

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

JANUARY 1, 2004 - DECEMBER 31, 2004

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Number 131

## INTRODUCTION

The Fisheries Information Network (FIN) is 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 FIN consists of two components: Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)].

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) that 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 an 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 FIN 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 that 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 FIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial, anadromous and recreational fishery data and information for the conservation and management

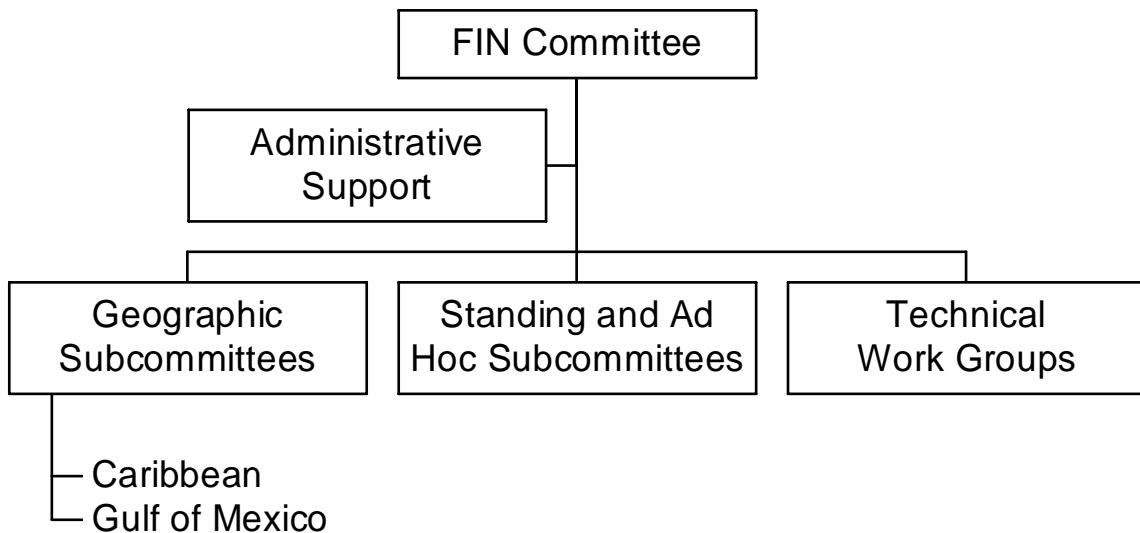
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<sup>1</sup> The Southeast Region (the Region) includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

of fishery resources in the Region and to support the development of a national program. The four goals of the FIN include planning, managing, and evaluating 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.

### PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The organizational structure consists of the FIN Committee, two geographic subcommittees (Caribbean and Gulf), standing and ad hoc subcommittees, technical work groups, and administrative support (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Organizational structure of the FIN.

The FIN Committee consists 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, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Puerto Rico Department of Environmental and 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 and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

As of October 1998, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission no longer actively participated on the FIN Committee. Although there is no representation of the South Atlantic on FIN, the South Atlantic continues to participate at the

work group level and there is continued participation by staff member from both programs to ensure compatibility and comparability.

The FIN Committee is divided into two 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 FIN Committee to address administrative issues and technical work groups are established as needed by the Committee to carry out tasks on specific technical issues. Coordination and administrative support of the FIN is accomplished through the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

## **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

The FIN is a comprehensive program comprised of coordinated data collection activities, an integrated data management and retrieval system, and procedures for information dissemination. Activities during 2002 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, FIN was 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. Each type of activity is discussed below. Future activities of the FIN Committee are outlined in Table 1.

## **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

### **FIN Committee**

The major FIN meeting was held in June 2004. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- Identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 2004 and instruction to Administrative and Geographic Subcommittees and the Data Collection, Biological/Environmental, Social/Economic, Data Collection Plan, Registration Tracking and ad hoc work groups to either begin or continue work on these tasks;
- Development of the 2005 FIN Operations Plan which presented the year's activities in data collection, data management, and information dissemination;
- Discussion of data management issues;
- Review of activities and accomplishments of 2004;
- Continued evaluation of adequacy of current marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs for FIN and development of recommendations regarding these programs;

- Review findings of and receive recommendations from technical work groups for activities to be carried out during 2005;
- Preparation and submission of a proposal for financial assistance to support activities of the FIN; and
- Continued internal evaluation of the program.

The FIN Committee members are listed in Table 2. The approved 2004 FIN Operations Plan is included in Appendix A and minutes for the FIN Committee meeting are included in Appendix B. The FIN goals and objectives are included in Appendix C.

### **Subcommittees and Work Groups**

The FIN subcommittees and work groups met during the year to provide recommendations to the Committee to formulate administrative policies, address specific technical issues for accomplishing many of the FIN goals and objectives, and examine other issues as decided by the Committee. Subcommittee and work group members are listed in Table 3. Their activities included:

- The Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee meeting in March and October 2004 to discuss the status of biological sampling activities, status of registration tracking module, using fishing licenses as sampling frame methods, monitoring of changes in scientific names, Mississippi Tournament Sampling Protocols, head boat sampling in the Gulf of Mexico, changes in TIP since implementation of trip ticket programs, and confidentiality issues regarding the FIN data management system;
- The FIN For-Hire Work Group met in March 2004 (via conference call) to discuss the status of the telephone calls to head boat operators in the Gulf of Mexico;
- The RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group met in March 2004 (via conference call) to discuss tournament sampling issues and the status of tournament sampling in Mississippi, development of sampling strategies for recreational non-rod-and-reel activities and private access site sampling;
- The Otolith Processors Training Workshop was held in May 2004 to discuss establishing primary readers for otolith processing, status of University of Florida greater amberjack project, the red snapper reference set, development of reference sets for additional species, processing status of otoliths collected in 2002 – 2004 as well as an otolith readings exercise for red snapper, greater amberjack, and king mackerel;
- The FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group met in May 2004 to review of 2003 and 2004 otolith and length data collection activities, development of targets for biological sampling, recommendations for necessary lengths and otoliths for FIN priority species, discussion of adding new species, discussion of developing sampling targets for east Florida, development of 2005 fin data collection plan document;

- The FIN Social/Economic Work Group met in May 2004 (via conference call) to discuss the status of the data collection plan for social/economic activities under FIN;
- The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee met in August 2004 to discuss the finalization of activities for funding for the 2005 FIN cooperative agreement;
- The Caribbean commercial port samplers meeting was held in September 2004 to discuss the status of Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN), an overview of the Gulf Shrimp program, overview of NMFS Caribbean SEDAR process, portrait of the fisheries of the red hind, mutton snapper and spiny lobster in Puerto Rico during 1988-2001, Puerto Rico's commercial landings reported in 2003 as well as a sampling trip to several shrimp operations along the Gulf coast; and
- The Gulf of Mexico commercial port samplers meeting was held in November 2004 to discuss the status of Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN), discussion of otolith issues, discussion of the TIP Online program, other pertinent issues as well as an otolith training workshop.

