

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
FISHERIES  
INFORMATION NETWORK IN  
THE SOUTHEAST REGION  
(FIN)

JANUARY 1, 1999 - DECEMBER 31, 1999

JUNE 2000

Number 77

## 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

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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.

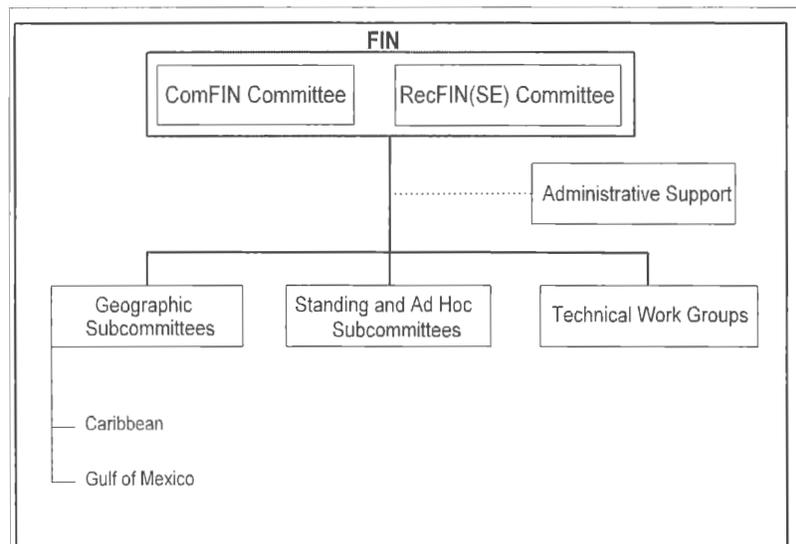
benefit not only commercial and recreational fishermen and the associated fishing industries, but the resources, the states, and the nation.

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.

It should be noted that during the annual fall meeting in 1998, the FIN Committee elected to forward a recommendation to the ACCSP Coordinating Council and the GSMFC that, effective upon agreement, the South Atlantic States should discontinue meeting in conjunction with the FIN. The recommendation was approved with the understanding that the South Atlantic States will continue to be signatory to the FIN MOU. Although there will be no representation of the South Atlantic states on FIN, the South Atlantic will continue to participate at the work group level and there will be continued participation by staff member from both programs to ensure compatibility and comparability.

### **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 1999 were associated with addressing issues and problems regarding data collection and management and developing strategies for dealing with these topics. In addition to committee activities, ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) were involved in various operational activities concerning the collection and management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data. These activities were conducted by the various state and federal agencies involved in FIN. 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 April and September 1999. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 1999 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 1999 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 2000 FIN Operations Plan;
- review of activities and accomplishments of 1999;
- 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 2000;
- preparation and submission of a proposal for financial assistance to support activities of the FIN; and
- continued internal evaluation of the program.

The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committee members are listed in Table 2. The approved 1999 FIN Operations Plan is included in Appendix A and minutes for all meetings are included in Appendix B. The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) goals and objectives are included in Appendix C.

## **Subcommittees and Work Groups**

The 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:

- The RecFIN Biological/Environmental Work Group met in April 1999 to begin discussing, conjunction with the Caribbean, the development of marine recreational

fishery surveys methodologies for the Caribbean; review of compilation of metadata related to changes in fishing regulations; review materials concerning night fishing activities and develop recommendations; and develop sampling methodologies for fishing tournaments.

- The FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group met May 1999 to discuss and develop the mission of the work group. The group determined the direction of the work group and developed a plan for addressing the issues related to both Fisheries Information Network (FIN) and Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP).
- The FIN Social/Economic Work Group met in July 1999 to review the current social and economic activities under FIN and develop a section for the FIN Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) document regarding mail surveys as well as a briefing on the pilot work that the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is undertaking regarding collection of social and economic data.
- The FIN Administrative Subcommittee met (via conference call) in July 1999 to discuss a proposed change in the meeting schedule for FIN as well as select members for an ad hoc work to address sampling methods for head boats.
- ComFIN implementation meetings were held in July 1999 to get all the players involved in commercial data collection activities in the Gulf of Mexico and discuss who is be responsible for the various tasks involved in the collection and management of these data. There were several presentations and after the presentations, the group various issues related to implementation of trip tickets.
- The Data Collection Work Group met in August 1999 to review the differences between the ComFIN and ACCSP trip ticket programs; development of a QA/QC document for commercial data collection; development of standard codes for FIN; further development of the biological sampling program; and discussion about the fishery and discards modules under ComFIN.
- The Implementation Work Group met in August 1999 to discuss the results from the ComFIN implementation meetings that were held early this month. The group reviewed the products developed from the implementation meetings and developed a report from the materials. In addition, the group examined the ACCSP implementation strategy, questionnaire and program decision document and developing similar documents for the FIN.
- The Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee met in August 1999 to initiate the development of the FY2000 cooperative agreement for RecFIN/ComFIN.

- The Caribbean port samplers met in October 1999 to discuss an overview of ComFIN and the Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP), review of sampling methods used by Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands personnel, conducting field operations such as review of sampling techniques, fish identification methods, and other related sampling procedures; and discussion of future meetings.

### **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 1999 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:

- FIN Committee. 1999. *1999 Operations Plan for Fisheries Information Network (FIN)*. No. 65 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 22 pp + appendix.
- FIN Committee. 1999. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 1998 - December 31, 1998*. No. 66 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 16 pp + appendices.
- 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 provides a user-friendly data management system for the MRFSS.

- GSMFC has developed a home page for the world wide web which provides programmatic and operational 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	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	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
<b>Data Collection</b>					
Data components					
Review of components of fisheries					X
Needed data elements					
Develop process for metadata		X	X	X	X
Collection of metadata			X	X	X
Identify social/economic data elements		X			

<b>Data Collection (cont.)</b>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Use existing social/economic panels for RecFIN(SE)			X		
Identify other social scientists to participate in RecFIN(SE)		X			
<b>Data Management</b>					
Standard data collection protocols					
Adoption of QA/QC standards		X			
Review of 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					
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 innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
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					
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>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
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



## TABLE 2.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**1999 Operations Plans**



**1999 Operations Plan for the  
Fisheries Information Network in the  
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 1999 to December 31, 1999

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Fisheries Information Network (FIN) establishes a state-federal cooperative program to collect, manage, and disseminate statistical data and information on the commercial and recreational fisheries of the Southeast Region. There are two separate programs under the FIN: the Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)].

The FIN is a cooperative state-federal marine commercial and recreational fisheries data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future marine commercial and recreational 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 1999. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

**II. MISSION AND GOALS**

The mission of the FIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial and recreational fisheries statistical data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Southeast Region<sup>2</sup> and to support the development and operation of a national program.

The goals of the FIN 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.

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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.

### III. OPERATIONS

#### A. Data Collection and Management

Ongoing marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys will be conducted by various state and federal agencies. The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees will review and evaluate progress towards integration of the surveys into the FIN.

#### B. Committee and Work Group Activities

The tasks below cover all 1999 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denoted a ComFIN activity; a 'R' denoted a RecFIN(SE) activity; and a 'F' denoted a FIN activity.

##### Task 1: Annual Operations Plan, 2000 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2000 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources, that implements the Framework Plan.

Team Members: FIN Committee.

Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 2000.

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

Product: 2000 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by late summer 1999 and addressed by the Committee at the fall 1999 meeting.

##### Task 2: Development of a Program Design Document (Goal 1, Objective 1) (F)

Objective: Develop a program design document for FIN

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: Using the information developed from the Committee and various work groups, the Committee has drafted a plan which will be used by the program partners to implement FIN. The draft document was presented to the Committee in 1998. The Committee will continue working on refining the document as the program develops. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Program design document

Schedule: The Committee will continue working on this issue and will address the progress at the spring 1999 meeting.

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

Objective: Support the establishment of long-term, comprehensive MRF surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Work Group will work in conjunction with the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (PRDNER) and U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife (USVIDFW) to develop marine recreational fishery surveys (MRF) in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. The PRDNER is currently working on project to implement a MRF survey in Puerto Rico. The Work Group will be working with the Department as well as USVIDFW to develop a coordinated survey. The group will first focus on the development of a site register and then direct their attention to the type of method(s) that should be used to collect MRF data in the Caribbean. The group will later address the development of a document to secure funding for the activity.

Resources: Travel, copy and mailing expenses and staff time.

Product: Develop of a MRF survey outline for the Caribbean.

Schedule: The work group met in 1998 and will continue working on this task in 1999.

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

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Team Members: FIN 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 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 FIN.

Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and staff time.

Product: Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning FIN 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: This task will be an ongoing activity.

Task 5: Establishment of Educational Work Group (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Establish an educational work group to develop and design an outreach program for FIN

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The Committee needs to set up an educational work group who will be tasked will developing an outreach program for FIN. The group will be charged with identifying the types of end users and compiling a list of these users for the fisheries data; developing and disseminating program information that provides notification of accomplishments to the public; and developing other pertinent outreach materials.

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

Product: FIN outreach program

Schedule: The Committee will address this issue at the spring 1999 meeting.

Task 6: Development of a Generic Trip Ticket Program (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

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

Team Members: Data Collection 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 continue to design and refine a modular trip ticket program that can be used by agencies interested in implementing a trip ticket program in their jurisdiction. The program outlines the necessary elements for a successful trip ticket program. Accomplished by meeting, telephone, mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

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

Product: Trip ticket program design

Schedule: The Work Group addressed this issue in 1997 and will continue working on it during 1999.

Task 7: Development of the Discards, Releases, and Protected Species Interactions Modules (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Develop the discards, releases, and protected species interactions modules of the ComFIN.

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group

Approach: Using information developed by the ACCSP and other pertinent information, the Work Group will design a data collection module for the compilation of discards and protected species interactions for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program will outline the data elements that need to be collected for compilation of discards and protected

species interactions. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

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

Product: Discard, Releases, and Protected Species Interactions collection program

Schedule: The Work Group addressed this issue in 1998 and will continue working on it during 1999.

Task 8: Development of the Social/Economic Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Develop the social/economic module for the ComFIN.

Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group

Approach: Using information developed by the ACCSP and other pertinent information, the Work Group will design a data collection module for the compilation of social/economic information for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program will outline the data elements required for each fishery component that need to be collected for compilation of social/economic data. The ASMFC Committee on Economic and Social Sciences has addressed the identification of necessary commercial and recreational social and economic data elements. The ASMFC Committee has produced a document which outlines the minimum data elements for the social and economic aspects of fisheries for the harvesting sector. It is recommended that the Social and Economic Work Group work with the ASMFC Committee in the further development of data collection activities for the other aspects of the fisheries. The Committee agree to include members of the Work Group on the ACCSP committee for social and economic issues. This module will be similar to the market module. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

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

Product: Social/Economic data collection module and data collection surveys for collection of the data.

Schedule: The Work Group begin addressing this issue during 1998 and will continue working on it during 1999.

Task 9: Development of Data Collection Procedures Document (Goal 2, Obj 2) (C)

Objective: Develop a document which outlines the procedures for the collection of data under the ComFIN.

Team Members: Data Collection Procedures Work Group

Approach: The work group developed a draft document which describes the various techniques and methods for collection of marine commercial data. The group utilized existing procedures for the Trip Interview Program and other related information. The group, in conjunction with the Committee, will continue to develop this document and the program evolves.

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

Product: Procedures document

Schedule: The work group met in 1998 to address this issue and will continue working on it during 1999.

Task 10: Biological/Environmental Data Elements (Goal 2, Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Compile metadata for inclusion into a metadata database for the Southeast Region.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group has worked on this issue in the past and has developed a criteria for creating a metadata database. The Committee discussed the issue of metadata and decided that the Work Group should continue looking at compilation of fishing regulations in 1999. The work Group will meet in 1999 and continue working on this issue. Subsequent categories to be collected will be determined by the Committee.

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

Product: Development of metadata database

Schedule: The initial compilation of data will begin in 1998 and this will be an ongoing activity.

Task 11: Commercial Quality Assurance and Quality Control (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

Objective: Identify and determine standards for commercial catch/effort data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group.

Approach: Determine standards for collection and management of commercial catch/effort 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 FIN. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

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

Product: FIN Quality assurance and quality control document.

Schedule: The commercial aspects of the document will be addressed in 1999. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 12: Development of Quality Assurance and Quality Control Methods (Goal 2, Obj 3) (F)

Objective: Identify and determine standards for commercial and recreational 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 commercial and recreational social and economic data. The Committee decided that a mail survey section will be developed for the document. Also, the Work Group will review and expand the quality assurance and quality control document developed by the Biological/Environmental Work Group and added the necessary information, where appropriate. This expanded document will encompass all quality assurance and quality control standards for the FIN. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

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

Product: FIN Quality assurance and quality control document.

Schedule: The Work Group reviewed the current document in 1998 and the work group will meet in 1999 to develop this section of the document. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 13: Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data (Goal 2, Objective 3) (R)

Objective: Implement an annual review process including guidelines for reviewing the data, through the RecFIN(SE), to evaluate MRFSS data.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee/MRFSS staff

Approach: The Committee approved a process for reviewing the MRFSS preliminary data which was presented in 1998. It was decided that MRFSS staff will set up automated e-mail messaging for notifying program participants regarding changes to the preliminary data as well as when the data becomes final.

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

Product: Process for MRFSS data finalization.

Schedule: The data evaluation will be an ongoing task. The automated processes are being implemented.

Task 14: Port Samplers Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

Objective: Convene a workshop of state and federal port samplers to discuss commercial data collection activities

Team Members: State and federal commercial port samplers and staff.  
 Approach: In an effort to provide a forum for discussing various issues concerning commercial data collection activities, the ComFIN Committee decided to convene a workshop of state and federal port agents. A similar meeting was conducted in 1998 and the group wished to continue holding these meetings. The workshop will be attended by the state and federal port agents from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, the ComFIN chairman, appropriate NMFS staff and other interested personnel. Some of the suggested topics for next meeting includes Crevalle jack identification workshop, overview of ComFIN program, trip ticket information, regulations, ways to build better rapport with dealers, sampling and sub-sampling techniques.  
 Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.  
 Product: Provide a forum for field personnel to discuss problems and issues related to commercial data collection activities. List of recommendations regarding commercial data collection activities.  
 Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for mid-1999.

Task 15: Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current and future programs for meeting FIN standards.  
 Team Members: FIN Committee.  
 Approach: Periodically evaluate surveys based on their adequacy for meeting FIN standards and make appropriate recommendations.  
 Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
 Product: Report containing recommendations for commercial and recreational surveys as well as an evaluation and report on recommendations.  
 Schedule: In 1999, the Alabama representative will provide a presentation to the Committee concerning the their inshore creel survey. This presentation will be conducted at the spring 1999 meeting. Continue reviewing commercial and recreational surveys. This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 16: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Identify and combine duplicative data collection and management efforts.  
 Team Members: FIN Committee  
 Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group has identified redundancies in MRF data collection and management in the Southeast Region and provided recommendations to the RecFIN(SE) Committee concerning these activities. One of the areas identified included a comparison of cost between the Mississippi Creel Survey and the MRFSS. From this information, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts in the Southeast Region.  
 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. The cost benefit analysis between the Mississippi Creel Survey and the MRFSS may be addressed in 1999, depending on availability of personnel and funds.

Task 17: Determination of Catch and Effort for Non-Rod-and-Reel Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine catch and effort of shellfish and finfish harvested using non-rod-and-reel methods.  
 Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee  
 Approach: The list of non-rod-and-reel recreational fisheries and related sampling programs in the Southeast Region was developed by the Committee. The Committee modified the list to

provide more detailed information and from this, the Committee will develop/modify sampling programs to collect this information. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Recommendations regarding non-hook-and-line recreational fisheries  
Schedule: Staff will distribute a letter asking program participants to assess the magnitude of non-rod-and-reel fisheries in their states. This task will be addressed at the 1999 spring meeting.

Task 18: Determination of Catch and Effort from Private Access Sites (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine catch rates and species composition from private access groups.  
Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group  
Approach: The Work Group has developed criteria for defining private access sites, compile of list of potential sources of information, and began developing a process for compiling information regarding private access sites. This year, the Work Group/Committee will continue developing a methodology for compiling this information. Once this information is collected, the Committee will develop a method for determining catch rates and species composition from private access groups. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: List of private access points for recreational fisheries  
Schedule: This task was addressed in 1998 and Work Group will meet in 1999 and continue addressing this issue. A report will be presented at the 1999 spring meeting.

Task 19: Determination of Catch Rates and Species Composition from Night Fishing (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine catch rates and species composition from night fishing.  
Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group  
Approach: The Work Group met in 1998 and presented the results to the Committee. The Committee asked that more information be examined by the Work Group to determine the distribution and magnitude of night fishing by state. Once this is complete, the Committee will develop a methodology for determining catch rates and species composition for night fishing. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Methodology of collecting data during night fishing activities  
Schedule: This task will be addressed at the 1999 spring meeting.

Task 20: Collection of Tournaments Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Collect appropriate information from fishing tournaments, and integrate with other MRF data.  
Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group  
Approach: A list that identifies all ongoing tournaments in the Southeast Region has been compiled and reviewed by the Committee. The next step is the Work Group will identify and recommend data requirements and consistent methodologies for tournament sampling. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Recommendations regarding sampling methods for tournaments  
Schedule: The Committee addressed this issue in 1998 and the Work Group will meet in 1999 to continue examining this issue. This task will be addressed at the 1999 spring meeting.

Task 21: Implementation of Methods to Monitor the For-Hire Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Identify evaluate, and test methodologies to survey charter and head boat fisheries.  
 Team Members: Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee  
 Approach: The purpose of this task is to make comparisons between various methods for estimating charter boat effort, catch per trip, and total catch. The three methods that will be compared 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 charter boat fishery. The evaluation of the data from these methods will be conducted based on various criteria. The pilot phase of the project has been extended until December 1998. In addition, the ACCSP is planning a similar study in South Carolina to compare the MRFSS, captain phone, and mandatory logbook methodologies.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
 Product: Participation in the Charter boat Pilot Survey to determine the best methodology for surveying charter boats.  
 Schedule: This is multi-year task. The testing of the methodologies began in September 1997 and will be completed in December 1998. The evaluation of the methods will be begin in early 1999.

Task 22: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Encourage coordination, integration, and augmentation, as appropriate, of data collection efforts to meet the FIN requirements.  
 Team Members: FIN Committee.  
 Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding marine commercial and recreational fisheries 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 23: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Develop a plan which outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming year as well as tracking of the collection for these data.  
 Team Members: FIN Committee  
 Approach: The Committee has developed a data collection planning process which identifies the priority species (and associated data needed to be collected) for the state, interstate and federal entities. The plan will provide guidance to the states, NMFS, and FWS for the development of funding mechanisms that are implemented to provide funding support for collecting the data. During the fall meeting, the Committee will conduct an evaluation of the adherence to prior year's plan and final review of prior year's data. A RFP was been developed to begin compiling information for stock assessment. In addition, the Committee will utilize a data tracking process to determine whether the identified data has been collected. Accomplished by telephone and mail.  
 Resources: Mail cost, telephone costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
 Product: Data collection plan  
 Schedule: The RFP is currently being developed and will be discussed by the Committee at the spring 1999 meeting.

Task 24: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.  
 Team Members: FIN Committee.  
 Approach: The FIN program partners will report to the Committee any new technologies which will aid in the collection of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data. Also, have

Resources: appropriate personnel report to the Committee concerning such advancements.  
Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Progress reports concerning pen-based and other data collection technologies.  
Schedule: At the spring 1999 meeting, the Texas representative will provide a presentation regarding the electronic data loggers currently being used for the data collection in their creel survey. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 25: Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: To design, implement, and maintain an marine commercial and recreational fisheries data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).  
Team Members: FIN and ACCSP program partners.  
Approach: The ACCSP is currently developing a data management system for the Atlantic coast. Since the FIN and ACCSP have been designed to be compatible and comparable, the FIN will utilize the data management system being developed for the ACCSP. FIN personnel will be involved in meetings of the ACCSP Computer Technical Committee to ensure that FIN has input into the design of the system.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: FIN data management system  
Schedule: The ACCSP system is being prototyped in Florida and the Northeast in 1998. The FIN will begin addressing this issue at the spring 1999 meeting.

Task 26: Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Develop standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.  
Team Members: FIN/ACCSP program partners  
Approach: The ACCSP is currently developing a data management system for the Atlantic coast. As part of the development, standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application are being developed. Through the involvement with the ACCSP Computer Technical Committee, the FIN will provide input into the development of this information. In addition, the FIN Committee has tasked an ad hoc work group to begin looking at standard codes for species, gear, etc. This work group will work closely with the ACCSP to ensure compatibility among programs.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Standard protocols and documentation for the FIN data management system.  
Schedule: The ACCSP system is being developed and the FIN will begin addressing this issue at the spring 1999 meeting.

Task 27: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.  
Team Members: FIN Committee  
Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies which will aid in the management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries 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 28: Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1) (F)

Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.  
Team Members: FIN Committee.  
Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will attend Pacific RecFIN, PacFIN, ACCSP Operations Committee, 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: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 29: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative Marine Commercial and Recreational Fisheries Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Coordinate FIN with other regional cooperative marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs and encourage consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.  
Team Members: FIN Committee/ FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group  
Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Pacific RecFIN, and PacFIN on the West Coast. The MRFSS staff is revising data files and will get input from the RecFIN(SE) Committee. The FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group was created to examine the differences/similarities between the FIN and ACCSP. It was decided that this group would meet on an annual basis to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs. Distribute appropriate program results and recommendations to other cooperative fisheries programs. The topic of a joint meeting among FIN, ACCSP and Pacific has been discussed and staff will examine the possibility of conducting these types of meetings. 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 fisheries programs and compilation of a record of information exchange.  
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity. The Work Group will meet in mid-1999.

**C. Administrative Activities**

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

- Work closely with the ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation;
- Implement plans and program directives approved by the ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees;
- Provide coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees, subcommittees, and work groups;
- Develop and/or administer cooperative agreements, grants, and contracts;
- Serve as liaison between the ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees, other program participants, and other interested organizations;
- Assist the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees in preparation or review of annual spending plans;

- Prepare annual operations plans under the direction of the FIN Committee;
- Prepare and/or supervise and coordinate preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings;
- Distribute approved ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures as set forth by the ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees;
- Assist in the identification of regional and geographic needs that can be satisfied through ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) activities;
- Seek funding for ComFIN, FIN and RecFIN(SE) activities as the need develops; and
- Conduct or participate in other activities as identified.

