary.

**Programmatic Functions:** Current data collection, management, and dissemination activities are funded by participating agencies.

- Additional funding is required to maintain current levels of activities (South Atlantic Statistics Committee, 1992).
- Additional funding also will be needed for new or augmented activities.

## **C. Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation**

The CSP is comprised of coordinated data collection activities, an integrated data management and retrieval system, and procedures for information dissemination, as outlined in the mission, goals, and objectives of this Framework Plan. These three program components will be directed by the SCSC. Involvement of all program participants in planning and implementation through the SCSC, geographical subcommittees, and technical work groups should ensure development of a program strategy that will best meet the fishery management needs of the participants. It is recognized that the needs of individual parties, in some cases, are quite different and that it will be impossible to meet all needs with a common effort. However, by considering the information needs and ongoing surveys of all CSP participants, the current data collection and data management activities may be coordinated and/or modified to maximize the return on expenditure of statistical survey monies and the utility of the results.

Implementation of annual operations plans will be the means of accomplishing the goals and objectives of the CSP. A detailed annual operations plan for each year will present tasks to be accomplished that year and the approaches for their implementation, including administrative and operational tasks. The data collection, data management, and information dissemination activities for each year will be determined through repeated monitoring, evaluation, and identification of needs.

### **Data Collection**

The process to determine data collection activities will generally include:

- The SCSC will charge the subcommittees and/or technical work groups in writing with specific tasks that address data needs and standards;
- Information needs will be compared to the existing programs and capabilities to identify gaps in available data;
- Activities necessary to fill identified gaps will be determined. These activities could range from integration with existing data collection projects to development of alternate survey designs; and
- The SCSC will periodically review commercial data collection activities accomplished by participating agencies.

### **Data Management**

A comprehensive data management system is a fundamental component of the CSP. It is an integrated, centralized but also distributed, regional data base, from which information on commercial fisheries is retrievable. Enhancement of the data management system will be



accomplished by technical work groups established by the SCSC and will generally include the following steps:

- The data elements and data element definitions of the various data bases will be examined to determine the feasibility standardizing them.
- The current hardware, software, and communication capabilities of program partners will be evaluated and recommendations will be made to the SCSC for changes and upgrades.
- Standard protocols and documentation, including quality assurance/quality control standards, for data formats, data element definitions, input, editing, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application will be evaluated and enhanced as needed.

### **Information Dissemination**

The information dissemination component of the SCSC will consist of activities associated with distribution of three types of information. These tasks may be accomplished by any or all of the groups in the CSP organizational structure.

- Administrative information will document program operations and will include annual work plans; annual reports; reports and/or minutes of the SCSC, subcommittee, and technical work group meetings; and reports documenting the results of work group studies.
- Data base information will include data base inventories, data summaries, system requirements, system design reports, and other data base documentation that will provide critical information to users.
- General program information which will be primarily descriptive, will keep the CSP participants and other interested groups informed about relevant events and issues and will generate interest in the program. Means of communication may include informal newsletters, informational articles in newspapers or journals, and presentations to public groups or at technical meetings.

### **Comprehensive Review of the CSP**

Though an ongoing evaluation of the CSP activities (administrative and operational) will occur annually, a comprehensive review of the CSP will be conducted every five years, beginning with the date of the adoption of this Framework Plan.

## **V. REFERENCES**

NMFS. 1993. Fisheries of the United States, 1992. 115 pp.

South Atlantic Statistic Committee. 1992. Report concerning the funding status for the State/Federal Cooperative Commercial Statistics Program. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. 2pp. + attachments.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Cooperative Statistics Program Memorandum of Understanding**



## **INTRODUCTION**

Commercial fisheries are extremely important in the Southeast Region<sup>1</sup> of the United States comprising approximately 15% of the nation's total commercial harvest (NMFS, 1993). Management of the Region's fisheries is complicated by their migratory nature. Movements along shore bring many stocks under the jurisdictions of multiple neighboring states. Furthermore, many species move between inshore and offshore habitats during different stages of their lives and therefore come under both state and federal jurisdiction at various times. Thus, several fishery management agencies often regulate the same resource or stock. All the agencies face the same problem of conserving important marine resources, while at the same time providing fishing opportunities to their constituents.

Statistical data and information are necessary to achieve optimal benefits from the use of fishery resources and to reduce the risk of overharvesting. Development of a cooperative marine commercial fishery statistics program among state, territory, and federal partners can avoid duplication of effort, reduce overall costs, promote education of resource users, and provide a more complete base of information for formulating management policies, strategies, and tactics.