## **OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- Coordination and Administration of RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN Activities - This task provides for the coordination, planning, and administration of FIN activities throughout the year as well as provides recreational and commercial information to the FIN participants and other interested personnel. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data - This task provided for the conduct of the MRFSS survey in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida for shore, for-hire, and private modes, an activity under the RecFIN(SE). This task provided for coordination of the survey, a field-intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. These data were combined with the NMFS effort estimate telephone survey. In addition, the states conducted supplemental sampling of the intercept portion for the MRFSS for charter boats in Texas (using TPWD methodology), Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (east and west coast). The states also conducted weekly telephone calls to a 10% random sample of the Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (east and west coast) charter boat captains to obtain estimates of charter boat fishing effort as well as social economic data. In addition, the states also called heat boat captains to obtain fishing effort from these vessels. In 2000, NMFS adopted this method as the official methodology for estimation of charter boat effort. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Head Boat Port Sampling in Texas, Louisiana, and Florida - This task provided for the sampling of catches, collection of catch reports from head boat personnel, and gathering effort data on head boats which operate primarily in the Exclusive Economic Zone from

ports along the coasts of Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year.

- Menhaden Data Collection Activities - This task provided for sampling of gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels that operate in Louisiana. The samples were processed for size and age composition for use in coast-wide stock assessments. In turn, gulf menhaden stock assessments are incorporated into the Fisheries Management Plan for the species, and are also utilized by the Gulf Coast states, the GSMFC, the menhaden industry, and the NMFS. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Development and Implementation of FIN Data Management System - This task provided for further implementation of a fishery information system for the FIN based on the ACCSP model. This task will provide funding for the FIN Data Base Manager and ComFIN Survey Coordinator who will, in conjunction with the ACCSP, work on developing more data modules for the FIN and ACCSP data management systems. Responsibilities include further development of data modules structures; routine loading of Louisiana, Mississippi (oyster only) Alabama, and Florida commercial catch effort data, Gulf biological data, Gulf recreational data; and maintenance of DMS. It is the next step for implementing a regional system for FIN.
- Trip Ticket Program Development, Implementation and Operation- This task provided for the initiation and development of a commercial trip ticket system for Texas and Mississippi, an activity under the ComFIN. This task provided for development of components for a commercial trip ticket system to census the commercial fisheries landings in Texas and Mississippi using the data elements and standards developed by the ComFIN. It will ultimately be combined with other commercial fisheries data collected from around the Gulf of Mexico. Full operation of Louisiana, Alabama and Florida trip ticket programs continue. GSMFC enter into a contract with Southwest Computer Bureau (SCBI) to provide installation and maintenance of electronic trip ticket programs for Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. In Mississippi, the state is currently implementing a trip ticket program. Unfortunately, Mississippi was still unable to get legislation passed that would make it easier to collect data from dealers, but is continuing to implement a program for oyster, bait shrimp and finfish. Texas is still evaluating the feasibility of implementing trip ticket program in their state.
- Biological Sampling of Commercial and Recreational Catches - This task provided for the collection of biological data from the recreational and commercial fisheries. These data are essential to accurately assessing the status of commercial and recreational species such as red snapper, king mackerel, gulf and southern flounder, and greater amberjack. For the commercial aspects, port sampling will be collecting this information based on established guidelines. For the recreational side, samplers will go to sites and collect the necessary biological data using a modified MRFSS method. This task provides funding for collection, processing and analysis of these data. The GSMFC provided coordination as well as tracking of the collection and analysis portions of this activity. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year

## **Coordination and Administrative Support**

Working closely with the Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation was a major function of FIN 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 Committee, subcommittees, and work groups; serving as liaison between the Committee, other program participants, and other interested organizations; preparing annual operations plans under the direction of the Committee; preparing and/or supervising and coordinating preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings; and distributing approved FIN information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures.

## **Information Dissemination**

Committee members and staff provided program information in 2003 via a variety of different methods such as distribution of program documents, presentation to various groups interested in the FIN, and via the Internet:

- FIN Committee. 2004. *2005 Operations Plan for Fisheries Information Network (FIN)*. No. 124 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 26 pp + appendix.
- FIN Committee. 2004. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 2003 - December 31, 2003*. No. 123 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 18 pp + appendices.
- FIN Committee. 2004. *2005 FIN Data Collection Plan*. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 74 pp.
- FIN articles in the GSMFC newsletters.
- Variety of informal discussions occurred throughout the year during ASMFC, GSMFC, NMFS, and other participating agencies meetings and workshops.
- The FIN has developed a data management system that provides access to commercial and recreational data for the Gulf States. There are two levels of access: confidential and non-confidential and users can request access via the FIN DMS web site ([www.gsmfc.org/data.html](http://www.gsmfc.org/data.html))
- NMFS provides a user-friendly data management system (DMS) for the MRFSS that is accessible via the web ([www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/recreational/data.html](http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/recreational/data.html))
- GSMFC has developed a home page that provides programmatic and operational information regarding FIN.



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 FIN 2001 - 2005**

[Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
<b>Planning, Management, and Evaluation</b>					
FIN Committee					
Maintenance of FIN Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Development of annual operations plans	X	X	X	X	X
Support establishment of MRF surveys in PR & VI	X	X	X	X	X
Identify funding needs for MRF programs	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination					
Implement outreach strategy	X	X			
Develop outreach materials and list of users	X	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					
Collection of metadata	X	X	X	X	X
Develop rec and comm catch/effort modules	X	X	X		
Develop permitting module	X	X			
Develop social/economic data module	X	X			
Develop biological sampling module	X				
Develop fishery module	X	X			
Develop discard and protected species interactions module	X	X	X		
Standard data collection protocols					
Develop data collection procedures manual	X	X	X		
Determine precision levels for priority species	X				
Evaluate methods for achieving desired precision levels	X				
Quality control/assurance					
Develop commercial and recreational QA/QC standards	X	X	X		
Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards					X
Recommendations regarding duplicative collection and management	X				
Coordination of data collection					
Development of data collection plan	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluate current fishery independent data activities	X				
Make recommendations to appropriate fishery -independent programs		X			
Establish/modify recreational licenses to meet criteria	X	X	X		
Conduct comparison survey of license frame and MRFSS				X	
Implement the appropriate license frame methodology					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	X		
Develop method for collecting recreational data on fishing tournaments	X	X	X		
Develop methods for collecting recreational data on non hook-&-line fisheries				X	X
Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process	X				
Determine the extent of non-consumptive activities					X

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
<b>Data Collection (continued)</b>					
Innovative collection technology					
Evaluate innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Management</b>					
Data management system					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
Hardware/software capabilities					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard data management protocols					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			
Integration of data bases					
Identify recreational databases for integration in DMS	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative data management technology					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data confidentiality					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Development of National Program</b>					
Long-term planning					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

**TABLE 2.**

**FIN COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2004**

Kevin Anson  
Alabama Marine Resources Division

Steven Atran  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
Council

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Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

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Tom Schmidt  
National Park Service

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**TABLE 3.**

**FIN SUBCOMMITTEE AND WORK GROUP MEMBERS FOR 2004**

**FIN Administrative Subcommittee**

Kevin Anson  
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### **FIN Data Management Work Group**

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**APPENDIX A**  
**2004 Operations Plan**

**2004 Operations Plan for the  
Fisheries Information Network in the  
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004

**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 2003. 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 and to support the development and operation of a national program.