## D. Time Table

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
<b>Planning, Management, and Evaluation</b>					
FIN Committee					
Maintenance of FIN Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Establish senior-level policy board			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
Review of legislation					X
Develop funding mechanism for short-term projects					X
Information dissemination					
Establish educational work group				X	
Establish commercial and recreational user advisory panel		X			
Process for notification of program accomplishments				X	
Develop outreach materials and list of users				X	
Use Internet communications	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					
Conduct program review					X
<b>Data Collection</b>					
Data components					
Review of components of fisheries					X
Needed data elements					
Develop process for metadata		X	X	X	X
Collection of metadata			X	X	X
Develop social/economic data module		X	X	X	X
Develop catch/effort modules		X	X	X	X
Identify recreational 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					
Develop data collection procedures manual			X	X	
Develop standard codes for species, gear, etc.				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 commercial QA/QC standards				X	X
Develop recreational QA/QC standards		X	X	X	X
Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards					X
Recommendations regarding duplicative collection and management		X			
Evaluate compatibility of Texas Survey data			X		
Coordination of data collection					
Development of data collection plan		X	X	X	X
Develop list of stock assessment methods					X
Identify uses of fishery independent data					X
Assess duplication of effort between fishery-dependent and -independent activities					X
Evaluate current fishery independent data activities					X
Make recommendations to appropriate fishery independent programs					X
Compile marine recreational licensing report		X			

<b>Data Collection (continued)</b>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Develop recreational license sampling frame criteria		X			
Establish/modify recreational licenses to meet criteria			X	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 recreational data for private access points			X	X	
Determine methods for collecting recreational catch data for night fishing			X	X	
Develop process for collecting needed commercial and recreational data on priority species			X	X	
Develop method for collecting recreational data on fishing tournaments			X	X	
Develop methods for collecting recreational data on non hook-&-line fisheries			X	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
<b>Innovative collection technology</b>					
Evaluate innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Management</b>					
<b>Data management system</b>					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
<b>Hardware/software capabilities</b>					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form		X	X	X	X
<b>Data maintenance</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Standard data management protocols</b>					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			
<b>Integration of data bases</b>					
Identify recreational databases for integration in DMS	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Innovative data management technology</b>					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data confidentiality</b>					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Development of National Program</b>					
<b>Long-term planning</b>					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Coordination with other programs</b>					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Consistency and comparability</b>					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Minutes**



**SOUTHEAST RECREATIONAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK [RecFIN(SE)] MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, April 6, 1999**  
**La Parguera, Puerto Rico**

Craig Lilyestrom called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. The following members, staff, and others were present:

**Members**

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Jeff Brust, (proxy for L. Kline) ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Page Campbell, (proxy for L. Green), TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Kerwin Cuevas, (proxy for T. Van Devender), MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Graciela Garcia-Moliner, CFMC, San Juan, PR  
Michelle Kasprzak, (proxy for J. Shepard), LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL  
Toby Tobias, USVI/DFW, St. Croix, USVI  
Carter Watterson, (proxy for D. Mumford), NCDMF, Morehead City, NC

**Others**

Mark Alexander, CDEP, Old Lyme, CT  
Jill Kelly, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Ivan Mateo, USVI/DFW, St. Croix, USVI  
Corky Perret, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Ana Roman, USFWS, Boqueron, PR

**Staff**

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

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted as presented.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)] meeting held on November 11, 1998 in Tampa, Florida were approved as amended.

**Presentation of Information Regarding Non-Rod-and-Reel Fisheries**

D. Donaldson distributed copies of non-rod-and-reel forms which had been sent out to Committee members for completion. This form lists the type of gear, magnitude, data collection activities if any, and license requirements for each state. There was discussion by the Committee on this issue which resulted in several suggestions. S. Atran noted that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has published a list of allowable gear for each species that is under management. C. Perret suggested that either PRELIMINARY or DRAFT be printed on this document since it is not complete and is of a sensitive nature. M. Osborn noted that the data in the Marine Recreational Fisheries

Statistics Survey (MRFSS) includes alternate gears in the creel intercept and this information may be helpful. K. Anson questioned whether the magnitudes could be defined by ranking the top 5 or 10 fisheries which need attention.

After lengthy discussion the Committee agreed on several actions. D. Donaldson will again send the non-rod-and-reel forms to Committee members for completion, which may include any additional information which would be helpful in assessing the magnitude of the fisheries. Members will also be asked to rank the top 5 fisheries in terms of magnitude. P. Campbell will check on documents outlining special studies for gigging in Texas. There will be further discussion on non-rod-and-reel fisheries at the Fall meeting. At that time the Committee will decide if a work group should be tasked with further investigation.

#### **Discussion of Quota Monitoring Policy Statement**

D. Donaldson reviewed the discussion on quota monitoring from the previous RecFIN(SE) meeting. At that time a motion was passed to have this Committee coordinate with the ACCSP to develop a position statement regarding the use of quota monitoring and closures in recreational fisheries. Donaldson contacted J. Moran of the ACCSP to determine their position on recreational quota monitoring and found that the ACCSP will address this subject later in the year. Donaldson stated that in order to insure compatibility and comparability with the ACCSP, he will be involved in the ACCSP discussions later this year.

W. Laney questioned whether quota monitoring results in increased management efficiency, both in resource conservation as well as expenditures. J. O'Hop stated that quota monitoring can work in limited areas, however for a very large fishery it may be inefficient. O'Hop agreed with Laney and felt that some information on risk be included in any recommendation on quota monitoring. M. Osborn noted that the ACCSP has also been dealing with quota monitoring and they feel that this is not the optimum way to manage a fishery from the viewpoint of the fisherman and charter boat industry. W. Laney noted that there is only one fishery where recreational quota monitoring has been successful, the striped bass fishery on the Roanoke River in North Carolina. It takes place in the spring, has a low quota, and is in a confined geographic area. Laney also noted that imposing a trip limit is another alternative.

M. Osborn noted that the MRFSS is not appropriate for quota monitoring, however quota monitoring is being used with tagging systems, call-in systems, IVR, etc. Since it appears that quota monitoring is inevitable, it may be time to begin investigating the costs and benefits of various systems. Osborn suggested referring this issue to the Biological/Environmental Work Group and arrange presentations to the Committee on the North Carolina survey, the large pelagic survey, and the striped bass survey. D. Donaldson noted that there are ongoing discussions concerning potential activities for funding with one suggestion being to look into the development of quota monitoring systems. Since the ACCSP is also working on quota monitoring, Donaldson suggested that a joint meeting may be beneficial. Committee members agreed that these two avenues be pursued.

#### **Discussion of the Compilation of Private Access Site Information**

D. Donaldson stated that at the last meeting, there was a recommendation to develop a definition for private access sites and to select several areas in the southeast to begin compiling information. This recommendation was made prior to the suggestion that the South Atlantic states no longer actively participate in FIN, therefore, Donaldson suggested selecting sites in the Caribbean and the Gulf.

M. Osborn suggested revisiting priorities that were developed from the recommendations document since currently there are several different issues being investigated. She noted that charter boats have been addressed, and perhaps this would be a good time to choose another high priority area for study. After Committee discussion, it was agreed that the Biological/Environmental Work Group will meet before the Fall meeting and re-examine the recommendations made as a result of the facilitated session. The work group will then make recommendations to this Committee concerning which areas should next be addressed. Prior to the Work Group meeting, M. Osborn and D. Donaldson will discuss the costs of the areas under consideration.

#### **Work Group Reports**

Biological/Environmental Work Group - D. Donaldson reported on the Biological/ Environmental Work Group meeting which was held on April 5, 1999.

Marine Recreational Fisheries Surveys in the Caribbean - C. Lilystrom reported to the Work Group that the proposal submitted by Puerto Rico to the USFWS has been funded with Wallop-Breaux funds. There was discussion

on how to utilize point access intercept surveys to collect catch information, while aerial surveys are being considered to collect effort information. M. Osborn has offered to assist Puerto Rico in several areas which include:

- estimating costs for conducting the MRFSS in Puerto Rico,
- provide the codes and species lists,
- provide the data entry program,
- provide statistical estimations and survey design assistance,
- provide site selection program,
- provide information on scanning technology for data entry,
- send a NMFS statistician to San Juan for consultation with the Puerto Rico staff

D. Donaldson will provide Lilyestrom with a site register database structure. C. Lilyestrom reported that for the first year Puerto Rico will address tournaments, charter boats, and private boats, and noted that the last time this was done was in 1989.

T. Tobias explained the recreational data assessment program in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI), and M. Osborn offered to send a statistician to assist. Tobias reported that in the USVI, recreational fishing information was collected from 1982 to 1994. A pilot study was initiated to start a roving creel survey. Information on recreational fishing tournaments has been collected for 25 years. Logbooks are distributed to participating recreational fishermen for the logbook survey. The USVI has initiated a socio-economic survey and a telephone survey.

Metadata - D. Donaldson reported that at the last meeting a recommendation was made to ask the ASMFC Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) to consider compiling a document similar to the GSMFC Law Summary. The ASMFC LEC was concerned because of the potential for error in such a document, and because laws in some states change quickly. Therefore they decided not to produce and distribute a law summary.

Donaldson noted that one of the issues being considered for funding is the development of a data management prototype for Louisiana which contains a metadata component.

Night Fishing Activities - D. Donaldson reported that information was supplied to the Work Group on the magnitude of night fishing, night vs day, public vs private, and species caught and targeted. The site register form for MRFSS has recently been modified to include questions on night fishing. That information is being compiled and should be available for analysis by the end of this year. Donaldson noted that since it was decided earlier in the meeting to task the Biological/Environmental Work Group with prioritizing the major topics under consideration at this time, analysis of the night fishing data may not be undertaken pending a decision by the Committee.

Fishing Tournaments - D. Donaldson reported that a list of fishing tournaments in the Southeast was compiled with information on species targeted, location, and contact person. In the case of the NMFS billfish tournament program, there was not much familiarity with the RecFIN(SE) program, therefore the Work Group recommended that a NMFS member of this Committee contact NMFS billfish personnel with information on RecFIN(SE). R. Lukens noted that T. Lowery of NMFS Pascagoula will try to attend the next RecFIN(SE) for coordination purposes. M. Osborn noted that the Work Group discussed doing workups on the cost of a survey to determine who would be interested in participating in a voluntary survey on the web. J. O'Hop noted that there are 170 tournaments in Florida and some of these are surveyed. Again, any decisions on the issue of tournaments will be made after the Work Group meets and makes recommendations on priorities.

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

D. Donaldson reviewed the development of the Charter Boat Pilot Survey noting that in September 1997 the NMFS, the Gulf states, and the GSMFC implemented the survey. Initially three methods were compared, the current MRFSS phone survey, the charter boat telephone survey, and the logbook panel survey. Currently plans are underway to evaluate these methods, with the states, NMFS, and the GSMFC compiling information for a presentation. D. VanVoorhees has contacted three qualified individuals to review the results of this study. The evaluation is planned for sometime in the April to June 1999 timeframe. The results of the evaluation will be complete no later than July, with a presentation being given to the GMFMC.

There was discussion on the precision and accuracy of the pilot study compared to the MRFSS. There are indications that the annual estimates are not statistically different, and M. Osborn suggested that the report explain in layman's terms the differences in these two methodologies and the erroneous perception that the results are the same. Several Committee members offered suggestions on how to explain the results of these two surveys, taking into consideration the sensitivity of the issue.

D. Donaldson also reported that beginning in November 1998 the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida had state personnel collecting MRFSS data for all three modes. M. Osborn noted that this was being done parallel to the intercept contractor through Wave 2. A final decision will be made by April 15.

**Other Business**

M. Osborn reported that Macro is the new intercept contractor and began collecting data in Wave 2. A sole source contract was given to Quantech for Wave 1, in addition to the parallel sampling by the GSMFC. An amended telephone contract is being negotiated with final proposals due by the end of April. NMFS will be asking for a proposal from Macro for Wave 2. The contract should be in place in May, for telephoning to begin in late June.

Osborn reported that the NMFS Southeast Center has funds for biological sampling of red snapper and asked if the Gulf states would be interested. This sampling would be run separately from the MRFSS and would begin with Wave 3 through Wave 6. The Committee discussed the situation, the amount of money involved, cooperative agreements, and agreed that they would need more lead time to prepare for this project. J. O'Hop suggested trying carcass collection while doing routine sampling and then evaluate the cost.

Osborn reported that Sea Grant Intern, Kirk Gillis, a student of Bob Ditton, will be with NMFS for one year. His duties will include developing an outreach strategy and materials for the MRFSS. There will be a 15 minute video developed touching on the partnerships with the states and Commissions. This video will be available for state partners, and may include Bob Zales and another charter boat captain from the mid-Atlantic coast. Brochures are also being developed

M. Osborn requested that in the future all MRFSS data requests go directly to her.

D. Donaldson announced that the Ron Schmied Scholarship Foundation has been established and donations are being requested. For further information, contact Donaldson or Bob Ditton.

W. Laney noted that since the south Atlantic states will no longer be actively participating in FIN on a regular basis, Doug Frugé will probably be his replacement on the FIN, RecFIN, and ComFIN Committees.

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

**FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK  
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, April 7, 1999  
La Parguera, Puerto Rico**

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

**Members**

Kevin Ansen, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Kerwin Cuevas, (proxy for T. Van Devender), MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Michelle Kasprzak, (proxy for J. Shepard), LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Jill Kelly, (proxy for J. Shepard), LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
William Perret, (proxy for T. Van Devender), MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Toby Tobias, USVI/DPNR/DFW, St. Croix, USVI  
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL  
Carter Watterson, (proxy for D. Mumford), NCDMF, Morehead City, NC

**Staff**

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

**Others**

Mark Alexander, CDEP, Old Lyme, CT  
Mike Cahall, ACCSP, Silver Spring, MD  
Tom Fazio, ICF Kaiser, Fairfax, VA  
Ivan Mateo, USVI/DFW, St. Croix, USVI  
Joe Moran, ACCSP, Washington, DC  
Edgardo Ojeda Serrano, UPR, Sea Grant, PR  
Ana Roman, USFWS, Boqueron, PR

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted as presented.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on November 12, 1998 in Tampa, Florida were approved with minor editorial changes.

**Status of the RFP for Data Collection Plan**

R. Lukens reported that the Request For Proposal (RFP) for a data collection plan was released but no proposals have been received at this time. This project was to be funded using a portion of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) Wallop-Breaux administrative funds. There is a sixty-four million dollar projected shortfall

in Wallop-Breaux funds which would have gone to the states apportionment. In addition, there is a shortfall of eight or nine million dollars in the administrative program. The USFWS has asked the GSMFC to re-submit the 1999 budget subtracting \$45,000 from the original budget. Therefore, at this time money is not available to fund the RFP for a data collection plan. Lukens also noted that it appears there will be reduced Wallop-Breaux funding for possibly the next three years. Other possible sources of funding will be investigated in the hope that this project can then go forward.

#### **Status of FIN Brochures**

D. Donaldson reported that 2,500 FIN brochures have been printed and will be distributed. Additional copies of the brochure will be available upon request. The GSMFC Commercial/Recreational Advisory Panel has reviewed the brochure and found that the information in the brochure helps to explain the program.

#### **Review of the 1998 FIN Annual Report**

Copies of the 1998 FIN Annual Report were distributed to Committee members for their review prior to this meeting. D. Donaldson noted that changes that take place annually are the program activities, work group activities, and information dissemination. Donaldson also noted that the Annual Report gives an overview of the program for the past year and includes meeting minutes, the operations plan, etc. J. O'Hop and W. Laney noted that the three South Atlantic states will not be regular participants in FIN and suggested that a statement to this effect be included in the 1999 Annual Report. Following Committee discussion, **M. Osborn moved to approve the 1998 FIN Annual Report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Discussion of Addendum to the FIN MOU**

D. Donaldson noted that at the last meeting there was a discussion on the integration of FIN and the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). At that meeting it was agreed that the South Atlantic states no longer regularly attend FIN, ComFIN, and RecFIN(SE) Committee meetings, but would still have representation on the various work groups. Donaldson reported that R. Lukens and L. Kline have developed language for an addendum to the FIN MOU. L. Kline reported that this information was presented to the ACCSP Coordinating Council in December, then to the Operations Committee, and will be returned to the Coordinating Council in May. Kline noted that J. Moran has drafted a similar addendum for the ACCSP to assure that both programs are moving in the same direction.

Donaldson requested that all Committee members review the addendum. R. Lukens suggested that Committee members review the rationale and noted that this action has been discussed for several years. Lukens and Kline agreed that funding, either by FIN or ACCSP, will be available on a case by case basis for participation by South Atlantic states in the future. J. O'Hop noted Florida's unique situation, being involved in both FIN and ACCSP, and reiterated the need for coordination so that data collection activities can be carried out the same on both coasts. B. Dixon noted that membership on the FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group appears to have greater representation by Atlantic states. After Committee discussion, **R. Lukens moved to replace Georgia with Texas on the FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group pending approval by Georgia. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**M. Osborn moved to approve the addendum to the FIN MOU as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Staff will send copies of the amended addendum to Committee members.

#### **Establishment of Educational Work Group**

D. Donaldson noted that the formation of this work group was recommended as a result of the facilitated session in Miami. He also noted the importance of outreach and the need for support and input from both the general public and industry. L. Kline noted that the ACCSP has had some difficulty in getting membership for their outreach committee, since many of their states do not have public relations personnel. The ACCSP outreach committee has members from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC), and New York and New Jersey Sea Grant.

M. Kasprzak suggested contacting Ken Roberts of Louisiana State University Cooperative Extension. This office has extensive experience in working with various fishing groups. In the Caribbean, Puerto Rico has one public affairs person, and in the U.S. Virgin Islands the position is vacant, however T. Tobias recommended the Sea Grant marine advisory service. W. Laney noted that the USFWS Regional Office has an outreach staff and may have someone able to serve on the work group. Laney will contact this office and investigate. M. Osborn suggested that Committee members be sent an official letter asking them to name a member to the outreach work group. This letter should include information regarding the number of meetings and time required. J. O'Hop suggested merging the FIN

and ACCSP educational outreach work groups into one group. It was noted by Committee members that since the issues are primarily the same and resources are limited this could be beneficial to both groups. Donaldson noted that this can be successful only with equal representation. In the event that a large number of members are put forth for this work group, the Administrative Subcommittee will hold a conference call to select candidates for membership.

#### **Presentation of the ACCSP Data Management System**

Tom Fazio, Vice President of ICF Information Technology, Inc. gave a presentation on the ACCSP Data Management System using a live Internet connection with the ACCSP website being accessed for demonstration purposes. Fazio explained the three layers used by the ACCSP. They are the operational layer, which include the current data collection systems used by various partners. The second layer is known as the reconciliation layer, which is the centralized data warehouse, where data streams from multiple sources or partners are reconciled down to a common standard. The third layer is the informational layer, which are smaller subsets of information that users can access. Fazio also explained the prototype system design, status, and future evaluation. Cost of software licenses was also discussed. Mike Cahall of the ACCSP provided background information during the online demonstration section of the presentation. At the conclusion of this presentation, Committee members were very enthusiastic about the versatility and flexibility of this sophisticated technology and look forward to using this system in the future.

#### **Presentation of Alabama Inshore Creel Survey**

K. Anson gave a presentation on the Alabama Inshore Creel Survey. Anson reported that this survey focuses on recreational boats which are launched at private boat ramps and docks and whose catch and harvest information are not covered by the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS). This data was needed for the development of stock assessments for inshore species. Funds became available in the past few years through Wallop-Breaux and have allowed this survey to take place. Some limited socio-economic data was also included in this survey. Anson then explained that areas of concentration were basically from the barrier islands and north to the inshore areas of Mobile Bay. This area was then divided into the two coastal counties of Alabama, which were then further subdivided. Overflights of the area being surveyed are utilized, as well as a roving creel survey, in which state personnel interview fishermen while fishing. The results of this survey were then compared to another survey which collects catch and harvest information from fisherman utilizing public access boat ramps. Data from complete and incomplete fishing trips were analyzed and the results showed that 45% of the anglers interviewed on the water were anglers originating from private access points. Anson noted that additional data from this survey is currently being analyzed.

#### **Presentation of the Use of Electronic Data Loggers for Texas Creel Survey**

P. Campbell reported on the testing of electronic data loggers being used in the Texas Creel Survey. Campbell distributed copies of the data sheets being used with the script writer in this survey and reviewed these with Committee members. Initially there were problems with the program and with the batteries, however these problems are being corrected. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will continue to test and evaluate the script writers and no decisions have been made at this time.

#### **Update and Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program**

L. Kline reported that ICF Kaiser is continuing to work on developing other modules for the ACCSP through 1999. At this point, only the commercial catch/effort module has been developed. The biological, recreational, socio-economic, and bycatch modules will be developed in the future.

The funding decision process is currently being worked on and approval from the Coordinating Council on this process is expected in May. Kline also reported that an implementation strategy will begin shortly. J. Moran and M. Cahall will visit every state on the Atlantic coast and conduct meetings with state directors, policy makers, legislative members, technical advisors and federal partners. A pilot study is being developed to begin collecting social and economic information on commercial harvesters. This pilot study will start in the fall and that data will be fed directly to the ACCSP data management system. The state of Georgia has been provided funding and has implemented a commercial trip ticket program. M. Cahall will be working with the state of Georgia to begin moving their data into the data management system. At this time the Northeast Regional logbook and dealer data has been moved into the system and Florida will have their data in the system shortly. Kline noted that work will begin in the fall on coordinated

permitting systems and suggested coordinating this effort with the FIN. M. Osborn noted that the contract for continued support will be going out for competitive bid.

#### **Update on the Vessel Registration System/Fishery Information System**

M. Osborn stated that a report outlining the regional implementation of a national Vessel Registration System (VRS)/Fishery Information System (FIS) was finalized and sent to Congress. Also included in this report are the Caribbean, Western Pacific, and Alaska. At this point it appears that the monies indicated in the report are not included in the President's budget. NMFS personnel have been meeting with Congressional staffers on this issue.

J. Poffenberger noted that the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is still in the process of completing the Vessel Information System (VIS) prototype with two states. The VIS is not quite ready for other states to begin participation in the program, however, Poffenberger noted the importance of having the states prepared to move into this system and participate when the USCG is ready. As new information becomes available, he will relay this to all partners.

R. Lukens questioned whether the decision had already been made to use the VIS as the model for use with the individual states and the USCG. Osborn and Poffenberger responded that it had. Lukens and Poffenberger suggested that it would be helpful to have someone give a presentation on the structure and function of the VIS program at the next FIN meeting. L. Kline suggested inviting someone from Massachusetts since they have been involved in this pilot program. Lukens expressed concern that the state boating programs and the USCG are not structured to create a fisheries vessel database. Poffenberger agreed that the VIS was not intended to be a fisheries database, but a documentation of all boats. After discussion on the pros and cons of this system, the Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to have a presentation on the VIS system at the next FIN meeting. M. Osborn will contact T. Fazio and request that he demonstrate how the information management system will link permits with landings with VRS/VIS. Osborn will also contact representatives from the USCG and the state of Massachusetts and request that they give a presentation to the Committee.

