

ANNUAL REPORT

FISHERIES  
INFORMATION NETWORK IN  
THE SOUTHEAST REGION

(FIN)

JANUARY 1, 1997 - DECEMBER 31, 1997

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Number 53

## INTRODUCTION

The Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)] are programs to establish a state-federal cooperative program to collect, manage, and disseminate statistical data and information on the marine commercial and recreational fisheries of the Southeast Region.<sup>1</sup>

The need for a comprehensive and cooperative data collection program has never been greater because of the magnitude of the recreational fisheries and the differing roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved. Many southeastern stocks targeted by anglers are now depleted, due primarily to excessive harvest, habitat loss, and degradation. The information needs of today's management regimes require data which are statistically sound, long-term in scope, timely, and comprehensive. A cooperative partnership between state and federal agencies is the most appropriate mechanism to accomplish these goals.

Efforts by state and federal agencies to develop a cooperative program for the collection and management of commercial and recreational fishery data in the Region began in the mid to late 1980s. In 1992, the National Marine Fisheries Service formally proposed a planning activity to establish the RecFIN(SE). Planning was conducted by a multi-agency Plan Development Team through October 1992 at which time the program partners approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which established clear intent to implement the RecFIN(SE). Upon signing the MOU, a RecFIN(SE) Committee was established.

In 1994, the NMFS initiated a formal process to develop a cooperative state-federal program to collect and manage commercial fishery statistics in the Region. Due to previous work and NMFS action, the Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee (SCSC) developed a MOU and a draft framework plan for the ComFIN. During the development of the ComFIN MOU, the SCSC, in conjunction with the RecFIN(SE) Committee, decided to combine the MOU to incorporate the RecFIN(SE). The joint MOU creates the FIN which is composed of both the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE). The MOU confirmed the intent of the signatory agencies to participate in implementing the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE).

The scope of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) includes the Region's commercial and recreational fisheries for marine, estuarine, and anadromous species, including shellfish. Constituencies served by the program are state and federal agencies responsible for management of fisheries in the Region. Direct benefits will also accrue to federal fishery management councils, the interstate marine fisheries commissions, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries Program. Benefits which accrue to management of fisheries will benefit not only commercial and recreational fishermen and the associated fishing industries, but the

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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.

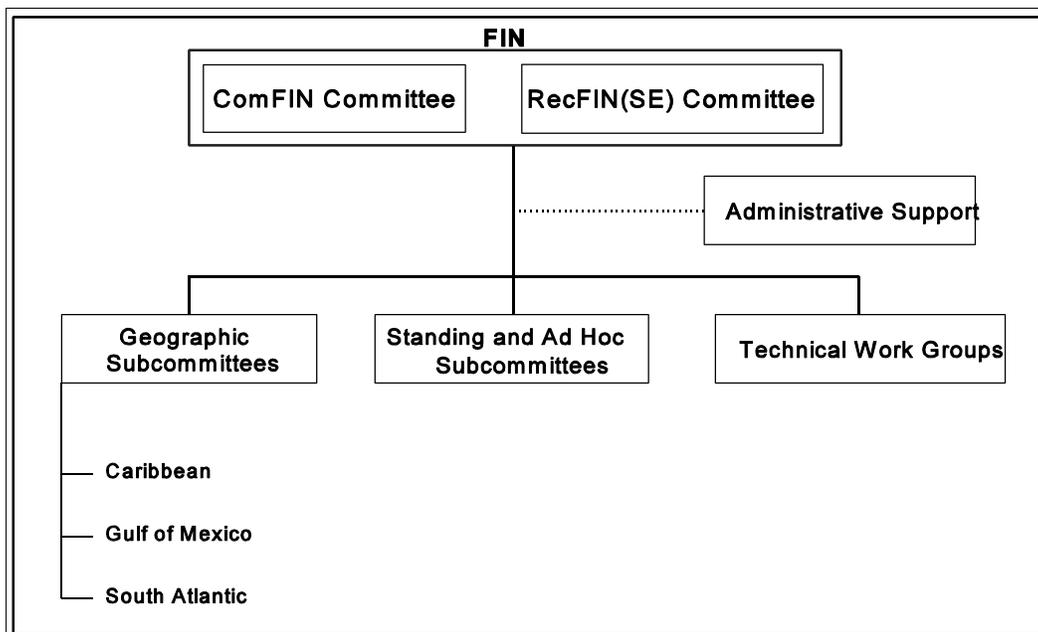
resources, the states, and the nation.

The mission of the ComFIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial and anadromous fishery data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Region and to support the development of an inter-regional program. The four goals of the ComFIN include to plan, manage, and evaluate commercial fishery data collection activities; to implement a marine commercial fishery data collection program; to establish and maintain a commercial fishery data management system; and to support the establishment of a national program.

The mission of the RecFIN(SE) is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine recreational fisheries statistical data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Region; and to support the development and operation of a national program. The four goals of the RecFIN(SE) are to plan, manage, and evaluate recreational fishery data collection activities; to implement a marine recreational fishery data collection program; to establish and maintain a recreational fishery data management system; and to support the establishment of a national program.

### PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The organizational structure consists of the FIN Committee, the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees, three geographic subcommittees (Caribbean, Gulf, and South Atlantic), standing and ad hoc subcommittees, technical work groups, and administrative support. (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) organizational structure.

The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees consist of the signatories to the MOU or their designees, and is responsible for planning, managing, and evaluating the program. Agencies represented by signatories to the MOU are the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park 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 Marine Resources, North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources, Puerto Rico Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Caribbean Fishery Management Council, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees are divided into three standing subcommittees representing the major geographical areas of the Region: Caribbean, Gulf, and South Atlantic. These subcommittees are responsible for making recommendations to the Committee on the needs of these areas. Standing and ad hoc subcommittees are established as needed by the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees to address administrative issues and technical work groups are established as needed by the Committees to carry out tasks on specific technical issues. Coordination and administrative support of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) is accomplished through the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

## **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) are comprehensive programs comprised of coordinated data collection activities, an integrated data management and retrieval system, and procedures for information dissemination. Activities during 1997 were associated with addressing issues and problems regarding data collection and management and developing strategies for dealing with these topics. In addition to ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) activities, ongoing marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys were conducted by the various state and federal agencies involved in these programs. The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees reviewed and evaluated progress towards the integration of these surveys into the respective programs. Future activities of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees are outlined in Table 1.

### **ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees**

Major ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) meetings were held in March and September 1997. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- @ identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 1997 and instruction to Committees, Administrative Subcommittee and the Data Collection, Future Needs, Biological/Environmental, Social/Economic, and ad hoc work groups to either begin or continue work on these tasks;

- @ development and completion of the 1997 ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Operations Plans which presented the year's activities in data collection, data management, and information dissemination as well as development of a 5-year time table;
- @ development of the 1998 ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Operations Plans;
- @ review of activities and accomplishments of 1997;
- @ continued evaluation of adequacy of current marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs for ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) and development of recommendations regarding these programs;
- @ review findings of and receive recommendations from technical work groups for activities to be carried out during 1998;
- @ preparation and submission of a proposal for financial assistance to support activities of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE); and
- @ continued internal evaluation of the program.

ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committee members are listed in Table 2. The approved 1997 Operations Plans are included in Appendix A and minutes for all meetings are included in Appendix B. ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) goals and objectives are included in Appendix C.

### **Subcommittee and Work Groups**

ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) subcommittees and work groups met this year to provide recommendations to the Committees to formulate administrative policies, address specific technical issues for accomplishing many of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) goals and objectives, and examine other issues as decided by the Committees. Subcommittee and work group members are listed in Table 3. Their activities included:

- @ RecFIN(SE) MRFSS Data Review Work Group met in February 1997 to develop a process for the annual review of the MRFSS data. This process will outline the criteria, protocols and time frames that will be used to review the data before they become final.
- @ RecFIN(SE) Social/Economic Work Group met in June 1997 (via conference call) to review the data elements of the market module for the commercial data collection program designed by the ComFIN and discuss RecFIN(SE) participation in the ASMFC Economic and Social Sciences workshop.
- @ RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group met in July 1997 to elect a new work group leader, discuss the development a data collection funding initiative in the Caribbean, review the RecFIN(SE) Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC)

document, review and develop metadata criteria, and examine the duplicative marine recreational data collection activities in the Southeast Region.

- @ ComFIN Future Needs Work Group met in August 1997 to develop a generic trip ticket system for the collection of commercial fisheries data as well as to discuss the development of the NMFS Fishery Information System (FIS).. Information regarding the trip ticket programs of Florida and North Carolina, the proposed trip ticket system for Louisiana, the trip ticket program developed by the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), and information developed by the Gulf of Mexico Subcommittee concerning a trip ticket system was provided to the group to assist in the development of the system. The purpose of the trip ticket program is to identify the universe of commercial fishermen. The group also discussed the use of a single vs. multiple forms for the trip ticket system. It was decided that the number of forms that would be used should be determined by the state as long as at least the minimum data elements for the system were collected.
- @ ComFIN Data Collection Work Group met in August 1997 to develop a bycatch module for the commercial fisheries data collection program in the Southeast Region, discuss the market module of the commercial data collection program being developed by ComFIN, compare Louisiana's proposed trip ticket data elements to NMFS Gulf Shrimp Program and discuss the Fishery Information System (FIS).
- @ FIN Administrative Subcommittee met in September 1997 (via conference call) to discuss the development of a criteria for marine recreational fishing licenses and development of a justification document which outlines the need for marine recreational fishing licenses and develop of potential candidates to serve on an advisory work group for RecFIN/ComFIN.
- @ ComFIN Data Collection Procedures Work Group met in September 1997 (via conference call) to discuss the further development of a data collection procedures document for commercial fisheries. The group is will continue working on this issue in 1998.
- @ RecFIN(SE) Data Review Work Group met in September 1997 (via conference call) to develop guidelines for reviewing the MRFSS data. The group has already developed a process for reviewing the data which was approved by the RecFIN(SE) Committee and needs to determine the mechanisms to review the data.

### **Coordination and Administrative Support**

Working closely with the Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation was a major function of ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) coordination and administrative support. Other important coordination and administrative activities included but were not limited

to providing coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the Committees, subcommittees, and work groups; serving as liaison between the Committees, other program participants, and other interested organizations; preparing annual operations plans under the direction of the Committees; preparing and/or supervising and coordinating preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings; and distributing approved ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures.

### **Information Dissemination**

Committee members and staff provided program information in 1997 via a variety of different methods such as distribution of program documents, presentation to various groups interested in the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE), and via the Internet:

- @ ComFIN Committee. 1996. *1997 Operations Plan for Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN)*. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 8 pp + appendix.
- @ FIN Committee. 1997. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 1996 - December 31, 1996*. No. 44 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 16 pp + appendices.
- @ RecFIN(SE) Committee. 1997. *1997 Operations Plan for Recreational Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States [RecFIN(SE)]*. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 17 pp + appendix.
- @ ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) articles in the ASMFC and GSMFC newsletters.
- @ Variety of informal discussions occurred throughout the year during ASMFC, GSMFC, NMFS, and other participating agencies meetings and workshops.
- @ NPS personnel periodically provided information concerning the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) (meeting notices, available documents, etc.) to the EPA's Gulf of Mexico Program computer Bulletin Board System.
- @ NMFS has begun the development of an user-friendly data management system for the MRFSS.
- @ GSMFC has developed a homepage for the world wide web which provides programmatic information regarding ComFIN and RecFIN(SE).

If you are interested in any of the documents, they are available upon request from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission office.