The goals of the FIN are:

- To plan, manage, and evaluate data collection and management activities;
- To implement data collection activities;
- To establish and maintain a data management system; and
- To support the establishment of a national program.

The goals and objectives of FIN are found in Appendix A.

### III. OPERATIONS

#### A. Operational Activities

The tasks below cover all 2004 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a commercial activity; a 'R' denotes a recreational activity; and a 'F' denotes a commercial/recreational activity.

Task A1: Development, Implementation and Operation of Trip Ticket Programs (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

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

Team Members: Gulf states and Data Collection Work Group

Approach: The states of Texas and Mississippi will continue the implementation of trip ticket programs in their states. This task will provide for development of components for a commercial trip ticket system to census the commercial fisheries landings in Texas and Mississippi using the data elements and standards developed by the FIN. Mississippi is currently collecting trip-level data for oyster, bait shrimp and finfish landings. They are attempting to pass legislation that would allow for the expansion of collection of trip-level data for all commercial species. Texas is currently evaluating the feasibility of implementing trip tickets in their state. For Louisiana and Alabama, funding will be provided for the majority of operation of their trip ticket programs. In addition, GSMFC will contract with Southwest Computer Bureau (SCBI) to implement and maintain electronic trip ticket reporting for Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida and potentially Texas. Ultimately, all states will have operating trip tickets program and all commercial landings will be captured via these systems. Accomplished by meeting, telephone, mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

Resources: Operational and implementation costs, telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.

Product: Gulf-wide trip ticket program

Schedule: Implementation of trip tickets began in 1999 and will continue during 2004 for Mississippi and Texas. Operations of trip ticket will continue in 2004 for Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida.

Task A2: Collection of Recreational Fisheries Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Collection of recreational fisheries data in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, NMFS

Approach: The states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida will continue to conduct the MRFSS survey for shore, for-hire, and private modes. This task will provide for coordination of the survey, a field-intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. It will be combined with the NMFS effort estimate telephone survey. The NMFS will produce expanded estimates of catch and effort by wave using the existing MRFSS methodology. In addition, the states will conduct supplemental sampling of the intercept portion for the MRFSS for charter boats in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
 Product: Collection of recreational fisheries data for the Gulf of Mexico.  
 Schedule: This is an on-going task.

Task A3: 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: For-Hire Work Group, Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS

Approach: For charter boats, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida have implemented the Charter Boat Telephone Survey that collects effort data from charter boat captains. Regarding head boats, the FIN For-Hire Work Group has met and developed data collection methods for this fishery. Implementation of these methods will require additional funding. There will be a period of time where duplicative data collection methods are being conducted for comparison purposes. Once enough data have been collection, Gulf States, GSMFC and NMFS will determine the best method for collecting data in the head boat fishery.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
 Product: For-hire survey methodology  
 Schedule: The alternative methodology is developed and additional funds are needed to implement in 2004.

Task A4: Continue the Collection of Menhaden Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (C)

Objective: Continue the support of menhaden sampling in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS

Approach: The purpose of this task is to sample gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels that operate at the ports of Empire,

Morgan City, Abbeville, and Cameron, Louisiana. Samples will be processed for size and age composition for use in coast-wide stock assessments. In turn, gulf menhaden stock assessments are incorporated into the Fisheries Management Plan for the species, and are also utilized by the Gulf coast states, the GSMFC, the menhaden industry, and the NMFS.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
Product: Collection of necessary menhaden data  
Schedule: This task is an on-going activity.

Task A5: Continue the Collection of Head Boat Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Continue the support of head boat sampling in the Gulf of Mexico.  
Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS  
Approach: The purpose of this task is to sample catches, collect catch reports from head boat personnel, and gather effort data on head boats which operate primarily in the Exclusive Economic Zone from ports along the coasts of Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. This task will be conducted in accordance with existing NMFS head boat methodology.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
Product: Collection of necessary head boat data  
Schedule: This task is an on-going activity.

Task A6: Collection of Biological (otoliths and lengths) Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Implement the collection of recreational and commercial sampling of biological data in the Gulf of Mexico.  
Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS  
Approach: The purpose of this task is to conduct biological sampling interviews of recreational and commercial fishermen using the modified MRFSS and Trip Interview Program protocols. Samplers will collect length frequencies, identifications of species, trip and gear characteristics, weights of catches, hard parts (otoliths) and make comparisons of interview data to trip ticket data for quality assurance purposes. The GSMFC will provide coordination and tracking of targets and provide feedback to the states. The Data Collection Plan Work Group and FIN will determine the priority species for 2003.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
Product: Collection of necessary biological data  
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task A7:        Collection of Detailed Effort Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective:            Implement the collection of detailed effort data from the commercial fisheries operating in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members:      Louisiana, GSMFC, and NMFS

Approach:            The purpose of this task is to collect detailed effort (multiple area fished and gears) data from the commercial fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. NMFS began this activity in 2002 and focused on the shrimp fishery in Louisiana using the Trip Interview Program (TIP) methodology. This year, NMFS will continue collecting data from the shrimp fishery in Louisiana. In addition, Louisiana personnel will collect detailed effort from the blue crab fishery. The samples will be representatively distributed using the trip ticket data. Information on multiple areas fished, gears, days at sea, crew size, etc. will be collected by both NMFS and Louisiana personnel.

Resources:          Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.

Product:              Collection of necessary detailed effort data

Schedule:             A presentation of the results will be given at the 2004 FIN meeting.

Task A8:        Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Objective 3) (F)

Objective:            To design, implement, and maintain a 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, FIN Data Base Manager, and ComFIN Survey Coordinator

Approach:            The FIN will continue to develop the Data Management System (DMS). Development of the registration tracking system will be address by the FIN Data Base Manager. This module will be used by both FIN and ACCSP. In addition, the FIN IT manager will continue to receive routine delivery of Louisiana, Mississippi (oyster, bait shrimp and finfish data only), Alabama, and Florida trip ticket data into the FIN DMS. The Data Base Manager will also maintain the historical data in the system and provide support of outside users of the system. In addition to the commercial data, regular loads of recreational data into the DMS will be accomplished. FIN will continue to work in conjunction with the ACCSP to ensure compatibility and comparability between the programs.

Resources:          Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.



Product: FIN data management system  
Schedule: Further development registration tracking system and routine delivery of data will continue in 2004.

Task A9: 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/FIN Data Management Work Group

Approach: The FIN and ACCSP are currently developing data management systems for their respective coasts. 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. The FIN Data Management Work Group and ACCSP Computer Technical Committee will continue to develop of this information and there will be coordination between the programs to insure comparability and compatibility.

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

Product: Standard protocols and documentation for the FIN data management system.

Schedule: The appropriate FIN and ACCSP groups will meet (if necessary) in 2004 to address any issues.