D. Donaldson noted that L. Kline reported to the Committee that the ACCSP was preparing to develop a permitting system and this would be an opportune subject for coordination with the FIN. After Committee discussion, it was agreed that Donaldson will draft a letter for distribution to Committee members asking for suggestions for membership on this Work Group. J. O'Hop suggested that members on the Permitting Work Group be actively involved in permitting systems since the integration of landings and permitting is critical in this issue.

#### **Discussion of Priorities for FY 1999 Funds**

R. Lukens provided the Committee with some background on the funding and Congressional language, indicating that as a result of the 1999 Congressional appropriations process, a new line item was added to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) budget. That line item is called *GulfFIN*. Lukens indicated that the line item name simply identifies the funding and does not indicate a change in the name of the program which is the Fisheries Information Network (FIN). Lukens pointed out that the line item provides \$3.0 million for 1999 and added that the assumption is that Congress intends to continue to provide funding for the program since they went to the trouble of establishing a new line item.

Lukens reminded the Committee that the availability of the funding was discovered just prior to the last FIN meeting, held in Tampa, Florida during November 1998. A full discussion of funding issues was not scheduled for that meeting, because it wasn't known in advance that the funding would be available. However, upon request, an *ad hoc* discussion of funding issues took place during the ComFIN session of that meeting. The GSMFC staff had compiled a preliminary list of suggested items for funding, and the items on that list were discussed. The conclusion of that discussion was that the FIN needed to develop a process by which funding priorities can be discussed and recommendations made by the FIN Committee. There was general agreement on that point.

Lukens informed the Committee that an in-depth discussion of funding priorities was held during the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee at the March 1999 meeting of the GSMFC. Included in that discussion were the five Gulf State Directors, Doug Frugé (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Dr. Mark Holliday (NMFS HQ Statistics Office), Dr. Andy Kemmerer (NMFS Southeast Regional Administrator), and Dr. Brad Brown (NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center Director). The list of suggested items, discussed above, was provided to the individuals at that meeting. In addition to the items already on the list, several of the participants added items. The meeting resulted in a recommendation; however, Lukens pointed out that the group requested that the FIN Committee consider and discuss the items and provide feedback for a follow-up meeting, to be scheduled in early May.

Lukens pointed out that the Gulf States, through coordination and administration of the GSMFC, are conducting the recreational fisheries survey in the Gulf of Mexico, as of January 1, 1999. He indicated that the funding for the survey has already been obligated at around \$2.2 million, and that that amount would have to be deducted from the total available funds to determine the level of funding available for the items on the list. The list represents suggested items only, except that the Gulf State Directors and the individuals listed above have already discussed and generally accepted the items, pending recommendations from the FIN, and that items could be added by the FIN Committee. Further, the list represents activities that have been identified in documentation of the proceedings of RecFIN and ComFIN, and so are consistent with existing recommendations. Lukens then recommended that the Committee take each item on the list individually, discuss what the items mean, and discuss the general level of funding estimated for the items. At this point, Lukens suggested adding an item to the list based on discussions with the State of Texas. He indicated that at the March meeting, Texas indicated that they didn't feel they had the staff time to pursue full trip ticket development; consequently, they withdrew from the list. Since that time, they have determined that they would like to pursue a portion of the activities in preparation for implementation, and Page Campbell (Texas) would provide the details later.

M. Osborn characterized that the original list of items submitted to the March meeting attendees was comprised of items taken from the FIN documentation, and that the additional items were added by individuals at the meeting. She indicated that the Committee should think in terms of long-term needs and strategies, for example providing seed money for capitol expenditures and improvements, such as gearing up for the Trip Ticket Systems. She suggested not using money to replace money already in place, expressing a concern that if that precedent is set, partners may take the money previously committed to the program and spend it elsewhere. In that case the total amount of funding available could decrease. She pointed out that the institution of Trip Ticket Systems in the Gulf would overlap other data collection activities, such as log books and the Cooperative Statistics Program, and posed the question of what should be done to avoid such duplication of effort. Can that effort be redirected to other priority items for data collection? She reiterated the need to develop a funding priority process for future years' funding. She asked if the *GulfFIN* line item included funding for the Caribbean or other partners outside the Gulf of Mexico region? Lukens answered no, indicating that the language is clear that the funding is for the Gulf portion of the program and includes funding for the states and the GSMFC only. Osborn expressed concern that if the NMFS cannot have any of the funds that they are, in effect, disenfranchised from the program, and what does that mean in terms of partnerships. She asked that Lukens address her questions. O'Hop also asked Lukens to explain when the funding must be committed or obligated.

Lukens responded, describing the funding process in general terms. He pointed out that the interstate marine fisheries commissions have for many years been working together to support increased funding for data programs, focusing on dedicated funding for conducting the state-federal cooperative programs developed or being developed on each coast, including PacFIN, RecFIN, ComFIN, and ACCSP. He then reiterated that the Congressional language specifies that the funding is for the Gulf and represents the state and GSMFC needs. Lukens stressed that the dedication of funding to the Gulf doesn't constitute disenfranchisement of any partners, stating that the funding process through the Congress is most effective when working with the legislative representatives of the states in a particular region, and that any resulting funding will be dedicated to support programs in that region. Lukens pointed out that the GSMFC had asked for \$3.0 million for recreational data work and \$4.0 million for commercial data work. The Congress provided \$3.0 million total and included recreational and commercial data work in the language. As in years past, the Congressional language also included a three-way split of the \$3.9 million line item of *Recreational Fish Harvest Monitoring*. Lukens was asked to explain that line item. He indicated that the *Recreational Fish Harvest Monitoring* line item is used to fund the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), and for the past four or five years has included language to split the \$3.9 million three ways among the Gulf, Atlantic, and Pacific States to implement RecFIN. He further explained how several items are taken off the top of the \$3.9 million. Osborn indicated that it is the NMFS position that the only money that is available is the \$3.0 million from the *GulfFIN* line item, minus a 5% NOAA tax, minus the \$2.2 million for the recreational survey, leaving approximately \$600 thousand. Lukens indicated that Osborn's figure is incorrect. Lukens was then asked to describe, in detail how the funding breaks out. The following provides that information:

**Recreational Fish Harvest Monitoring Line Item**

\$3,900,000.00	Total
-195,000.00	NOAA Tax (5%)
-500,000.00	South Carolina Red Drum Project
-500,000.00	Economic Add-on
<b>\$2,705,000.00</b>	Revised Total

This figure is divided by three, as per the Congressional Committee language.

\$901,666.66	Amount available for Gulf of Mexico
-250,000.00	Telephone survey for Gulf of Mexico
<b>\$651,666.66</b>	Total available from this line item to GSMFC and states for RecFIN

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***GulfFIN* Line Item**

\$3,000,000.00	
-150,000.00	NOAA Tax (5%)
<b>\$2,850,000.00</b>	Total available from this line item to GSMFC and states for other projects

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**Combined Line Items**

<b>\$2,850,000.00</b>	<i>GulfFIN</i> Line Item
<b>+651,666.66</b>	Recreational Fish Harvest Monitoring Line Item
<b>\$3,501,666.66</b>	Total available to GSMFC and states for data program

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**Funding for Cooperative Agreements**

<b>\$3,501,666.66</b>	Total available funds
-2,222,042.00	Obligated for 1999 for RecFIN
\$1,279,624.66	Total available for next cooperative agreement

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Osborn provided her thoughts regarding the time line for making the funding available. She indicated that the NMFS will be trying to get the funding obligated as an amendment to the cooperative agreement that is already in place

to conduct the recreational survey in the Gulf of Mexico. She indicated that it normally takes 60 days to process a cooperative agreement, but that they sometimes can be expedited to as little as 45 days. The funding must be made available to the Gulf States and the GSMFC no later than September 30, 1999 since that is the end of the fiscal year, and funds not obligated by that time go back to the general treasury. However, Lukens pointed out that that time frame is too late. Osborn agreed, indicating that an early June submission was a better time frame, and Lukens indicated that a July 1 start date was the best target. A July 1 start date would require a submission of around May 1. It was pointed out that if such an accelerated time frame were to be successful, the states would have to work very quickly to develop statements of work and budgets. Lukens strongly asked that any budgets developed by the states be reviewed and approved by the State Directors before they are sent to the GSMFC office. Everyone agreed.

Lukens suggested that the Committee discuss each item on the list individually, describing in detail what the item is and how much it would cost, in general terms. The following discussion ensued:

#### **Compile “for-hire” vessel frame for Texas**

The ongoing charter boat pilot survey employs a vessel frame for all charter vessels operating in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (Gulf). In anticipation of and preparation for expanding the charter boat survey to include the State of Texas, this activity will provide funding for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to compile a “for-hire” vessel frame for Texas. This is a labor intensive activity and will require a dedicated staff person. It will be scheduled for 12 months, but may take less time to complete. The estimated cost for this activity is \$50,000.00. A suggestion was made that the experience of the GSMFC and Florida may be useful to the State of Texas in compiling the vessel frame. Donaldson indicated that the GSMFC office will be providing information to Texas regarding how the original vessel frame was compiled and all the sources of information that were used to identify vessels for inclusion in the frame.

#### **Compile “for-hire” vessel frame for the Florida east coast**

The ongoing charter boat pilot survey employs a vessel frame for all charter vessels operating in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (Gulf). In anticipation of and preparation for expanding the charter boat survey to include the Florida east coast, this activity will provide funding for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to compile a “for-hire” sampling frame for the Florida east coast. The FDEP staff has had experience in this activity as a result of compiling the charter boat vessel frame for the Florida west coast. In addition, some of the work has already been done. This activity will be scheduled for 12 months, but may take less time to complete. The estimated cost for completing this activity is \$4,000.00. The question was asked if *Gulf/FIN* funds could be spent on a Florida east coast activity. Lukens responded that in an effort to keep from splitting Florida between two coordination programs, the Gulf determined that Florida recreational survey activities would be coordinated by the GSMFC and Florida commercial data activities would be coordinated by the ACCSP.

#### **The FIN data management system**

In keeping with the stated position of having the GSMFC serve as the marine fisheries data management center for the Gulf of Mexico, the GSMFC will make computer hardware and software purchases to establish a data management system in the GSMFC office to handle the commercial fisheries data collected under the Gulf Fisheries Information Network. This will include a commercial data server, Oracle database management software, and appropriate licensing. This will be scheduled as a 12 month activity. The estimated cost for this activity is \$300,000.00.

Osborn asked why the GSMFC is proposing to do this activity when there was a cooperative agreement in 1997 to purchase servers and software under the transition activities. Lukens responded that the GSMFC had proposed to purchase another server for the commercial data, but the NMFS denied that item, saying that it was not necessary in the transition activities. She questioned why there needs to be separate computer systems for commercial and recreational programs. Lukens responded that the best advice that the GSMFC had been given indicated that if separate operating systems were going to be used, it is best to use separate servers. In this case, the recreational server is a SAS-based environment and the commercial server will be an Oracle environment. The experience of the Pacific coast in managing similar systems is that it is better to keep the servers separate. In this case the servers would be separate, but would be components of the GSMFC network. The question was asked if the software proposed included the utility software presented by ICF/Kaiser earlier in the meeting. Lukens indicated that it did not. Poffenberger indicated that it would

be important at some point to determine what the division of labor of the proposed activity would entail, including warehousing, data collection, data management, etc. He indicated that the NMFS facility in Miami has the capacity to provide the data management function and has served as the repository of the landings statistics for the Southeast Region. He pointed out that this activity may be a duplication of effort. He asked that if the GSMFC is going to house/warehouse the data for the Gulf of Mexico, what will happen to the system in Miami? Wouldn't it be less expensive to house/warehouse the data in Miami and increase the staffing there, or conduct data management remotely? The discussion continued to explore the question of duplication of effort regarding this activity. Poffenberger stressed again that if this activity is pursued, there needs to be a concerted effort to determine how it would affect the operations at the NMFS Miami facility. Osborn indicated that the ACCSP spent several years determining what the architecture should look like for the ACCSP system, and that it would be a centralized warehouse system. She pointed out that the FIN has not yet determined what the FIN data management system architecture should look like. Lukens responded that the GSMFC believes that there are institutional reasons for the GSMFC to house and staff the system, and that efficiencies will be realized in serving the constituency by having the data management system housed in the GSMFC office. He indicated that the Gulf States have gone on record through letters indicating their preference for having the system located at and staffed by the GSMFC. The GSMFC is a neutral entity, in that there is no regulatory authority, and will have dedicated staff whose only job will be to monitor and manage the system. Osborn stated that the decision to house and staff the data management system in the GSMFC office was made by the Gulf States and the GSMFC and did not involve any discussion or input from the federal partners, and she feels that the NMFS has been disenfranchised from the process. Perret explained that there have been several opportunities for the NMFS to enter into discussion regarding this issue, but Osborn countered that the policy decision was already made without that input. Lukens agreed with Perret that the NMFS directorate had the opportunity to discuss the issue at the March meeting of the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee, described above, and that he felt that the issue was agreed to. Osborn indicated that she understood that that meeting did not result in any agreement. She expressed her dismay that the Gulf representatives of the FIN met behind closed doors, made decisions, and communicated those to the NMFS as a *fait accompli*. Lukens responded that it was clear to the participants at the March meeting that that was the time to discuss these items and determine if there were any objections. He indicated that there was not any extended discussion of this item at that meeting, and that no one openly objected to its inclusion on the list. Indeed, there was general acceptance of the list as presented, with the only substantive discussion being the inclusion of additional items, as discussed below. Osborn disagreed with Lukens position. Poffenberger asked if the meeting minutes from the March meeting are available, and Lukens indicated that they were not done. He stated that the GSMFC will make those minutes available to everyone as soon as they are complete. Osborn followed by saying that the issues begin as private discussion on the side, not including the other partners. Perret indicated that on many occasions decisions have been made by the NMFS without consultation with the states, and the states are forced to live with those decisions. O'Hop suggested that perhaps an alternative could be considered, by establishing a temporary location at the Miami center. Lukens responded that it doesn't make any sense to delay the decision, when it would have to be made at some time anyway. He stressed that the strategy is to use the initial year(s) of funding to make equipment and infrastructural purchases, because later in the program, when funding is tied directly to data collection and other staff activities, it will be more difficult to find the funding to make those kind of purchases. Osborn asked if the data management system architecture had already been decided. Donaldson responded that at the last FIN meeting it was decided to adopt the ACCSP data management system, since the program is striving to maintain compatibility. Responding to Osborn's earlier comments regarding the decision on this issue by the Gulf States and the GSMFC, Lukens stated that the Gulf States represent the Gulf Regional Subcommittee of the FIN, and it is perfectly reasonable for that group to discuss the items of importance to the Gulf of Mexico, within the context of the regional program, to make plans for actions that will achieve what the Gulf States believes they need, and to establish policies based on those deliberations. In addition, the Gulf region has been successful in getting funding to support the actions and policies that have been established, and that is a good thing. Lukens emphasized that this item is high priority for the Gulf States and the GSMFC, it relates to the Gulf of Mexico region only, and it does not impinge on anyone else's ability to continue their work. Schmidt indicated that he agreed that the item is duplicative and agrees with the NMFS representatives. The question was asked if the GSMFC would receive \$300 thousand each year for this activity. Lukens explained that the costs reflect startup needs only. Ongoing costs have not yet been worked out, but they are not reflected in the \$300 thousand figure.

The discussion then turned to the need to integrate ongoing activities into the plans as outlined. There was general agreement that everyone needs to understand the impact on ongoing activities when the proposed activities are

implemented. Dixon agreed, saying that he is concerned that there could be duplicative data collection, and that not enough detail has been provided on the items, particularly the data management system proposal. Lukens responded by saying that the time line since Congress made the funding available and the time that the cooperative agreement to obligate the funding needs to be in place has precluded establishing the kinds of details requested. Lukens pointed out that even after getting the cooperative agreement in place, it will be near the end of the year before any action will be taken on this item. There should be time in the interim to determine to some degree how to integrate the proposed actions. Dixon stressed that he perceived this item as being duplicative and possibly a waste of money. Discussion continued regarding this issue; however, there was no consensus on this issue.

#### **ComFIN data management prototype for Louisiana**

The Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) under development on the Atlantic coast is nearing completion of a regional database management system, and has established a prototype interface between the system and the data collection activities of the Northeast Region and Florida's Trip Ticket System. In an effort to avoid duplication of effort, the FIN agreed to adopt the data management system developed by the ACCSP, assuming the prototype project was successful. Recent results are positive, and this activity proposes to adapt the ACCSP data management system for integration of the Louisiana Trip Ticket System data and the FIN data management system. In addition, this activity will provide for the completion of a metadata module, an important component of the overall data management system. This module will provide the information necessary for interpretation of the data in the system. This will be scheduled as a 12 month activity. The estimated cost for this activity is \$105,000.00.

Osborn asked if Louisiana already has their data going into a data management system in the state. The answer was yes, and that this item is to reconcile Louisiana's data to the regional FIN data management system. Louisiana is already entering their data. She asked if it includes hardware, and the answer was no. There will be software purchases and licensing costs. She indicated that, in her experience, the cost estimate seems high, but she basically agreed with the need for the item. She asked if the GSMFC plans to issue the contract with ICF/Kaiser, and if so will the GSMFC take an overhead cost. Lukens explained that the GSMFC will manage the contract with ICF/Kaiser, but that office costs to oversee that project will be minimal. The GSMFC does not have an established overhead percentage, but works off a cost reimbursable arrangement. Most of the administrative costs are born by the administrative portion of the cooperative agreement and will likely not affect the contract. Poffenberger asked about Louisiana's involvement in this item, and Lukens indicated that J. Shepard was fully aware of and supportive of the project. Osborn asked what kind of system the Louisiana program is using. Kasprzak indicated that it is a SAS database.

#### **Trip Ticket System development - Mississippi**

In keeping with the established goal of implementation of Trip Tickets Systems throughout the Gulf of Mexico, this activity will provide funding to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources to conduct activities in preparation for implementing a Trip Ticket System. Those activities include but are not limited to

- hardware/software purchases (including installation and configuration costs)
- identification of seafood dealers in the state (including traditional dealers, restaurants, and fishermen who sell their catch directly to the public)
- investigation into implementing a seafood dealer's license
- installation of the database management system
- outreach to dealers
- development of trip ticket forms

This will be scheduled as a 12 month activity. The estimated cost for this activity is \$250,000.00. Osborn asked if the states already have the regulatory authority to implement the systems, and the answer was yes. She asked if the costs reflected production of the forms and possibly purchasing scanning equipment for data entry, such as in Louisiana. Lukens indicated that those details have not yet been determined. Watterson asked if there had been any discussion regarding a state match for annual support of the Trip Ticket Systems. Lukens indicated that this issue has arisen, but no resolution has been reached. He cautioned that getting funds from the state dedicated to such a program can be difficult, because it likely will require acts of the legislatures. It was pointed out that the Louisiana Trip Ticket System was originally proposed before the legislature in 1989, and funding to support it was not forthcoming until 1999. Osborn asked if the Louisiana system provides for every landing that occurs in Louisiana, regardless of where it was

caught. She was concerned that there could be duplicative reporting. It was explained that the Trip Ticket System records the first point of sale. If a product moves from one state to another, the first transaction is the one that is recorded. Kelly indicated that if a truck were to be loaded at the dock for transport to another state, the trucking company would need a wholesale dealer's license in order to be able to transport it. In that case the harvest would be recorded. Dixon asked what the timeframe for completing these projects is. Lukens responded that, for planning purposes, it is assumed that most of the items could be completed within a 12 month period of time, some perhaps sooner. However, Osborn noted that if projects are not completed within a 12 month period, no cost extensions can be granted for completion.

#### **Trip Ticket System development - Alabama**

In keeping with the established goal of implementation of Trip Tickets Systems throughout the Gulf of Mexico, this activity will provide funding to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources/Marine Resources Division to conduct activities in preparation for implementing a Trip Ticket System. Those activities include but are not limited to

- hardware/software purchases (including installation and configuration costs)
- identification of seafood dealers in the state (including traditional dealers, restaurants, and fishermen who sell their catch directly to the public)
- investigation into implementing a seafood dealer's license
- installation of the database management system
- outreach to dealers
- development of trip ticket forms

This will be scheduled as a 12 month activity. The estimated cost for this activity is \$250,000.00. In the Committee meeting, the discussion included Mississippi and Alabama together. Comments above are pertinent to Alabama's effort to develop a Trip Ticket System.

#### **Trip Ticket System development - Texas**

In keeping with the established goal of implementation of Trip Tickets Systems throughout the Gulf of Mexico, this activity will provide funding to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to conduct activities in preparation for implementing a Trip Ticket System. While those activities include the following list, the TPWD proposes to conduct a small subset of the list, to be identified, because they do not have adequate staff time available during the upcoming months to dedicate to this entire task.

- hardware/software purchases (including installation and configuration costs)
- identification of seafood dealers in the state (including traditional dealers, restaurants, and fishermen who sell their catch directly to the public)
- investigation into implementing a seafood dealer's license
- installation of the database management system
- outreach to dealers
- development of trip ticket forms, or modification of current cash sales ticket

Osborn asked if Texas will be looking a new technologies for the Trip Ticket System. Campbell indicated that the state has a point-of-sale system for recreational fishing licenses, and they will be considering a system like that for the trip tickets. This will be scheduled as a 12 month activity. The estimated cost for this activity is \$100,000.00.

#### **Menhaden Sampling**

Currently menhaden are being sampled to support stock assessment and trend analyses. Lukens indicated that the funding for the sampling has been provided from the NMFS to the GSMFC to hire and administer the samplers. The NMFS indicated that funding to support that activity would not be available beyond the current agreement, and asked the GSMFC to include the activity in the Cooperative Agreement. There was general conceptual agreement with this request. Osborn expressed her concern that by including activities such as menhaden sampling in the new funding initiative, a precedent is being set for everyone to come to the table and ask for funding to support their ongoing activities. Some discussion ensued regarding this issue. It was pointed out, however, that menhaden sampling is currently funded through the end of December 1999; consequently, there will be no need to include this activity in the Cooperative Agreement for FY 1999 funds.

### **Gulf of Mexico Head Boat Sampling**

Currently, head boats in the Gulf of Mexico are sampled for fish lengths, weights, and otoliths (perhaps other biological sampling) through dockside sampling of the catch. Catch and effort are acquired through logbooks. For the past several years, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has been providing funds to hire the dockside samplers through the GSMFC. This item does not include the log book portion of the program. That funding has not been designated in the budget over the years, and as a result, it is likely that the funding will not be available past the current agreement, ending September 30, 1999. Because these data are vital to the current stock analysis and management decision processes, this activity will support the head boat dockside sampling from October 1, 1999 through December 31, 1999.

With the conduct of the charter boat pilot survey, preliminary data being favorable to the methodology, there is an interest in developing alternatives to sampling the catch and effort in the head boat fishery, in particular the pilot captain's phone call methodology. This activity has already begun through discussions of the Recreational Fisheries Information Network Committee, and costs to support it will be born by the administrative segment of the FIN program. The cost to conduct the dockside head boat sampling from October through December is \$34,000.00.