**TABLE 1.****PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR ComFIN 1995 - 1999**

[ComFIN Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>
<b>Management and Evaluation</b>					
Operations Plans	X	X	X	X	X
Funding priorities		X	X	X	X
Information dissemination	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					X
<b>Data Collection</b>					
Data needs	X	X	X		
Standard collection protocol	X	X			
Quality control/assurance		X	X		
Data confidentiality	X	X			
<b>Data Management</b>					
Standard coding system			X	X	
Data management system		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard management protocols		X	X		
Data confidentiality	X	X			

**PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR RecFIN(SE) 1996 - 2000**

[RecFIN(SE) Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
<b>Planning, Management, and Evaluation</b>					
RecFIN(SE) Committee					
Maintenance of RecFIN(SE) Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Support establishment of MRF surveys in PR & VI					X
Identify funding needs for MRF programs	X	X	X	X	X
Identify funding sources	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination					
Establish educational work group					X
Establish MRF user advisory panel					X
Use Internet communications	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					
Conduct Program review					X

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
<b>Data Collection</b>					
Data components					
Review components of fisheries					X
Needed data elements					
Develop process for metadata		X	X	X	X
Collect metadata			X	X	X
Identify social/economic data elements		X			
Use existing social/economic panels for RecFIN(SE)			X		
Identify other social scientists to participate in RecFIN(SE)			X		
Standard data collection protocols					
Adopt QA/QC standards		X			
Review QA/QC standards					X
Calculate precision estimate for Head boat Survey			X		
Determine precision levels for priority species		X			
Evaluate methods for achieving desired precision levels			X		
Quality control/assurance					
Develop recommendations regarding duplicative collection and management	X				
Evaluate compatibility of Texas Survey data			X		
Coordination of data collection					
Compile marine recreational licensing report		X			
Develop license sampling frame criteria		X			
Establish/modify licenses to meet criteria			X		
Conduct comparison survey of license frame and MRFSS				X	
Implement the appropriate methodology				X	
Evaluate methods for surveying the for-hire fishery		X			
Test methods for surveying the for-hire fishery			X	X	X
Determine methods for collecting catch data for private access points			X		
Determine methods for collecting catch data for night fishing			X		
Develop process for collecting needed data on priority species			X		
Develop method for collecting data on fishing tournaments			X		
Develop methods for collecting data on non hook-and-line fisheries			X		
Evaluate the potential for stratifying at finer geographic levels				X	
Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process				X	
Select preferred method for site selection process				X	
Evaluate methods to improve enforceability of reporting requirements				X	
Conduct comparison study between preferred and MRFSS methods					X
Determine the extent of non-consumptive activities					X
Innovative collection technology					
Evaluate innovated data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Management</b>					
Data management system					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
Hardware/software capabilities					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Data maintenance					
Provide finalized data in electronic form		X			
Standard data management protocols					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Integration of data bases					
Identify databases for integration in MRF DMS	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative data management technology					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data confidentiality					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Development of National Program</b>					
Long-term planning					
Coordinate with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs					
Coordinate with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability					
Coordinate with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

**TABLE 2.**

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**TABLE 3.  
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**APPENDIX A**  
**1997 Operations Plans**

**1997 Operations Plan for the  
Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN)**

January 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The ComFIN is a cooperative state-federal marine commercial fisheries data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future marine commercial fisheries data collection and data management activities through cooperative planning, innovative uses of statistical theory and design, and consolidation of appropriate data into a useful data base system. This operations plan implements the FIN Framework Plan for 1997. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

**II. MISSION AND GOALS**

The mission of the ComFIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial and anadromous fishery data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Southeast Region<sup>2</sup> and to support the development of a inter-regional program.

The four goals of the ComFIN are:

- @ To plan, manage and evaluate a marine commercial fishery data collection program;
- @ To implement and maintain a marine commercial fishery data collection program;
- @ To establish and maintain a marine commercial fishery data management system; and
- @ To support the development and operation of an inter-regional program.

The goals and objectives of the ComFIN are found in Appendix A.

**III. OPERATIONS**

**A. Data Collection and Management**

Ongoing marine commercial fisheries surveys will be conducted by various state and federal agencies. The ComFIN Committee will review and evaluate ongoing activities and provide recommendations for continued operations.

**B. Committee and Work Group Activities** (see Section D for membership)

The tasks below cover all 1997 objectives.

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<sup>2</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

Task 1: Annual Operations Plan, 1998 (Goal 1, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop 1998 Annual Operations Plan, including identification of available resources, that implements the Framework Plan.

Team Members: ComFIN Committee

Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 1998.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: 1998 Annual Operations Plan

Schedule: The Plan will be drafted by mid/late summer 1997 and submitted for approval by the Committee at the fall 1997 meeting.

Task 2: Information Dissemination (Goal 1, Objective 5)

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Team Members: ComFIN Committee and staff

Approach: The Committee will distribute information concerning the structure, mission, goals and objectives, etc., to cooperators and interested parties documented by a request log. Each committee member is responsible for maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the ComFIN staff.

Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: A report which compiles a record of information distributed and presentations given by the Committee and staff.

Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 3: Current and Future Data Needs (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Annually compile a listing of current and future data needs for fisheries management and track the collection of these data.

Team Members: ComFIN Committee

Approach: Collect information through the established data collection planning process which determines the species that will be targeted for size frequency and bioprofile sampling for the upcoming year. Also, utilize the data tracking process to determine whether the size frequency and bioprofile data identified by the ComFIN has been provided. Accomplished by telephone and mail.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.

Product: A report which lists the current and future data needs necessary for fisheries management and recommendations.

Schedule: A preliminary report will be presented at the fall 1996 meeting. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 4: Development of a Generic Trip Ticket Program (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop a generic trip ticket program for the Southeast Region.

Team Members: Future Needs Work Group

Approach: Using the data element matrix which identifies data gaps in the Southeast Region, the licensing document, and the non-reported landings schematics, the Work Group will design a modular trip ticket program that can be used by agencies interested in implementing a trip ticket program in their jurisdiction. The program will generically outline the necessary elements for a successful trip ticket program. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.

Product: Outline for a trip ticket program

Schedule: The Work Group will begin addressing this issue in 1997 and will present a draft program to the Committee at the fall 1997 meeting.

Task 5      Development of Data Collection Procedures Document (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective:            Develop a document which outlines the procedures for the collection of data under the ComFIN.  
Team Members:      Ad hoc work group  
Approach:            The work group will develop a document which describes the various techniques and methods for collection of marine commercial data. The group will utilize existing procedures for the Trip Interview Program and other related information.  
Resources:           Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.  
Product:              Procedures document  
Schedule:              The work group will meet in early 1997 to address this issue and present their results to the Committee at the spring 1997 meeting.

Task 6:            Review of TIP data elements (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective:            Examination of the data elements that are collected by the Trip Interview Program (TIP)  
Team Members:      Data Collection Work Group  
Approach:            The Work Group will review all of the data elements that are currently being collected by the TIP in terms of their necessity. It was decided that if data being collected is not utilized, there is no reason to collect that particular element. Each element collected under the TIP will be examined and the group will determine if that element is necessary and is being used by fishery managers. The group will develop recommendations concerning the necessary TIP data elements. Accomplished by mail, conference calls, and meetings, if necessary.  
Resources:           Mail costs, conference calls/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product:              List of necessary data elements that need to be collected by the TIP.  
Schedule:              The Work Group will address this issue in 1997 and present its findings to the Committee at the spring 1997 meeting.

Task 7:            TIP Data Error Corrections Work Session (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective:            Conduct TIP data error corrections work session.  
Team Members:      ComFIN Committee  
Approach:            The Committee will conduct a data error correction work session. This session will address the procedures for identifying and rectifying errors in the data collected during the TIP and establish procedures for handling these errors. Accomplished by mail, conference calls, and meetings, if necessary.  
Resources:           Mail costs, conference calls/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product:              List of recommendations regarding error corrections.  
Schedule:              The work session will be conducted at the spring 1997 meeting.

**C. Administrative Activities**

Coordination and administrative support of ComFIN will be accomplished through the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. Major tasks involved in the coordination and administration of the various levels of ComFIN include but are not limited to the following:

- @ Work closely with the ComFIN Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation;
- @ Implement plans and program directives approved by the ComFIN Committee;
- @ Provide coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the ComFIN Committee, subcommittees, and work groups;
- @ Develop and/or administer cooperative agreements, grants, and contracts;

- @ Serve as liaison between the ComFIN Committee, other program participants, and other interested organizations;
- @ Assist the ComFIN Committee in preparation or review of annual spending plans;
- @ Prepare annual operations plans under the direction of the ComFIN Committee;
- @ Prepare and/or supervise and coordinate preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings;
- @ Distribute approved ComFIN information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures as set forth by the ComFIN Committee;
- @ Assist in the identification of regional and geographic needs that can be satisfied through ComFIN activities;
- @ Seek funding for ComFIN activities as the need develops; and
- @ Conduct or participate in other activities as identified.

**D. Time Table for ComFIN**

	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>
<b>Management and Evaluation</b>					
Operations Plans	X	X	X	X	X
Funding priorities		X	X	X	X
Information dissemination	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					X
<b>Data Collection</b>					
Data needs	X	X	X		
Standard collection protocol	X	X			
Quality control/assurance		X	X		
Data confidentiality	X	X			
<b>Data Management</b>					
Standard coding system			X	X	
Data management system		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard management protocols		X	X		
Data confidentiality	X	X			

**E. Committee and Work Group Membership**

**ComFIN Committee**

Steven Atran  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Mgmt. Council

Lisa Kline  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Page Campbell  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Wilson Laney  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Skip Lazauski  
Alabama Department of Conservation  
and Natural Resources  
Marine Resources Division

Ron Lukens  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Daniel Matos  
Puerto Rico Department of Natural and  
Environmental Resources

Joe Moran  
South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources

Bob Mahood  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Joe O'Hop  
Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection

Dee Lupton  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Julie Califf  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Miguel Rolón  
Caribbean Fishery Management Council

Representative  
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Tom Schmidt  
National Park Service

Joe Shepard  
Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries

Tom Van Devender  
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

John Poffenberger  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

#### **Data Collection Work Group**

Page Campbell  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Skip Lazauski  
Alabama Department of Conservation  
and Natural Resources

Representative  
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Dee Lupton  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

John Poffenberger  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Julie Califf  
Georgia Coastal Resources Division

Joe Shepard  
Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries

#### **Data Management Work Group**

Steven Atran  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Mgmt. Council

Mary Anne Camp  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Joe Moran  
South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources

Skip Lazauski  
Alabama Department of Conservation  
and Natural Resources

Representative  
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

### **Future Needs Work Group**

Steven Atran  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Mgmt. Council

Mary Anne Camp  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Skip Lazauski  
Alabama Department of Conservation  
and Natural Resources

Representative  
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Dee Lupton  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

John Poffenberger  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

**1997 Operations Plan for the  
Recreational Fisheries Information Network in the  
Southeastern United States [RecFIN(SE)]**

January 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The RecFIN(SE) is a cooperative state-federal marine recreational fisheries (MRF) data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future MRF data collection and data management activities through cooperative planning, innovative uses of statistical theory and design, and consolidation of appropriate data into a useful data base system. This operations plan implements the FIN Framework Plan for 1997. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

**II. MISSION AND GOALS**

The mission of the RecFIN(SE) program is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate MRF statistical data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Southeast Region<sup>3</sup> and to support the development and operation of a national program.

The four goals of the RecFIN(SE) are:

- @ planning, management, and evaluation of data collection and management activities;
- @ implementation of data collection activities;
- @ establishment and maintenance of a data management system; and
- @ support for establishment of a national program.

The goals and objectives of RecFIN(SE) are found in Appendix A.

**III. OPERATIONS**

**A. Data Collection and Management**

Ongoing MRF surveys will be conducted by various state and federal agencies (RecFIN(SE) Committee 1993). The RecFIN(SE) Committee will review and evaluate progress towards integration of the surveys into the RecFIN(SE).

**B. Committee and Work Group Activities** (see Section F for membership)

The tasks below cover all 1997 objectives (see Section D).

Task 1:                    Annual Operations Plan, 1998 (Goal 1, Objective 3)

Objective:                    Develop 1998 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources, that implements the Framework Plan.

Team Members:              RecFIN(SE) Committee.

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<sup>3</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

Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 1998.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: 1998 Annual Operations Plan.  
Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by late summer 1997 and addressed by the Committee at the fall 1997.

Task 2: Development of Funding Initiatives to Establish MRF Surveys (Goal 1, Objective 3)

Objective: Support the establishment of long-term, comprehensive MRF surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee  
Approach: The Committee will discuss the concept of creating a marine recreational fishery survey in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands with the Caribbean participants. The Committee will assist the participants in establishing a MRF survey.  
Resources: Travel, copy and mailing expenses and staff time.  
Product: Discussion of the establishment of MRF surveys in the Caribbean.  
Schedule: This task will be discussed at the 1997 spring meeting and further explored throughout the year.