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

The tasks below cover all 2004 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a commercial activity; an 'R' denotes a recreational activity; and an 'F' denotes a commercial/recreational activity.

Task B1: Annual Operations Plan, 2005 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2005 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 2005.

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

Product: 2005 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by spring 2004 and addressed by the Committee at the 2004 meeting.

Task B2: Development of Funding Initiatives to Establish Marine Recreational Fisheries (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/NMFS/GSMFC

Approach: The Work Group has been working on this issue for several years. In 2000, the MRFSS was re-established in the U.S. Caribbean, although there were severe problems with attracting and retaining reliable intercept interviewers in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Sampling in Puerto Rico was conducted in 2001- 2002, however, sampling was dropped in the U.S. Virgin Islands during 2001. Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, NMFS and GSMFC personnel are exploring ways to ensure long-term collection of recreational data in the Caribbean.

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

Product: Develop a long-term MRF surveys for the Caribbean.

Schedule: The Work Group and FIN will continue monitoring this task in 2004.

Task B3: 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. 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 that 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 B4: Implementation of Outreach Program (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Implementation an outreach program for FIN

Team Members: FIN Outreach Work Group/FIN Committee

Approach: The Work Group has developed a strategy for outreach. The group developed a draft strategy document that has been reviewed and approved by the FIN Committee. As outlined in the document, it is incumbent on the program partners to conduct outreach within their jurisdiction. The FIN staff will attend a variety of meetings to promote the program as well. FIN Committee will continue to work with the ACCSP in developing outreach activities.

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

Product: FIN outreach program

Schedule: The FIN Committee approved the strategy in June 2002. An update of outreach activities will be compiled each year and presented to FIN Committee at their annual meeting.

Task B5: Development of the Bycatch Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Develop the bycatch module of the FIN.

Team Members: ComFIN Data Collection Work Group

Approach: In 2002, information regarding absence/presence and magnitude of discards activities was compiled for the Southeast Region. Using this information and that developed by the ACCSP, the Work Group designed a data collection module for the compilation of discards and protected species interactions for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program outlined the data elements that need to be collected for compilation of discards and protected species interactions. The FIN Committee approved the module and additional funding is needed to implement the data collection activities. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

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

Product: Bycatch data collection program

Schedule: The Work Group addressed this issue in 1998 and will continue working on it during 2004.

Task B6: Implementation 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: Working in conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group has designed a data collection module for the compilation of social/economic information for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program outlines the data elements required for each fishery component that need to be collected for compilation of social/economic data. Since the module has been developed, additional funds as well as needs have to be identified

before data collection activities can begin. The FIN approved a new approach to social/economic data collection where FIN focuses on providing feedback to existing data collection activities (logbook add-ons, offshore shrimp fisheries interviews, etc.) in terms of meeting the FIN social/economic standards. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.  
Product: Social/Economic data collection module and data collection surveys for collection of the data.  
Schedule: The Work Group began addressing this issue during 1998 and will continue working on it during 2004, as needed.

Task B7: Development of Metadata Database (Goal 2 , Objective 2) (F)

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

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group/FIN Data Base Manager

Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group has worked on this issue in the past and has developed 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. The FIN Committee approved the recommended data structure for the metadata database. Once the fishing regulations information in is the system, subsequent categories to be collected will be determined by the Committee.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail costs, staff time.

Product: Development of metadata module

Schedule: The initial development of the data base structure began in 2000. Due to the status of the Data Base Manager, this activity has been put on hold. The compilation of these data will be an ongoing activity.

Task B8: Implementation of Registration Tracking System (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Development of a registration tracking system for FIN.

Team Members: Registration Tracking Work Group

Approach: In conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group will continue the development of the registration tracking system for both programs. This system will provide a unique identifier for fishermen, dealers, and vessel involved in commercial fisheries that is trackable through geographic location and time. The basic data elements have been approved. The next step is for program partners to

modify their existing licensing systems to collect all the needed elements. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

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

Product: Registration tracking system for FIN and ACCSP

Schedule: The Work Group addressed this issue in 2000 and will continue to meet as needed for the development of this system. The states need to implement the strategy for modifying their licensing systems to collect the needed data.

Task B9: 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/FIN Committee

Approach: Determine standards for collection and management of commercial catch/effort data. The FIN has developed draft documents that describe 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. As modules are implemented, procedure documents will be developed to assist in the collection of the particular data. 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 costs, and staff time.

Product: FIN quality assurance and quality control documents for the various modules

Schedule: The documents will be developed as new and existing modules are addressed. A draft of these documents will be presented to the FIN Committee at the 2004 meeting. Review of this information is an ongoing activity.

Task B10: Port Samplers Workshops (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

Objective: Convene workshops 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 FIN Committee decided to convene workshops of state and federal port agents. There will be several workshops: Texas/Louisiana/Mississippi/Alabama/ Florida; and the Caribbean.

These workshops will be attended by the state and federal port agents from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands, the FIN chairman, appropriate NMFS staff and other interested personnel. Some of the suggested topics for these meetings include species identification workshop, overview of ComFIN program, trip ticket information, sampling and sub-sampling techniques and other pertinent topics.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, 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- and late-2004.

Task B11: Otolith Processors Training Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

Objective: Convene an annual workshop of state and federal otolith processors to discuss issues related to analyzing hard parts (otoliths, spines, etc.)

Team Members: State and federal processors and staff

Approach: In an effort to provide a forum to ensure quality control and quality assurance for otolith processing, the FIN Committee decided to convene workshops of state and federal processors. Processing personnel from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, GSMFC, NMFS staff and other interested personnel will attend the workshop.

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

Product: Provide a forum for processing personnel to discuss problems and issues related to analysis of age structures.

Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for mid- and late-2004.

Task B12: 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 staff time

Product: Recommendations for commercial and recreational surveys.

Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task B13: 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 FIN Committee concerning these activities. From this information, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts in the Southeast Region.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.

Product: Recommendations for reducing duplicative data collection and management efforts

Schedule: This is an ongoing task.

Task B14: Determination of Methods for Collecting Recreational Data from Private Access Sites Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine most appropriate methods for collecting recreational data from private access sites.

Team Members: FIN/Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group met to determine the best method of collected data from private access sites. The group recommended that the first step is to determine the magnitude of the activity. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.

Product: Determination of the best method of the collected the needed data.

Schedule: The Work Group met 2003 and will meet in 2004 to continue addressing this task.

Task B15: 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 and FIN Committee

Approach: In 2001-2002, a night fishing pilot study was conducted in Mississippi. The personnel met in 2003 and evaluated the results of this study, which were presented to the FIN Committee. Based on the evaluation, the FIN Committee decided that the Biological/Environmental Work Group needs to further explore the

need and feasibility of conducting night fishing in other region of the Gulf of Mexico. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
Product: Detailed plan for the compilation of night fishing activities in the Southeast Region.  
Schedule: Implementation of night sampling activities is contingent on additional funding.