Atran pointed out the Gulf Council staff will likely be recommending a mandatory log book system for charter and head boats at an upcoming Council meeting. Dixon pointed out that log books for head boats are currently mandatory; however, it is not enforced, and there is currently only about 80 - 85% compliance with the log books. Discussion ensued regarding the idea of developing alternate methodologies to sample the head boat fishery. Dixon recalled that the ACCSP is currently planning to conduct a pilot study in South Carolina, much like the pilot study that was conducted in the Gulf. He agreed with the concept that a study should be done to compare methodologies before any change to the program would take place.

**R. Lukens moved that the FIN Committee establish a work group of the RecFIN Committee to address alternate methodologies for sampling the head boat fishery, including catch, effort, and biological sampling, and to begin work group effort as soon as the work group members are identified. The motion was seconded.** Lukens pointed out that the work group activity, if approved, would be funded through the existing administrative portion of the program, not from the funds currently being addressed. Osborn asked how the activity would fit into the RecFIN priorities. Lukens responded that surveying and sampling the for-hire fisheries is a high priority within RecFIN, and the activity would simply be an extension of the pilot charter boat survey. Lukens suggested that the Administrative Subcommittee meet via conference call and discuss the formation of the work group and develop a formal charge to that work group. **The motion passed with the GMFMC and the NPS abstaining.** Osborn pointed out that there needs to be better communication between the FIN and its activities and the Gulf Council, in light of the information provided by Atran. The Committee agreed, and GSMFC staff indicated that they were already working with Dr. Richard Leard to periodically have time on the Council's agenda for FIN presentations. The Committee encouraged staff to continue, and even increase, that activity.

Lukens pointed out that the participants at the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee work session in March in New Orleans asked for clarification of the impacts of implementing Trip Ticket Systems in the states on existing activities, such as the Cooperative Statistics Program. He indicated that there was not time during the FIN Committee meeting to do that; however, there will be considerable time between the start of the Cooperative Agreement activities and implementation of any new Trip Ticket Systems to fully consider all impacts of new activities on ongoing activities.

There ensued a general discussion regarding the need for additional funding for Caribbean programs. There were differing perspectives on the disposition of funding and how funding is secured for programs. T. Tobias, USVI, expressed his concern and disappointment that funding through *GulfFIN* will not be available to the Caribbean. He indicated that his understanding was that any new funding would be available to all partners in the program. He stressed that the Caribbean components of the program had been participating for many years in the State-Federal Cooperative Statistics Program and then the FIN, and was under the impression that such participation would result in additional funding for the Caribbean. Lukens responded, indicating that the GSMFC has had a long history of interfacing between the states and the Congress to gain support for new and ongoing programs, but it would be difficult for the GSMFC to directly interface with the Congress for funding to support Caribbean activities. The FIN can work cooperatively to establish program plans and funding strategies, but the individual components of the program have to use the political resources at their disposal to attempt to secure funding for program activities. All Committee members agreed that the

Caribbean needs additional funding to be able to establish the range of data collection and management activities that are needed.

#### **Florida Trip Ticket System updating**

Florida was the first state in the Gulf of Mexico to establish a Trip Ticket System, implemented several years ago. There is a need to convert database software from its current database management system to Oracle. This will require considerable effort, and this activity will support completing a portion of the effort. They need to convert to Oracle is based on using Oracle as the overall, regional database management system. This is a 12 month activity. The estimated cost of this activity is \$150,000.00. Osborn brought up the issue of commercial data for Florida being administered and coordinated by the ACCSP, indicating that use of these funds would be inconsistent with that policy decision. Lukens pointed out that the policy decision is related to coordination and administration of program activities only. Osborn continued to object to the funding; although, she felt the activity is necessary.

#### **Biological sampling in the Gulf of Mexico**

During recent years, additional biological samples, including lengths, weights, and otoliths, have been collected to support the call for more reliable stock assessments, particularly for red snapper. The activity will also continue to support sampling in the shrimp fishery for effort and fishing area. This information is critical for estimating shrimp trawl bycatch. This funding has not been designated in the NMFS budget, and as a result, will not be available beyond the current project period ending July 31, 1999. This activity will begin August 1, 1999, and could be supported by FY 1999 funds through July 31, 2000 or could be supported by FY 1999 funds through December 31, 1999, and continued using FY 2000 funds. The estimated cost of this activity is \$160,000.00 for funding through July 31, 2000, or \$80,000.00 for funding through December 31, 1999.

There was a discussion regarding the difference between the Trip Ticket Systems and the need to continue shrimp sampling. Poffenberger indicated that this constitutes a difference between the FIN and the ACCSP regarding the trip tickets. He stated that for FIN the trip tickets will establish a sampling universe from which to sample for effort. In the ACCSP, the trip tickets will provide effort. Donaldson indicated that that approach was for Louisiana only, and that other states that establish Trip Ticket Systems may be able to collect all the information via a trip ticket. Watterson suggested from North Carolina's perspective that the trip ticket is not the best way to get effort information. He stated that it has been tried and did not work well. Campbell added that port agents spend a lot of time getting landings information. If the landings are collected from the trip tickets, it will free up the port agents to do more shrimp interviews.

#### **Examine Quota Monitoring Options**

Lukens pointed out that this activity is a request from the participants in the March State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee session for the FIN Committee to begin investigating options to conduct quota monitoring. A concern was expressed at that meeting that the Gulf-wide implementation of Trip Ticket Systems may cause some people to suggest using those systems for quota monitoring, and those programs will not be designed to nor adequate for quota monitoring. Lukens explained that this activity would be handled under the administrative portion of the program and will not require funding from the funds currently under discussion.

#### **Reconciling Texas recreational fishing data and Beaufort Head boat data to Oracle format**

The NMFS is currently in the process of converting all the MRFSS recreational fisheries data files into Oracle format. Since the Texas recreational survey data are not housed in the NMFS database management system, the current plan is that the NMFS will not be converting Texas data. This activity will support the conversion of Texas data to the Oracle format and provide the vehicle for continuous conversion, as Texas data are collected. An effort will also be made to reconcile the Beaufort head boat data into Oracle. This is a 12 month activity. The estimated cost of this activity is \$50,000.00.

#### **Trip Intercepts Module Development**

Campbell suggested adding the development of a module for trip intercepts. Texas is currently conducting some commercial trip intercepts from the inshore shrimp fishery, and she is suggesting a module be developed to handle

shrimp intercept data. Osborn indicated that modules currently planned would likely capture the data Campbell mentioned. No action was taken on that suggestion.

The total for activities discussed above is **\$1,453,000.00** if biological sampling is supported through July 31, 2000 or **\$1,373,000.00** is that activity is supported through December 31, 1999.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee considered the items that were discussed and determined the following prioritization:

- For-hire vessel frame development - Texas High
- For-hire vessel frame development - Florida East Coast High
- FIN Data Management System Development High
- Data Management Prototype - Louisiana High
- Trip Ticket System - Mississippi High
- Trip Ticket System - Alabama High
- Trip Ticket System - Texas High
- Head boat Sampling Medium
- Biological/Shrimp Trip Sampling Medium
- Trip Ticket System Upgrade - Florida Low
- Texas Recreational and Beaufort Head boat Data Reconciliation Low

Again, there was considerable discussion regarding the FIN Data Management System proposed for the GSMFC office. The decision was to leave it in the High category, but to indicate that there was considerable disagreement, and no final resolution of the issue was reached. The system itself is a high priority, the location and staffing of the system is the issue in question.

Donaldson indicated that each agency responsible for items in the funding priority list will be responsible for development a statement of work and a budget for each item. Those items should be sent to Donaldson by April 23, 1999. **M. Osborn moved to adopt the list and priorities above. The motion was seconded.** The question was asked what information would be presented to the State Directors and the NMFS Directorate. It was pointed out that the prioritized list, statements of work, and budgets would be presented. Lukens also indicated that a report based on the Committee's discussions would be presented. **The motion passed with the U.S. Virgin Islands opposed, and the ASMFC and North Carolina abstaining.**

**M. Osborn moved to develop a funding decision process, based on the model developed by the ACCSP, at the next FIN meeting.** Lukens pointed out that the Cooperative Agreement for FY 2000 funds will have to be submitted to the NMFS by September 1, 1999. That would not give the Committee time to develop the decision process prior to that taking place. Osborn suggested that such discussions could take place via telephone conference calls. **The motion was seconded and passed with U.S. Virgin Islands abstaining.**

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

Committee members agreed that the next meeting would be held in Tampa, Florida the week of either September 20, 1999 or October 4, 1999.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.**

## COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (ComFIN)

### MINUTES

La Parguera, Puerto Rico

Thursday, April 8, 1999

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

#### Members

Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Graciela Garcia-Moliner, CFMC, San Juan, PR  
Michelle Kasprzak, (proxy for J. Shepard), LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Corky Perret, (proxy for T. VanDevender), MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Tom Schmidt, NPS, Homestead, FL  
Toby Tobias, USVIDPNR, Frederiksted, St. Croix, USVI  
Carter Watterson, (proxy for D. Lupton), NCDMF, Morehead City, NC

#### Others

Mark Alexander, CTDEP, Old Lyme, CT  
Mike Cahall, ACCSP, Silver Spring, MD  
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Jill Kelly, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Ivan Mateo, USVIDPNR, Frederiksted, St. Croix, USVI  
Joe Moran, ACCSP, Washington, DC  
Edgardo Ojeda, PR Sea Grant, Puerto Rico  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD

#### Staff

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

#### Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as amended.

#### Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on November 12 and 13, 1998 in Tampa, Florida were approved as written.

#### Time Line for Funding

D. Donaldson reported that as a result of the discussion on funding issues during the FIN meeting several tasks were developed, however deadlines were not discussed. Committee members will be responsible for statements of work as follows:

Page Campbell	Charter boat frame in Texas
Joe O'Hop	Charter boat frame in east Florida

Dave Donaldson	Hardware/software and ComFIN prototype
Kerwin Cuevas	Trip ticket program in Mississippi
Kevin Anson	Trip ticket program in Alabama
Page Campbell	Trip ticket program in Texas
Bob Dixon	Head boat and menhaden
Joe O'Hop	Update Florida trip ticket program
John Poffenberger	Biological Sampling
Maury Osborn	Catch/effort data and integration of head boat data

Statements of work on these projects are due to D. Donaldson on April 23, 1999.

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

J. Poffenberger distributed the list of personnel with access to confidential data and asked that anyone having changes, needing access, or an account, contact Ken Zinniger or Poffenberger.

**Discussion of Upcoming Meetings**

D. Donaldson reviewed the schedule of upcoming meetings with Committee members.

The Social/Economic Work Group is tentatively scheduled to meet on June 15, 1999 in Miami, Florida and has been tasked with developing a mail survey section for the QA/QC document.

The FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group is meeting May 11, 1999 and will be addressing the similarities in the two programs. Since this work group will be meeting annually, standard operating procedures will be established at this meeting, as well as discussions about data management systems, quota monitoring, etc.

The regional port samplers will meet from July 20 to 22, 1999 in Tampa, Florida. The samplers met last year and agreed that the meeting was very productive and beneficial. There was Committee discussion on having a jack identification workshop at the upcoming port samplers meeting, and J. O'Hop agreed to supply the fish and personnel for conducting this workshop. D. Matos requested holding a port samplers meeting for agents in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. D. Donaldson will coordinate with D. Matos and T. Tobias on plans for this meeting.

The Data Collection Work Group was tasked with designing and refining the implementation of a trip ticket program and the bulk of this work has been completed. Another task was to work with the ACCSP on discards and releases. Committee members agreed that since the ACCSP seems to be further along in this area, and the bycatch issues in the Atlantic are not the same as in the Gulf, it would be prudent for the work group to gather information and flesh out details before attending a joint meeting with the ACCSP. Therefore, a tentative date for a work group meeting is August 10, 1999 in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Data Collection Procedures Work Group has been charged with continued development of the ComFIN Procedures Document which explains data collection procedures. Donaldson suggested that a conference call and work assignments may be suitable at this time, with a meeting to be held later in the year.

Now that much of the planning for ComFIN has been completed and the program is beginning its operational mode, J. Poffenberger suggested that the Program Design Document be used by the various work groups as a guide to help identify priorities and direction.

**Presentation of Louisiana Trip Ticket Program**

Jill Kelly of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) gave a presentation on the Louisiana Trip Ticket Program which began on January 1, 1999. Kelly reviewed the procedures manual which outlines the responsibilities of the dealers and fishermen. Training workshops were held throughout the state, as well as in LDWF offices in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Training for dealers was available on a walk-in basis at these two offices. Dealers are required to use LDWF established trip ticket forms to document commercial landings transactions. Another form used is the monthly submission sheet which summarizes the trip tickets for the month. Kelly also described the scanning process and noted that the anticipated number of tickets to be scanned will be approximately 500,000 per year, or 2,500 per day. Kelly described for Committee members the entire trip ticket process and fielded inquiries during the question and answer session. In summary Kelly noted problem areas and recommendations for start up of a trip ticket program, highly recommending that a pilot study be done before implementation. Kelly noted that J. Shepard is currently working on a report of the trip ticket program which will be available upon request.

### **Discussion of the Direction of ComFIN**

D. Donaldson noted that until recently the ComFIN program was in a planning mode and now is at a point where implementation is beginning to take place. M. Osborn noted that there are other facets to this transitional stage, namely from Southeast to Gulf and Caribbean planning. Osborn noted that the ACCSP developed a white paper outlining scope to include all living marine resources, endangered species, marine mammals, etc. With the FIN program there has been an emphasis on finfish, shellfish, and commercial and recreational landings, and Osborn questioned whether a re-examination of the scope of ComFIN is in order. Several suggestions were made by Committee members including use of the Program Design Document, the possibility of having another facilitated session, and more integration between the NMFS and the states. L. Kline noted that the ACCSP has been experiencing a similar situation with transition, and suggested that the FIN finalize the Program Design Document. Both state and federal partners of the ACCSP, have been asked to review the Program Design Document in relation to where their particular agency is in terms of the ACCSP program design. J. O'Hop noted the importance of having involvement and familiarity with the program at the state director and regional level.

After lengthy discussion, Committee members agreed that a FIN ad hoc work group be formed to examine the Program Design Document and develop an implementation strategy. Members of this work group will include a representative from NMFS Statistics, J. Poffenberger, T. Tobias, D. Matos, R. Lukens, and P. Campbell. This work group will meet prior to the fall FIN meeting. Staff will notify members of time and location of the meeting and will provide them with copies of the ACCSP Program Design Document.

### **Other Business**

D. Donaldson reported that one of the subjects addressed at the last ACCSP Operations Committee meeting, was the possible implementation an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system in the Southeast. This system is currently being used in the northeast, and Bill Cole suggested including the Gulf states during the development of this system in the Southeast. J. Poffenberger noted, that from the federal perspective, including the Gulf states would not cause a significant increase in the cost of this project. Poffenberger also stated that federal regulations would have to be changed to accommodate an IVR system. The ACCSP will be funding a prototype which will be developed for use with about 30 king and Spanish mackerel dealers on the Atlantic coast. Poffenberger noted that the red snapper fishery and the net fisheries for Spanish and king mackerel would benefit from an IVR system in the Gulf. Committee discussion followed and it was agreed that an IVR system in the Gulf would be considered at a later time when more information becomes available. T. Tobias noted that although the U.S. Virgin Islands does not have quota monitoring at this time, they would like to be kept informed on the subject of IVR.

Donaldson reported that a scholarship fund has been set up in memory of Ron Schmied. Anyone wishing to make a contribution to this scholarship fund, may contact Donaldson for more information.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.**

**SOUTHEAST RECREATIONAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK [RecFIN(SE)] MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, September 21, 1999**  
**Tampa, Florida**

Vice-Chairman Craig Lilyestrom called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

**Members**

Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Page Campbell, (proxy for L. Green), TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Doug Frugé, USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS  
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Rick Leard, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Joe O'Hop, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL

**Others**

Richard Cody, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL  
Jennifer Lee, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Eric Prince, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Tony Lowery, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS

**Staff**

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

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted as presented.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on April 6, 1999 in La Parguera, Puerto Rico were approved as amended.

**Presentation of NMFS Activities Regarding Tournament Sampling**

T. Lowery of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) National Seafood Inspection Laboratory (NSIL) in Pascagoula, Mississippi gave a presentation on the development of the NMFS Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Tournament Registration and Reporting Program which should be operational in 2000. Lowery reported that various offices within NMFS handle different components of this program which include, billfish tournament monitoring, registration, a website which handles registration and self reporting for shark tournaments, and the development of a list of tournaments. Since the program is new, NMFS management will be making a decision on the appropriate office to administer the program.

T. Lowery reported that new requirements for HMS tournaments went into effect on May 28, 1999. One requirement is that Atlantic and Gulf HMS tournament operators, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, must register with NMFS at least four weeks prior to the start of the tournament. If requested by NMFS, these tournaments are required to report HMS catches.

Lowery noted that the first task in initiating this program is to identify tournaments. The NSIL is using internet searches, as well as newspaper and magazine advertising to identify tournaments and has developed a tournament data base with about 350 tournaments listed for 1999. There are a significant number of tournaments not yet identified, therefore, NSIL is collaborating with staff from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) in an effort to identify tournaments. The second task is to get tournament operators to register their tournaments. Once a

tournament is identified, NMFS staff will send out letters explaining the registration and reporting requirement. The third requirement of the program is deciding what landings information to collect. Possibilities include, total landings, catch per unit of effort, and bycatch.

Lowery then gave examples of possible data collection situations which included billfish tournaments interviewing boat captains, rodeo tournaments interviewing participants, or self reporting by either boat captains or participants. Lowery noted that the main advantages for separating the HMS Tournament Registration and Reporting Program from the need to collect CPUE and bycatch data are that NMFS would be able to obtain the HMS tournament landings information economically, and the CPUE and bycatch information would be focused to meet the needs of stock assessment groups. In closing, Lowery stated that he believed that given the budget constraints for FY2000, this is the method most likely to be selected by NMFS management.

E. Prince responded that the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Miami has been responsible for billfish tournaments for 28 years in the Gulf, then expanding to include Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Prince stated that as a result of the 1988 billfish management plan, they instituted data collection from tournaments, and the registration program was implemented last year. Prince noted that his office, in conjunction with B. Sutter's office, is required to develop a list of registered billfish tournaments every two weeks. Prince then went on to discuss the difficulties of identifying billfish tournaments using the Internet.

R. Lukens noted that this Committee has a general interest in dealing with the tournament issue, and would like to get all the expertise available. Lukens noted that he contacted Spencer Garret of NSIL and discussed data collection and data management activities being done in partnership with the FIN program, and the difficulties that arise when individual agencies go forward with programs that are uncoordinated. Lukens stated that the RecFIN(SE) Committee believed that it was important to begin discussing fishing tournaments in general, with the goal of making tournament sampling programs more effective for fisheries management. T. Lowery noted that a workshop on HMS tournaments is being developed by S. Garret of the Pascagoula Laboratory and will be held this year.

Following Committee discussion, D. Donaldson noted that the RecFIN Biological/Environmental Work Group has been charged with addressing the issue of sampling fishing tournaments and they have developed a list of tournaments in each state. The Committee also discussed the complexities of reporting and registration requirements for tournaments. Since the Biological/Environmental Work Group will be investigating tournaments, R. Lukens suggested that staff from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center who have been involved with billfish tournaments, and NSIL staff be invited to participate in the process.

### **Work Group Reports**

Biological/Environmental Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that at the last RecFIN(SE) Committee meeting, the Biological/Environmental Work Group had been asked to prioritize several ongoing tasks (Attachment A). A matrix outlining the various tasks was developed by Donaldson and M. Osborn and was used by the Work Group in determining which tasks should take precedence. After meeting via conference call, the Work Group recommended that the Committee focus on night fishing sampling and tournament sampling. Mail ballots were sent to the FIN Committee and these two items were approved. The issue of tournament sampling has been discussed at this meeting and will continue. The Work Group suggested that night fishing activities be initiated in 2000, to include compiling a site register. Donaldson noted that the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S-FFMC) met and discussed night fishing as an activity for 2000.

R. Lukens explained that the S-FFMC took recommendations from the FIN Committee to select items to be funded under the FIN for 2000. Lukens noted some of the uncertainties associated with sampling night fishing which include, location, cost, remote sites, etc. Because of these and other issues, the S-FFMC recommended that no money be spent at this time on the development of a night fishing site register, but that the Committee should further investigate and consider these issues in order to determine if this is still a high priority issue. After discussing this issue, **the RecFIN(SE) Committee made a recommendation to charge the Biological/Environmental Work Group with further exploration of night fishing, including anticipated problems and benefits, while considering the issues raised by the S-FFMC.** Lukens also noted that the S-FFMC suggested that any funding which might have been used for night fishing, could be used to increase recreational interviews. P. Campbell will provide the Biological/Environmental Work Group with a copy of the report done by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department on day versus night fishing.

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

D. Donaldson reported that the Charter Boat Pilot Survey is funded through December 1999 and has been identified as a task for 2000. Texas is also considering implementing this methodology and is currently compiling a list of charter boat vessels. Donaldson stated that the Charter Boat Pilot Survey has not yet been evaluated, but is scheduled for the week of October 11 in order to be able to present the results to the November meeting of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC). Donaldson then noted the concern expressed by the charter boat industry since NMFS has not yet reviewed the methodology used in the survey, and the importance of having the cooperation of the charter boat captains.

R. Lukens stated that the pilot period ended on December 31, 1998 and that nine months should have been ample time to evaluate the data. Lukens noted that the longer the pilot survey is run, the longer the duplication of effort and expense, and he suggested that when a decision is made it should be retroactive to January 1999. In discussing the situation, the Committee reviewed the evolution of the evaluation plan. A list of evaluation criteria was developed by the Charter Boat Team and will be used by the evaluators in assessing the methodology of the Charter Boat Pilot Survey. D. Donaldson noted that he, D. VanVoorhees, J. O'Hop, M. Kasprzak and possibly E. Cortes will attend the evaluation. R. Lukens suggested that a written charge be given to the evaluation team asking for recommendations.

After lengthy Committee discussion on the evaluation process, **R. Lukens made the following motion: the reviewers of the Charter Boat Pilot Survey will be provided historical background of the study, a formal presentation of each methodology involved in the study including the estimates that resulted from those studies, an expectation of a recommendation regarding the performance of each methodology based on the criteria provided and a single recommendation on a preferred methodology, and that the reviewers collaborate and provide a single report to the RecFIN(SE) Committee within two weeks of the evaluation. The motion was seconded and passed with NMFS opposed.**

### **Election of Officers**

C. Lilyestrom of Puerto Rico was elected Chairman and K. Anson of Alabama Vice Chairman.

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.**

RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group  
Meeting Summary  
April 5, 1999

The meeting convened at 9:05 a.m. The following members and others were present:

Members

Jeff Brust, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Tom Schmidt, NPS, Homestead, FL  
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Toby Tobias, USVI/DPNR, Frederiksted, VI  
Ivan Mateo, USVI/DPNR, Frederiksted, VI  
Luz Maria Yoshira, DRNA, Rio Pietra, PR

Staff

David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Purpose of the Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the purposes of the meeting were, in conjunction with the Caribbean, begin discussing the development of marine recreational fishery surveys methodologies for the Caribbean; review of compilation of metadata related to changes in fishing regulations; review materials concerning night fishing activities and develop recommendations; and develop sampling methodologies for fishing tournaments.

