

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

JANUARY 1, 2005 - DECEMBER 31, 2005

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Number 138

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.¹ 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

¹ 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).

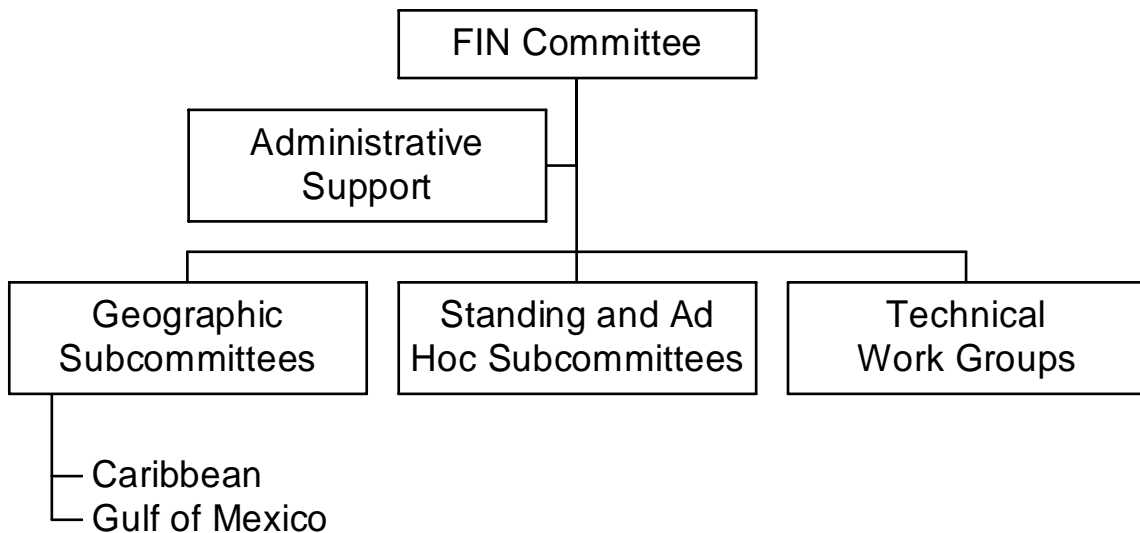


Figure 1. Organizational structure of the FIN.

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 2005 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 2005. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- Identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 2005 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 2006 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 2005;
- 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 2006;
- 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 2005 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 Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey data review meetings were held in February, June and November to discuss the RDD and Intercept Surveys for the Gulf Region, sampler performance activities, scanning technologies for data entry, presentation of at-sea head boat sampling activities, conducting economic add-on expenditure survey, adding questions regarding protected species interactions, review and comparison of at-sea and logbook head boat data, collecting of latitude and longitude data for recreational fishing sites, issues regarding red groupers estimates, review of wave report fish tables and estimate tables and review of Gulf States For-Hire Telephone Survey;
- ComFIN Data Collection Work Group met in February and May (via conference call) to review the bycatch priorities for the listed commercial fisheries and develop recommendations to FIN regarding bycatch monitoring;
- RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group met in May to discuss the development of sampling protocols for highly migratory species, prioritization of recreational fisheries for the FIN Bycatch Module, RDD add-on questions for collection of private access site fishing data, presentation of pilot tournament sampling activities in Mississippi, further development of pilot recreational shrimping and crabbing mail survey, determination of extent for non-consumptive activities and exploring the feasibility of implementing a federal recreational fishing permit;

The Otolith Processors Training Workshop was held in May 2005 to conduct an otolith readings and comparison exercise for red snapper, greater amberjack, king mackerel and flounders as well as discuss the red snapper, flounder and king mackerel reference sets, establishing a regional otolith processing center, presentation of greater amberjack

processing and analysis issues, status of Otolith Manual Revision, processing status of otoliths collected in 2002 – 2004;

- The FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group met in May 2005 to review of 2004 and 2005 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, development of 2005 fin data collection plan document;
- The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee met in August 2005 to discuss the finalization of activities for funding for the 2006 FIN cooperative agreement;
- The Gulf of Mexico commercial port samplers meeting was held in November 2005 to discuss NMFS SERO federal management, presentation of shark identification, collection of tilefish otoliths, status of the Commercial Fisheries Information Network, status of TIP Online Program, presentation of gag and black grouper assessment concerns and other pertinent issues as well as a tour of the new NMFS Southeast Regional Office.