Task 3: Establishment of Public Input into RecFIN(SE) (Goal 1, Objective 4)

Objective: Establish an user advisory group to provide input into the RecFIN(SE)/ComFIN process.  
Team Members: Administrative Subcommittee  
Approach: The Subcommittee establishes work group which will be responsible for providing input into the RecFIN(SE)/ComFIN process to better meet the needs of the recreational and commercial user groups.  
Resources: Travel costs, meeting costs, copy and mailing expenses and staff time.  
Product: Establishment of the User Advisory Work Group.  
Schedule: This task will be addressed at the 1997 fall meeting.

Task 4: Establishment of Communication Process (Goal 1, Objective 4)

Objective: Establish an educational work group to develop outreach programs and materials.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee  
Approach: The Committee establish a work group which will be responsible for developing a plan to communicate with the public regarding the purpose of the RecFIN(SE). The group will develop information that informs interested personnel about the program.  
Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and staff time.  
Product: Establishment of the Educational Work Group.  
Schedule: This task will be addressed at the 1997 fall meeting.

Task 5: Information Dissemination (Goal 1, Objective 4)

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee and staff.  
Approach: The Committee will distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties documented by a request log. Each committee member is responsible for maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the RecFIN(SE) staff. In addition, the MRFSS staff has developed a home page where users are able to access the MRFSS data for their use. The user is able to specify the area, species, gear, etc. that he/she is interested in obtaining. Also, the GSMFC has developed a home page which includes information concerning the RecFIN(SE). In an effort to best utilize the Internet, a survey will be developed to determine the Internet capabilities of RecFIN(SE) participants.  
Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and staff time.

Product: Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning RecFIN(SE) and a report which compiles a record of information distributed and presentations given by the Committee and staff. This information is included in the FIN Annual Report.

Schedule: The Internet capabilities information will be compiled by staff and presented at the fall meeting. This task will be an ongoing activity.

Task 6: Social/Economic Data Elements (Goal 2, Objective 2)

Objective: Identify social and economic data elements required for each fishery component.

Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group.

Approach: Currently, the ASMFC Committee on Economic and Social Sciences is addressing the identification of necessary social and economic data elements. The ASMFC Committee will produce a document which should be available in early 1997. The group recommended that the RecFIN(SE) Social and Economic Work Group wait for the outcome of the ASMFC Committee and review and modify the document, as appropriate. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: List of social and economic data elements

Schedule: This task will be completed by the 1997 fall meeting.

Task 7: Biological/Environmental Data Elements (Goal 2, Objective 2)

Objective: Establish process for creating a metadata database for the Southeast Region.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The group has worked on this issue in the past and needs to continue to develop criteria for creating a metadata database. The group also needs to develop and implement a process for receiving metadata input. Once this is done, the collection of these data needs to be addressed.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Criteria for compilation of metadata and process for compiling this information.

Schedule: The criteria and process should be completed by the end of 1997.

Task 8: RecFIN(SE) Quality Assurances /Quality Control Document (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Development of the QA/QC document for RecFIN(SE).

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The group will continue developing the RecFIN QA/QC document. The document will include QA/QC guidelines for the various types of marine recreational surveys that are conducted. This document will be compared with other state/federal MRF programs QA/QC documents. Once the document has been approved, the Committee will encourage all RecFIN(SE) partners to adopt the RecFIN(SE) quality assurances and quality control standards.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Comprehensive RecFIN(SE) Quality Assurances /Quality Control Document

Schedule: Work on this task will begin in 1996 and continue into subsequent years.

Task 9: Social/Economic Quality Assurance and Quality Control (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Identify and determine standards for sociological and economic data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.

Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group.

Approach: Determine standards for collection and management of social and economic data. Review and expand the quality assurance and quality control document developed by the Biological/Environmental Work Group. This expanded document will encompass all quality assurance and quality control standards for the RecFIN(SE). Accomplished by meetings,

conference calls, and mail.  
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: RecFIN(SE) Quality assurance and quality control report.  
Schedule: This task will be completed by the 1996 fall meeting.

Task 10: Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Establish an annual review process including guidelines for reviewing the data, through the RecFIN(SE), to evaluate MRFSS data.  
Team Members: Ad hoc Data Review Work Group  
Approach: The work group presented a process for reviewing the MRFSS preliminary data to RecFIN(SE) Committee at the last meeting. The group is now focusing on developing guidelines for reviewing the data.  
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: All participants involved in collection of the data will have an opportunity to comment about the data.  
Schedule: The work group will meet prior to fall 1997 meeting and develop guidelines for reviewing the data. These guidelines will be presented to the Committee at the fall 1997. However, this will be an ongoing activity.

Task 11: Increase of Precision of Estimates for Priority Species (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Establish of a method to increase the precision of estimates for priority species.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee  
Approach: The Committee will develop a list of prioritized species, by sub-region. This list will be developed using the established data collection process. Once the list is developed, the Committee will determine target precision levels for priority species, to included at least all species covered by all management plans.  
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, and staff time.  
Product: Precision levels for priority species.  
Schedule: This task will be addressed at the 1997 fall meeting.

Task 12: Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting RecFIN(SE) requirements.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.  
Approach: Periodically evaluate surveys based on their adequacy for meeting RecFIN(SE) requirements and make appropriate recommendations.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Report containing recommendations for MRF surveys as well as an evaluation and report on recommendations.  
Schedule: Continue reviewing MRF surveys. This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 13: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Identify and combine duplicative data collection and management effort.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee  
Approach: Identify, using existing RecFIN(SE) documents, any redundancies in MRF data collection and management in the Southeast Region. Also, the group will provide recommendations to the RecFIN(SE) Committee concerning the reduction of these activities. From these activities, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Recommendations for reducing duplicative data collection and management efforts.

Schedule: This is an ongoing task.

Task 14: Implementation of Methods to Monitor the For-Hire Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Identify evaluate, and test methodologies to survey charter and headboat fisheries.  
Team Members: Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee  
Approach: The purpose of this task is to make comparisons between various methods for estimating charterboat effort, catch per trip, and total catch. The three methods that will be compare are the current MRFSS method, a captain's telephone survey, and a log panel survey. All methods will be conducted simultaneously and the results will be compared to determine the best methods for estimating effort in the charterboat fishery.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Participation in the Charterboat Pilot Survey to determine the best methodology for surveying charterboats.  
Schedule: This is multi-year task. The evaluation of methodologies is been conducted and testing of the methodologies should begin in mid-1997. The testing phase should be completed by 1998.

Task 15: Evaluation of Licensing System as Sampling Framework (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Evaluate the licensing systems for use as sampling framework in the Southeast Region.  
Team Members: Administrative Subcommittee  
Approach: Based on the licensing report, the subcommittee will develop criteria that ensures that state marine recreational fishery licenses can be used as a regional sampling frame. In addition, a justification paper will be developed by the group that outline the rationale and need for a marine recreational license. Once the criteria and paper have been developed and approved by the Committee, the Committee will either recommend that states establish or modify a MRF license that include the identified criteria.  
Resources: Mail costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Criteria for MRF licenses in the Region  
Schedule: This is a multi-year task. Development of the criteria and justification paper will be completed in 1997.

Task 16: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Encourage coordination, integration, and augmentation, as appropriate, of data collection efforts to meet the RecFIN(SE) requirements.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.  
Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding MRF surveys to the appropriate personnel.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.  
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task 17: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.  
Approach: RecFIN(SE) members report to the Committee any new technologies which will aid in the collection of MRF data. Also, have appropriate personnel report to the Committee concerning such advancements.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Progress reports concerning pen-based and other data collection technologies.  
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task 18:                    Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Objective 3)

Objective:                    To design, implement, and maintain an MRF data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).

Team Members:              MRFSS staff and other State and Federal Data Base Managers.

Approach:                    The MRFSS staff completed design of Oracle Data Bases for catch and trip estimates, and summarized intercept data bases for bag limits and size distributions. The MRFSS staff designed and implemented a user-friendly data query system for these data bases that is accessible through Internet and the World Wide Web. The Oracle data bases and SAS intercept and telephone interview data bases were placed on the NMFS IT-95 computer system which allows distributed processing and availability to the NMFS Southeast Regional Office, Science Center and laboratories. Although original plans were to incorporate non-MRFSS data bases identified as high priority for inclusion in the MRF data management system, in most cases it will be more efficient and appropriate to link to other home pages. State and Federal Data Base managers of MRF data bases other than the MRFSS should develop similar home page accessible data base queries. The MRFSS Home Page will include a link to these other data bases as they are developed and the other home pages should add links to the MRFSS Home Page.

Resources:                    The design, data query system development, html query pages, and query codes developed by the MRFSS staff are available to other data base managers to use as a basis for their own systems.

Product:                      MRFSS Home Page with user-friendly data query system. Home pages and data query systems for non-MRFSS data bases.

Schedule:                     The MRFSS system was implemented in the spring of 1996. The schedule for creation of systems for other data bases has not been decided.

Task 19:                    Establishment of MRFSS Data Review Process (Goal 3, Objective 4)

Objective:                    Develop a process for finalization and evaluation of the MRFSS data

Team Members:              MRFSS Data Review Work Group

Approach:                    Initially, the group will meet to develop a process to evaluate and finalize the data. Once the process has been established, the group will meet annual to evaluate the data and identify any errors or problems with the data before they become final.

Resources:                    Meeting costs/travel, mail costs, report costs, and staff time.

Product:                      Process for MRFSS data finalization.

Schedule:                     The process will be completed in 1997. The data evaluation will be an ongoing task.

Task 20:                    Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4)

Objective:                    Develop standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.

Team Members:              MRFSS staff and other State and Federal Data Base Managers.

Approach:                    Access to the MRF system by state personnel and other researchers is now available through the Internet or through requests to the MRFSS staff. Dial-up protocols are now necessary only on an individual state basis for states without Internet access and are the responsibility of the state. Menu-driven access to MRF Oracle/SAS data bases through the MRFSS Home Page now provides quality control through standardized queries and summarization procedures. The MRFSS Home Page provides quality control through standardization, with proper use of MRFSS data (weighting for unequal sample size, etc.). The MRFSS staff will continue development of MRFSS documentation and standardization of formats and codes of historical intercept, telephone and estimate data bases and incorporate them on-line in the MRFSS Home Page. State and Federal data base managers should develop documentation of non-MRFSS data bases as they are put onto Home Page systems or

incorporated into the MRFSS system. Develop MRF Metadata Data Base to help users properly interpret their results. Error-checking software is available on the NMFS data management system.

Resources: MRFSS staff time and RecFIN(SE) Committees, and staff time as needed.  
Product: Standard protocols and documentation on-line on the MRFSS Home Page and other non-MRFSS home pages.  
Schedule: Documentation and standardization of MRFSS intercept and telephone historical data bases was begun in 1993. The final intercept format was adopted by MRFSS staff by March 1995 and is available for distribution as well as similar documentation for the telephone data base. Basic documentation of the catch and trip estimate data bases exists and will be added to the MRFSS Home Page. Standardization of variables was achieved by the MRFSS staff during the clean-up effort during 1994 and 1995 prior to re-estimation.

Task 21: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee  
Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies which will aid in the management of MRF data. Also, industry personnel will report to the Committee concerning such advancements.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Progress reports.  
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task 22: Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1)

Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.  
Approach: The RecFIN(SE) Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will attend Pacific RecFIN and ASMFC Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics meetings and coordinate activities as appropriate. Accomplished by mail and meetings.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Record of coordination activities.  
Schedule: The planning aspect of this task is an ongoing activity.