## **PURPOSE**

The state/federal Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP) is designed to provide sound scientific information on catch, effort, and participation that managers need to prudently conserve and manage commercial fisheries resources in the Region. Having determined that there is an urgent and compelling need for statistical data on marine commercial fisheries of the southeastern United States, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions; the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils; and the marine fishery management agencies in the Region confirm their intent to continue to collect and manage commercial fishery data, and establish an organizational structure for the state/federal Cooperative Statistics Program. This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) recognizes the long-standing cooperation and partnership existing among these organizations in management of and research on the Region's living marine resources and their habitat.

The signatories of senior agency officials on this MOU in no way obligate the signatory agencies to provide personnel or funds for planning and implementation of the CSP.

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<sup>1</sup>The Southeast Region (the Region) includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## AUTHORITY

Authorization of the CSP participants to collect data for use in marine fishery resource management includes the following statutes:

### National Marine Fisheries Service:

- Under the Magnuson Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (MFCMA, 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), the NMFS is required to consider the effects of commercial and recreational fishing activities on marine fishery resources in the development of FMPs. Development and implementation of FMPs require the NMFS to use the best scientific information available.
- The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, (16 U.S.C., Sect. 753a et seq.) provides for the collection and dissemination of statistics on commercial and sport fisheries.
- The Migratory Game Fish Study Act of 1959 [16 U.S.C. 760(e)] provides for a continuing study of migratory marine fishes, including the effects of fishing on the species.
- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other laws and directives (Regulatory Flexibility Act and E.O. 12291) delineate federal analytical responsibilities for assessing the impact of fishing activities.
- The NMFS Framework Plan (1992-96) details specific goals and objectives referring to the need for collection of commercial fisheries statistics.

### Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission:

- The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Compact (P.L. 77-539) provides for a regional approach to improve utilization and prevent waste of the marine and estuarine fisheries resources of the Atlantic Coast.
- The Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (P.L. 99-659) provides authorization for the interstate compacts to develop interstate fishery management plans.
- The Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (P.L. 98-613 and amendments) gives the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission management authority for Atlantic striped bass in state waters.

### Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission:

- The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Compact (P.L. 81-61) provides for a regional approach to management, monitoring, and utilization of marine fisheries resources.

- The Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act (P.L. 99-659) provides authorization for the interstate compacts to develop interstate fishery management plans.

#### Caribbean, Gulf, and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils:

- The MFCMA (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) requires the fishery management councils to develop FMPs according to national standards, including use of the best available scientific information. Each council, through the FMPs, can require the submission of fishery statistics by fishermen and processors (16 U.S.C. 1853).

#### Alabama:

- Code of Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Title 9, Subsection 2-4, Subheading (a), provides the Department with full jurisdiction and control of all resources existing or living in the waters of Alabama.

#### Florida:

- Florida Statute 370.02 directs the Department to secure and maintain statistical records of the catch of marine species by various gear, by areas and other appropriate classifications.
- Florida Statute 370.0607 directs the Department to establish a marine information system in conjunction with the licensing program to gather marine fisheries data.

#### Georgia:

- Georgia Code Section 27-1-3(a) declares all wildlife of the state to be within the custody of the Department of Natural Resources for purposes of management and regulation.
- Georgia Code Section 27-1-3(b) authorizes the Department of Natural Resources employees to check creels for adherence to daily limits and size limits.
- Georgia Code Section 27-1-6(3) confers upon the Department of Natural Resources the power to enter into cooperative agreements with educational institutions and state, federal, and other agencies to promote wildlife management, conservation, and research.
- Georgia Code Section 27-1-23 authorizes the Department of Natural Resources agents to inspect business premises and records of commercial license holders.
- Georgia Code Section 27-1-24 authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to board, inspect and examine the vessel, its equipment, wildlife on board, and required documents.

- Georgia Code Section 27-4-118 requires any commercial fishing boat or vessel to maintain and carry a record book showing information pertaining to their catch.
- Georgia Code Section 27-4-135 requires the maintenance of records by sellers and reports of oysters and clams harvested.
- Georgia Code Section 27-4-136 requires the maintenance of records by seafood suppliers.
- Georgia Code Section 27-4-171 requires licensed bait shrimpers to report the gear used, time fishing, amount of shrimp caught and other pertinent information. It also requires the maintenance of a record book showing information pertaining to the catch.
- Georgia Code Section 50-18-70 states that all public records be open for inspection to the general population.
- Georgia Code Section 50-18-72 refers to the limited application of provisions and refusal to disclose identity of informant.

#### Louisiana:

- Louisiana Revised Statute 56:6(6) confers upon the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries the authority to collect, classify, and preserve such data and information as will tend to conserve and protect marine resources.