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. 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 Sampling Activities – The port sampling portion of 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 and Florida. The at-sea portion of this task provided for the collection of catch and effort data for head boats operating in Alabama and east and

west Florida. The effort data was collected via the Telephone For-Hire Survey where the states conducted weekly telephone calls to a 25% random sample of the Alabama and Florida head boat captains to obtain estimates of head boat fishing effort. The catch and bycatch data was collected via at-sea sampling, where the states will conduct an at-sea sampling survey of approximately 10% of the trips made by for-hire vessels, using the protocols established by FIN and tested by Alabama. The port sampling portion is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. The at-sea sampling is a continuation in Alabama and a new activity in Florida.

- **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 and finfish 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 development and implementation 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 implemented trip-level reporting for a limited number of dealers in 2005 and is planning on full implementation in 2006.
- **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 2005 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. 2005. *2006 Operations Plan for Fisheries Information Network (FIN)*. No. 136 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 25 pp + appendix.
- FIN Committee. 2005. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 2004 - December 31, 2004*. No. 131 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 18 pp + appendices.
- FIN Committee. 2005. *2006 FIN Data Collection Plan*. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 87 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)

- 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)
- 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>
Planning, Management, and Evaluation					
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
Data Collection					
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>
Data Collection (continued)					
Innovative collection technology					
Evaluate innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data Management					
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
Development of National Program					
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 2005

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TABLE 3.

FIN SUBCOMMITTEE AND WORK GROUP MEMBERS FOR 2005

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APPENDIX A

2005 Operations Plan

**2005 Operations Plan for the
Fisheries Information Network in the
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005

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 2005. 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 2005 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 implementing trip tickets for a limited number of dealers (approximately 60) to ensure the feasibility of this data collection method. 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 Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. 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 2005 for Mississippi and Texas. Operations of trip ticket will continue in 2005 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 and GSMFC 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 as well as in Texas (using TPWD methodologies). 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 For-Hire 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. Effort data will be collected via the For-Hire Telephone Survey and catch data will be collected via at-sea sampling and dockside sampling. Implementation of these methods will require additional funding. Alabama will continue the at-sea sampling pilot survey for head boats in their state. There will be a period of time where duplicative data collection methods are being conducted for benchmarking purposes.

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 2005.

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: 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 2005.
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 A6: 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 Data Base 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 2005.

Task A7: 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 2005 to address any issues.

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

The tasks below cover all 2005 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, 2006 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2006 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 2006.

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

Product: 2006 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by spring 2005 and addressed by the Committee at the 2005 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- 2004, 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 2005.

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 in the FIN Annual Report.

Task B5: Conduct FIN Program Review (Goal 1, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Conduct a formal external program review of the FIN to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in achieving the goals and objectives.
Team Members: FIN Committee/Administrative Subcommittee
Approach: The FIN Committee will conduct an external program review. A written report will be prepared by an external review team and presented to all the FIN signatory agencies, with a recommendation on the continuation of the FIN. It has been suggested that the American Fisheries Society - Marine Fisheries Section be utilized for this review.
Resources: Meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Program review report.
Schedule: This task will be addressed at 2005 FIN meeting so the appropriate actions can be taken.

Task B6: Develop Recommendations Document (Goal 1, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Develop a recommendations document from the results of the facilitated session conducting in 2004.

Team Members: FIN Committee/Ad Hoc Recommendations Work Group

Approach: At the last FIN meeting, a facilitated session was convened to help guide FIN into the future. From the session, a report was developed and provided to the group. This report outlines the issues and problems identified during the session. From this report, the Work Group needs to develop a recommendations document that takes the general issues and converts them into specific tasks and objectives.