Task 23: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative MRF Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3)

Objective: Coordinate RecFIN(SE) with other regional cooperative MRF programs and encourage consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.  
Approach: The RecFIN(SE) Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and Pacific RecFIN on the West Coast. The MRFSS staff is revising data files and will get input from the RecFIN(SE) Committee. Distribute appropriate program results and recommendations to other RecFIN programs. Accomplished by mail and meetings.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Ensure adequate information exchange, consistency and comparability between all regional RecFIN programs and compilation of a record of information exchange.  
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

**C. Administrative Activities**

Coordination and administrative support of RecFIN(SE) will be accomplished through The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. Major tasks involved in the coordination and administration of the various levels of RecFIN(SE) include but are not limited to the following:

- @ Work closely with the RecFIN(SE) Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation;
- @ Implement plans and program directives approved by the RecFIN(SE) Committee;
- @ Provide coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the RecFIN(SE) Committee, subcommittees, and work groups;
- @ Develop and/or administer cooperative agreements, grants, and contracts;
- @ Serve as liaison between the RecFIN(SE) Committee, other program participants, and other interested organizations;
- @ Assist the RecFIN(SE) Committee in preparation or review of annual spending plans;
- @ Prepare annual operations plans under the direction of the RecFIN(SE) Committee;
- @ Prepare and/or supervise and coordinate preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings;
- @ Distribute approved RecFIN(SE) information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures as set forth by the RecFIN(SE) Committee;
- @ Assist in the identification of regional and geographic needs that can be satisfied through RecFIN(SE) activities;
- @ Seek funding for RecFIN(SE) activities as the need develops; and
- @ Conduct or participate in other activities as identified.

**D. Time Table for RecFIN(SE)**

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
<b>Planning, Management, and Evaluation</b>					
RecFIN(SE) Committee					
Maintenance of RecFIN(SE) Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Support establishment of MRF surveys in PR & VI		X	X	X	X
Identify funding needs for MRF programs	X	X	X	X	X
Identify funding sources	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination					
Establish educational work group		X			
Establish MRF user advisory panel		X			
Use Internet communications	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					
Conducting of Program review					X

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
<b>Data Collection</b>					
Data components					
Review of components of fisheries					X
Needed data elements					
Develop process for metadata		X			
Collection of metadata			X	X	X
Identify social/economic data elements		X			
Use existing social/economic panels for RecFIN(SE)			X		
Identify other social scientists to participate in RecFIN(SE)			X		
Standard data collection protocols					
Adoption of QA/QC standards		X			
Review of QA/QC standards					X
Calculate precision estimate for Headboat Survey			X		
Determine precision levels for priority species		X			
Evaluate methods for achieving desired precision levels			X		
Quality control/assurance					
Recommendations regarding duplicative collection and management		X			
Evaluate compatibility of Texas Survey data			X		
Coordination of data collection					
Compile marine recreational licensing report		X			
Develop license sampling frame criteria		X			
Establish/modify licenses to meet criteria			X		
Conduct comparison survey of license frame and MRFSS				X	
Implement the appropriate methodology				X	
Evaluate methods for surveying the for-hire fishery		X	X		
Test methods for surveying the for-hire fishery			X	X	X
Determine methods for collecting catch data for private access points			X		
Determine methods for collecting catch data for night fishing			X		
Develop process for collecting needed data on priority species			X		
Develop method for collecting data on fishing tournaments			X		
Develop methods for collecting data on non hook-and-line fisheries			X		
Evaluate the potential for stratifying at finer geographic levels				X	
Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process				X	
Select preferred method for site selection process			X		
Evaluate methods to improve enforceability of reporting requirements				X	
Conduct comparison study between preferred and MRFSS methods					X
Determine the extent of non-consumptive activities					X
Innovative collection technology					
Evaluate innovated data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
<b>Data Management</b>					
Data management system					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
Hardware/software capabilities					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Data maintenance					
Provide finalized data in electronic form	X	X	X	X	
Standard data management protocols					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			

Integration of data bases	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Identify databases for integration in MRF DMS	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative data management technology					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data confidentiality					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Development of National Program</b>					
Long-term planning					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

## E. References

RecFIN(SE) Committee. 1993. Marine recreational fisheries data collection project summaries. REC93-2. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 78 pp.

## F. Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group Membership

### RecFIN(SE) Committee

Steven Atran Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council	Ronald Lukens Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Graciela Garcia-Moliner Caribbean Fishery Management Council	Bob Mahood South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Lee Green Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Representative Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife
Steve Holiman National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office	Nick Nicholson Georgia Coastal Resources Division
Lisa Kline Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	Joseph O'Hop Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection
Wilson Laney U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Maury Osborn National Marine Fisheries Service
Skip Lazauski Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	Craig Lylestrom Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources
	Thomas Schmidt Everglades National Park

Bob Dixon  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Beaufort Laboratory

Joseph Shepard  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and  
Fisheries

Doug Mumford  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Thomas Van Devender  
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Joe Moran  
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

#### **Administrative Subcommittee**

Lisa Kline  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Bob Dixon  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Beaufort Laboratory

Wilson Laney  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
South Atlantic Fisheries Coordination  
Office

Ronald Lukens  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Nick Nicholson  
Georgia Coastal Resources Division

Maury Osborn  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Silver Spring

Joe Moran  
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

#### **Biological/Environmental Work Group**

Bob Dixon  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Beaufort Laboratory

Lisa Kline  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Representative  
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Doug Mumford  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Steve Meyers  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Silver Spring

Thomas Schmidt

South Florida Research Center  
Everglades National Park

Tom Van Devender  
Mississippi Bureau of Marine Resources

Joe Moran  
South Carolina Department of Natural  
Resources

**Social/Economic Work Group**

Tony Lamberte  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
Council

Theo Brainerd  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Lisa Kline  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Representative  
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Steve Holiman  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Regional Office

Ron Lukens  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Minutes**

**COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (ComFIN)  
DATA ERROR CORRECTION WORK SESSION  
MINUTES**

**Tuesday, March 4, 1997  
Washington, D.C.**

Chairman, Joe Shepard, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

**Members**

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Laura Bishop, NMFS, Galveston, TX  
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Trish Murphey, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC  
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

**Others**

Carolyn Belcher, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Jeff Brust, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Corky Perret, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Kay Williams, SASI, Pascagoula, MS  
Connie Young-Dubovsky, USFWS, Washington, DC  
Bob Zales, II, PCDA, Panama City, FL

**Staff**

Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as written.

**Overview of Current Data Error Correction Methods**

Laura Bishop of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Galveston, Texas reported that NMFS is currently trying to update the method used to submit data, however, most files are received by mail on diskette. There are edits built into the program and data goes through several error checks at the PC level. The files are then uploaded using File Transfer Protocol to the A7, and the data are then subjected to eight different edit programs. The first program checks for invalid characters in the file, then a series of species code checks for validity are performed. The next check is an edit of the individual elements. The next series of programs concerns site verification and gives warnings of possible errors regarding length range, hours/days fished, water depths, etc. At this point the agent is contacted by phone to verify data. The next series of programs deals with structural problems with the Trip Interview Program (TIP) file format. There are seven record types involved in the TIP interview and each record type is checked. The next program run is to check for misidentification of species between the different sections of the interview. The

final program is an update which takes all the information after the edits have been run and appends it to a master file which is where the data is stored. The vessel identification is separated from the file for reasons of confidentiality and at present is not stored with the TIP data set. Anyone using their own programs for entering data has their own checks built into the system. However, there is a need for a second layer of editing on the mainframe.

Many agents have been doing TIP sampling for years, and until new agents begin, there is very little need to do error verification by phone at this time. Future plans call for sending printouts to agents indicating data errors, have the corrections made by the agents, then returning corrected printouts to NMFS. After becoming familiar with data and error corrections, agents will be able to get on the system and make their own corrections. It appears that it will be several months before NMFS is on the new system.

L. Bishop stated that files are being sent through the Internet and e-mail and this is the preferred method to diskettes. There was discussion on the amount of personnel time, access to the system, and scheduling the transmittal of data. R. Lukens suggested a protocol manual to improve the timeliness of reports. D. Donaldson stated that a data tracking process and a data collection planning process have been developed by the ComFIN Committee, and this should help to improve receiving data in a timely manner. L. Bishop stated that quarterly reports will be generated giving a summary of all activity.

### **Development of Data Error Correction Process**

Responsibility for editing data was discussed and the possibility of having error checks incorporated into the data entry process done by the states. Initial edits by the states should include validation of codes, duplication of interview numbers, vessel names and registration numbers, and duplication of tag numbers. Currently there are structural edits to assure that the format at the PC level is in line with the format on the mainframe system. L. Bishop stated that at the mainframe level, all fields that are not numeric are checked and these include, valid interview dates, state, county, port, area fished, gear codes, number of fish, sex codes, species codes, termination, trip type, fishery type, etc. Final edits are done by NFMS with port agent verification.

L. Bishop stated that ranges were set prior to 1989 and are very general. If an agency needs a new species code added to the entry program, M. Camp at NMFS/SEFSC is contacted, and the new species is then added to the data base. A diskette with the new species is sent to the requesting agent and is also added to the mainframe. S. Atran suggested sending annual updates to agencies. L. Bishop noted that historically the problem with the TIP program has not been the edit checking procedures, but the interpretation of the data elements and the lack of confidence in the data. Since there are no guidelines for collecting data, there is a need for periodic meetings for the agents to exchange information on data elements. Ron Lukens suggested that this group formulate a method to dispense information to everyone in the system, and possibly to fund port agents meetings. Dave Donaldson suggested coordinating the port agents meeting with the FIN meeting in spring and fall. Daniel Matos requested that L. Bishop meet in Puerto Rico with their agents since the fishery in the Caribbean is different in some ways from the south Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. J. Shepard suggested that areas of responsibility be outlined throughout the system at all levels. R. Lukens suggested that this topic be discussed further at the ComFIN fall 1997 meeting, then schedule a port agents meeting for winter of 1998.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations set forth at this meeting will be interim measures to be used until such time that all agents are on the system, which could be up to one year.

- @ L. Bishop will mail printouts to specified individuals.
- @ Once errors have been identified, specified individuals will have 5 working days to make corrections and mail the printout back to L. Bishop.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.**

## **COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (ComFIN)**

### **MINUTES**

**Tuesday, March 4, 1997**

**Washington, D.C.**

Chairman, Joe Shepard, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The following members, staff and others were present:

#### **Members**

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Laura Bishop, NMFS, Galveston, TX  
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Trish Murphey, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC  
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

#### **Others**

Carolyn Belcher, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Corky Perret, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Kay Williams, SASI, Pascagoula, MS  
Bob Zales, II, PCBA, Panama City, FL

#### **Staff**

Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

#### **Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as written.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on September 25, 1996 in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands were approved as written.

#### **Follow-up from the Data Error Correction Work Session**

P. Campbell suggested that training on connecting to the new SEF host system and data transfer to that system be conducted on site. L. Bishop stated that M. Camp's office will be available to provide assistance in connecting and training. R. Lukens suggested contacting M. Camp and requesting that she send information to users on how to get the support needed to connect to the new system and also to discuss the possibility of having on site training. L. Bishop suggested that training be combined with future port agents meeting.

### **Review of List of Personnel with Access to Confidential Data**

Alabama - no change  
Georgia - add Lisa Isbell  
Louisiana - no change  
Mississippi - no change  
North Carolina - delete Paul Phalen and Walter Gibson; add Trish Murphey  
South Carolina - no change  
Texas - no change  
Puerto Rico - 2 names added four weeks ago  
U.S.V.I. - unavailable at this time  
ASMFC - add Jeff Brust and Najih Lazar  
GMFMC - no change  
GSMFC - add Jim Duffy

### **Discussion of State/Federal Cooperative Ageing Activities in the Southeast Region**

D. Donaldson reported that several work group meetings were held in Atlanta, Georgia in February and the issue of ageing fish by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) personnel was discussed. Since Barbara Palko is retiring, no one yet is assigned to do this work. Since many of the states now have ageing laboratories, the possibility of having the states conduct this activity was discussed. J. Shepard suggested writing to the NMFS regional office to document the resources available at the state level, and the ability of the states to conduct ageing using otoliths. Staff will poll each state to determine their interest, capability, and the method used in ageing otoliths. Standardization among the states will be addressed.

R. Lukens explained that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) is in the process of bringing together experts in the field of ageing otoliths. The purpose of these meetings is to establish standards for the otolith ageing process, to include taking, preparing, reading, and interpreting otoliths on a species basis. After review of this document, a training workshop would be held for state personnel. This would assure that the ageing of a particular species would be done in a uniform manner. D. Donaldson reported that the guidelines document should be ready by the end of this year, with training to begin in 1998. GSMFC staff will contact Brad Brown of NMFS and indicate that some of the states now have the capability to begin ageing otoliths, and suggest developing a cooperative effort for conducting this work.