Development of marine recreational fishery surveys methodologies for the Caribbean

D. Donaldson reviewed some of the issues discussed at the last meeting. The group discussed some of the possibilities for conducting marine recreational surveys in the Caribbean. It was agreed that an intercept survey would be the best method for collecting data for catch in this region. For effort information, the group discussed several viable methods such as a roving count survey or an aerial survey. C. Lilyestrom stated that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has provided funding for the Puerto Rico Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Program. C. Lilyestrom stated that the goal of the project is to collect, store, analyze, manage and disseminate fishery-dependent, biological and socio-economical data on the marine recreational resources, their users, and their environment, in Puerto Rico, in support of management policies, strategies and tactics. There are several jobs associated with the project such as conducting a preliminary survey to obtain basic descriptors of the marine recreational fishery in Puerto Rico; preparation of data forms, logbooks, databases, intercept site lists and maps, standardized species codes, etc.; collection of data from tournament or "big game" fisheries; estimation of catch and fishing effort of marine anglers fishing from head/charter boats, shoreline, and private and rental boats; and development of data entry, analysis and reporting procedures. T. Tobias stated that the U.S. Virgin Islands utilized W/B monies to fund a recreational data assessment program on St. Thomas and St. Croix. He provided an overview of the program. The U.S. Virgin Islands utilizes a roving creel survey with non-uniform probability sampling. The main objective of the program is to gather information on the activity patterns of recreational fishermen including catch, harvest, catch per unit effort by species, and by area fished. This information is fundamental in the formulation of management options to sustain the recreational fishery in the area. St. Croix and St. Thomas are divided into six and five sampling areas, respectively. Field work consists of fishermen interviews and fishermen counts from shoreline, piers and docks.

M. Osborn offered to provide some assistance to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico in developing the survey

procedures and methods. She stated that NMFS would send the amount of funding it would take for the contractor to conduct the MRFSS in the Caribbean to U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. She also stated NMFS would send the species, water body and others code lists. The NMFS will provide a copy of the current MRFSS data entry program as well as the site selection program to U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. D. Donaldson stated that he would send Puerto Rico a copy of the current site register data base file structure. M. Osborn stated that the current contractor is exploring the possibility of using scanning technology to enter the recreational data. The group expressed an interest in this work and asked to be kept up-to-date on this activity. M. Osborn stated that she would provide one of the MRFSS staff member to assist to U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico in statistical estimation procedures and survey design. M. Osborn stated that she could provide this person during the summer months. D. Donaldson stated that the GSMFC could provide some support for this activity as well.

The group discussed the establishment of a marine recreational fishing license in the Caribbean. C. Lilyestrom stated that Puerto Rico is currently working on establishing a marine recreational fishing license. A bill in the legislature has already been passed establishing a license. Puerto Rico is has been authorized to implement a license program following approval of new regulations. The new regulations will go to public hearings in the near future. T. Tobias stated that the U.S. Virgin Islands do not have a marine recreational fishing license and the prospects for establishing one do not look hopeful. However, although there is no license, there are required stamps for harvesting various species in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It was noted that a fishing license provides a very useful sampling frame (if the license is designed to collect the appropriate information) and RecFIN(SE) is examining the possibility of using fishing license data bases as sampling frames. C. Lilyestrom stated that he would send the information regarding the fishing licenses to T. Tobias for his use in attempting to implement a marine recreational fishing license in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

#### Review of compilation of metadata related to changes in fishing regulations

D. Donaldson stated that the group discussed this issue at the last work group meeting. The group had decided to utilize existing information (GSMFC law summary documents) instead of recompiling the information. The group stated that the information is available for the Gulf region but wondered about the Caribbean. T. Tobias stated that the U.S. Virgin Islands currently compile this type of information for their jurisdiction and has some historical information. C. Lilyestrom stated that Puerto Rico is in the process of implementing a procedure for compiling this information. The group will continue to pursue this issue and believed the next step will be the development of a metadata module for the FIN data management system.

#### Night Fishing Activities

D. Donaldson stated that the Work Group addressed this issue at the last meeting and the group determined that the next step will be to examine the phone and intercept data to identify areas of significant night fishing in the Southeast. D. Donaldson presented the night fishing data compiled from the MRFSS telephone and intercept data. The group looked at night fishing distributions by mode and wave as well as private versus public access sites. Again, the shore mode has the highest occurrence of night fishing and most of the night fishing occurred at public sites. Also, the group examined the types of species that are targeted and caught during night fishing activities. After reviewing and discussing the data, the group decided that the next step would be to continue collecting information for the MRFSS site register. Information is currently being compiled about night fishing although this was just recently implemented. It is important for samplers to assess the presence of night fishing at a site and assign some type of pressure for that activity. The pressures may be obtained via roving counts or existing methods. The group decided that at the end of 1999, the information about night fishing in the site register should be examined to determine areas of significant activity. Also, the group discussed conducting an analysis of catch rates for species caught during the day versus night. Although the data are not overly abundant, there is enough to make some preliminary assessment about any differences between day and night fishing.

#### Development of Fishing Tournament Sampling Methods

D. Donaldson stated that the work group has been tasked with developing a sampling protocol for fishing tournaments. He presented a list of existing saltwater fishing tournaments for the Southeast Region. D. Donaldson stated that he sent out a request for information about fishing tournament sampling methods prior to the meeting to help with the discussions. It was apparent that there are not many sampling activities regarding tournaments in the Southeast.

He noted that he did receive some comment from Mark Farber from the NMFS Billfish Tournament Sampling program. M. Farber was concerned that RecFIN(SE) was not going to include the NMFS program. The group noted that appears that the NMFS program is not aware of what is occurring in RecFIN(SE) and someone in the NMFS should provide some briefing to the NMFS Billfish Tournament Sampling program. D. Donaldson also noted that Ron Lukens talked with Tony Lowery with the NMFS Highly Migratory Program. That program is currently in the process of developing sampling strategies for fishing tournaments for high migratory species. It was suggested that the RecFIN(SE) coordinate with the Highly Migratory Program in the development of these strategies. Unfortunately, T. Lowery was unable to attend the work group meeting but will be kept informed about the RecFIN(SE) activities regarding fishing tournament sampling. The group discussed possible methods for sampling tournaments. M. Osborn stated that a first step may be to develop a program where anglers voluntarily provide data about their tournament activities. This information can be collected via the Internet. M. Osborn said that the MRFSS could design the data form. T. Tobias stated that the U.S. Virgin Islands currently collects information from fishing tournaments. He has a data form that they use to collect data. The group decided that the U.S. Virgin Islands form would be a good starting point and the MRFSS staff can utilize that to develop the data entry form. It was also noted that there could be some type of incentives built into this approach such as providing feedback to the anglers in the form of posting summarized data about types of species landed, numbers, weights, etc. as well as providing a list of participating tournaments in the program as a form of advertising. The group agreed that for this approach to be successful, there needs to be some interaction with the tournament contacts. The contacts will be very important in getting participants to participate in the program so it is essential that the tournament contacts be involved. If the contacts can be sold on the benefit of the sampling program, that will help ensure the tournament participants will provide the needed information.

**Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.**

**FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK  
MINUTES  
Wednesday, September 22, 1999  
Tampa, Florida**

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

**Members**

Kevin Ansen, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Guy Davenport, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Doug Frugé, USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS  
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Christine Johnson, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Rick Leard, (proxy for S. Atran) GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe O'Hop, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL  
Dave VanVoorhees, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD

**Staff**

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

**Others**

Carol Ballew, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Jennifer Lee, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Joe Moran, ACCSP, Washington, DC  
Martha Norris, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted as amended.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on April 7, 1999 in La Parguera, Puerto Rico were approved with minor changes.

**Discussion of Data Collection Plan**

R. Lukens reported on the development of a data collection plan for commercial fisheries. A list of finfish and invertebrate species in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean was distributed to Committee members. Lukens stated that he hoped to be able to get the data on the priority species for a three to five year period to be used as a starting point. This will give the group a number to work with and determine the number of samples necessary. After this process has been utilized for a year or two, stock assessment and other needs should become apparent.

G. Davenport stated that ideally an assessment biologist from each state would be involved in the process to determine what needs to be done in which areas, and to assist in the development of a statistically valid survey design. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) personnel and port agents would also be involved. Davenport explained the importance of coordinating this effort on all levels to ensure success and inquired as to the possibility of funding

for state assessment personnel and meetings. D. Donaldson stated that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) would be able to pay travel expenses for state personnel to attend a meeting. Donaldson also noted that at the Data Collection Work Group meeting held recently in Atlanta, this subject was discussed under the Biological Sampling module of ComFIN. This module provides the basis for the types of information that needs to be collected and a basic design. After Committee discussion **R. Lukens moved to have staff plan for a meeting early in 2000 with each state being comfortable with membership on the Stock Assessment Panel or providing other recommendations. Also included would be two or three port agents and Caribbean personnel. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** D. Matos noted that a meeting of Caribbean port agents will take place in a few weeks and this subject can be discussed at that time. It was also noted that the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is dealing with this issue and will hold a meeting in December which D. Donaldson will be attending.

There was general discussion by the Committee on the species list and it was agreed that this is a limited list on which to collect data. Several adjustments were made to this list which will be presented at the Stock Assessment meeting for further refinement.

### **Subcommittee and Work Group Reports**

**Administrative Subcommittee** - D. Donaldson reported that the Administrative Subcommittee met via conference call in July (Attachment A). One of the issues discussed was changing the meeting schedule since it had been envisioned that eventually meeting once a year would be sufficient. Also, the last two fall FIN meetings were adversely affected by tropical storms and hurricanes. Initially the RecFIN(SE) and the ComFIN Committees each met twice a year for one and one-half days and now meet for one-half day each, with the FIN Committee meeting for one full day. In consideration of these facts, the Subcommittee recommended that these Committees meet once a year. This schedule would allow time for discussion of funding issues and development of statements of work well within appropriate deadlines for submission. **R. Lukens moved to accept the recommendation of the Administrative Subcommittee to have the FIN, RecFIN(SE), and ComFIN Committees meet once a year in early summer. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Donaldson reported that the Administrative Subcommittee also addressed the issue of head boat sampling at the request of Andy Kemmerer. The Subcommittee nominated B. Dixon and D. Donaldson for membership on an ad hoc work group and requested that the FIN Committee select appropriate personnel from NMFS, Texas, and Florida for inclusion in the work group. Donaldson also noted that the ACCSP is conducting a pilot for-hire (both charter boats and head boats) survey similar to the one conducted in the Gulf of Mexico. This survey will be conducted in South Carolina and will compare the mandatory log book with the captain's telephone survey and the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) random digit dialing. The Subcommittee recommended that the FIN Committee await the outcome of the South Carolina pilot study before making any decisions concerning head boat sampling in the Gulf and the Caribbean. B. Dixon noted that the proposal for the South Carolina pilot study has been submitted to the ACCSP Operations Committee but has not yet been approved for funding. Since this is a high priority item it is anticipated that funding will be approved. **R. Lukens moved to accept the recommendations of the Administrative Subcommittee concerning head boat sampling. The motion passed unanimously.** The Committee then addressed the issue of membership to the ad hoc work group. D. VanVoorhees was suggested as the NMFS representative, P. Campbell from Texas, and J. O'Hop from Florida. The Committee also agreed to consider adding a member from the ACCSP at a later time.

**FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group** - D. Donaldson reported that the FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group met in May in Washington, D.C. and noted that the initial task for this Work Group was to compare the program design documents for the FIN and the ACCSP (Attachment B). The Work Group agreed to identify areas that the two programs are working on and coordinate activities to ensure comparability and compatibility. Donaldson noted that one of the goals of both FIN and ACCSP is to have the regional fishery management councils utilize these programs for their data needs. The Work Group discussed various ways of getting the councils more involved in the process.

Donaldson reported that as a result of the work group meeting, one recommendation made to the FIN Committee was to form an ad hoc work group to review definitions. Other areas where both programs are in developmental stages include, data management, implementation strategies, permitting and quota monitoring, and standard codes. Since the ACCSP data management system is up and running, the FIN will utilize this to aid in

developing their data management prototype. Donaldson also noted that the ACCSP is conducting implementation meetings with the Atlantic states. Donaldson reported that both the FIN and the ACCSP Permitting Work Groups will hold a joint meeting in 2000. Donaldson also attended a meeting of the ACCSP Standard Codes Committee on behalf of the ComFIN Data Collection Work Group.

As a result of the recommendation made by the FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group, **R. Lukens moved to charge the Administrative Subcommittee with the task of reviewing and establishing compatible definitions with the ACCSP program design document. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Lukens also addressed the issue of the need for a closer relationship with the councils, and noted that he and R. Leard of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) had discussed the matter. Leard noted that the January 2000 GMFMC meeting would be an opportune time for the FIN Committee to give a presentation on the activities of the FIN program. **R. Lukens moved to accept the Administrative Subcommittee report and the FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**FIN Implementation Work Group** - D. Donaldson reported that the FIN Implementation Work Group met in August 1999 having been charged with developing a funding decision process since there is now dedicated funding for the FIN program (Attachment C). Donaldson noted that there has been a difference of opinion on how the GulfFIN funds should be allocated. The Work Group determined that it was not their decision to make and recommended that this issue should be brought to the GSMFC State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S-FFMC) at their October 1999 meeting. **P. Campbell moved to accept the recommendation of the FIN Implementation Work Group to have the GSMFC State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee address the issue of expenditure of GulfFIN funds, either for Gulf state partners only or both state and federal partners. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Donaldson noted that when funding becomes available in the Caribbean, the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council will provide oversight for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

During discussion on the need for a FIN implementation strategy, Donaldson noted that state personnel in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida are conducting the MRFSS, however in Texas it will be necessary to determine if their data is compatible. The Gulf states are currently working on implementing trip ticket programs. Donaldson noted that there was discussion on placing a high priority on collecting social and economic data and possibly doing some preliminary work on collecting these data as well as catch and effort data. S. Holiman noted that within the next year the Southeast Regional Office of NMFS will be conducting a pilot survey in North Carolina and Louisiana using the permit database as the sampling frame. M. Osborn had requested that this Committee consider moving the timetable up for the collection of commercial social and economic data. Donaldson noted that the ACCSP is doing a pilot study in Georgia on how best to collect this information, and it may be beneficial to await the outcome of this pilot study. Donaldson also noted that the FIN Social/Economic Work Group is recommending that they work with the ACCSP Economic and Social Sciences Committee. There was Committee discussion on the need for commitment to fund the collection and analysis of social and economic data. R. Lukens noted that funding for the GulfFIN program may increase in the future, allowing for additional social and economic data collection and analysis. The Committee agreed to await the outcome of the ACCSP study to pursue the issue of social and economic data collection and analysis.

The Committee reviewed the funding decision process developed by the Implementation Work Group at the meeting held in August. Discussion ensued on the budget process, to include submission of projects for funding. R. Leard requested the sharing of information with the GMFMC on a regular basis, and R. Lukens suggested that GSMFC staff be invited to attend the upcoming NMFS/GMFMC Operations Plan meeting. Lukens will pursue this with L. Simpson and B. Hogarth. After Committee discussion, **R. Lukens moved to delete the following from the list of criteria developed by the Work Group: *the initial investment in the project is for a one time capitalization to build the FIN infrastructure, rather than being operational in nature.* The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Lukens also moved to delete: *the project is supported by matching partner funds, where applicable.* The motion was seconded.** After further Committee discussion, **Lukens withdrew the last motion.**

**K. Cuevas moved to accept the Implementation Work Group Report with the deletion of the above mentioned item. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Social/Economic Work Group** - D. Donaldson reported to the Committee on a meeting held in May by the Social/Economic Work Group (Attachment D). The purpose of the meeting was to review the social and economic activities under FIN and develop Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) for mail surveys. Donaldson noted that through the MRFSS, NMFS is conducting an add-on to collect social and economic data. There was concern by the

Work Group that the FIN had not been more involved in the development of this add-on. The Work Group recommended that the FIN, via the Social/Economic Work Group, become more involved in the development of social and economic data collection and management activities of the MRFSS. S. Holiman noted that there was not an opportunity provided for input by the GMFMC or the GSMFC in the southeast since the survey instrument being utilized was developed in the northeast and also because of time constraints. Holiman also stated that, where possible, sufficient lead time be provided when a survey effort is going to occur so that partners being impacted will have time for input and comment. D. VanVoorhees requested that the Work Group include B. Gentner, an economist from NMFS headquarters. After Committee discussion, the wording of the above recommendation was changed to read: **It was recommended that the FIN, via the Social/Economic Work Group, participate in all aspects of the development of social and economic data collection and management activities of the MRFSS. R. Lukens moved to accept the amended recommendation of the Social/Economic Work Group. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**R. Lukens moved that the FIN, through its Social/Economic Work Group, be considered a full partner in all aspects of collection and management of social and economic data. The motion was seconded and passed with GMFMC opposed, Florida opposed, and NMFS abstaining.**

Donaldson reported that the Work Group discussed the perception that the social and economic data are not analyzed on a regular basis and are not regularly used in management decisions. The Social/Economic Work Group recommended that when an economic add-on is being conducted in the Southeast, additional time be set aside at wave meetings to review the social and economic data. After Committee discussion on this recommendation, **S. Holiman moved to change the wording of the recommendation to: when an economic add-on is being conducted in the southeast, opportunities be made available for the partners to review the social and economic data. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Donaldson reported that the Social/Economic Work Group then discussed the for-hire sector and decided that they will not make any recommendations pending the outcome of the ACCSP pilot study regarding social and economic data.

Donaldson noted that the Work Group discussed the need for the ACCSP and FIN to use the same methods for collecting social and economic data (mail, phone, interview), however some members believed that it wasn't necessary for the method of collection be the same as long as the types of data collected were the same. Donaldson stated that after the ACCSP pilot study is evaluated a similar study could be conducted in the Gulf or Caribbean using the same methods.

The Social/Economic Work Group then addressed membership in this group and discussed the fact that there were not many economists or sociologists on the Work Group. Now that there are more social and economic issues being addressed, the Work Group recommended that the FIN Committee readdress the membership of the Social/Economic Work Group. The group recommended that Ron Lukens and Lisa Kline be removed from the group and 2 - 4 people with social and economic expertise be placed on the Work Group. Donaldson suggested that a letter be sent to FIN Committee members requesting names for membership on the Work Group. Membership should include personnel from federal, state, and Caribbean agencies, as well as universities. R. Lukens noted that J. Moran suggested that a representative from the ACCSP Committee on Social and Economic Sciences also be included. D. VanVoorhees suggested that a NMFS headquarters economist be included on the Work Group. **R. Leard moved to remove R. Lukens, L. Kline, and B. Kojis from the Social/Economic Work Group and have staff send a letter to FIN Committee members requesting nominations to this Work Group. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Donaldson reported that the Social/Economic Work Group then addressed the inclusion of a section on mail surveys in the Quality Assurance/Quality Control document. The Work Group developed this section and it was distributed to Committee members for their review prior to this meeting. **S. Holiman moved to adopt the mail survey section for inclusion in the Quality Assurance/Quality Control document. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Discussion on Quota Monitoring**

D. Donaldson reported that the issue of quota monitoring was raised during the recent ComFIN Implementation

meeting and it was suggested that a list be compiled of species currently being quota monitored. Donaldson noted that members of the Biological/Environmental Work Group will be working with the ACCSP on recreational quota monitoring and suggested that it would be beneficial to have the same involvement concerning commercial quota monitoring. After lengthy Committee discussion, **R. Lukens moved to give the issue of commercial quota monitoring to the Data Collection Work Group to identify quota monitoring programs currently in place, including IVR, and to examine alternatives to monitor quotas. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Discussion of Establishing For-Hire as Separate Sector**

D. Donaldson reported that this subject was a result of the ComFIN Implementation meeting and it was suggested that the for-hire industry be considered a separate sector from the recreational fishery. D. Van Voorhees noted that this has been discussed frequently in the Recreational Statistics Subcommittee of the ACCSP for both data collection and management purposes. R. Lukens noted that the for-hire sector is approached from a different perspective than the private boat and shore mode fisheries, and there are more implications for management than for data collection. R. Leard noted that the Magnuson Act clearly defines recreational and commercial fish. Committee discussion ensued and it was agreed that the Committee will take no action on this issue at this time.

#### **Operations Plan**

D. Donaldson reported to the Committee that all FIN activities for 1999 had either been completed or would be by the end of this year. A status sheet was distributed for review (Attachment E).

The FIN Operations Plan for 2000 was reviewed by the Committee and the revised version of this document constitutes an administrative record for this portion of the meeting. **D. Frugé moved to approve the 2000 FIN Operations Plan with inclusion of the modifications discussed and any other editorial changes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised Operations Plan will be mailed to Committee members.

#### **Review of FY2000 FIN Funding Priorities**

A list of activities for funding consideration in 2000 was distributed to Committee members (Attachment F). Donaldson reported that these activities were accepted by the S-FFMC for inclusion in the 2000 Cooperative Agreement.

#### **Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program**

J. Moran reported that the ACCSP has been working on prioritizing funding activities and developing a funding process. A series of implementation meetings were held in various locations on the Atlantic coast. This was an educational activity for state personnel who were not familiar with the operation of the ACCSP, and also encouraged personnel to compare their current data collection and management processes with the ACCSP model. These implementation meetings were also utilized to assist personnel from various state and federal agencies to recognize and alleviate duplication of effort. Moran noted that quota monitoring is a good example of this situation since several northeast states had IVR systems as well as the NMFS northeast region. At the implementation meetings these agencies began discussing ways to eliminate this duplication of effort and expense. As a result of these successful meetings, Moran stated that he will recommend to the ACCSP Coordinating Council that regional implementation meetings continue to be held.

Moran reported Charlie Treat has been retained to do public outreach for the ACCSP Socio-Economic Pilot Study which is being conducted in the northeast for the summer flounder. The Socio-Economic Pilot Study will begin interviews in the northeast in January 2000. A socio-economic study of the blue crab fishery in Georgia is ongoing. Treat will also develop an overall strategy for public outreach for the ACCSP.

Moran reported on several issues that will be considered by the ACCSP Coordinating Council at their upcoming meeting. A confidentiality policy has been drafted for review by the Council. The Computer Technical Committee has been reviewing proposals for the location of the host site for the ACCSP data management system, and their recommendation will be presented to the Coordinating Council. Moran stated that the Coordinating Council will also consider funding proposals received as a result of a Request for Proposal (RFP).