Resources: Meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and staff time.

Product: Recommendations document.

Schedule: The work group will meet in 2005 and the document will be presented to the Committee at the 2005 FIN meeting so the appropriate actions can be taken.

Task B7: Implementation of the Bycatch Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Implement the bycatch module of the FIN.

Team Members: FIN Committee/ComFIN Data Collection Work Group/RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The FIN Committee designed and approved the bycatch module, however, additional funding is needed to implement the data collection activities. In order to implement, a list of prioritized fisheries needs to be developed. The NMFS has developed a list of fisheries where bycatch is occurring. The FIN Committee reviewed this list and the Committee tasked the Biological/Environmental and Data Collection Work Groups with prioritizing these fisheries. 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 groups will meet to develop a prioritized list of fisheries and this list will be presented to the FIHN Committee at the June 2006 meeting.

Task B8: 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 and priorities need to be identified before data collection activities can begin. The FIN tasked the Work Group to develop a social/economic data collection plan to help guide the collection of social/economic data. 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 the development of data collection plan in 2005.

Task B9: 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 given a lower priority. The compilation of these data will be an ongoing activity.

Task B10: Implementation of Registration Tracking System (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Implementation 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 implementation of this system. The states need to implement the strategy for modifying their licensing systems to collect the needed data.

Task B11: 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- to late-2005.

Task B12: 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 early - to mid- 2005.
- Task B13: 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 B14: 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 B15: 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 2005 to continue addressing this task.

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. In addition, Mississippi will continue the pilot survey to collect catch and effort data from tournaments operating in Mississippi. 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 2005 to continue examining this issue. Findings from the Mississippi pilot survey will be presented at the June 2005 meeting.

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 2005 to continue to address this task.

Task B18: Determination of the Extend of Non-consumptive Activities (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine the extent of non-consumptive activities in the Gulf of Mexico.

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 compiling information about non-consumptive activities. 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: Compilation of non-consumptive activities.
Schedule: The Work Group will meet 2005 to address this task.

Task B19: 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. In addition, the Work Group will begin compiling a list of biological data sets and prioritize these databases for inclusion into the FIN DMS. Accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

Resources: Meeting costs, mail costs, telephone costs, and staff time
Product: Data collection plan
Schedule: The group will meet in 2005 to review activities and develop a biological sampling annual plan as well as identify appropriate biological databases for inclusion in the FIN DMS

Task B20: 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. As an initial step, the GSMFC, with the assistance from the states, will begin compiling recreational fishing license databases. This will identify gaps in the data sets and allow for a smoother transition once all states have met the criteria.

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 B21: Develop Methodologies for Sampling Highly Migratory Species (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Develop methods for accurately collect catch and effort data for highly migratory species (HMS) in the Gulf of Mexico

Team Members: FIN Committee/Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council asked the FIN to examine the best methods for collecting catch and effort data for HMS species, specifically yellowfin tuna. While there is currently a survey for collecting these types of data on the Atlantic coast, no such survey exists in the Gulf. This lack of data makes it very difficult to accurately assess this fishery. The Work Group will start with the existing protocols and look at all options.

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

Product: Sampling methods for HMS species in Gulf of Mexico

Schedule: The Work Group will meet in 2005 to begin addressing this issue.

Task B22: 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 B23: 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: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B24: 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 B25: 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 B26: 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>
Planning, Management, and Evaluation					
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
Data Collection					
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
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>
Data Collection (continued)					
Innovative collection technology					
Evaluate innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data Management					
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
Development of National Program					
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 7 and 8, 2005
Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

Chairman Page Campbell called the meeting to order on June 7, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