### **Discussion of the Data Collection Planning and Data Tracking Processes**

Data Collection Planning Process - The objective is to determine the species that will be targeted for size frequency and bioprofile sampling. D. Donaldson reviewed the data collection planning process and the matrix that has been developed. Discussions followed on the timing of implementation, program procedures being documented and approved, and priorities set on different modules. The matrix will be sent to committee members for completion. The results will be compiled by staff and presented at the September meeting. At that time, the decision will be made to determine content and volume, and if goals are realistic to have a region-wide plan for collecting data.

Data Tracking Process - This is the development of a data collection plan that will identify priority species for data collection, how much and what type of data should be collected. This is related to the data error correction issue of data elements, etc. In conjunction with the data collection planning process, states will have quotas. The subject of possible conflicts between state and federal samplers was addressed, and Florida, with its' two unique coastlines, appears to be the only area at this time where this is a concern. The necessity to devise a system to avoid conflicts is essential. Therefore, a cooperative document specifying the responsibilities of each agency is required. L. Bishop explained that totals could be incorporated in a monthly report with a message that quotas had been reached for that sampling timeframe. The committee discussed training port agents in the need to submit data in a timely manner, i.e., quarterly submission is acceptable, and monthly submission is preferable. L. Bishop noted that most agencies now provide their data on a monthly basis and two agencies do so on a quarterly basis. L. Bishop suggested that the GSMFC staff monitor the number of samples taken gulfwide, and landings gulfwide to be matched against distribution that has been set; also, timeliness of data submission can be monitored. L. Kline

suggested that stock assessment team members notify the commissions of any shifts in priority, then the commission representatives would advise the ComFIN committee via conference call.

### **Data Collection Work Group Report**

TIP data elements matrix - J. Shepard reported on the commercial data collection schematic/trip ticket system.

The purpose of the fishery module is to collect catch/effort information on trips and the data elements that go into this module reflect the type of data needed. Another module is the species-specific module where the length/frequency and other biostatistical information is collected. Each module has a different focus. This program is statistically designed to get trip information, develop a universe, and get species information. The third module is market information. Each module can be stratified based on committee needs. The bioprofile module is the ageing information. All modules can be linked, but do not have to be linked. The work group did not feel comfortable dealing with economic information and felt an economic module could be added at a later time under either the fishery module or market module.

The fishery data module was reviewed in detail, changes and modifications were made, and staff will make corrections. There was lengthy discussion on species codes. This has been an ongoing, long term problem which the committee will address in greater detail in the future. J.Shepard suggested that committee members discuss the fishery data module with their stock assessment personnel to assure that the data elements include all areas they require. The subject of defining bycatch was addressed, and committee members agreed to use the definition in the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

### **Presentation of Data Collection Procedures Document**

J. Shepard reported that the work group began developing data collection procedures and presented an outline to the committee. This outline describes each module and its function. The committee agreed to charge the data collection procedures work group with continued development of this document.

### **Election of Officers**

The following officers were elected by rotation: Chairman - Joe Moran; the position of Vice-Chairman will be decided at a later date.

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.**

**FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK  
MINUTES  
Wednesday, March 5, 1997  
Washington, D.C.**

Chairman Nick Nicholson called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. The following members, staff and others were present:

**Members**

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Laura Bishop, NMFS, Galveston, TX  
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Lee Green, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

**Others**

Wilma Anderson, TSA, Aransas Pass, TX  
Carolyn Belcher, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Richard Christian, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Corky Perret, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Bill Price, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Kay Williams, SASI, Pascagoula, MS  
Bob Zales II, PCDA, Panama City, FL

**Staff**

Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, Ms

**Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as written.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network meeting held on September 26, 1996 in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands were approved as written.

### **Status of Memorandum of Understanding for RecFIN/ComFIN**

D. Donaldson reported that Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed by all members with the exception of the U.S. Virgin Islands, where the governor's approval is required. Since S. Meyers will no longer be on this committee, and his replacement has not yet been named, staff will contact B. Kojis to update her on the situation, and determine protocol in an effort to have MOU signed.

### **Discussion and Review of FIN Brochure**

D. Donaldson reported on the progress of designing the FIN brochure. Committee members discussed color, graphics and the logo. Editorial comments and changes were discussed and staff will make adjustments. **R. Lukens moved to change the word *depleted* to *stressed*. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Committee members will attempt to develop a design for a logo and send suggestions to D. Donaldson by April 15, 1997. A draft brochure will then be sent to committee members for review approximately one month prior to the fall meeting.

### **Discussion of Development of FIN Annual Report**

D. Donaldson suggested that the RecFIN and ComFIN annual reports be combined to produce a FIN annual report. This concept was approved by committee members and the draft annual report was reviewed by committee members. With editorial changes noted, **J. Moran moved to accept the FIN Annual Report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

### **Update and Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)**

L. Kline reported that the ACCSP issues are consistent with the RecFIN/ComFIN issues. Recreational and commercial fisheries were characterized through listing of fishery components. Information has been compiled on the magnitude of the fisheries on the Atlantic coast by state. The ACCSP has approved minimum standard data elements for both recreational and commercial fisheries that includes catch/effort, biological, social, and economic. Evaluation criteria have been set and evaluation of the existing programs on the Atlantic coast began in November. The majority of the high priority surveys are complete. The next step is development of the data collection system for both recreational and commercial programs. This will be presented to the Advisory Committee and the Coordinating Council for approval in May 1997. After approval, a week long workshop will be conducted in June. In July there will be a three-day workshop of the Socio-economic Committee. In September a bycatch workshop is planned. The data management system will begin in June and there is funding available for a computer consultant. The January 1, 1998 deadline is still in effect. When the updated ACCSP technical source document is complete, copies will be sent to members of the FIN committee for review and input.

### **Update and Status of NMFS Core Statistics Program**

M. Osborn reported on how the Core Statistics Program (CSP) relates to the ACCSP, RecFIN, other state-federal programs, and to the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The CSP was created to improve NMFS basic data collection. Developing a set of standards for use in all regions is the goal of the program. A plan design team has been formed and will create a plan that will include input from all partners including RecFIN/ComFIN and ACCSP. Since the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires a national plan, the NMFS will solicit input from representatives of the commissions, councils, and states in order to coordinate efforts. The program is in draft form at this time and is comprised of two teams. One team will deal with the vessel registration system, and the other, the fishery information system. The two teams will finish drafting the proposal by August, and this report will be sent out to states, councils and commissions for comments and suggestions. The south Atlantic states, including Florida, have agreed with the data elements list being proposed for the program. M. Osborn suggested the GSMFC Data Management Subcommittee be informed of the progress to date at their spring meeting and request their input. The Caribbean would also need to be informed. This data elements list and the ACCSP data elements list have been derived from the data elements originally designed by the RecFIN Committee.

### **Time Schedule and Location for Next Meeting**

The next FIN meeting will be held during the week of September 22, 1997. First choice of location is San Antonio, Texas, and second choice is Austin, Texas.

**Other Business**

L. Kline reported that Connie Young-Dubovsky has been detailed from the USFWS to be the ACCSP program manager. Her office is located in the ASMFC office.

M. Osborn reported that their office is now named Office of Fisheries Statistics and Economics, part of the office of Science and Technology. Several positions have been filled recently.

M. Osborn also reported that the MRFSS is conducting an economic add on in the southeast.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.**

**SOUTHEAST RECREATIONAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK [RecFIN(SE)] MINUTES**  
**March 5 - 6, 1997**  
**Washington, D.C.**

Chairman Nick Nicholson called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. The following members, staff and others were present:

**Members**

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Jack Dunnigan, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Lee Green, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

**Others**

Wilma Anderson, TSA, Aransas Pass, TX  
Jeff Brust, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Corky Perret, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Bill Price, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Ron Salz, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Kay Williams, SASI, Pascagoula, MS  
Bill Wright, NFI, Arlington, VA  
Connie Young-Dubovsky, USFWS/ACCSP, Washington, DC  
Bob Zales, II, PCDA, Panama City, FL

**Staff**

Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as written.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on September 26 and 27, 1997 in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands were approved with minor editorial changes.

**1997 Operations Plan**

D. Donaldson distributed copies of the 1997 Operations Plan to committee members. Included was the time table of tasks for RecFIN(SE) which covers 1996 through 2000. After reviewing this time table of tasks, several revisions were made and the Committee agreed that activities identified in the 1997 Operations Plan are being completed at this meeting or will be in the allotted time frame. **M. Osborn moved to accept the 1997 Operations Plan as**

**amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised 1997 Operations Plan represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting. D. Donaldson will make corrections and mail copies to Committee members.

a. Measures of Precision for Catch and Effort Estimates from the Headboat Survey

M. Osborn discussed the issue of estimating variance for the component of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) that is estimated. A statistician with an understanding of the program will be able to establish the variance. B. Dixon reported that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is in the process of tying in the head boat logbooks with the snapper/grouper permit, gulf reef fish permit, as well as mackerel and tuna permits. Applications for renewal of these permits will not be complete without their reports being submitted. This is being done to achieve 100% compliance and implementation will begin shortly. M. Osborn stated that historical data going back to the 1970's are estimates and should have variances associated. N. Nicholson suggested delaying this issue until 1998 due to workload. B. Dixon noted it would be appropriate to wait in view of the new system of tying in the permits with mandatory reporting. R. Lukens stated that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC), via the RecFIN/ComFIN administrative grant, can provide a service for the NMFS by hiring people for head boat and menhaden sampling. Funding for these two jobs has not been made available at this point in time. J. Shepard suggested notifying the Councils. **J. Moran moved to have staff draft a letter to A. Kemmerer on behalf of the RecFIN(SE) Committee suggesting NMFS use every avenue possible to identify funding for the head boat sampling in the Gulf of Mexico. The motion was seconded and passed with 10 votes for the motion, M. Osborn and W. Laney abstaining.** R. Schmitt and W. Fox will be copied.

b. Discussion of Establishment of MRF Surveys in the Caribbean

M. Osborn noted that since the goal of having a recreational data collection program in the Caribbean has been identified, it is necessary to evaluate different methodologies to conduct a survey in the Caribbean. The lack of telephones, language differences, and other circumstances were discussed, as was the issue of representation by the U.S. Virgin Islands on the Committee. The Biological/Environmental Work Group has been charged with the task of evaluating different methodologies for data collection in the Caribbean and will report to the Committee at the fall meeting.

**Discussion of Duplicative Data Collection and Management Efforts**

D. Donaldson distributed copies of a matrix listing current marine recreational fishing sampling programs. L. Kline stated that the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) will be meeting in one week, and noted the need for coordination between ACCSP and RecFIN(SE), particularly where the southeastern states are concerned. J. Shepard noted the need for a process of evaluation to be developed. R. Lukens suggested that a list of the overlaps be given to the Biological/Environmental Work Group for consolidation and recommendations. The following areas were identified by the Committee as having overlap:

- C The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and MRFSS overlap in participation estimates every five years, as well as Alabama, and Georgia
- C Everglades National Park and MRFSS overlap in catch and harvest information
- C Biscayne National Park and MRFSS overlap in catch and harvest
- C NMFS Panama City Charter Boat Survey is currently under evaluation
- C NMFS Billfish Tournament/Non-Tournament Sampling possible overlap with South Carolina and North Carolina - catch and effort data
- C North Carolina - Albermarle Sound Survey overlap with MRFSS - catch and effort data; Roanoke River Striped Bass Survey overlap MRFSS - catch and effort data
- C South Carolina - Finfish Survey overlap with MRFSS - catch and effort data, lengths; Charter Boat Survey overlap with MRFSS - catch and effort data
- C Florida - MRF Statistical Data Collection - Site description overlap with MRFSS; Angler Interview possible overlap with MRFSS
- C Alabama - Inshore Private Boat Survey overlap with MRFSS - catch and effort data
- C Mississippi - Creel Survey overlap with MRFSS - catch and effort data, and sites; Recreational Oyster Harvest potential overlap with MRFSS in 1996
- C Louisiana - No duplication
- C Texas - No duplication

- C U.S. Virgin Islands - No duplication
- C Puerto Rico - No duplication

The Biological/Environmental Work Group has been charged with the task of exploring and recommending possible alternatives, considering cost and efficiency. Other issues for the Work Group to consider are legal mandates, quota monitoring, estimates, precision, and site registers.