Task B16: Collection of Tournaments Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Collect appropriate information from fishing tournaments, and integrate with other marine recreational fisheries 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 Work Group met and discussed this issue and presented their recommendations to the FIN Committee. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, 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 2004 to continue examining this issue.

Task B17: Determination of Methods for Collecting Recreational Data from Non Hook-and-Line Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine most appropriate methods for collecting recreational data from non hook-and-line fisheries.  
Team Members: FIN/Biological/Environmental Work Group  
Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group will need to meet in order to determine the best method of collected data from non hook-and-line fisheries. The FIN has compiled information regarding the magnitude of non-hook-and-line fisheries in the Southeast Region. The group needs to review (and possible update) this information and convene a meeting to develop protocols for sampling these fisheries. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.  
Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
Product: Determination of the best method of the collected the needed data.  
Schedule: The Work Group will meet 2004 to address this task.



Task B18: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Develop a plan that outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming year as well as tracking the collection of these data.

Team Members: FIN Committee/Data Collection Plan Work Group

Approach: The Committee has developed a data collection plan that identifies the priority species (and associated data needed to be collected) for the state, interstate and federal entities as well as establishes sampling target levels for biological data. The plan provides guidance to the states. As trip ticket systems are implemented Gulf-wide, the data from these systems will allow for better allocation of samples. Accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

Resources: Meeting costs, mail costs, telephone costs, and staff time

Product: Data collection plan

Schedule: The group began meeting in 2002 and will continue to do so into the future to review activities and develop this annual plan.

Task B19: Establish/modify recreational licenses (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Establish/modify recreational licenses to meet criteria for use as sampling frame

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The FIN has developed criteria that allow state marine recreational fishing licenses to be used as a regional sampling frame. Based on these criteria, each state needs to either adopt a recreational fishing license or modify existing licenses to meet the criteria. The Committee will periodically review the status of each states' licenses. Once a region has adopted a standardized license, implementation of license sampling frame can be accomplished.

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

Product: Recreational fishing licenses suitable for use as sampling directory

Schedule: The FIN Committee will periodically address this issue to determine the status of each states' licenses.

Task B20: 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 staff time  
Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.  
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B21: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Obj 6) (F)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies  
Team Members: FIN Committee and other appropriate personnel  
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 staff time  
Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.  
Schedule: The GSMFC and Mississippi will be evaluating the latest version of data loggers for collection of recreational data. The results of this test will be presented to the FIN Committee at the 2004 meeting. This is an ongoing activity.

Task B22: 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 and industry personnel  
Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies, which will aid in the management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and staff time.  
Product: Progress reports.  
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B23: 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 other pertinent meetings and coordinate activities as appropriate. Accomplished by mail and meetings.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.  
Product: Record of coordination activities.  
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task B24: 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 encourages consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.  
Team Members: FIN Committee  
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 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 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.

**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 FIN Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation;
- Implement plans and program directives approved by the FIN Committee;
- Provide coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the FIN Committee, subcommittees, and work groups;
- Develop and/or administer cooperative agreements, grants, and contracts;
- Serve as liaison between the FIN Committee, other program participants, and

other interested organizations;

- Assist the FIN 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 FIN information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures as set forth by the FIN Committee;
- Assist in the identification of regional and geographic needs that can be satisfied through FIN activities;
- Conduct or participate in other activities as identified.

D. Time Table	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
<b>Planning, Management, and Evaluation</b>					
FIN Committee					
Maintenance of FIN Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Development of annual operations plans	X	X	X	X	X
Support establishment of MRF surveys in PR & VI	X	X	X	X	X
Identify funding needs for MRF programs	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination					
Implement outreach strategy	X	X			
Develop outreach materials and list of users	X	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					
Collection of metadata	X	X	X	X	X
Develop rec and comm catch/effort modules	X	X	X		
Develop permitting module	X	X			
Develop social/economic data module	X	X			
Develop biological sampling module	X				
Develop fishery module	X	X			
Develop discard and protected species interactions module	X	X	X		
Standard data collection protocols					
Develop data collection procedures manual	X	X	X		
Determine precision levels for priority species	X				
Evaluate methods for achieving desired precision levels	X				
Quality control/assurance					
Develop commercial and recreational QA/QC standards	X	X	X		
Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards					X
Recommendations regarding duplicative collection and management	X				
Coordination of data collection					
Development of data collection plan	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluate current fishery independent data activities	X				
Make recommendations to appropriate fishery -independent programs		X			
Establish/modify recreational licenses to meet criteria	X	X	X		
Conduct comparison survey of license frame and MRFSS				X	
Implement the appropriate license frame methodology					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	X		
Develop method for collecting recreational data on fishing tournaments	X	X	X		
Develop methods for collecting recreational data on non hook-&-line fisheries				X	X
Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process	X				
Determine the extent of non-consumptive activities					X

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
<b>Data Collection (continued)</b>					
Innovative collection technology					
Evaluate innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Management</b>					
Data management system					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
Hardware/software capabilities					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard data management protocols					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			
Integration of databases					
Identify recreational databases for integration in DMS	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative data management technology					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data confidentiality					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Development of National Program</b>					
Long-term planning					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Minutes**

**PLEASE NOTE: Attachments to Minutes are not included in this document. They are available at the GSMFC office**

**FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (FIN)  
MINUTES**

**June 3 and 4, 2004  
Fajardo, Puerto Rico**

Chairman Joseph Shepard called the meeting to order on June 3, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

**Members**

Kevin Anson, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL  
Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Guy Davenport, NOAA Fisheries, Miami, FL  
Chris Denson, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL  
Bob Dixon, NOAA Fisheries, Beaufort, NC  
Stephen Holiman, NOAA Fisheries, St. Petersburg, FL  
Christine Johnson, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe O'Hop, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL  
Ana Roman, USFWS, Boqueron, PR (proxy for D. Frugé)  
Joseph Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Sminkey, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD  
Vicki Swann, TPWD, Austin, TX  
Jason Vasques, USVIDPNR, St. Thomas, USVI

**Staff**

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

**Others**

Troy Barker, ICF Consulting, Fairfax, VA  
Mike Cahall, ACCSP, Washington, DC  
Tom Fazio, ICF Consulting, Fairfax, VA  
Michelle Kasprzak, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Robert Sadler, NOAA Fisheries, St. Petersburg, FL  
Carolyn Sranek, NOAA Fisheries, St. Petersburg, FL  
Dave Van Voorhees, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as presented.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on June 4 and 5, 2003 in Orlando, Florida were approved as presented.



## **Summary of FIN Facilitated Session Discussions**

Troy Barker of ICF Consulting in Fairfax, Virginia presented the results of the FIN Facilitated Session held on June 2, 2004. Barker noted that the purpose of the Facilitated Session was to do strategic and implementation planning. During the session, the state of the FIN “as is” and “to be” were discussed as well as the strategies and actions required to close the gap. Barker then gave an overall view of the workshop outcomes or expectations.

Barker reviewed the “as is” findings, “to be” findings, and strategies that can be used to meet goals for the various modules of the FIN program in both the commercial and recreational fisheries. Barker then reviewed the recommended next steps in strategic plan development. Tom Fazio of ICF Consulting noted that although this is a planning tool for FIN it could also be used as a selling tool.