**Time Schedule and Location for Next Meeting**

R. Lukens moved to have the next FIN meeting the week of June 12, 2000 in Austin, Texas with an alternate of the week of June 19 in San Antonio, Texas or New Orleans, Louisiana. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Other Business**

R. Lukens reported that he and D. Van Voorhees recently attended the Pacific RecFIN meeting and gave a presentation on the FIN program and a report on the Charter Boat Survey. The Pacific RecFIN Committee expressed interest in the Charter Boat Survey and invited Lukens and Van Voorhees back to give a full report when the Survey is finalized.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.**

FIN Administrative Subcommittee  
Conference Call Summary  
July 21, 1999

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m and the following people were present:

Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Maury, Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Doug Frugé, FWS, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Purpose of Meeting

R. Lukens stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss a proposed change in the meeting schedule for FIN as well as select members for an ad hoc work to address sampling methods for head boats.

Meeting Schedule Changes

R. Lukens noted that D. Donaldson distributed some thoughts about modification of the FIN meeting schedule. The proposed changes to the meeting schedule were to meet only once a year. The annual meeting would be held during the summer which would allow for planning of funding activities to be discussed and timely submission of the appropriate funding documents. It would also allow for enough time for the appropriate bodies in the Gulf and Caribbean to review and approve the list of funding activities before the funding document submission deadline. M. Osborn stated that she did not have a problem with the proposed changes but pointed out that there still needs to be a funding decision process developed by FIN. The funding decision process will provide long-term guidance to the program regarding the activities that will be funded. The development of this process will be addressed by the Implementation Work Group in August 1999. **The group recommended that the proposed change to the FIN meeting schedule be forwarded to the FIN Committee for discussion at the September meeting.** The revised meeting schedule proposal is attached.

Ad Hoc Head Boat Work Group

R. Lukens stated that the group needed to select the appropriate personnel for an ad hoc work group to address sampling of head boats. The following personnel were nominated and will be forwarded to the FIN Committee for their consideration at the September meeting:

Bob Dixon	Texas representative
Dave Donaldson	Florida representative
MRFSS representative	

The FIN committee will select the appropriate personnel for the spots that specific people were not identified. The group then discussed the charge to this work group. It was suggested that the group should explore the current methods for sampling head boats as well as examine alternative methods. J. Shepard stated that this has been done in the past and a decision needs to be made if the current captain's telephone survey method is adequate to survey head boats. J. Shepard stated that it would be better if only one method was used to collect information from charter and head boats. B. Dixon noted that although charter and head boats operate similarly in Louisiana, that is not always the case in the rest of the Gulf of Mexico. It may be premature to believe that the captain's telephone survey is the best method for

sampling head boats. B. Dixon noted that the ACCSP will be conducting a study in South Carolina which will examine three methods (MRFSS random-digit dialing, captain's telephone survey, and 100% mandatory log books) for sampling both charter and head boats. It might be beneficial for the FIN to await the outcome of this study before making any decisions about head boat sampling methods. R. Lukens suggested that the FIN recommend to the ACCSP that the South Carolina for-hire study be funded for 2000. It was suggested that the FIN head boat work group could work in conjunction with the ACCSP to address the issue of head boat sampling. **The recommendations regarding head boat sampling from the Administrative Subcommittee are:**

- FIN await the outcome of South Carolina for-hire study before making any decisions about head boat sampling methods in the Gulf of Mexico;
- FIN Head Boat Work Group will document any operational issues in the Gulf of Mexico that may be different than what is found in South Carolina and ensure that these issues are addressed;
- FIN Head Boat Work Group will review the South Carolina for-hire study; and
- FIN Head Boat Work Group should interact with the South Carolina for-hire study through periodic updates and other appropriate means regarding the study. It was noted that there is also overlap between the FIN work group and the ACCSP For-Hire Subcommittee that will help facilitate this interaction

**There being no further business, the call was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.**

### **Discussion Items for the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Funding Process**

The Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)] is established as 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. In order to ensure timely submission of the RecFIN(SE)/ComFIN cooperative agreement, the FIN Committee needs to develop a process for developing recommendations for the next year's activities that will allow all partners to be involved in the discussions as well as allow for submission of the cooperative agreement by the established deadline. The following are some thoughts about how to accomplish this:

- Change the meeting schedule of the RecFIN(SE), FIN and ComFIN Committees from twice a year to once a year. In recent meetings, the Committees have not utilized the entire time period allotted for discussion so reducing the number of meetings should not hamper the Committees' ability to address all the necessary issues.
- The meeting will be scheduled during the summer which will allow the FIN to discuss potential activities for funding prior to submission of the cooperative agreement. The time period needs to be late enough in the year that the Committee will have some idea about federal appropriations for the program and early enough to be able to submit the cooperative agreement by the deadline.
- Review of FIN recommendations by the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee. This meeting would follow the RecFIN(SE), FIN and ComFIN meetings and allow for final approval of the FIN funding recommendations affecting the Gulf of Mexico. A similar meeting will be scheduled in the Caribbean with the appropriate agencies, contingent upon the availability of funding for Caribbean activities.

FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group  
 Meeting Summary  
 May 11, 1999  
 Washington, DC

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m and the following people were present:

Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
 Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
 Joe O'Hop, FMRI, St. Pete, FL  
 John Hoey, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
 Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
 Dee Lupton, NCDMR, Morehead City, NC  
 Bruce Joule, MDMR, West Boothbay Harbor, ME  
 Mark Alexander, CDEP, Old Lyme, CT  
 Joe Moran, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
 Mike Cahall, ASMFC, Washington DC  
 Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

#### Purpose of Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss and develop the mission of the work group. The group needs to determine the direction of the work group and develop a plan for addressing the issues related to both Fisheries Information Network (FIN) and Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). D. Donaldson pointed out that the initial task of the group was to compare the program design documents for the FIN and ACCSP. It was noted that at the last meeting, the group reviewed the two documents and although that was a successful activity, the work group cannot do that at every meeting. Therefore, the group needs to determine what the mission of the group will be. It was pointed out that there needs to be periodic review of the documents however not at every meeting. It was suggested that for each meeting, the group identify areas the both programs are working on and discuss how the two programs can coordinate the activities to ensure comparability and compatibility among the programs. The group believed that this was a good approach and decided that this should be how the group operates for future meetings. The group began discussing regional differences in terms of data elements. It was noted that in the ACCSP, it will be necessary to add some additional data elements due to regional differences. These elements will be collected as well as the minimum set of data agreed upon by the ACCSP. This issue will be discussed during the implementation meetings being conducted on the Atlantic coast. It was noted that the regional topic is not an issue in the Gulf of Mexico since the geographic area is much smaller and there are no real regional difference, in terms of collection of data, in the Gulf of Mexico.

The group also discussed getting the regional fishery management councils more involved in the FIN and ACCSP. It was pointed out that one of the goals of both FIN and ACCSP is for the councils to utilizes these regional programs for their data needs and requests. It is imperative that the regional councils become more integrally involved in these program and the group discussed ways for integrating the regional councils into FIN and ACCSP. L. Kline stated that there are people involved in the ACCSP that give updates to the South Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, and New England Councils on a periodic basis. R. Lukens noted that FIN staff has discussed providing more routine updates to the Gulf of Mexico Council as well. After some discussion, the group decided that the FIN and ACCSP staffs should meet with the Council staffs to discuss this issue. It was decided that the FIN and ACCSP staffs should provide an overview of the respective program. During these presentations, it will be important to point out the areas where the Councils will be affected and how they can provide input into these systems.

#### Review of the Program Design Document

J. O'Hop stated that there were several areas in the FIN Program Design Document that needed to be discussed by the group. The group began reviewing and comparing the FIN and ACCSP documents. The first section addressed was the *Policies and Goals* section of the FIN document. It was noted that the ACCSP has some additional policies that are not included in the FIN plan and R. Lukens wondered if the FIN should address these issues and develop the

appropriate policy statements. The group discussed this topic and it was noted that the two policy statements developed by ACCSP and not FIN are in areas the FIN is just beginning to address (outreach and social and economic data). D. Donaldson stated that when those groups meet, one of the tasks can be the development of a policy statement regarding the appropriate issues. The group also discussed the need for a *Goals* heading in the FIN plan. L. Kline stated that the goals in the ACCSP plan are items that are long-term goals and something the program is striving to achieve and the group should attempt to identify similar goals for FIN. After some discussion, the group believes a goal regarding the requirement of a unique identifier for all commercial, recreational, and for-hire fishermen should be developed for the FIN. The next section discussed by the group was the *Standard Definitions* section. It was noted that the ACCSP has a much more comprehensive list of definitions than the FIN. After some discussion, the group recommended that the FIN examine the ACCSP definitions and determine if they meet the needs of the FIN. This issue will be addressed at the next FIN meeting and will probably be addressed by an ad hoc work group. The next section addressed was the actual data collection modules. As the group began to review the various tables for the commercial and recreational components of the FIN, it was suggested that it really was not in the purview of this group to compare and contrast these components. This task would be better addressed by the various FIN work groups and it was agreed to charge the appropriate work groups to undertake this task at their upcoming meetings.

#### Coordination of Activities between FIN and ACCSP

The group identified several areas where both the FIN and ACCSP are currently in a developmental stage and believed there would be some benefit in coordinating the efforts among the two programs. The areas that were identified included data management, implementation strategies, permitting/quota monitoring, and standard codes.

M. Cahall provided an overview of the current ACCSP Data Management System. The prototype is currently up and running. There are official data for the NMFS-NE logbook program and the Florida trip ticket data will be loaded into the system in the near future. To date, the feedback received from the various users has been positive. D. Donaldson stated that with funds from the GulfFIN line item, FIN will begin development of FIN data management prototype using the Louisiana trip ticket program. This task will utilize much of the hard work and effort put forth by the ACCSP. The GSMFC, Louisiana and the contractor (ICF Kaiser) will begin addressing this issue later this year. It was noted that in the spirit of cooperation, the FIN and ACCSP should work on jointly developing the additional modules for the data management. M. Cahall noted that if there are significant differences between the FIN and ACCSP data elements, there will need to be extensive modifications needed to make the two systems compatible. L. Kline stated that if there are differences, the group need to determine if there is a logical reason for the differences. The group discussed the number of people necessary to finish the development and maintain the system and determined that it would take about 4 or 5 people (both FIN and ACCSP personnel) to complete the development of the system and about 3 or 4 people for ongoing maintenance. This would be accomplished with FIN and ACCSP personnel only. It would not include utilizing a contractor. The other option would be to continue development of the system using a contractor. The group discussed the issue of utilizing FIN and ACCSP staff vs. a contractor to complete the system but no consensus was achieved. D. Donaldson pointed out that although the ACCSP currently has personnel to address this issue, the FIN has yet to hire a person. However, he stated that the GSMFC will probably be hiring a person within a short period of time.

J. Moran stated that the ACCSP is currently conducting implementation meetings with all the states on the Atlantic coast. The purpose of these meetings are for all the players within a jurisdiction to sit down and work out the details of how to actually implement the ACCSP within that jurisdiction. He and M. Cahall have already attended one of these meetings and another is scheduled for later this week. It was pointed out the NMFS-Southeast Region will be participating in the meetings involving the South Atlantic states. Since the NMFS-Southeast Region encompasses both the South Atlantic and Gulf states, it would be useful for NMFS to have an idea of the activities they will be involved in related to data collection and management for the Gulf of Mexico as well as the South Atlantic. R. Lukens stated that during the discussions regarding identification and selection of activities for funding in 1999 in the Gulf of Mexico, partners discussed issues concerning the division of labor among the partners. It appears that these types of issues are similar to the ones that will be discussed at the ACCSP meetings and there seems to be a need for these meetings in the Gulf of Mexico as well. To help ensure that NMFS has a clear picture of its tasks, it was suggested that the FIN set up similar meetings in the Gulf of Mexico. D. Donaldson will attend one of the ACCSP meetings (probably in the South Atlantic region) to get a feel for the dynamics of the meeting. Also, both the FIN and ACCSP issues will be discussed

at the Florida meeting to alleviate the need for two separate meeting in Florida. D. Donaldson stated that he will attempt to schedule the meetings during the summer of this year to coincide with the ACCSP meeting.

D. Donaldson stated that at the last meeting, the FIN discussed the development of a Permitting Work Group to begin addressing the issue of licenses and permits and developing a process for integrating the permitting and licenses systems with the catch data. J. Moran stated that the ACCSP is also looking at this issue and this provides a perfect avenue to jointly addressing the issue to ensure compatibility between the programs. Once the respective groups have been established, D. Donaldson and J. Moran will work together to set up a meeting to discuss the necessary issues. The group also examined working together on the recreational quota monitoring issues. The ACCSP has a group that will be addressing this issue later this year. At the last RecFIN(SE) meeting, the RecFIN(SE) Committee tasked the RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group to begun examining this issue. It was suggested that a subset of the RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group be selected to participate in the upcoming ACCSP meeting. D. Donaldson stated that he would contact the membership and let J. Moran know who to include from the FIN.

The last two issues discussed by the group related to standard codes. The first related to the extensive list of standard codes for a variety of different items (species, gears, etc.) already developed by the ACCSP. It was suggested that the ComFIN Data Collection Work Group examine the existing list of codes and ensure that they cover all possible situations in the Gulf of Mexico. The other issues related to water body codes which is still not resolved within the ACCSP. The ACCSP has a Standard Codes Committee that will be addressing this issue in the near future and it was suggested that it would be beneficial to have Gulf of Mexico representation at this meeting so an agreed upon method can be developed for creating water body codes. D. Donaldson suggested that Joey Shepard (Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries) be asked to participate in this meeting. In the event that he could not attend, P. Campbell would be willing to attend the meeting. D. Donaldson stated that he would contact J. Shepard and check to see if he would be available to attend the meeting and let J. Moran know. It was also suggested that D. Donaldson contact each state and ask them to compile a list of inshore water body codes that are used in their state. This information will be provided to J. Moran for the meeting.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.**

FIN Implementation Work Group  
Meeting Summary  
August 16, 1999  
Atlanta, Georgia

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. and the following people were present:

Guy Davenport, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Toby Tobias, USVIDFW, St. Croix, VI  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

#### Purpose of the Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the main purpose of the meeting was to review the products developed from the ComFIN implementation meetings and develop a report from the materials as well as develop a funding decision process, review and evaluation criteria, guidelines and implementation strategy for FIN.

#### Development of a ComFIN Implementation Report

D. Donaldson stated that the Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS met in July in New Orleans to discuss implementing ComFIN. One of the tasks for this group is to develop a report regarding the implementation of ComFIN. A meeting summary of the implementation meetings was provided to the work group and it was suggested that some introductory language be added and the bulleted items from the summary be incorporated into the report. The group discussed adding some information about the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico regarding their commercial sampling programs. The group reviewed the meeting summary and made several changes. The draft implementation report is attached and represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

#### Development of Funding Decision Process

D. Donaldson stated that the FIN discussed the need for a funding decision process, similar to the one developed by ACCSP. In the past, there has not been funds available for operational activities however with the creation of the GulfFIN line item, there needs to be a process for determining how the funds will be spend among the partners. M. Osborn and G. Davenport stated that they are concerned that the funds appropriated under the GulfFIN line item are not available to the federal partners of the program. D. Donaldson stated that the language associated with the line item clearly stated that the GulfFIN funds are to be used by the Gulf states only. M. Osborn noted that is one interpretation of the language and there are differing views about how the money can be spent. M. Osborn felt that NMFS is being left out of the loop and not being treated as a full partner. After some discussion, the group decided that this work group was not the appropriate body to determine how the money should be spent and **recommended to the FIN that the GSMFC State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S/FFMC) address the issue of how the GulfFIN line item should be allocated: to state partners only or both state and federal partners, at their upcoming meeting in October.** D. Donaldson noted that the FIN Administrative Subcommittee discussed the possibility of reducing the number of FIN Committee meetings from twice a year to once a year. M. Osborn stated that there needs to be a list of funding priorities developed before the annual FIN meeting. This funding priority list will be developed on the subcommittee/work group level. The recreational (Biological/Environmental), commercial (Data Collection) and social/economic (Social/Economic) components will be charged with developing funding priorities for the upcoming year. It was noted that a clear charge to each of these groups needs to be developed so useful products are produced. Budgetary and technical reviews need to be incorporated into the process. It is important that realistic budgets be developed to ensure the funding is used in the most efficient manner. The technical review of the proposed activities will be part of subcommittee/work group charges. The activities will be reviewed prior to implementation of the tasks.

Once the groups have presented their recommendations, the FIN Committee will review and consider which activities to fund for the upcoming year. Once the FIN Committee agrees upon the activities, the list needs to be approved by the appropriate bodies in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. For the Gulf of Mexico, the S/FFMC will provide final approval and in the Caribbean, it will be the Caribbean Fishery Management Council.

#### Development of Guidelines and Review and Evaluation Criteria

The group developed guidelines and review and evaluation criteria to be used by the appropriate subcommittees/work groups. The group utilized the ACCSP process as a starting point. The FIN funding decision process is attached and represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

#### Discussion of FIN Implementation Strategy

D. Donaldson noted that there may not be a need for an implementation strategy for FIN. On the recreational side, the program is basically implemented. In the states of Louisiana through Florida, state personnel are conducting the MRFSS. In Texas, there is a need to make their data available and ensure that it is compatible. This is a task that the RecFIN(SE) Committee is addressing. With the availability of funds for the Caribbean, the MRFSS methodology will be implemented in that region as well. On the commercial side, the Gulf states are working on implementing trip ticket programs. This is the first step in implementing a cooperative data collection program. Once the trip tickets are in place, information about detailed effort, biological sampling, social/economic data, and discards can be collected. M. Osborn stated that there may be a need to begin collecting social and economic information before full implementation of the trip ticket system. D. Donaldson noted that you need the trip ticket system in place before you can collect the social and economic data since the trip ticket program identifies the universe from which you will be sampling. Although it has never been formally stated, collection of the catch and effort data is the highest priority to the FIN. M. Osborn stated that she understood that but there is a real need for social and economic data and these types of data might be as high a priority as catch and effort and the group should consider the collection of social and economic data at the same level as catch and effort.

#### Other Business

M. Osborn stated that funds are available to begin recreational data collection in the Caribbean. The MRFSS methods will be used and NMFS will work with Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands to coordinate the data collection activities. Sampling will begin in Wave 6 of this year and continue for three waves.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.**

FIN Social/Economic Work Group  
 Meeting summary  
 July 27, 1999  
 Miami, Florida

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. and the following people were present:

Tony Lamberte, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
 Steve Holiman, NMFS, Tampa, FL  
 Marina Guedes, ASMFC, Washington DC  
 Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

#### Purpose of the Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the main purpose of the meeting was to review the current social and economic activities under FIN and develop a section for the FIN Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) document regarding mail surveys. It was noted that as part of the review of activities, the group needed to be briefed on the pilot work that the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is undertaking regarding collection of social and economic data.

#### Review of Current activities

For the recreational sector, D. Donaldson reported that, through the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), state personnel are collecting social and economic data via an economic add-on. This add-on is part of NMFS initiative to periodically collect social and economic throughout the United States. Every three years, social and economic data are collected in the Southeast Region of the United States. For this period, the questionnaire consists of approximately 10 questions which are administered in the field. The last question asks if the person would be willing to participate in a follow-up telephone survey. The states are collecting the field data and the NMFS contractor is conducting the follow-up phone survey. Because this add-on survey asked more sensitive questions, the initial refusal rates appear to be higher than the last time an economic add-on was conducted in the Southeast. There was concern by the group that the FIN was not more involved in the development of the economic add-on for the MRFSS. It was understood that the funds for this activity were made available fairly quickly and there needed to be a fast turn around to implement this activity, but the group believed that there needs to be a more structured process for the pre-, during-, and post-survey activities. **It was recommended that the FIN, via the Social/Economic Work Group, become more involved in the development of social and economic data collection and management activities of the MRFSS.** There are two components involved: data collection (which has been established as every 3 years in the Southeast) as well as data analysis. The group discussed the perception of the utility of social and economic data. It was noted there is a perception that the data are not analyzed (and thus not used) on a regular basis. There is a need to develop a process for integrating the social and economic data into the management of the resources. Currently, these type of data are not regularly used in management decisions. There needs to be a systematic review of the social and economic data that are collected by the economic add-on similar to review of the catch and effort information collected by the base MRFSS. **It was recommended that when an economic add-on is being conducted in the Southeast, additional time be set aside at wave meetings to review the social and economic data.** Participation at these meetings should be the FIN Social/Economic Work Group, data collection personnel, and MRFSS staff. It was pointed out that there may need to be separate meetings apart from the wave meetings but the group believed that holding these meeting in conjunction with the wave meetings was a good starting point.

The group reviewed data collection activities regarding the for-hire sector. D. Donaldson stated that social and economic data are currently being collected regarding charter boats, via the economic add-on. Information being collected from head boats will be evaluated during the South Carolina study and the group believed that it should wait for the results of this study before making any recommendations. It was noted that the activities for the charter and head boats collects data from the anglers and does not address the operational side of the for-hire sector. M. Guedes noted

that there will be some information collected regarding the for-hire sector during the ACCSP pilot study regarding social and economic data. The group believed that it should await the outcome of that study as well before making any recommendations.

The group then discussed the commercial data collection activities. D. Donaldson stated that the trip ticket system is the backbone of the ComFIN. It allows for the identification of the universe of commercial fishery participants and from that, enables someone to design a sampling method for collecting other needed data such as social and economic data. Currently, Louisiana and Florida have operating trip ticket programs and Texas, Mississippi and Alabama are in the process of implementing systems in their state. There was a discussion regarding who would be collecting the information in the field. D. Donaldson noted that although the trip ticket system is the backbone of the ComFIN, it is equally important to continue to have a strong port sampler system. The port samplers will be responsible for collecting a variety of data in the field including the social and economic information. T. Lamberte suggested that it might be possible to have the dealers actually collect the social and economic data. The group agreed that it might be a long-term possibility, however, in the short-term, the information would probably be collected by the port agents. M. Guedes stated that the ACCSP will be conducting a commercial harvesters pilot study. The pilot study is designed to look at three specific areas. One is to identify and address potential problems with the mechanics of implementing the system. These include all data gathering, entry and storage activities as well as the ability to link the data to all other ACCSP data and to U.S. census data. The second is to carry out a field test of the survey instrument across the different cultural and socioeconomic contexts in which the data gathering system must eventually be implemented. Field testing questions and instruments is standard procedure in preparing for any survey research. The third area is to verify the economic models. Initial data gathering in two specific fisheries, summer flounder and blue crab, will be carried out and the data used for test runs of several standard economic models. The group decided that it would be beneficial to await the outcome of the ACCSP pilot study before proceeding with development of commercial data collection for social and economic data for FIN. The Social/Economic Work Group should be involved in the evaluation of the pilot study. There was a discussion regarding the need for both the ACCSP and FIN to use the same methods (mail survey vs. phone survey vs. personal interviews) for collecting social and economic data. M. Guedes stated that, in order to be compatible, both programs need to use the same methods since utilizing different methods can result in very different answers to similar questions. S. Holiman noted that as long as the same sampling protocol was being used and the same questions were asked, thus collecting the same data elements, the method of collection should not really matter. Although the data will not be identical, it will still be compatible. The group continued to discuss this issue and no consensus was reached. It was suggested that this issue be discussed further by both the Social/Economic Work Group and the FIN Committee in the future. The next step after the evaluation of the pilot study would be to either conduct a similar pilot in the Gulf and Caribbean regions or implement the methods tested by the ACCSP study, depending on the outcome.