**The meeting recessed at 4:40 p.m.**

**March 6, 1997**

**The meeting reconvened at 8:30 a.m.**

#### **Discussion of Licensing Structure Matrix for RecFIN(SE) Participants**

D. Donaldson explained that this discussion is based on the recommendation to develop an integrated licensing permit data base that is suitable for using as a sampling frame. The Committee will determine if the sampling frame in the Southeast is adequate to capture the fishing population. The Committee will develop a criteria to insure that the marine recreational fishing licenses can be used as a regional sampling frame. The matter of exemptions and gratis licenses was addressed by the Committee. W. Laney noted that the North Carolina legislature is currently considering the issue of saltwater licenses. N. Nicholson reported that Georgia is also considering saltwater licenses but the outcome is unknown at this time. M. Osborn stated that the ACCSP will also be promoting the use of saltwater licenses. A license frame for the MRFSS would require a regional implementation, side by side studies for at least a year with several states, and easy access to license frame data bases. There was general discussion on the situation in Florida concerning saltwater licenses. GSMFC staff will check with Florida and determine the situation regarding licenses for individuals, phone numbers, addresses, etc. J. Moran noted that only two states have computerized licensing at this time. Discussion ensued on the need to produce a document to educate the public and legislators on the need for salt water licenses. The Committee charged the Administrative Subcommittee with the task of developing a list of recommended minimum criteria and draft a justification document to be presented at the fall meeting.

#### **Presentation of Findings Regarding Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data**

Copies of the MRFSS Data Review Process Report were distributed to Committee members. R. Salz explained that there are two levels of data. One is the raw intercept data, which comes to NMFS as a "fish dump". The individual states can access this information directly from the contractor. The other level are estimates. R. Salz requested that the states give NMFS feedback in an attempt to keep the data as clean as possible. M. Osborn will send the states a list of projected dates of availability of data and will investigate the possibility of putting the fish dumps on the Internet. M. Osborn would like to see participants assist in developing standard ways to review the fish dumps. R. Lukens noted that general guidelines need to be developed for an annual review process. N. Nicholson noted the need for these data to be reviewed before it becomes public or before it is released to the Councils. R. Lukens noted that for the final annual estimates, the review does not necessarily have to be done at the February meeting. M. Osborn stated that in the past the target date for annual estimates has been March 15. R. Lukens requested that final estimates be sent to GSMFC for distribution to the states. **R. Lukens moved that the RecFIN(SE) Committee approve the report as written and task the Ad Hoc Data Review Work Group with developing a draft for guidelines and criteria for reviewing the data. This draft will be presented for consideration at the fall meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** L. Kline noted that the ACCSP is meeting next week and will utilize information from this RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN meeting.

#### **Biological/Environmental Work Group Report**

##### **a. Presentation of RecFIN(SE) QA/QC Document**

Copies of the revised QA/QC document were sent to Committee members for review prior to the meeting. D. Donaldson reported that the Biological/Environmental Work Group felt that general guidelines would be an appropriate approach to the QA/QC document. Since many of the details on conducting various types of surveys can be found in other manuals, etc., the Work Group felt it was not necessary for this type of information to be included in the QA/QC document.

J. Shepard believed that the new QA/QC document is too general in nature, but could be added to the original document. R. Lukens suggested that the revised document be added to the original as an Introduction. Chairman Nicholson suggested that the Work Group revisit the QA/QC document and address additional methodologies to increase the scope of the document. Discussion followed on the need for the RecFIN(SE) Committee to produce a standards and guidance manual for conducting surveys. The Committee then charged the Biological/Environmental Work Group to revisit the QA/QC document and consider the following areas: intercept survey to determine catch, telephone survey to determine effort, intercept survey for biological sampling, logbooks for catch and effort, aerial survey for effort, and roving survey for effort. B. Dixon requested that the Committee prioritize tasks assigned to the Biological/Environmental Work Group. This subject will be discussed under Other Business.

b. Discussion of Process for Integrating RecFIN(SE) into Stock Assessment

D. Donaldson distributed copies of the Data Collection Planning Process. The Committee discussed the possibility of this item being on the FIN agenda since it deals with an issue common to both RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN.

R. Lukens noted that interstate species being done through GSMFC, will be handled by the Stock Assessment Team. In the case of federal species, these are prioritized at the Council level and then given to the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center. S. Atran noted that the Council identifies a species for stock assessment approximately one year in advance. L. Kline explained how the ASMFC prioritizes species for stock assessment and also noted that the NMFS Northeast Center gathers their stock assessment personnel together for species selection. R. Lukens noted the lack of guidance in ascertaining which species should be selected for assessment. D. Donaldson stated that he will send out the matrix for the data collection planning process and each member will fill out information for their agency. The Committee will evaluate this effort at the September meeting.

Update on Charter Boat Pilot Survey in the Gulf of Mexico

M. Osborn stated that cost estimates for the Pilot Charter Boat Survey in the Gulf of Mexico (Louisiana to Florida) had been developed. The NMFS personnel have come up with a statistically valid design for log book sampling. The budget negotiation process is underway, but has not been finalized at this time. In order for the survey to be successful, both the log book and telephone portions must be done. Therefore, if funds are not budgeted for the entire program, it will be delayed until 1998. R. Lukens stated that valuable information has already been collected. The Charter Boat outreach program will begin before the sampling since there will be the additional burden of several methodologies on the charter boat captains. The purpose of the outreach program is to receive some input from the captains in the early stages of the program, which eventually will benefit them and management. R. Lukens also noted that a comprehensive list of charter boat captains in the Gulf of Mexico has been developed by GSMFC and Florida. B. Dixon noted the importance of charter boat estimates and suggested this committee go on record as supporting the Pilot Charter Boat Survey. R. Lukens stated that in order to do this study gulfwide, involving the NMFS, states, and GSMFC, approximately \$400,000 would be required. This figure does not include the logbook survey. R. Lukens noted that a presentation of the study plan will be made to the RecFIN(SE) Committee at the fall meeting. L. Kline requested that any information now available be sent to her for the ACCSP. **R. Lukens moved that the RecFIN(SE) Committee send a letter to the NMFS indicating support for the Pilot Charter Boat Study to compare methodologies in the charter boat sector and encourage the NMFS to fund this study beginning as early as possible in 1997. The Committee prefers the broadest geographic coverage, but as a minimum, funding for all three methodologies on the west coast of Florida. The motion was seconded and passed with M. Osborn abstaining.**

Other Business

Pacific RecFIN Update - M. Osborn reported that the budget for the Pacific coast has been used to fund the samplers. There has not been a plan to determine the most efficient expenditure of funds. At this time, D. Van Voorhees is on the west coast working with the subcommittee of the Pacific RecFIN and they are developing an outline for a strategic plan.

RecFIN(SE) Letterhead - R. Lukens reported that in the past, letters from this Committee have been printed on GSMFC letterhead or from the agency of the Chairman, and perhaps it would be more appropriate to have a FIN Committee letterhead. **M. Osborn moved to direct staff to develop a draft letterhead for consideration at the**

**September meeting.** After discussion **M. Osborn amended the motion to have staff develop a letterhead at this time with a footer listing participating agencies. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Prioritize Work Group Tasks - D. Donaldson listed the following four tasks as assigned to the Biological/Environmental Work Group: metadata, QA/QC document, MRF surveys in the Caribbean, and duplicative data collection. Chairman Nicholson asked the Committee for input on the amount of work charged to the Work Group, and the Committee discussed the length of time required to have a productive work group meeting. It was determined that the Biological/Environmental Work Group could adequately address all of the identified issues and will proceed with these tasks during the year.

MRFSS Strategic Plan - M. Osborn reported that in developing a Strategic Plan, the NMFS may call on members of this Committee to participate.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.**

**COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (ComFIN)  
MINUTES  
Tuesday, September 23, 1997  
San Antonio, Texas**

Chairman, Joe Moran, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

**Members**

Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Trish Murphey, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

**Others**

Laura Bishop, NMFS, Galveston, TX  
Mary Anne Camp, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Steven Koplín, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD

**Staff**

Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved with the addition of "Discussion of Development of Recommendations Document" under agenda item 11.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on March 4, 1997 in Washington, DC were approved as written.

**Review of List of Personnel with Access to Confidential Data**

M. Camp distributed a list of personnel with access to confidential data and requested that members make corrections, deletions, and additions. Personnel added to the list must sign a statement of non-disclosure and return to M. Camp. User identification numbers must be requested of M. Camp. D. Donaldson noted that Dave Van Voorhees of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has e-mailed the non-disclosure form to charter boat samplers.

**Update on the GSMFC Ageing Guidelines Document**

R. Lukens reported that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) Stock Assessment Team (SAT) met recently to discuss the development of a handbook which will establish standard protocol for collecting, preparing, processing, and reading otoliths for ageing. This document will be species specific. The first draft of this document should be completed by the end of this year or early next year. A training workshop for Gulf of Mexico

species should be held in the latter part of 1998. Discussion followed concerning the use of other methods in determining age. R. Lukens will relay to the SAT this committee's discussion of the importance of using other ageing techniques in addition to otoliths.

#### **Discussion of Periodic Meetings of Port Samplers**

D. Donaldson reported to the committee on the subject of meetings of the states and federal port samplers. Due to the large number of samplers in the southeast region, J. Shepard suggested having three meeting groups comprised of: (1) North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia; (2) Florida; (3) Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. D. Matos suggested that agents from Puerto Rico meet in Puerto Rico and help facilitate the meeting, with L. Bishop giving the workshop. The committee will determine which subjects would be the most beneficial for these meetings. Data elements, regulations, priorities, sampling allocations, and protocols for collecting samples were suggested as topics, as well as time for state and federal samplers to meet and share information. Staff will compile a draft agenda and send to committee members for changes, deletions, additions, comments, etc. Committee members will discuss this tentative agenda with their port agents and relay suggestions, comments, etc. to staff. Committee members agreed that a two day meeting in December or January would be the best time frame. D. Donaldson stated that it appears that there are funds in the budget to conduct these meetings. Staff will further explore the issue.

#### **Discussion and Planning of a Training Session for Connecting to the SEFHost Computer**

D. Donaldson stated that at the last meeting, there was discussion concerning logging on and accessing data from the SEFHost. Apparently, there has been some difficulty in getting onto the computer. M. Camp stated that anyone with a user identification to the system, should have received a manual giving instructions on using the system. This manual is currently being updated and should be on the World Wide Web NMFS homepage within approximately six months. There was discussion concerning different possibilities for training on the SEFHost, with the possibility of having a training session at the NMFS Miami Lab. It was suggested that each participant attempt to get on the SEFHost, using the current resources. The contact person for assistance on connecting to the SEFHost is Ken Zinniger - (305) 361-4251. For assistance in communications, call Charles Lavarini - (305) 361-4461. Committee members were encouraged to attempt using the system with telephone assistance. If a training session becomes necessary, one will be arranged in the future.

M. Camp stated that there are problems with the TIP data entry system in Windows 95. The TIP system is now in a test mode, and when the problem is corrected the new version will be sent out, probably sometime in October.

#### **Development of a Data Collection Document of Commercial Fisheries in the Southeast**

D. Donaldson reported on the Data Collection Planning Process Document. Staff developed a list of finfish and invertebrates species for the Gulf, South Atlantic, and Caribbean regions. The committee reviewed the list of species under assessment. J. Shepard suggested communicating with the NMFS Southeast regional office naming the identified species and asking for specific details on the number of otoliths, length frequencies, etc. Additions and deletions were made to the list of species and those corrections represent the administrative record for this portion of this meeting. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the best method to use in selecting species for inclusion in the plan. The following species, although not inclusive, were selected in the Gulf: gulf flounder, spotted seatrout, striped mullet, black drum, striped bass, and southern flounder. R. Lukens suggested that staff contact the GSMFC Stock Assessment Team members to discuss the species identified by this committee and ask for recommendations. L. Kline will contact the ACCSP stock assessment group. Staff will compile a draft plan which will be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **Data Collection Work Group Report**

**Bycatch Module** - L. Kline reported to the committee on Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Bycatch workshop. Approximately fifty persons attended the workshop and the main focus was on commercial and for-hire fisheries. An at sea observer program will collect the information for commercial fisheries, and a trip ticket system will be used. A draft report of this workshop should be available by the end of September, and D. Donaldson will provide this to the work group. D. Donaldson stated that when this report becomes available, a work group meeting or conference call will be held to address these findings. The work group will present this information to the committee at the spring 1998 meeting.