During Committee discussion R. Lukens noted that the FIN utilizes a Framework Plan for long standing goals and objectives, procedures, etc. D. Donaldson reported that after the last Facilitated Session a work group was formed to identify major actions, turn them into tasks, and associate them back to goals and objectives.

**S. Holiman moved to have the Administrative Subcommittee, augmented by other interested members, create a document that outlines the general strategies from this Facilitated Session, develop specific tasks related to them, and prioritize these tasks. The motion was seconded and failed to pass.**

**S. Atran moved to create an ad hoc Recommendations Work Group. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The work group will be made up of the following members: R. Lukens, C. Lilyestrom, T. Sminkey, and J. Shepard.

The Committee agreed that the charge to the Recommendations Work Group is to take the general findings from the Facilitated Session and develop specific objectives and tasks for each finding, associate them with the current goals and objectives of FIN, and prioritize those activities. Previous recommendation documents developed by the earlier Work Group can be used for guidance. The Recommendations Work Group will meet prior to June 2005 and will be prepared to present their findings at the 2005 FIN meeting.

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

M. Cahall reported on recent activities of the ACCSP including, finishing the Technical Source Document (TSD) #6, re-writing the program design for the 2004 through 2008 implementation plan, and moving forward with the biological tracking system. The ACCSP has funded 16 projects in FY2004 with 38% of the budget for administration, eight commercial catch and effort projects, registration tracking work, biological sampling and monitoring. In FY2005 they are planning on being level funded at \$3.5 million.

Cahall explained that the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) is a web based electronic real-time reporting system and gave a presentation on this system. SAFIS can be used for quota monitoring and compliance monitoring, and will also provide real-time data back to the dealers and fishermen. Cahall explained the technical aspects of the SAFIS program noting that the data flow comes into the ACCSP office in Washington, DC, is then audited, and shared with NMFS Northeast Regional Office (NERO). Cahall reported that it is expected they will be asked to add biological sampling as well as trip reporting, and they will also be collaborating on Highly Migratory Species (HMS). Some registration tracking is being done using state license information, and state or federal vessel information.

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

Committee members were provided with a list of personnel with access to confidential data for the FIN data management system (DMS) as well as the NMFS system. D. Donaldson requested that Committee members review the lists and make any corrections, additions, or deletions.

## **Status of FIN Data Management System**

D. Donaldson reported on the status of the FIN DMS. Donaldson noted that trip tickets are routinely being loaded as well as biological data. This information is available on the web. Historical biological data is not available at this time since TIP is in the process of revamping the database. Once this is completed this information will be available. The Committee discussed putting headboat data in the FIN database and agreed to task the Recommendations Work Group with evaluating whether the headboat survey should be included in the system.

### **Status of Data Confidentiality MOA**

D. Donaldson briefly reviewed the history of the FIN Data Confidentiality MOA. The FIN is in the process of updating the original MOA and creating a Caribbean MOA. At a recent State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S/FFMC) meeting it was suggested by lawyers that legislative cites be added to the MOA in order to add protection in the area of confidentiality until such time as the language in the Magnusson/Stevens Act provides that protection. R. Lukens noted that sub-contracts between GSMFC and the states offer some protection and shows the intent to cooperate. The Committee agreed to move forward with seeking review and approval of the Caribbean MOA.

### **Presentation of Recreational Artificial Reef Data**

G. Bray of GSMFC gave a presentation on recreational artificial reef data. Bray reported that the Artificial Reef Subcommittee found that data had been collected in the past on the MRFSS survey asking about fishing adjacent to artificial reefs. The Subcommittee requested that these questions be added back on to the MRFSS survey for 2003. Bray's presentation compared the data from the earlier survey with the 2003 data. Bray gave a brief history of the MRFSS survey and noted that the area covered by the survey is from west Florida to Louisiana. The MRFSS began in 1979 to provide a database for estimating the impact of marine recreational fishing on marine resources. In 1992 the basic methods were two independent but complimentary surveys, a random digit dial survey of coastal households, and the dockside intercept survey. In 2003 the methodology changed to three surveys by adding the for-hire telephone survey that collects data directly from the charter boat captains.

Bray explained that the question added to the MRFSS survey was, did you spend the majority of your fishing trip today fishing within 200 feet of: a standing oil or gas structure, a submerged artificial reef, neither, or refused. Red snapper, gag, and triggerfish were the species selected for the comparison. Bray then gave a summary of the data collected in 2003.

The Committee discussed whether to continue asking this question on the MRFSS survey. **R. Lukens moved to continue to ask the artificial reef question through December of 2004. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

### **Discussion of Area Fished Codes**

C. Denson explained that dealers and fishermen were asking about the difference in the codes used in the logbooks and those used in the trip ticket program. The dealers and fishermen were concerned that the offshore codes were not being used in the logbooks so when the codes were compared between the logbooks and the landings there would be a difference in the area fished. Denson stated that the basic question is whether or not sub-areas are collected under the logbook program and D. Donaldson stated that that is not the case. J. O'Hop explained that the sub-areas are more precise. G. Davenport will get with C. Denson and give him copies of the grid maps from the logbooks. If this issue cannot be resolved it will be brought to the FIN Committee.

### **Discussion of Access for Biological Data**

D. Donaldson explained that this issue came up because GSMFC is now routinely loading biological data into the DMS. Mike Sestak asked the FIN Committee to review the list before it is released to people who have access to non-confidential data. The biological data are not confidential, however there were some questions and objections regarding releasing these data. Donaldson requested guidance from the FIN Committee on how to handle access to biological data.

D. Donaldson noted that the information is identified by dealer number not vessel information and people with access to non-confidential data would have no use for this information. J. Shepard suggested having two levels of access to the data: confidential having

access to all data elements, and non-confidential having access to a limited number of data elements such as, total number of species, otoliths, length, sex, etc.

Donaldson stated that M. Sestak will generate the non-confidential universe, probably within the next month, and will e-mail the Committee with this information.

#### **Discussion of Collection Methods for Highly Migratory Species in the Gulf of Mexico**

D. Donaldson reported that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) requested that the FIN Committee assist them in trying to develop a methodology for collecting information on Highly Migratory Species, specifically yellowfin tuna. Donaldson explained the HMS large pelagic survey has not been conducted in the Gulf of Mexico.

S. Atran explained that the problem is primarily in the recreational fishery and there could be problems in the future if data collection is not improved. After the Committee discussed the situation, J. Shepard suggested sending this issue to the Biological/Environmental Work Group with the task of developing a methodology for more precise estimates. **R. Lukens moved that since there are two requests for assistance in the area of data collection for tuna in the Gulf of Mexico, one from the GMFMC and another from the Director of Sustainable Fisheries at NMFS, the FIN Committee should respond that this is an appropriate roll for the FIN Committee. Since this issue is too complex to resolve at this meeting, it will be referred to the Biological/Environmental Work Group for action. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Discussion of Strategies for Implementation of Registration Tracking Module**

Committee members were provided with a list of the registration tracking minimum data elements as well as information on which of these data elements are being collected through current licensing systems. D. Donaldson explained that the key data element is birth date and for this module to be fully implemented this information must be collected. Donaldson requested that the agencies that do not collect birth date at this time seriously consider doing so. M. Cahall reported that since SAFIS is an interagency system, without birth dates and vessel identification numbers, matches become very difficult and require manual intervention. The Committee discussed the various data elements on the matrix and gave corrections to staff.