#### Development of QA/QC for Mail Survey

D. Donaldson stated that a draft section regarding mail survey has been developed and distributed to the group. D. Donaldson noted that editorial comments could be given to him or e-mailed to him as soon as possible. The group should focus on substantive changes. After some review, the group agreed that the section for mail surveys should be forwarded to the FIN Committee for their review and approval. The revised section is attached.

#### Other Business

S. Holiman brought up the issue of membership of the Work Group. When the Work Group was first established, the RecFIN(SE) Committee discussed adding people with more expertise in the social sciences and economics. However, since the RecFIN(SE) was not currently focusing on social and economic issues, it was decided to not alter the membership of the group. However, now that FIN appears to be working on social and economic issues, it might be an appropriate time to revisit the membership of the Work Group. After some discussion, **the group recommended that the FIN Committee readdress the membership of the Social/Economic Work Group. The group recommends that Ron Lukens, Lisa Kline, and Barbara Kojis be removed from the group and 2 - 4 people with social and economic expertise be placed on the group.** The people who will be selected for the Work Group will be determined by the FIN Committee at the upcoming fall meeting.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.**

## MAIL SURVEYS

Mail surveys are a type of off-site survey method. The advantages of mail surveys over other approaches are mail surveys are relatively simple and cost-effective. These types of surveys are usually used to sample opinions about fishing issues and to develop sociological and economic profiles of anglers or of communities affected by fisheries. They can also be used as supplements to on-site creel surveys.

### Survey Procedures

Mail surveys can be applied as the initial point of survey contact using an existing sample frame or applied as a follow-up or add-on to a field intercept survey. License, permit or registration files can be used as the sample frame for mail surveys of the first type. These surveys are used most often for socioeconomic assessments to collect information that does not require the angler to recall detailed information on specific trips. When conducting surveys of this type, sampling is easier if the sample frame files are computerized, since selecting a simple random or stratified random sample is fairly straightforward. When the files are not computerized, sampling is usually conducted using a systematic random sampling since it is difficult to get simple random or stratified random samples of boxes of license cards.

Add-on mail surveys, as the name implies, are used to gather more detailed information than could be collected in the field. This approach requires the determination of an initial sampling protocol for selecting anglers in the field as well as a subsequent protocol for determining which intercepted anglers receive the add-on. While detailed trip-specific information, such as expenditures, is preferably gathered at the point of intercept, add-on mail surveys can be used to collect both trip related and general information from anglers if the time lapse between intercept and survey are not too great.

### Design

The structure of a typical mail survey consists of several mailings and a telephone follow-up of non-respondents. The multiple mailings typically cover introductions, reminders, thank-you messages, and rewards, as appropriate. One of the biggest concerns with mail surveys is the non-response. As with all survey methods, it is important to conduct mail surveys with professionalism, personalization, honesty, directness, and attention to detail. By doing this, the quality of response can be enhanced.

Before survey implementation, all forms should be pretested in the field. A survey agent should distribute the form to a number of "typical" respondents (i.e. not office mates). This will allow the agent to identify any problems the respondents have, and make changes to the reporting form accordingly.

### First Mailing

The first mailing should consist of a cover letter, a numbered questionnaire, and a postage-paid return envelope. Where deemed necessary or appropriate, an inducement to participate in the survey may also be included. All materials should be sent by first-class mail. It is important that the cover letter be written on official letterhead and personally signed by the leader of the survey team. The letter should provide an explanation of the survey's purpose as well as the importance of the respondent's participation in the survey. The content of the introductory letter will vary depending upon whether the survey is the first point of contact or whether it is a follow-up to the field interview. It should be established that all information will be kept confidential and explain that identification numbers are used only to check the respondent's name off the mailing list when the questionnaire is returned. The letter should also provide a telephone number respondents may call if they have questions. If a deadline for response is deemed appropriate, notification of such should also be included in the introductory letter. Any deadline, however, must be tactfully introduced, emphasizing the need for such, and allow reasonable time for the participants to respond.

As in any survey, questionnaire design is extremely important. The questionnaire should be straight forward and easy

to use, and have a logical “hierarchical” layout from the standpoint of the respondents, not from an analytical viewpoint. The order and position of questions should not require a respondent to jump all over the form and flip pages. Questions of similar subjects should be grouped together. The print should be large enough to easily read, and there should be sufficient space for recording responses. The specific wording of questions should be considered carefully. Methodological studies have shown that even slight changes in wording, for example, “should” versus “could,” drastically influence item response. All questions should have a clear and specific meaning, and redundant questions should be eliminated. Each questionnaire should have an identification number on the top of the first page. The questions should be brief and clearly stated. Open-end questions should be used sparingly, because they are hard to analyze and interpret when there is no opportunity for follow-up questions to clarify confusing answers. Finally, the questions should be as few as possible to satisfy the research needs while not excessively burdening the respondent .

The use of business reply envelopes with franked postage require less time to prepare and incur actual postage expense only when the envelopes are returned. However, stamped return envelopes imply a more personal approach and can provide for a slightly higher response.

All survey materials (cover letter, questionnaire, and return envelope) should be folded and stuffed together in the mailing envelope. Separate folding of materials suggests a less personal approach. When the respondent receives the envelope, the overall effect should be as pleasing as a personal business letter sent to an acquaintance. It is also important to send a postcard to everyone after the first mailing. The postcard should thank those who have already responded and reminds those who have not yet responded about the survey and the importance of their participation.

### Second Mailing

A second mailing to all non-respondents should be sent within a reasonable time after the initial mailing or after passing of response deadlines. The same techniques should be used as with the first mailing. However, the use of a new personalized cover letter is very important. This letter should state that no response has been received to the first mailing and emphasize again the importance of the survey and the individuals participation. A new copy of the questionnaire and return envelope should be included because the original materials may have been thrown out or misplaced. A new response deadline, as appropriate, should be included.

### Third Mailing

A third mailing should be sent to all non-respondents several weeks after the second. The use of certified mail (despite costs) can be used since this mailing can significantly increase the overall response rate of the survey. The third mailing should utilize the same components of the previous mailings but should have yet another personalized cover letter.

### Telephone Follow-Up Survey

Usually, response rates of mail surveys are sufficient to obtain valid results. Sometimes, however, a concern about bias induced by the remaining non-respondents requires a follow-up survey by a different contact method. The follow-up interview usually will be by telephone rather than face-to-face. The purpose of the follow-up telephone survey is to both increase the response rate and allow for estimation of how the mail non-respondents differ from the mail respondents. If the mail survey had been a stratified random sample, a simple random sample of the non-respondents in each stratum should be contacted.

### **Non-response Bias**

Non-response in mail surveys may induce a non-response bias in the estimates. This occurs when the non-respondents differ in important characteristics from the respondents. The two groups may answer survey questions very differently, and wrong conclusions may be drawn if respondents are viewed as representative of the whole population. Non-response bias in mail surveys can be a major problem because non-response to mail surveys can be substantial.

## **Ways to Reduce Non-response**

There are several methods for reducing non-response in mail surveys. The first is to use Dillman's total design method. This method utilizes the multiple mailings, personal attention and other activities described previously in this section. By using this method, one is able to not only survey the avid participants (usually picked up in the first mailing) but also obtain information from the less serious participants (picked up in the second and third mailing).

Another way to reduce the non-response rate in a mail survey is use inducements or rewards for participating in the survey. This might be a monetary reward, a premium (such as a cap or t-shirt), or some kind of lottery for those who respond. It has been shown that monetary rewards are more effective than premiums or gifts. It has also been shown that the monetary reward does not have to be significant to improve the response rate of the survey.

## **Summary**

The use of mail surveys will continue to be popular because of their relative low cost and simplicity of operation. Mail surveys allow agencies to usually conduct the work with their existing facilities and staff. Off-site surveys (telephone, door-to-door) are often complicated and may require specialized staff or contractors to conduct the survey. A well-designed mail survey can provide useful information about a situation and provide a cost-effective method for collecting the data.

**Status of 1999 FIN Activities**

- Task 1:            Annual Operations Plan, 2000 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)
- Objective:        Develop 2000 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources, that implements the Framework Plan.
- Schedule:         Annual Operations Plan was distributed in August 1999 and will be discussed by the Committee at the fall 1999 FIN meeting.
- Task 2:            Development of a Program Design Document (Goal 1, Objective 1) (F)
- Objective:        Develop a program design document for FIN
- Schedule:         The Committee continuing working on this document as the different aspects of the program were developed. This issue will be discussed at the fall 1999 FIN meeting.
- Task 3:            Development of Funding Initiatives to Establish MRF Surveys (Goal 1, Objective 3) (R)
- Objective:        Support the establishment of long-term, comprehensive MRF surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.
- Schedule:         The Biological/Environmental Work Group met in April 1999 and developed recommendations regarding this issue. A report will be presented at the fall 1999 RecFIN(SE) meeting.
- Task 4:            Information Dissemination (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)
- Objective:        Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.
- Schedule:         This task is an ongoing activity.
- Task 5:            Establishment of Educational Work Group (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)
- Objective:        Establish an educational work group to develop and design an outreach program for FIN
- Schedule:         The FIN Committee discussed this issue and a letter was sent soliciting membership for the work group. The name of the group was changed to the Outreach Work Group. The Work Group will meet in fall 1999 to begin developing an outreach strategy. The group will also meet in conjunction with the ACCSP.
- Task 6:            Development of a Generic Trip Ticket Program (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)
- Objective:        Develop a generic trip ticket program for the Southeast Region.
- Schedule:         The Data Collection Work Group met in August 1999 to discuss this issue and will present a report at the fall 1999 ComFIN meeting.
- Task 7:            Development of the Discards, Releases, and Protected Species Interactions Modules (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)
- Objective:        Develop the discards, releases, and protected species interactions modules of the ComFIN.
- Schedule:         The Data Collection Work Group met in August 1999 to discuss this issue and will present a report at the fall 1999 ComFIN meeting.

- Task 8:            Development of the Social/Economic Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (F)
- Objective:        Develop the social/economic module for the ComFIN.  
Schedule:         The Social/Economic Work Group met in July 1999 to address this issue and will present at report at the fall 1999 FIN meeting.
- Task 9:            Development of Data Collection Procedures Document (Goal 2, Obj 2) (C)
- Objective:        Develop a document which outlines the procedures for the collection of data under the ComFIN.  
Schedule:         The Data Collection Work Group met in August 1999 to discuss this issue and will present a report at the fall 1999 ComFIN meeting.
- Task 10:         Biological/Environmental Data Elements (Goal 2 , Objective 2) (F)
- Objective:        Compile metadata for inclusion into a metadata database for the Southeast Region.  
Schedule:         The Biological/Environmental Work Group met in April 1999 to discuss this issue and will present a report at the fall 1999 RecFIN(SE) meeting. The compilation of metadata is an ongoing activity.
- Task 11:         Commercial Quality Assurance and Quality Control (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)
- Objective:        Identify and determine standards for commercial catch/effort data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.  
Schedule:         The Data Collection Work Group met in August 1999 to discuss this issue and will present a report at the fall 1999 ComFIN meeting. The overall task of QA/QC is an ongoing activity.
- Task 12:         Development of Quality Assurance and Quality Control Methods (Goal 2, Obj 3) (F)
- Objective:        Identify and determine standards for commercial and recreational sociological and economic data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.  
Schedule:         The Social/Economic Work Group met in July 1999 to develop a section regarding QA/QC for mail surveys. This information will be presented at the fall 1999 FIN meeting. The overall task of QA/QC is an ongoing activity.
- Task 13:         Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data (Goal 2, Objective 3) (R)
- Objective:        Implement an annual review process including guidelines for reviewing the data, through the RecFIN(SE), to evaluate MRFSS data.  
Schedule:         The data evaluation will be an ongoing task. The automated processes are being implemented.
- Task 14:         Port Samplers Workshops (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)
- Objective:        Convene a workshop of state and federal port samplers to discuss commercial data collection activities  
Schedule:         The Gulf meeting was not held due to lack of funding for the federal biostatistical samplers. A meeting of Caribbean samplers is scheduled for October 1999. This issue will be discussed at the fall 1999 ComFIN meeting.
- Task 15:         Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)
- Objective:        Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current and future programs for meeting FIN standards.  
Schedule:         At the spring 1999, the Alabama representative provided a presentation to the Committee concerning

the their inshore creel survey. This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 16: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Identify and combine duplicative data collection and management efforts.

Schedule: This is an ongoing task. The cost benefit analysis between the Mississippi Creel Survey and the MRFSS was not addressed in 1999.

Task 17: Determination of Catch and Effort for Non-Rod-and-Reel Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine catch and effort of shellfish and finfish harvested using non-rod-and-reel methods.

Schedule: The Biological/Environmental Work Group met in April 1999 to address this issue. After some prioritization, it was decided that this task was not a high priority and will be addressed sometime in the future. A report will be presented at the fall 1999 RecFIN(SE) meeting.

Task 18: Determination of Catch and Effort from Private Access Sites (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine catch rates and species composition from private access groups.

Schedule: The Biological/Environmental Work Group met in April 1999 to address this issue. After some prioritization, it was decided that this task was not a high priority and will be addressed sometime in the future. A report will be presented at the fall 1999 RecFIN(SE) meeting.

Task 19: Determination of Catch Rates and Species Composition from Night Fishing (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine catch rates and species composition from night fishing.

Schedule: The Biological/Environmental Work Group met in April 1999 to address this issue. After some prioritization, it was decided that this task was a high priority and will be addressed in 2000. A report will be presented at the fall 1999 RecFIN(SE) meeting.

Task 20: Collection of Tournaments Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Collect appropriate information from fishing tournaments, and integrate with other MRF data.

Schedule: The Biological/Environmental Work Group met in April 1999 to address this issue. After some prioritization, it was decided that this task was a high priority and will be addressed in 2000. A report will be presented at the fall 1999 RecFIN(SE) meeting.

Task 21: Implementation of Methods to Monitor the For-Hire Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Identify evaluate, and test methodologies to survey charter and head boat fisheries.

Schedule: This is multi-year task. The testing of the methodologies began in September 1997 and will be completed in December 1998. The evaluation of the methods is scheduled for September 1999.

Task 22: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Encourage coordination, integration, and augmentation, as appropriate, of data collection efforts to meet the FIN requirements.

Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task 23: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Develop a plan which outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming year as well as

- tracking of the collection for these data.
- Schedule: Funding for the RFP is not available for 1999 and the FIN Committee needs to address this issue at the fall 1999 FIN meeting.
- Task 24: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6) (F)
- Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.
- Schedule: At the spring 1999 meeting, the Texas representative provided a presentation regarding the electronic data loggers currently being used for the data collection in their creel survey. This is an ongoing activity.
- Task 25: Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Objective 3) (F)
- Objective: To design, implement, and maintain an marine commercial and recreational fisheries data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).
- Schedule: The FIN Committee approved funding in 1999 for the development of a data management system prototype in Louisiana similar to the ACCSP system in Florida.
- Task 26: Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4) (F)
- Objective: Develop standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.
- Schedule: The FIN Committee approved funding in 1999 for the development of a data management system prototype in Louisiana similar to the ACCSP system in Florida.
- Task 27: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6) (F)
- Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
- Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.
- Task 28: Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1) (F)
- Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.
- Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.
- Task 29: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative Marine Commercial and Recreational Fisheries Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3) (F)
- Objective: Coordinate FIN with other regional cooperative marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs and encourage consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.
- Schedule: The FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group met in May 1999 and will present a report at the fall 1999 FIN meeting. This task is an ongoing activity.

## ITEMS FOR FUNDING CONSIDERATION IN 2000

### Activities

Expand charter boat telephone survey for east coast of Florida

Completion of charter boat vessel frame for Texas

Conversion of Florida licensing system

Expand site register for night fishing activities in the Gulf

Continue administration and coordination of FIN

Continue development of FIN data management system

Continue recreational data collection in Gulf of Mexico

Continue development of trip ticket programs

Continue the support of commercial data collection activities

Continue the support of menhaden sampling

Continue the support of head boat sampling

Otolith workshops

Trip ticket vs. gulf shrimp landings comparison workshop

## COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (ComFIN)

### MINUTES

Thursday, September 23, 1999

Tampa, Florida

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

#### Members

Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Steve Brown, (proxy for J. O'Hop), FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Guy Davenport, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Doug Frugé, USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS  
Christine Johnson, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Rick Leard, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR

#### Staff

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

#### Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as amended.

#### Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on April 8, 1999 in La Parguera, Puerto Rico were approved as amended.

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

G. Davenport distributed the list of personnel with access to confidential data and asked that Committee members verify the information on that list. Forms for new employees were available.

D. Donaldson noted that the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) forms should be sent to D. Van Voorhees.

#### Work Group Reports

Data Collection Work Group Report - Copies of the Data Collection Work Group Report were distributed to Committee members (Attachment A). D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Work Group met in Atlanta in August to discuss several issues. The first issue discussed was the comparison of the ComFIN and the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) trip ticket programs. As a result of discussions at this meeting, some changes were made to the FIN trip ticket data elements which include, the addition of a trip number and market size range, and the removal of primary area fished and primary gear as separate data elements.

Donaldson reported that the Work Group then reviewed the draft QA/QC document for commercial data collection and made some revisions in the biological sampling and discards sections. The Work Group also suggested developing QA/QC sections for port sampler meetings, data management and validation methods.

The Committee then addressed the subject of standard codes. After reviewing the findings of the Data Collection Work Group, the Committee discussed several areas where the ACCSP and the FIN are not compatible, particularly the Area Codes since the grid system in the Gulf of Mexico does not cover the entire Gulf. Various possibilities were discussed by the Committee and it was agreed that it would be beneficial to present these findings to the GSMFC Commercial Fisheries Advisory Panel at their meeting in October and request their input. If recommendations are made by the Advisory Panel, then the ACCSP Standard Codes Committee would be asked to revisit this issue since some codes do not correspond. The Committee continued to discuss Standard Codes particularly

the problems associated with Market Category and agreed to have D. Donaldson contact M. Cahall of the ACCSP in an effort to reconcile the differences in FIN and ACCSP codes.

D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Work Group then discussed the Biological Sampling Module. The Work Group recommended that the FIN use millimeters as the official measurement for length, and that fork length or mid-line length should be used as the official length measurement. After Committee discussion, **D. Frugé moved to adopt both of these recommendations. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

D. Donaldson reported that the Fishery module was the next item addressed by the Data Collection Work Group and it was noted that all the minimum data elements for the Fishery module are captured in the trip ticket program. The Work Group also discussed discards and protected species modules and agreed that the ComFIN should complete the trip ticket, biological sampling and social/economic modules before developing another module. Following discussion on species codes and adoption of the ITIS codes, **R. Leard moved to accept the Data Collection Work Group Report. The motion seconded and passed unanimously.**

Implementation Work Group Report - Copies of the FIN Implementation Work Group Report, the ComFIN Implementation Report, and the funding decision process for FIN were distributed to Committee members (Attachment B). D. Donaldson reported that the Gulf states, the GSMFC, and the NMFS met in July in New Orleans to discuss implementing the ComFIN trip ticket program. As a result of this meeting, the Implementation Work Group met in Atlanta in August having been charged with developing a ComFIN Implementation Report. The Work Group reviewed a summary of the meeting held in New Orleans and this report was used as the basis for development of the Implementation Report. Donaldson reported that the Work Group believed that information on the commercial sampling programs in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico should be added to the report. **P. Campbell moved to accept the FIN Implementation Work Group Report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

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

D. Donaldson stated that a port samplers meeting was held in 1998 which included port samplers from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina. In 1999 the port samplers were unable to meet because of travel fund constraints for federal agents, however Donaldson stated that he is hopeful that these meetings will resume in the future. Donaldson reported that at the recent Implementation Work Group meeting he met with T. Tobias and D. Matos to discuss holding a meeting of Caribbean port samplers. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have a joint meeting of the port samplers from the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. A meeting has been scheduled for October 7 and 8 in St. Croix, U.S.V.I. Donaldson noted that the agenda for this meeting will include a presentation on the ComFIN program, an overview of the Cooperative Statistics Program by G. Davenport, how some of the data collected in the Caribbean has been used, review of sampling methods used in the U.S.V.I. and Puerto Rico, and discussion among the port samplers. T. Tobias has arranged a trip to a fisherman's dock to work up a sample, and also reef fish identification.

Donaldson reported that there is funding in 2000 for both Gulf and Caribbean port sampler meetings and they will continue as long as there is interest. Donaldson noted that since it is difficult to have one port samplers meeting in the Gulf, there will probably be a meeting of port samplers from Texas and Louisiana, and another with Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Possible locations for these two meetings are Galveston and Tampa.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.**

Data Collection Work Group  
Meeting Summary  
August 17-18, 1999  
Atlanta, Georgia

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. and the following people were present:

Guy Davenport, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Trish Murphey, NCDMR, Morehead City, NC  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Geoff White, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Toby Tobias, USVIDFW, St. Croix, VI  
Mark Alexander, CBMF, Old Lyme, CT  
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

#### Purpose of the Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the main purpose of the meeting was to review the differences between the ComFIN and ACCSP trip ticket programs; development of a QA/QC document for commercial data collection; development of standard codes for FIN; further development of the biological sampling program; and discussion about the fishery and discards modules under ComFIN.

#### Comparison of ComFIN and ACCSP Trip Ticket Programs

D. Donaldson noted that at the last FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group meeting, the group began discussing the trip ticket systems for each program. During the discussions, several differences were identified. The group believed that the Data Collection Work Group should address these differences. Therefore, the Data Collection Work Group discussed the identified issues. The revised FIN trip ticket data elements are attached. The first issue was the absence of TRIP NUMBER in the FIN trip ticket program. This element is necessary for compatibility with the ACCSP program and it was inferred for the FIN program since trip number will be one for the majority of the trips in the Gulf of Mexico. To ensure compatibility, however, the group decided to add the element. Another issue was the addition of MARKET SIZE RANGE in the FIN program. This element was added to capture the actual count, pounds, etc. of the product instead of relying on categories that may vary among and between states. The actual number will allow users to view the actual measurement used by the dealers. The use of this element as well as the coding of the MARKET CATEGORY will be discussed later in this report. The group also decided to remove PRIMARY AREA FISHED and PRIMARY GEAR as separate data elements and provide descriptions in the AREA FISHED and GEAR(S) elements to explain when only primary area fished and/or gear was used.