#### Mississippi:

- Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Ordinance 9.002, Sections 3 and 8, directs the Department to obtain statistical information on recreational fisheries landed or processed in the State of Mississippi.

#### North Carolina:

- North Carolina General Statute (GS) 113-131 charges the Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources with stewardship over the state's marine and estuarine fishery resources.
- Research and collection of statistics are authorized by GS 113-181.
- Endorsement to sell is authorized by GS 113-154.1.



#### Puerto Rico:

- Act Number 23 of June 20, 1972, as amended (known as the Department of Natural Resources Organic Act) and Act Number 83 of May 13, 1936, as amended (known as the Puerto Rico Fisheries Act), confer upon the Department of Natural Resources authority over the natural resources of Puerto Rico and the aquatic resources within jurisdictional waters of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

#### South Carolina:

- South Carolina Code Section 50-5-20 gives the Division of Marine Resources jurisdiction over all salt-water fish, fishing and fisheries in all water of the state whereupon a tax or license is levied for use for commercial purposes.
- Section 50-17-280 requires license and permit holders (including the recreational bait shrimp fishery) to keep records and provide information.

#### Texas:

- Code of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Sections 66.217, 76.302, and 77.004 direct the Department to conduct continuous research and study of the supply, economic value, environment and reproductive characteristics of finfish, shrimp, and oysters.

#### U.S. Virgin Islands:

- U.S.V.I. Code, Title 12, Section 303-326 (Act 3330), authorizes the Department of Planning and Natural Resources with jurisdiction and control of all marine resources.

## **PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

The mission of the CSP is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate landings (including finfish and shellfish) and bioprofile information for marine commercial fisheries in the Region.

The goals and objectives of the CSP are as follows.

**GOAL 1:** Manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial fishery statistics program for the Southeast Region.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Establish a Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee responsible for 1) development of strategic and operations plans; 2) providing direction, guidance and evaluation for the CSP on a continuing basis.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Utilize the South Atlantic Statistics Committee of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Data Management Subcommittee of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Scientific and Statistical Committee of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council and, as appropriate, representatives of Fishery Management Councils and other interested parties to accomplish working group tasks and provide advice to the CSP.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** Maximize effective utilization of available funds and personnel for data collection and processing.

**OBJECTIVE 4:** Establish and maintain cooperative agreements that are consistent with goals and objectives of the CSP.

**OBJECTIVE 5:** Distribute program information to the program participants and to interested parties.

**OBJECTIVE 6:** Conduct a program evaluation by an outside review team every 5 years.

**GOAL 2:** Collect State/Federal marine commercial fishery information for the Southeast Region.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Collect landing statistics and bioprofile data (size and age composition, etc.) at a level needed for management of marine resources.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Promote uniformity of data element definitions and comparability of data collection methods and procedures.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** Provide for regular assessment of the quality of the data collected through reviews, edits, and verification procedures.

**OBJECTIVE 4:** Eliminate duplication between state and federal data collection activities.

**OBJECTIVE 5:** Protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

**GOAL 3:** Operate an integrated marine commercial fishery data management system for the Southeast Region.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Process State/Federal marine commercial fishery data for computer storage.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Supply, operate, and administer a regional data management system.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** Maintain all data in a computerized data base that is accessible by all CSP participants.

**OBJECTIVE 4:** Develop and maintain standard data management protocols and documentation for data formats, inputs, editing, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.

**OBJECTIVE 5:** Protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Participants in this MOU recognize the critical need for a comprehensive program to collect and manage marine commercial fisheries data in the Region. Participants also agree on the appropriateness of cooperative agreements and grants (financial assistance awards) and/or contracts to fund approved projects, subject to the availability of funds and in accordance with applicable agency administrative policies and procedures.

It is hereby agreed that the undersigned will establish and implement an organizational structure for the CSP in accordance with its mission, goals, and objectives, contingent upon available resources. This agreement will become effective with an agency upon signature of the authorized official of that agency.

The terms of the agreement may be modified at any time by mutual agreement of the participants, including the provision for the Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee to extend invitations to other agencies with fishery management or research authority to become participants in the program. Further, it is agreed that any signatory to this MOU may terminate its involvement upon 90-day written notice to the other signatories.

## **OTHER PROVISIONS**

Nothing herein is intended to conflict with current state, territory, commonwealth, council, commission, or Department of Commerce regulations, policies or directives. If the terms of this MOU are inconsistent with existing practices of a participant entering into this MOU, then those portions of this MOU which are determined to be inconsistent shall be invalid; however, the remaining terms and conditions of this MOU shall remain in full force and in effect. Such changes as are deemed necessary will be accomplished by either an amendment to this MOU or by entering into a new MOU, as determined by the pertinent participants.