Market Module - D. Donaldson reported that the Social/Economic Work Group reviewed the Market Module which was developed by the Data Collection Work Group. The Social/Economic Work Group recommended several changes to this module. Donaldson reviewed these suggestions with the committee and after discussion, the committee agreed that staff will make changes to the Market Module.

Comparison of Louisiana Proposed Trip Ticket and NMFS Gulf Shrimp Program - J. Shepard reported that Louisiana, in implementing a trip ticket program, has incorporated data elements which should solve some of the problems of data collection. If the Louisiana trip ticket system can collect comparable data, this information can be used in place of data collected by the Gulf Shrimp program. There is a pilot study planned to begin July 1, 1998 with 10 to 20 dealers being selected to participate. The target date for full implementation is January 1, 1999. This system will be dealer based with license sales dedicated to the trip ticket program. D. Donaldson noted that the data elements for the Louisiana Trip Ticket system are compatible with the data elements developed by the ComFIN committee for its' generic trip ticket system.

### **Future Needs Work Group Report**

D. Donaldson reported on the Future Needs work group, which met to develop a generic trip ticket system. The Data Collection work group, as well as the Gulf Geographic Subcommittee, had previously developed data elements and these were refined and modified. The work group has defined "trip" as the time a vessel left the dock to the point the product is transferred.

The work group also discussed the Vessel Registration System (VRS) and a commercial fisherman identification system and requested that the ComFIN committee discuss this concept. A unique identifier would be assigned to all commercial fishermen and this number would be retained regardless of location. After some discussion, **R. Lukens moved to table this subject indefinitely. The motion was seconded and passed with S. Lazauski opposed.**

D. Donaldson reported on the development of the Data Elements Matrix for the generic trip ticket system. The issue of fishermen providing information to dealers was discussed at length, as well as the question of whether to collect effort data on the trip ticket or via a survey. The ACCSP has a trip ticket program where information to obtain effort will be collected for every trip, while the ComFIN will use a system where effort information may be obtained via a survey. Since the ComFIN, RecFIN, and ACCSP are designed to be compatible, the issues of compatibility and comparability are significant. In comparing these two programs (ComFIN and ACCSP), it is essential that the perception of compatibility be noted. The committee compared the data elements for the generic trip ticket with the ACCSP trip ticket program data elements. **R. Lukens moved to provide the two tables of data elements (ComFIN generic trip ticket and ACCSP trip ticket) to the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee. The subcommittee will examine the differences and discuss potential solutions. The motion was seconded and passed with J. Shepard opposed.**

### **Operations Plan**

Status of 1997 Activities - D. Donaldson reviewed with committee members the tasks from the 1997 Operations Plan and their status. All tasks either have been, or will be addressed before the end of 1997.

Development of 1998 Operations Plan - The committee reviewed the 1998 Operations Plan. Additions and corrections were made to the Plan and represents the administrative record of this portion of the meeting. D. Donaldson will mail a ballot or members can e-mail their vote approving the Operations Plan. The U.S. Virgin Islands will be asked to name a representative to the Future Needs Work Group.

Development of Recommendations Document - D. Donaldson reported to the committee that a facilitated session was held to identify issues that need to be addressed concerning recreational fisheries data. A recommendations document has been developed for the RecFIN(SE) as a result of the facilitated session and Donaldson suggested that it would be useful to have a similar document developed for the ComFIN. This document could be developed from the information compiled during the brainstorming session. The recommendations document will be presented to the committee at the fall 1998 meeting. D. Donaldson suggested identifying an *ad hoc* Recommendations Work Group, with the following members: R. Lukens, W. Laney, D. Lupton, and J. Poffenberger.

**Election of Vice-Chairman**

D. Matos was nominated as Vice-Chairman of the committee and was elected unanimously.

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.**

**FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK  
MINUTES  
Wednesday, September 24, 1997  
San Antonio, Texas**

Chairman Joe Moran called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The following members, staff and others were present:

**Members**

Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Graciela Garcia-Moliner, CFMC, San Juan, PR  
Lee Green, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Trish Murphey, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC  
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

**Others**

Laura Bishop, NMFS, Galveston, TX  
Maryanne Camp, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Steven Koplín, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD

**Staff**

Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, Ms

**Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda, with minor changes, was approved.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network meeting held on March 5, 1997 in Washington, DC were approved as written.

**Discussion of the Fishery Information System**

J. Poffenberger reported that two of the main responsibilities of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under section 401 of the Sustainable Fisheries Act are the Vessel Registration System (VRS), and a Fishery Information Management System (FIS). The NMFS is required to recommend a plan to Congress. Poffenberger stated that in the case of the FIS, the following need to be included: the types of data to be collected, the level of detail, how information should be related, method and level of verification, and level of standardization. The model being considered by NMFS

is a regional approach, with the Atlantic coast, the Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean, the Pacific coast and Alaska comprising the four regions. Data collection and standard procedures would be regional, but information would be available at a centralized location. Detailed information would be maintained on a regional basis, with summary data from all regions available at a central site. There are several options for providing data to the system; some possibilities are, the partners/states, commissions, and private contractors. Poffenberger stated that the target date for a draft document for Congress is October 13 and asked for input from Committee members. There will be a 60 day comment period after notice in the Federal Register. S. Koplin noted that NMFS has requested a six month extension.

The Committee discussed the FIS in detail, including funding, data collection, consolidation of data, location of centralized data base, staffing, regions, etc. J. Poffenberger noted the need for compatibility of data from all regions and requested committee members input on any and all phases of FIS. R. Lukens noted that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) would have a formal response to the FIS proposal. R. Lukens suggested that staff write a letter endorsing the concept and details of the FIS proposal, using the RecFIN and ACCSP as models. This draft letter would then be sent to Committee members for comment and vote.

### **Discussion of Vessel Registration System**

Overview - S. Koplin of NMFS reported to the Committee on the Vessel Registration System (VRS). The NMFS has sent to its stakeholders five proposals on the VRS. 1. The NMFS would be responsible for registering all boats. 2. The states, in participation with NMFS, would register boats. 3. NMFS would have a third party register boats. 4. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) would document all commercial fishing craft, regardless of size. 5. Adopt the Vessel Identification System (VIS) which would involve the USCG and the states. The VIS, at this time, appears to be the most efficient program. The NMFS will suggest that a hull identification number be required on all commercial fishing vessels. This number will remain on the vessel permanently and can be provided by the USCG or the states. At this time the USCG vessel documentation system is being rebuilt into a system which will be easier to utilize. Since there is a comment period, M. Osborn noted that this is an opportunity to inform Congress of the cost associated with the FIS and VRS. R. Lukens stated that comments concerning the VRS and VIS would be added to the letter regarding the FIS.

### **Status of Memorandum of Understanding for RecFIN/ComFIN**

D. Donaldson reported that Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed by all members. Donaldson will send a copy of the signed MOU to all participants.

### **Discussion of Information Dissemination of Program Material**

Internet Capabilities of Participants - D. Donaldson noted that one of the tasks in the Operations Plan was to develop Internet capabilities for participants. Committee members were given a list of members e-mail addresses and were asked to make corrections. Donaldson also explained how to access the GSMFC site, and also noted that meeting notices are being posted on the web page.

### **Discussion of FIN Administrative Issues**

Administrative Subcommittee Report - R. Lukens reported to the Committee on the Administrative Subcommittee, noting that the Recreational Fishing License issues would be dealt with at the RecFIN meeting. The Subcommittee discussed the subjects of education and outreach, and advisory committee structure. Since the ACCSP has established both programs, L. Kline addressed the Committee on these subjects. The ACCSP Coordinating Council has adopted the policy of recognizing the importance of fishermen and industry input into ACCSP programs. The ACCSP Outreach Strategy Outline was reviewed noting the importance of stakeholder input, the methods used to gather input, and dissemination of information. The Advisory Committee is comprised of commercial fishermen, dealer/processors, recreational fishermen and charter/head boat operators. A process is in place for gathering public input and dissemination of information, and press releases are also utilized. R. Lukens noted that the GSMFC is now naming a Commercial/Recreational Advisory Panel (AP) and perhaps this Committee would be able to utilize this AP. **M. Osborn moved that the FIN use the GSMFC Commercial/Recreational Advisory Panel as a forum to provide input on this Committee's planning efforts, to include Caribbean issues, and to assure the South Atlantic is kept informed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** **R. Lukens moved to modify the ACCSP outreach program and provide it to the Committee for review and**

**consideration. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Letterhead - With the addition of the following statement, the letterhead was approved by the Committee: A state/federal cooperative program providing sound scientific information on catch, effort, and participation for the prudent conservation and management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries resources in the Southeast Region

Logo - The logo, using a triangle design with darker watermark of a fish in center, was approved by the Committee

Brochure - The brochure, with the addition of bullets indicating states/partners, was approved by the Committee.

#### **Discussion of Development of Technical Source Document for ComFIN/RecFIN**

D. Donaldson reported that the ACCSP has a series of Technical Source Documents. It has been suggested that a similar document be developed for the RecFIN/ComFIN programs. R. Lukens stated that most of the information for producing such a document is currently available. The Committee agreed to have staff develop a Technical Source Document for FIN and have it reviewed by the Administrative Subcommittee.

#### **Update and Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)**

L. Kline reported that the Series 3 Technical Source Document (TSD) will be ready shortly, and the ACCSP will ask for comment from RecFIN/ComFIN. Series 4, which deals with the bycatch monitoring program, is currently being prepared. The implementation date has been changed to May 1998. D. Donaldson will forward the TSD to Committee members for comment. L. Kline, D. Donaldson and R. Lukens met and discussed the similarities and differences between RecFIN/ComFIN and ACCSP and determined the programs are moving in the same direction.

#### **Time Schedule and Location for Next Meeting**

If there is to be a joint meeting with the ACCSP, the meeting will be held in the end of January 1998, otherwise the FIN meeting will be held during the week of February 24, 1998. The location of the meeting will be in Florida with Miami, Orlando, and Tampa/St.Petersburg area being the choices.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.**

**SOUTHEAST RECREATIONAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK [RecFIN(SE)] MINUTES**  
**September 24 - 25, 1997**  
**San Antonio, Texas**

Chairman Nick Nicholson called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

**Members**

Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Graciela Garcia-Moliner, CFMC, San Juan, PR  
Lee Green, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Trish Murphey, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC  
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

**Staff**

Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as written.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held March 5 and 6, 1997 in Washington, DC were approved as written.

**Development of Data Collection Document of Recreational Fisheries in the Southeast**

D. Donaldson reviewed the Data Collection Plan and the Data Collection Planning Process for recreational fisheries and stated that the ComFIN Committee is undertaking the same task for commercial fisheries. R. Lukens noted that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) Stock Assessment Team (SAT) has been given specific stock assessment responsibilities and staff will contact them to determine the recreational data that are required. The following species were identified by the ComFIN Committee: spotted seatrout, black drum, menhaden, mullet and southern flounder. Staff will proceed with the development of the Data Collection Plan and report to the committee at the spring 1998 meeting. L. Kline noted that the ACCSP has adopted a similar process to be implemented next year.