#### Development of QA/QC Document for Commercial Data Collection

D. Donaldson distributed a draft QA/QC document developed by J. Shepard for commercial data collection. The group reviewed the document and the revised document is attached as represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting. The group decided that the draft document for more pertinent for biological sampling and discards. It was noted that there needs to be some language regarding the periodic port sampler meeting as part of QA/QC. D. Donaldson will develop this section and provide it with the report. The group needs to develop QA/QC sections for data management and validation methods. G. Davenport noted that there may be some information already written regarding data management. He will check with J. Poffenberger and get back with D. Donaldson with any pertinent information. D. Donaldson will develop a section for validation methods for inclusion in the document. The group noted that this information will be included in ComFIN Data Collection Procedures Document.

### Development of Standard Codes

D. Donaldson stated that the FIN needs to develop codes for the various data elements being collected for the commercial fisheries data. In an effort to be compatible with the ACCSP, the group utilized the codes already developed by ACCSP. Since both programs will be part of the FIS, it is important that both programs use similar codes to avoid confusion. The group discussed each data element for the trip ticket and biological sampling modules in terms of variable format and necessary codes. These comments will be presented to the ACCSP Standard Codes Committee at their upcoming meeting. The following are comments and suggested developments by the group. A list of revised codes is attached.

### **Table A.1, Standard Code Formats**

#### **Table 1, Minimum Data Element Table**

In alpha numeric fields where there may be imbedded numbers (e.g. *reporting form series number*) should the numbers be right justified and zero filled. For example, CT00000001 vs CT1. Does this have any data management implications besides sort order. Same applies to the ITIS codes used for *Species*. Since the *Species* code is presently an “11 digit character code”, would one use 87470101 for Alewife, or 00087470101?

*Reporting Form Series Number* - Does the value entered here have to be unique within *Form Type / Version*, within State, or globally across all partners? What are the data management implications?

*Vessel Identifier* - Is this supposed to be State Reg / USCG Doc or HIN? The field width suggests that VIN would be used.

*Date of Landing* (Table A.1) - The group recommends using FIPS state code rather than 2 character postal abbreviation. This would be uniform with *County/Port*.

State postal code seems to be a redundant component in many of the data elements (*Form Type / Version*, *Reporting Form Series Number* (?), and *Dealer ID*). Is this necessary?

### **Table A.3 Units of Measurement**

Why is there a code for *meat pounds* (MP)? Shouldn't this be indicated by Landing Grade code 70 (*meats*) or perhaps other codes such as 40-44 in table A.7?

### **Table A.3 Length Types**

For biological sampling, at-sea observer and protected species interactions the following length types need to be added:

- LT - Lip thickness (for conch, VI)
- SG - Shell length (for conch, VI)
- SH - Shell thickness (clams, NC)
- CC - Curved carapace width (turtles)
- CU - Curved carapace length (turtles)

For biological sampling, it was generally agreed that all lengths would be reported in mm and all length measurements should be standardized to fork length (or midline length) for finfish.

### **Table A.3 Dealer Identification**

Louisiana needs 7 digits for dealer code. Must all partners use the format template provided (ST12345AWD), or can all of the characters following the state code be utilized as a partner sees fit. *Note: Mark Alexander seemed to recall that the ACCSP Commercial Tech Committee later decided that all locations of a dealer would (or could) be separately*

licensed and that the WD / RD portion of the dealer number was only a Florida requirement. If this is the case, might the rightmost 8 characters of the dealer number be entirely up to the discretion of the partner?

### Table A.3 Area Code Format

The *nnn.nnn* format for area codes will need to be modified for the Gulf of Mexico. Louisiana uses 4-digit hydrologic water body codes for their inshore areas. The area fished code would be based on latitude and longitude and would allow for as much detail as was needed. This idea will be presented to the ACCSP Standard Codes Committee

### Table A.4, Gear Types and Codes Commercial Program Design, Table 2

Table 2 will have to be expanded to include the values for *Quantity, Fishing Time, and Number of Sets* for the major gear groups listed in table A.4. The Group members will supply Dave Donaldson with Code table additions and effort descriptors (for Table 2) by September 13, 1999.

The TIP program may use  $yd^2$  for *Quantity of Gear* rather than float line length. This will be confirmed.

For gears with long deployment times (i.e. long lines), when does fishing time start and end. For example: the time interval from first hook in to last hook out?

Under *Traps and Pots* in Table 2, the Group suggested that *Mean Soak Time* would be a better descriptor for Fishing Time than *Total Soak Time*.

For the code 701 - *Troll & Hand Lines CMB*, what is "CMB"?

Is the code 804 - *Chemical* targeted at the aquarium trade?

Under other, add *Slurp Gun* and/or *Slurp Gun, Diving*.

What is 151 - *Pots and traps, puffer*?

The 750 series codes for *By Hand* do not seem to follow the same hierarchal format as other gears. The Group suggests:

750 By Hand  
751 By Hand, no diving gear  
752 By Hand, diving gear

### Table A.5, Disposition Codes

The descriptions of the codes need to be clarified with more detail. For example, *Placed in car* might be expanded to read *Placed in live car or pound* and *Removed for sale* might read *Removed from car or pound for sale*. Code 229 - *No retention* was vague and confused with 204 - *No quota in area*.

There seems to be no clear indication in the codes 001 - 010 to suggest whether the product was sold or retained for personal use. *Was this supposed to be implicit by the appearance of dealer information?*

Need a code for unknown disposition.

### Table A.6, Market Categories (Size)

The Group wondered if the codes CX through MX were specific to lobster, or could they also be applied to any other

species (finfish, crabs, etc). If they can, the descriptions should convey this fact. Also, the specific application of these codes should be detailed in the metadata.

The Group also proposed that #1, #2, and #3 blue crabs would use the LG, MD, and LG size category codes respectively.

The Group also suggested a size category of NG (no grade) for an “unclassified category”.

The Group commented that the size category codes 01-91 are not universally applicable to all fisheries where market size is specified as a range in size. Even count range intervals used for a given species may change seasonally or with size itself. For example, large shrimp may use an interval of 10 (20-30 / lb) while small shrimp may use an interval 20 (80-100 / lb). The field size does not permit the permutations that would be required to satisfy every fishery. To solve this problem, the workgroup proposed adding a data element pair: *Size Range Minimum and Maximum*. These data elements would be used for any species where a market size category is expressed in terms of a range of sizes. To flag the use of this field pair, and to specify the units used, special Market Size Categories would be instituted as follows:

- CT - counts per lb. (i.e. 80-100 / lb)
- LB - pounds (i.e. 1-2 lbs, 2-3 lbs)
- MM - millimeters

Using this method, the scallop size codes (S0-S6) could also be eliminated.

#### **Table A.7 Market Grade (Landing Condition)**

Is code 20 (*Scales*) a typo intended to be *Scaled*? If not, a code for *Scaled* should be added.

#### **Table A.8 Species Codes**

Adoption of the ITIS codes would be no problem.

#### **Table A.9 State and County Codes**

Can FIPS be used for port codes?

**The meeting was recessed at 4:30 p.m.**

**August 18, 1999**

**The meeting reconvened at 9:00 a.m.**

#### Discussion of Biological Sampling Module

D. Donaldson distributed a existing biological sampling module data elements. The group reviewed the elements and developed variable formats and coded, where necessary. The group discussed the LENGTH element. **It was recommended by the group that FIN used millimeters as the official measurement for length.** The LENGTH TYPE was also discussed by the group. G. Davenport noted that at last year’s Gulf of Mexico port samplers meeting, a recommendation regarding length type was developed. **It stated that fork length or mid-line length should be used as the official length type measurement for FIN.** The group believed this recommendation should be discussed by the FIN Committee at the upcoming meeting. The revised biological sampling module elements are attached and represent the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

#### Discussion of Fishery and Discards Modules

The group discussed the Fishery module and stated that all the elements necessary are included in the trip ticket elements. The method for sampling and collecting this information will be developed once the trip ticket programs have been implemented in the Gulf of Mexico. The group also discussed the development of discards and protected species interactions modules. The group agreed that these modules are currently lower priority than the trip ticket, biological sampling, and social/economic modules. The group believed ComFIN should focus on completing these modules before becoming involved in developing another module.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.**

FIN Implementation Work Group  
Meeting Summary  
August 16, 1999  
Atlanta, Georgia

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. and the following people were present:

Guy Davenport, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Toby Tobias, USVIDFW, St. Croix, VI  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

#### Purpose of the Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the main purpose of the meeting was to review the products developed from the ComFIN implementation meetings and develop a report from the materials as well as develop a funding decision process, review and evaluation criteria, guidelines and implementation strategy for FIN.

#### Development of a ComFIN Implementation Report

D. Donaldson stated that the Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS met in July in New Orleans to discuss implementing ComFIN. One of the tasks for this group is to develop a report regarding the implementation of ComFIN. A meeting summary of the implementation meetings was provided to the work group and it was suggested that some introductory language be added and the bulleted items from the summary be incorporated into the report. The group discussed adding some information about the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico regarding their commercial sampling programs. The group reviewed the meeting summary and made several changes. The draft implementation report is attached and represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

#### Development of Funding Decision Process

D. Donaldson stated that the FIN discussed the need for a funding decision process, similar to the one developed by ACCSP. In the past, there has not been funds available for operational activities however with the creation of the GulfFIN line item, there needs to be a process for determining how the funds will be spend among the partners. M. Osborn and G. Davenport stated that they are concerned that the funds appropriated under the GulfFIN line item are not available to the federal partners of the program. D. Donaldson stated that the language associated with the line item clearly stated that the GulfFIN funds are to be used by the Gulf states only. M. Osborn noted that is one interpretation of the language and there are differing views about how the money can be spent. M. Osborn felt that NMFS is being left out of the loop and not being treated as a full partner. After some discussion, the group decided that this work group was not the appropriate body to determine how the money should be spent and **recommended to the FIN that the GSMFC State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S/FFMC) address the issue of how the GulfFIN line item should be allocated: to state partners only or both state and federal partners, at their upcoming meeting in October.** D. Donaldson noted that the FIN Administrative Subcommittee discussed the possibility of reducing the number of FIN Committee meetings from twice a year to once a year. M. Osborn stated that there needs to be a list of funding priorities developed before the annual FIN meeting. This funding priority list will be developed on the subcommittee/work group level. The recreational (Biological/Environmental), commercial (Data Collection) and social/economic (Social/Economic) components will be charged with developing funding priorities for the upcoming year. It was noted that a clear charge to each of these groups needs to be developed so useful products are produced. Budgetary and technical reviews need to be incorporated into the process. It is important that realistic budgets be developed to ensure the funding is used in the most efficient manner. The technical review of the proposed activities will be part of subcommittee/work group charges. The activities will be reviewed prior to implementation of the tasks.

Once the groups have presented their recommendations, the FIN Committee will review and consider which activities to fund for the upcoming year. Once the FIN Committee agrees upon the activities, the list needs to be approved by the appropriate bodies in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. For the Gulf of Mexico, the S/FFMC will provide final approval and in the Caribbean, it will be the Caribbean Fishery Management Council.

#### Development of Guidelines and Review and Evaluation Criteria

The group developed guidelines and review and evaluation criteria to be used by the appropriate subcommittees/work groups. The group utilized the ACCSP process as a starting point. The FIN funding decision process is attached and represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

#### Discussion of FIN Implementation Strategy

D. Donaldson noted that there may not be a need for an implementation strategy for FIN. On the recreational side, the program is basically implemented. In the states of Louisiana through Florida, state personnel are conducting the MRFSS. In Texas, there is a need to make their data available and ensure that it is compatible. This is a task that the RecFIN(SE) Committee is addressing. With the availability of funds for the Caribbean, the MRFSS methodology will be implemented in that region as well. On the commercial side, the Gulf states are working on implementing trip ticket programs. This is the first step in implementing a cooperative data collection program. Once the trip tickets are in place, information about detailed effort, biological sampling, social/economic data, and discards can be collected. M. Osborn stated that there may be a need to begin collecting social and economic information before full implementation of the trip ticket system. D. Donaldson noted that you need the trip ticket system in place before you can collect the social and economic data since the trip ticket program identifies the universe from which you will be sampling. Although it has never been formally stated, collection of the catch and effort data is the highest priority to the FIN. M. Osborn stated that she understood that but there is a real need for social and economic data and these types of data might be as high a priority as catch and effort and the group should consider the collection of social and economic data at the same level as catch and effort.

#### Other Business

M. Osborn stated that funds are available to begin recreational data collection in the Caribbean. The MRFSS methods will be used and NMFS will work with Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands to coordinate the data collection activities. Sampling will begin in Wave 6 of this year and continue for three waves.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.**

## ComFIN Implementation Report

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

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.

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 resources, the states, and the nation.

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

Several meetings were held in July 1999 to get all the players involved in commercial data collection activities in the Gulf of Mexico at the table and discuss who will be responsible for the various tasks involved in the collection and management of these data. From those meeting, the following items were identified:

- It was stated that the trip ticket program is the backbone to the ComFIN. The first step in implementation of the ComFIN is the initiation of trip ticket programs in each state in the Gulf of Mexico. It is essential that each state have a trip ticket program to ensure that all landings are captured.
- It was suggested that some side-by-side activity between the current data collection (monthly landings) and the trip ticket be conducted for a specified time period. When Florida implemented their trip ticket program, they conducted side-by-side comparisons for two years to ensure that the data being collected by the two programs were the same.
- It was stressed that the port agent system is very important and still plays an integral role in ComFIN. Although the landings information will be captured via the trip ticket, the port samplers will still be necessary to collect such information as detailed effort (where not captured on the trip ticket), biological sampling, social/economic data, and discards information. In Texas and Mississippi, there is a need for additional port samplers to conduct the necessary data collection activities. There was a stated need for increased biological sampling in Texas. This issue will be addressed during the development of the FY2000 cooperative agreement for FIN.
- The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) will be the data warehouse for the Gulf of

Mexico. It was also suggested that the GSMFC act as a centralized repository for all the dealers similar to the charter boat vessel frame. The GSMFC would be responsible for maintaining the data base and the states would be responsible for providing updates to the dealer information. The group discussed the data management aspects of the ComFIN and the fact that this system will be housed at the GSMFC. The issue of how this will affect the NMFS-Miami data management facility was discussed, and it was pointed out that although the ComFIN data management system will house the regional data, there is still a need for NMFS data management capabilities. However, it was noted that by establishing a regional data warehouse at the GSMFC, there will be some freeing up of NMFS staff to focus on other aspects of the program. It was also noted that a process for transferring ComFIN data into the Fisheries Information System (FIS) still needs to be developed.

- Since several of the states are beginning the implementation of trip ticket programs and Louisiana and Florida already have operational program, it was discussed and decided that there needs to be a workshop regarding establishing and maintaining a trip ticket program. The workshop will focus on the steps Florida and Louisiana took to implement their programs, problems and issues encountered, pros and cons about the way their systems are set up, costs of operation, etc. This workshop will be held during the Annual Fall GSMFC meeting at the Data Management Subcommittee meeting.
- The group discussed the issue of quota monitoring. It was decided that this issue needs to be further explored by the FIN Committee at their upcoming fall meeting. The partners need to develop a list of species that are currently monitored by quota. Alabama stated that they currently do not quota monitor any species. Mississippi stated that they have a quota for red drum and speckled trout. Also, the Committee needs to discuss what the expectation of a FIN quota monitoring system would be: estimation of fish or total count of fish.
- The issue of continued funding for commercial activities in the Southeast Region was discussed. There was concern that because of the initiation of trip ticket programs in the Gulf of Mexico, there might be the perception that the current funding for the Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP) could be utilized for other activities, possibly outside of the Region. It was pointed out that this is not the case and there is still the need for funding. Although the funds may not be used for current CSP activities, the money is essential to the collection of commercial data. It was also noted that a significant amount of funding for the U.S. Virgin Islands (100%) and Puerto Rico (65%) comes from the CSP and without these funds, the sampling in the Caribbean would be drastically reduced. It was decided that a schematic be developed (and incorporated into the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee presentation) that outlines the amount of funds needs for all the commercial data collection activities in the Southeast. This could be used as rationale for keeping funding in the Southeast for commercial data collection (i.e. detailed effort, biological sampling, social/economic, discards).
- The group discussed the need for periodic meetings of the port samplers. Last year, there was a port sampler meeting in Tampa and was very successful. Unfortunately, there was not sufficient travel funds for the federal port agents; consequently, there was not a port samplers meeting this year in the Gulf; however, a meeting will be held in the Caribbean. It was noted that, as justification for securing funding, these meetings are actually part of the quality assurance/quality control aspects of the ComFIN. The meetings allow for interaction among the samplers and provides them a forum to discuss data collection methods, problems encountered in the field and potential solutions, and other related issues.
- It was noted that there needs to be a firm commitment from each state regarding the implementation of a trip ticket program. Texas has some concern about implementation of such a program and there needs to be discussion by state personnel to ensure this is the method for collecting commercial data that should be used.

- Alabama is attempting to have a pilot trip ticket program implemented by January 2000. They (as well as Mississippi) will use scanning technologies (similar to Louisiana's system) for entering the data. Another issue discussed concerned electronic reporting of the data. It was stated that there are some dealers (usually the high-volume dealers) who would be able and are actually interested in utilizing this technology for reporting the data. This issue will be pursued by the states and periodic updates to the FIN will be provided.
- The group discussed legislative issues regarding the implementation of a trip ticket program. Obviously, Louisiana and Florida have adequate laws and regulations to allow for the implementation of such a system. Texas's, Alabama's, U.S. Virgin Islands' and Puerto Rico's current laws and regulations are also adequate to allow for a trip ticket program. However, it appears that although the laws and regulations in Mississippi give the authority to collect data about commercial fishing activities, they place the onus on the Department to collect this information and not require the dealers to report these data. Mississippi is exploring this issue and will make the necessary changes to allow for implementation of the program.
- There was concern by Mississippi and Alabama about compliance with the trip ticket program. It was noted that an integral part of this program is interaction with the dealers and fishermen to ensure that there is "buy-in" from the industry. It is important to involve the dealers and fishermen so that they are part of the process of developing the program. Without the support of industry, the trip ticket programs will not be successful. The U.S. Virgin Islands holds periodic meetings with their commercial fishermen to provide training on how to complete the necessary forms, provide an overview of the previous year's data, discuss confidentiality issues, and other pertinent topics.
- The U.S. Virgin Islands has a voluntary program where commercial fishermen report catch records (on a trip level) on a monthly basis. There are approximately 400 commercial fishermen in the U.S. Virgin Islands. There are no dealers in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The ComFIN trip ticket data elements are mostly captured by the monthly reporting. If charter boats sell their catch, they are required to report the landings. In Puerto Rico, there is weekly reporting from fishermen; however, that information is not trip-based. There is also reporting from dealers and these data are reported on a trip basis. About 60% of the commercial landings are reported through dealers. The reporting was recently made mandatory and as in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the ComFIN trip ticket data elements are mostly captured by the reporting program. The law which required mandatory reporting also establishes a recreational fishing license. It is illegal in Puerto Rico for charter boat operators to sell their catch. There are approximately 1,700 commercial fishermen in Puerto Rico. Both U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico collect data on finfish as well as shellfish.

## **Funding Decision Process for FIN**

The Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)] are state-federal cooperative programs to collect, manage, and disseminate statistical data and information on the marine commercial and recreational fisheries of the Southeast Region. All proposals should follow the current format for cooperative agreements being utilized in the Southeast. The following process are provided as guidance to program partners and are consistent with current federal guidelines.

### **Guidelines**

The following guidelines are proposed to assist State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee and Caribbean Fishery Management Council decisions on funding proposals:

- The FIN Committee is the appropriate bodies to review proposals and make funding recommendations to the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee and Caribbean Fishery Management Council.
- Existing program partner funds are not expected to be replaced with new FIN funds, subject to current funding levels.
- After establishment of programs, the responsible partner(s) will assume long-term operational costs using a combination of partner and FIN funds.
- For the short-term, FIN funds will not be used for current programs in jurisdictions with established resources. Partners with existing programs that do not meet FIN standards may receive funds to bring their program to FIN standards.
- Even though a large portion of available resources may be allocated to one or more jurisdictions, new systems (including prototypes) will be selected to serve all partners' needs during the implementation phase.

### **Steps in the Funding Decision Process**

1. Annual Development of FIN Priorities
2. Review & Recommendations to the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee and Caribbean Fishery Management Council
3. Approval/Disapproval by State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee and Caribbean Fishery Management Council

### **Development of FIN Priorities**

The subcommittee and work groups will develop a list of funding priorities prior to the annual FIN meeting (May/June) through meetings of the groups. The priority list will be based on the annual Operations Plan for that calendar year. This list will be approved by the FIN Committee.

### **Review and Evaluation**

The review and evaluation of all activities will take into consideration the following criteria, with no priority implied:

- The project benefits are region-wide in scope, pertain to all fisheries, and address regional questions or policy issues.
- The project is required by federal or state legislation (e.g., MSFCMA, ACFCMA, MMPA, ESA, or other acts).
- The project will provide early success in implementing the FIN, a quick payback, and a large return on investment.
- Data provided by the project is transferable to other FIN partners, and demonstrates the practical application of the FIN.
- The project will result in substantial improvement to current data collection and data management systems, in a cost-effective manner
- The project will fill large gaps in information, versus historical database transformation.
- The project will result in high quality data that can be utilized immediately for fisheries assessment and management.
- The initial investment in the project is for a one time capitalization to build the FIN infrastructure, rather than being operational in nature. (*FIN needs to discuss*)
- The project provides the capability to link to other data sets (GIS, environmental, fisheries dependent/independent data) enabling more sophisticated modeling and multi-use.
- The project serves as a prototype for the FIN, thereby generating secondary benefits.
- The project is supported by matching partner funds, where applicable. (*FIN needs to discuss*)



## **APPENDIX C**

### **Goals and Objectives**



- GOAL 1: To plan, manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.
- Objective 1 To establish and maintain a ComFIN, FIN and 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 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 and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.
- Objective 1 To characterize and periodically review the commercial and recreational 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 and RecFIN(SE) requirements.
  - Objective 5 To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) requirements.
  - Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection methodologies and technologies.
- GOAL 3: To establish and maintain an integrated, marine commercial and recreational fishery data management system for the Region.
- Objective 1 To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the FIN 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 and recreational 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 and recreational 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 and recreational 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 FIN 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.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Goals and Objectives**



GOAL 1: To plan, manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.

Objective 1 To establish and maintain a ComFIN, FIN and 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 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 and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.

Objective 1 To characterize and periodically review the commercial and recreational 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 and RecFIN(SE) requirements.

Objective 5 To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) requirements.

Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection methodologies and technologies.

GOAL 3: To establish and maintain an integrated, marine commercial and recreational fishery data management system for the Region.

Objective 1 To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the FIN 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 and recreational 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 and recreational 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 and recreational 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 FIN 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.