D. Donaldson reported that early in this program it was illegal to collect social security numbers, however some of those laws have now changed and some states are collecting social security numbers to generate an ID number. After lengthy Committee discussion, **P. Campbell made a motion to add Social Security number and tax ID number to the Registration Tracking database as an option to date of birth. The motion was seconded and passed with GMFMC opposed.**

#### **Discussion of Next Steps for Implementation of Bycatch Module**

D. Donaldson reported that the work group had developed a bycatch monitoring program. The Committee was provided with a list of the data elements. The next step was to prioritize the fisheries for at-sea sampling and through routine fishery dependent and independent sampling. Donaldson noted that NMFS had been working on a prioritization plan for bycatch and from that process a bycatch priorities and implementation plan was developed. Donaldson requested that the Committee review the NMFS list to be certain that all fisheries that FIN is focusing on are

listed. Donaldson explained that if money becomes available for bycatch data collection, FIN needs to know which fisheries to focus on.

After Committee discussion, **T. Sminkey moved to task the Data Collection and Biological/Environmental Work Groups with developing a list of priority of Gulf of Mexico fisheries for bycatch. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Review and Approval of 2003 FIN Annual Report**

Committee members were provided with draft copies of the 2003 FIN Annual Report. After reviewing the Report and making editorial changes, **S. Holiman moved to approve the 2003 FIN Annual Report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Review and Approval of FIN Commercial QA/QC Document**

Committee members were provided with draft copies of the FIN Commercial QA/QC Document. The Committee reviewed the Document and **P. Campbell moved to approve the FIN Commercial QA/QC Document. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

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

The FIN Committee was provided with copies of the Subcommittee and Work Group Reports.

#### **Commercial Port Sampler Meeting (Attachment A)**

D. Donaldson reported that the Caribbean Port Samplers met in October 2003 in Puerto Rico and discussed a variety of issues. There were no recommendations made at this port samplers meeting. The FIN Committee was provided with copies of the Caribbean Port Samplers Meeting Report. **C. Johnson moved to accept the Caribbean Port Samplers Meeting Report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Donaldson reported that the Gulf of Mexico Port Samplers met in November 2003 with approximately 50 samplers in attendance. Several issues were discussed and no recommendations or action items were generated from this meeting. **The FIN Committee accepted this report.**

#### **Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee (Attachment B)**

Donaldson reported that the GSMFC Data Management Subcommittee and the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee are made up of essentially the same Committee members and they meet in October and March. The Subcommittee report includes motions that have been addressed at this FIN meeting. **The FIN Committee accepted these reports.**

#### **Otolith Processors Training Workshop (Attachment C)**

Donaldson reported that this workshop was attended by otolith processors from the Gulf states as well as processors from the NMFS Panama City Lab and others. Donaldson reported that there were some recommendations made by the group, including information sent to the data management system, as well as a recommendation from this group to add a half-day to the training workshop. **S. Atran moved to accept the recommendations of the Otolith Processors Training Workshop. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### Biological/Environmental Work Group (Attachment D)

Donaldson reported that the Biological/Environmental Work Group (BEWG) met via conference call and agreed that it appears that night fishing activities are similar to daytime in catch rates and species composition. The work group recommended that further collection of these data is not required at this time, but that FIN should periodically examine night fishing activities. **T. Sminkey moved that based on the available data, further collection of shore-based night fishing activities is not recommended at this time.** It was suggested that FIN annually examine night fishing activities via the telephone survey.

Donaldson reported that during a conference call the BEWG recommended that a pilot study be conducted in Mississippi for fishing tournaments. The BEWG asked for guidance from the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee. A pilot survey has been implemented in Mississippi. K. Cuevas reported that tournaments with a few selected species and where the number of anglers is known would be surveyed. Questionnaires include date, daily hours fished, fish landed and released, and fish caught in state waters or EEZ. These questionnaires will be distributed during the Captain's meetings.

Donaldson reported that the BEWG met and developed two options for non-hook-and-line sampling. The first was to develop a pilot survey for recreational shrimping and crabbing utilizing a mail survey. The second option was to require fishermen for non-hook-and-line fisheries to provide catch and effort information to the agency issuing the license. The Committee agreed to add this pilot survey to the list of items to be considered for funding in 2005.

Donaldson reported that the BEWG developed two methods to survey private access sites. One method is to survey fishermen on the water and ask if they left from a private site and the other method would be to do an add-on to the Household Telephone Survey. The Committee discussed the two methods and agreed to investigate an add-on to the Household Telephone Survey which could begin in 2006. **The FIN Committee accepted the BEWG report.**

#### Data Collection Plan Work Group (Attachment E)

Donaldson reported that this work group develops the otolith targets for priority species. At a recent meeting the work group made several recommendations: they reviewed the priority and secondary species lists and recommended that black grouper be added to the priority list, they recommended that targets be developed for federal species, and they recommended that FIN begin compiling other sources of biological data for the data management system (TIP being one of those sources). **P. Campbell moved to task the Data Collection Plan Work Group with compiling lists of other biological datasets, evaluate those datasets to assure they fit the FIN standard, and prioritize the lists for inclusion into the data management system. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Donaldson reported that the work group also discussed developing targets. The work group raised three questions: what are the total number of otoliths needed, are additional lengths needed for a particular species, and what are the cells of significance. Donaldson reported that the work group recommended that FIN send a letter to experts for each of 15 species asking for their assistance in determining the necessary otoliths and lengths from the various species and identify cells of significance. The work group would like to receive feedback in order to modify targets for 2006. G. Davenport suggested directing the letters to the agency rather than the

individual. Donaldson reported that the work group recommended for 2005 to keep existing sampling targets with modifications to red snapper recreational targets.

Donaldson reported that the work group recommended that otolith sampling for greater amberjack be stopped in 2005 since recent information shows there may be a better method for aging and that monies be used to fund the University of Florida greater amberjack project. After lengthy Committee discussion, Chairman Shepard polled the Committee to determine whether there was a consensus for stopping the sampling of greater amberjack until there is clarification on the best method. The majority of the Committee wants to continue sampling greater amberjack and agreed to disregard the recommendation of the work group.

Donaldson then reported that the work group discussed adding five new species to the priority list in the event that there are additional funds available. These species, in priority order, are: grey snapper, gag grouper, red grouper, grey triggerfish, and red drum. S. Atran recommended that goliath grouper be added to the secondary list and the Committee agreed. Donaldson next reported that the work group recommended that targets be generated for the east coast of Florida utilizing the same process as in the Gulf. The Committee agreed with this recommendation.