**Administrative Subcommittee Report**

Discussion of Licensing Criteria and Justification Paper - R. Lukens reported that the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Administrative Subcommittee held a conference call on September 10, 1997 on the subject of marine recreational fishing license criteria and justification. The subcommittee is trying to establish the criteria necessary for a licensing system to be useful as a sampling frame for recreational fisheries surveys. A list of criteria developed by the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) was compared with the RecFIN initial list of criteria and the two are very similar. R. Lukens submitted the following recommendation from the Administrative Subcommittee

to the RecFIN Committee: the initial list of criteria, the resulting matrix, and the list of criteria developed by the ACCSP be used by the RecFIN Committee to establish final criteria and guidance for licensing systems in order to use them as sampling frames. The RecFIN Committee reviewed both lists of criteria, and the following are minimum criteria for using this licensing system for a sampling frame:

- C All marine recreational fishing activities should be licensed in order to survey range of activities
- C Exempted individuals should be identified
- C Issuance should be on an annual basis, 12 months from date of issue
- C The license system should be fully automated at point of sale, daily updates are preferred, but weekly updates are acceptable
- C Information should include name, address, phone number, and drivers license number if applicable
- C Access should be provided to survey personnel in an electronic format

**T. Murphey moved to adopt the above as minimum licensing criteria. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

The Administrative Subcommittee was provided with a document describing the need for marine recreational fishing licenses. After reviewing this document, the subcommittee recommends that the materials be reviewed by the RecFIN Committee and that a brochure be developed from those materials, tailored to the states that do not have a license. D. Donaldson reviewed a brochure published by the ACCSP entitled, State Licensing of Saltwater Anglers: Issues and Answers. At the present time all Gulf states have marine recreational licenses. Georgia, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) do not have marine recreational licenses. After discussion, the RecFIN Committee directed staff to work with Puerto Rico and the USVI to amend the language in the above mentioned documents to suit the Caribbean area. S. Holiman raised the issue of language pertaining to marine recreational fishing licenses. After discussion, the committee clarified the following: **Licenses are to be renewed on an annual basis since it provides a more current and accurate sampling frame, however we recognize that there are lifetime licenses and temporary licenses that can be accommodate.** R. Lukens moved to adopt this statement. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Biological/Environmental Work Group Report**

#### Discussion Regarding Funding Initiatives to Establish MRF Surveys in the Caribbean -

D. Donaldson reported to the committee on a work group meeting held in July. One purpose of the meeting was to explore the development of a funding initiative to establish MRF surveys in the Caribbean. During the facilitated session held in 1996, one of the issues identified as high priority was the establishment of MRF surveys in the Caribbean. It was determined that Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (PRDNER) and U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife (USVIDFW) were still interested in starting MRF surveys, with PRDNER already in the process of developing a marine recreational fisheries survey. C. Lilystrom explained the proposal to the committee and will provide a copy of this proposal to D. Donaldson. Funding will be provided in part by Wallop-Breaux Sport Fish Restoration. A meeting of the Biological/Environmental Work Group and representatives of PRDNER and USVIDFW will be held in late 1997 or early 1998 to help identify the methodologies that can be used in developing the survey in the Caribbean. The committee agreed that staff will write a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the Caribbean, copying B. Cooke and C. Diaz, stating that the RecFIN Committee in full support of this project and will be directly involved with inkind support.

RecFIN(SE) QA/QC Document - D. Donaldson reported that J. Brust is responsible for the draft of the QA/QC Document. A revised copy of the document was provided to committee members for their review. Members were reminded to try for consistency with the ACCSP. Donaldson explained that if the layout of the document and the amount of detail provided is acceptable to the Committee, the work group can develop additional sections for log books and

other methodologies in the future. Committee members were asked to give any editorial changes to D. Donaldson. **J. O'Hop moved to accept the Quality Assurance/Quality Control Document as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Metadata Criteria and Plans for Development of Metadata Database - D. Donaldson reported that the Biological/Environmental Work Group developed a matrix for the compilation of metadata. There are several major categories of metadata identified by the work group, and these include: environmental events, changes in regulations, changes in survey methods, economic and social factors, and other events. D. Donaldson stated that the RecFIN Committee has compiled some information in an attempt to develop a metadata data base. After lengthy discussion, the committee charged the Biological/Environmental Work Group with the task of determining how to structure a data base, focusing on the category of fishing regulations. R. Lukens noted that the GSMFC currently has an annual publication, the Law Summary, which lists the fishing regulations of the Gulf states. Some issues for the work group to consider are: how the sources should be compiled, a draft prototype on developing a data base structure, who should provide data, how should data be entered into the system (each individual state enter their own, or Commissions enter all), a proposed schedule, etc. The work group will report to the RecFIN Committee at the Fall 1998 meeting.

Recommendations Regarding Duplicative Data Collection Activities in the Southeast - The Biological/Environmental Work Group report, with recommendations on how to address duplicative data collection activities in the Southeast, was reviewed by the Committee. After discussion, the following suggestions and recommendations were made. **Since there is an overlap in the South Carolina Billfish Monitoring Project and Ocean Pelagic Gamefish Survey with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Billfish Tournament/Non-Tournament Sampling, R. Lukens moved that the RecFIN Committee recommend that South Carolina communicate with the NMFS regarding this overlap. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Since the Alabama Inshore Private Boat Survey is a new program, it will be analysed and presented to the committee by S. Lazauski at the February 1998 RecFIN meeting to determine any overlaps. Based on the suggestion of the work group, the committee recommends that the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) and the MRFSS develop a cost/benefit proposal comparing the Mississippi Creel Survey with the MRFSS, then explore the possibility of using the Mississippi data in place of the MRFSS. R. Lukens suggested having staff work with MRFSS and MDMR to structure a proposal to investigate this matter, possibly using outside sources for an evaluation.

#### **Data Review Work Group Report**

D. Donaldson reported that the Data Review Work Group held a conference call in September to develop guidelines for reviewing the MRFSS data. The work group recommended that the data being prepared for wave meetings should also be available to the states for their review, and that the NMFS notify the states and other interested parties when the data has been modified. The committee then reviewed the MRFSS Data Review Process developed by the work group, and made several changes and additions. The amended review process is attached. **R. Lukens moved to accept the MRFSS Data Review Process developed by the Data Review Work Group with changes recommended by the RecFIN Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

After discussion, the committee agreed that M. Osborn will set up automatic e-mail messages for notifying RecFIN and ACCSP members when MRFSS data is available, etc.

#### **Update on Charter Boat Pilot Survey in the Gulf of Mexico**

D. Donaldson reported that the Charter Boat Pilot Survey started September 1, 1997. The survey is comprised of three parts: the current MRFSS, a telephone Captain's survey, and a log panel survey in the northwest part of Florida. A conference call will be held on September 29 to discuss any problems and issues regarding the project. The states are doing the intercept surveys for the Charter Boat mode only, and are making the telephone calls. Texas is not participating in the data collection since the MRFSS is not collected in Texas, however they have been involved in the planning process for the survey. There have been some minor problems, but overall the project is running smoothly. Outreach meetings with the captains and charter boat associations were held throughout the summer. There will be an evaluation period in late August, 1998 to examine the different methodologies and determine which method provides the most accurate effort estimates. The sampling frame will be updated on a wave by wave basis. M. Osborn noted that this is truly a cooperative effort between the states, GSMFC, and NMFS.

### **Operations Plan**

Status of 1997 Activities - Committee members were provided with a list of tasks from the 1997 Operations Plan and their status. D. Donaldson and M. Osborn reviewed the list of activities and their status with committee members and determined that all tasks are being completed at this meeting or will be in the allotted time frame.

Development of 1998 Operations Plan - The plan is being developed from the list of recommendations developed by the committee from the facilitated session in 1995. L. Kline suggested that since some of the tasks in the RecFIN Operations Plan are very similar to the tasks of the ACCSP, it would be beneficial if the work were done jointly by both groups. The committee agreed and Kline will present this to the ACCSP at their winter meeting.

The committee then reviewed the 1998 Operations Plan, making modifications and revisions. **W. Laney moved to accept the 1998 Operations Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** D. Donaldson will make corrections and send the revised version of the 1998 Operations Plan to committee members. The revised 1998 Operations Plan represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

### **Election of Chairman**

J. Shepard was elected Chairman, and C. Lilyestrom was elected Vice-Chairman.

### **Other Business**

Bycatch - L. Kline reported that the ACCSP recently held a Bycatch Workshop dealing with general recreational and for-hire fisheries. A report on the workshop should be complete by the end of this month. Kline will forward this report to D. Donaldson for RecFIN purposes. The RecFIN committee will address the issue of bycatch definition at the Spring 1998 meeting.

Action Items - M. Osborn requested that committee members be sent a list of any action items generated by the Rec/ComFIN meetings beginning with the Spring, 1998 meeting.

Private Access - J. O'Hop noted that the ACCSP Technical Committee asked its members to determine how difficult it would be to list private docks, marinas, etc. L. Kline suggested that the RecFIN Committee could review the ACCSP Technical Source Document (TSD) 3 on the issue of private access. This subject will be considered by the committee at the Spring 1998 meeting.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.**

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Goals and Objectives**

## ComFIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- GOAL 1: To plan, manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial fishery data collection program for the Region.
- Objective 1 To establish and maintain a ComFIN Committee consisting of MOU signatories or their designees to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the program.
  - Objective 2 To develop and periodically review a Framework Plan that outlines policies and protocol of the program
  - Objective 3 To develop annual operation plans, including identification of available resources, that implement the Framework Plan.
  - Objective 4 To distribute program information to the cooperators and interested parties.
  - Objective 5 To conduct a program review at least every five years of operation to evaluate the program's success in meeting needs in the Region.
- GOAL 2: To implement and maintain a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial fishery data collection program for the Region.
- Objective 1 To characterize and periodically review the commercial fisheries and identify the required data priorities for each.
  - Objective 2 To identify and periodically review environmental, biological, social and economic data elements required for each fishery.
  - Objective 3 To identify, determine, and periodically review standards for data collection, including statistical, training and quality assurance.
  - Objective 4 To identify and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting ComFIN requirements.
  - Objective 5 To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet ComFIN requirements.
  - Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection methodologies and technologies.
- GOAL 3: To establish and maintain an integrated, marine commercial fishery data management system for the Region.
- Objective 1 To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the ComFIN data management system.
  - Objective 2 To periodically evaluate the hardware, software and communication capabilities of program partners and make recommendations for support and upgrades.

- Objective 3 To implement, maintain, and periodically review a marine commercial fishery data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs.
- Objective 4 To develop, maintain, and periodically review standard protocols and documentation for data formats, inputs, editing, storage, access, transfer dissemination, and application.
- Objective 5 To identify and prioritize historical databases for integration into the marine commercial fisheries database.
- Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
- Objective 7 To protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

GOAL 4: To support the development and operation of an inter-regional program to collect, manage and disseminate marine commercial fisheries information for use by states, territories, councils, interstate commissions and federal marine fishery management agencies.

- Objective 1 To provide for long-term inter-regional program planning.
- Objective 2 To coordinate ComFIN with other regional and national marine commercial fisheries programs.
- Objective 3 To encourage consistency and comparability among regional and national marine commercial fisheries programs over time.

## **RecFIN(SE) GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- GOAL 1:** To plan, manage, and evaluate a coordinated state-federal MRF data collection program for the Region.
- Objective 1: To maintain a RecFIN(SE) Committee consisting of MOU signatories or their designees to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate the program.
  - Objective 2: To develop and periodically review a Framework Plan that outlines policies and protocols of the program.
  - Objective 3: To develop annual operations plans, including identification of available resources, that implement the Framework Plan.
  - Objective 4: To distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.
  - Objective 5: To conduct a program review at least every five years of operation to evaluate the program's success in meeting needs in the Region.
- GOAL 2:** To implement and maintain a coordinated state-federal MRF data collection program for the Region.
- Objective 1: To periodically review the components of the fishery (modes, areas, etc.) and the required data priorities for each component.
  - Objective 2: To periodically review data elements (environmental, biological, sociological, economic) required for each fishery component.
  - Objective 3: To determine, maintain and periodically review standards for data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.
  - Objective 4: To periodically review and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting the RecFIN(SE) requirements.
  - Objective 5: To coordinate, integrate, and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet the RecFIN(SE) requirements.
  - Objective 6: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.
- GOAL 3:** To establish and maintain an integrated, MRF data management system for the Region.
- Objective 1: To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the RecFIN(SE) data management system.
  - Objective 2: To periodically evaluate the hardware, software, and communication capabilities of program partners and make recommendations for support and upgrades.
  - Objective 3: To implement, maintain, and periodically review an MRF data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).

- Objective 4: To develop, maintain, and periodically review standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.
- Objective 5: To identify and prioritize data bases for integration into the MRF data management system.
- Objective 6: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
- Objective 7: To protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

GOAL 4: To support the development and operation of a national program to collect, manage, and disseminate MRF information for use by states, territories, councils, interstate commissions, and federal marine fishery management agencies.

- Objective 1: To provide for long-term national program planning.
- Objective 2: To coordinate the RecFIN(SE) with other regional and national MRF programs.
- Objective 3: To encourage consistency and comparability among regional and national programs over time.