#### For-Hire Work Group (Attachment F)

Donaldson reported that the work group met twice in the past year. At the first meeting the work group decided that headboats would be sampled at a 25% rate with sampling beginning in July 2003. The work group discussed looking at fishing methods in the telephone survey to see if adding target species is possible. The work group agreed to review effort headboat data in conjunction with Wave meetings. Donaldson reported that the work group then recommended sampling methodologies. Catch data could be collected via dockside and/or at-sea sampling, and effort could be collected through the telephone survey. With full funding catch and bycatch information could be collected through at-sea sampling. **R. Lukens moved to accept the recommendation of the For-Hire Work Group. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Donaldson reported that the work group held a conference call meeting in March. The work group discussed collection of effort through the telephone survey with the hope that there would be funding in 2004 for headboat dockside sampling. Since funding did not become available only effort information has been collected since July 2003. Because catch information is not being collected, there was discussion about whether to continue collecting effort information. The work group reached no consensus on this subject but agreed that the FIN Committee should address this issue. The FIN Committee discussed at great length whether to stop telephone calls for effort by the end of June or to continue them through December. **R. Lukens moved to continue to collect headboat effort with the telephone survey through the end of this calendar year. Before the end of this calendar year FIN will know if additional funding will be available and if it is not the telephone survey will be stopped on January 1, 2005. The motion was seconded and passed with NMFS voting no and GMFMC abstaining.**

D. Donaldson reported that since M. Sestak was on active duty in the Army, some of that money was used to fund a pilot in Alabama for at-sea sampling for bycatch. K. Anson reported that a training manual was developed and training of observers began in the middle of March. Due to bad weather, only four trips were taken in April and six in May. Alabama has conducted

250 interviews with anglers and obtained measurements of 97% of discarded catch. Overall participation from anglers has been very good with only one refusal. Anson noted that an estimate of discards is approximately 20% to 30% however this varies. Six trips are scheduled in June. The pilot study will continue through December 2004.

#### Social/Economic Work Group (Attachment G)

D. Donaldson reported that the work group met in September with the purpose of developing a social/economic data collection plan. The work group also met via conference call in May. An outline was developed and activities were listed and hopefully there will be a presentation in June 2005. The FIN Committee was provided with information on what has been developed and S. Holiman stated that the work group would like some feedback on the outline. Holiman noted that there are two components of the plan. One deals with the legal mandates and/or statutes that provide the framework under which social science data elements can be collected. Holiman noted that each of the agencies already do some social/economic work and he requested that FIN members check with their agencies and notify him of which data collection programs are already in place as well as any mandates/statutes to facilitate collection of information. D. Donaldson would like these sent to him no later than June 30 and he will compile this information for the Social/Economic Work Group.

#### Operations Plan

The FIN Committee was provided with a list of data collection and management activities and D. Donaldson reported that they have either been accomplished or are being addressed.

Donaldson noted that after discussions held today, there are new tasks that need to be added to the 2005 Operations Plan. One is the Highly Migratory Species task for the Biological/Environmental Work Group. The other is for the Ad Hoc Recommendations Work Group to develop a recommendations document based on the information and issues discussed during the facilitated session. Also the Data Collection Plan Work Group and the Biological/Environmental Work Group to develop and prioritize a list of fisheries for bycatch. Donaldson noted that in 2005 the FIN needs to plan for a program review in 2006. Another charge to the Biological/Environmental Work Group is to map out strategy to capture non-consumptive activities. Donaldson noted that he will add the additional tasks to the Operations Plan. The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee meets in August to review and approve the Plan and Donaldson will send the updated approved Operations Plan to Committee members. **S. Holiman moved to approve the 2005 FIN Operations Plan with the contingency of adding the additional tasks. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**The meeting was recessed at 5:30 p.m.**

**The meeting reconvened on Friday, June 4, 2004 at 8:30 a.m.**

#### Discussion of 2005 FIN Funding Priorities

Committee members were provided with guidelines on the funding decision process for FIN and a list of items for consideration in 2005. D. Donaldson reported that the list was

generated from activities conducted last year as well as discussions in work group meetings. Donaldson noted that the final prioritized list will be forwarded to the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S/FFMC) and they will decide which items will be included in the 2005 FIN cooperative agreement.

Donaldson noted that as a result of discussion yesterday, the pilot survey for recreational shrimp and crab would be added to the list of items for discussion and prioritization. Donaldson also noted that any new items are contingent on additional funding.

One of the items listed for consideration in 2005 was a proposal submitted by the University of Florida for “Age and growth, sexual maturity, and fecundity of greater amberjack in the Gulf of Mexico”. After lengthy discussion, and since this is an academic project to conduct research, **R. Lukens made a motion to remove the amberjack proposal from the funding list, not because of a lack of need, quality, or substance of the proposal, but because FIN would be an inappropriate funding source. The motion was seconded and passed with the GMFMC opposed.** S. Atran noted that his opposition to the motion was based on the fact that this proposal needs to be funded by someone since this information is needed by the GMFMC.

The Committee agreed to list as high priority all ongoing activities. The prioritized list of activities for funding in 2005 is as follows:

### **High Priority**

Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities (ongoing)  
Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data (ongoing)  
Charter Boat Survey Offshore Texas (ongoing)  
Head Boat Port Sampling in Texas and Florida (ongoing)  
Gulf Menhaden Port Sampling (ongoing)  
Development and Implementation of FIN Data Management System (ongoing)  
Trip Ticket Program Implementation and Operations in Mississippi (ongoing)  
Trip Ticket Program Operations in Alabama (ongoing)  
Trip Ticket Program Operations in Louisiana (ongoing)  
Recreational/Commercial Biological Sampling (ongoing)  
Trip Ticket Program Implementation and Operations in Texas (new)  
Continuation of Alabama Head Boat Pilot Survey through April 2005 (ongoing)  
Implementation of For-Hire Telephone Survey (effort) and Field Sampling (catch) for Head Boats (new)  
Collection of Detailed Effort for Blue Crab Fishery in Louisiana (new)  
Biological Sampling for Additional Species (new)  
Develop Frame for Sampling using Recreational Fishing Licenses (new)

### **Medium Priority**

Pilot Study for Recreational Fishing Effort using Fishing Licenses as Sampling Frame (new)  
Pilot Study for Bycatch Data Collection (head boat and commercial fisheries) (new)

### **Low Priority**

Pilot Study for Recreational Shrimp and Crab



D. Donaldson stated that for every item that is ranked high he needs a statement of work and an associated budget by June 30. This information will be presented to the S/FFMC in August.

**Time Schedule and Location for Next Meeting**

The next FIN Committee meeting will be held during the first week of June 2005. First choice of location is Baton Rouge, Louisiana, second is San Antonio, Texas, and third Silver Spring, Maryland.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.**

## **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 FIN 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 FIN requirements.
- Objective 5 To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet FIN 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 a national program to collect, manage and disseminate marine commercial fisheries information for use by states, territories, councils, interstate commissions and federal marine fishery management agencies.**

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