Members

Kevin Anson, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Chris Denson, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Assane Diagne, GMFMC, Tampa, FL (*Proxy for S. Atran*)
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Guy Davenport, NOAA Fisheries, Miami, FL
Bob Dixon, NOAA Fisheries, Beaufort, NC
John Forester, USFWS, Baton Rouge, LA (*proxy for D. Frugé*)
Stephen Holiman, NOAA Fisheries, St. Petersburg, FL
Christine Johnson, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Michelle Kasprzak, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Joe O'Hop, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL
Tom Sminkey, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD
Vicki Swann, TPWD, Austin, TX
Roger Uwate, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI

Staff

Donna Bellais, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Mike Sestak, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Harry Blanchet, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Claude Boudreaux, Lafayette, LA
Ken Brennan, NOAA Fisheries, Beaufort, NC
Mike Cahall, ACCSP, Washington, DC
Yeong Nain Chi, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Terry Cody, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Jason Duet, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Aimee Eschete, LDWF, Grand Isle, LA
Brad Gentner, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD
David Lavergne, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on June 3 and June 4, 2004 in Fajardo, Puerto Rico were approved as presented.

Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)

M. Cahall reported on recent activities of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). Cahall reported that Congressional rescission cut over \$50,000 out of their budget in 2005. However, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) funded a biological sampling project which helped to cover the shortfall. The ACCSP also purchased a new warehouse server and will transition from Business Objects to Oracle Discoverer in 2005. An RFP for the contract to make this transition was issued on May 2 and can be viewed on the ACCSP website.

Cahall reported on the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) and explained that it is a web based electronic reporting system that was developed in cooperation with the NMFS Northeast Regional Office. Currently 671 dealers are reporting in to the system and there are over 700,000 individual species records. Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire are on-line and entering data and Maine, Rhode Island, and Maryland will follow shortly.

Cahall reported on the status of the ACCSP data warehouse. Commercial catch and effort data from Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and NMFS Northeast is housed, with South Carolina data feed expected this summer. The data warehouse also stores biological data on lobster from the 1980's to 2003. The ACCSP is also warehousing recreational data in the form of catch and effort estimates, as well as collaborating with NMFS MRFSS personnel to validate contract work. The ACCSP also hosts the NEAMAP, SEAMAP, and ASMFC websites.

FIN Data Management System (DMS) Issues

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 and G. Davenport requested that Committee members review the lists and provide any corrections, additions, or deletions.

Status of FIN Data Management System

M. Sestak distributed a data collection and program status report to Committee members. Sestak reported that the data access program has been changed from Business Objects to Oracle Discoverer. Public connections have been created to allow direct access to public data without the need for a password. Sestak noted that the "Rule of Three" program for public usage has been modified to display "confidential data" whenever the rule of three is violated. Sestak also reported that Puerto Rico commercial data has been added. Several years of biological data have been added for Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Florida, and a web based data entry form is being created for the states to enter biological data. Sestak reported that MRFSS catch estimates for the five Gulf states and Puerto Rico have been loaded, as well as menhaden data, SEAMAP data, Artificial Reef Program data, and Rapid Assessment Program data.

Status of Caribbean Access to FIN DMS

D. Donaldson reported that in the past, MOAs for data confidentiality had been developed. However, the GSMFC sub-contract with each of the Gulf states' has a clause that includes language protecting data confidentiality, therefore an MOA is no longer necessary. In order to load and access Caribbean data into the system, a similar vehicle has to be developed for Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Puerto Rico has reviewed and signed an agreement which allows them to load and access their commercial data from the FIN DMS. Donaldson will work with the US Virgin Islands to establish a similar agreement with them.

Review of Draft Universal Confidentiality User Form

D. Donaldson distributed copies of a draft confidentiality user form which had been e-mailed to partners for their consideration. M. Sestak noted that at this time there are different versions of non-disclosure forms being used by various agencies. Using a universal form would simplify releasing data and all forms would be available in one

place. G. Davenport will check into the feasibility of NMFS using this form and will let Donaldson know the results.

M. Sestak reported to the Committee that he had been contacted by the US Army Corps of Engineers asking for total commercial landings by ZIP Code for all species landed. Since there is not a confidentiality problem, Committee members agreed to release this information. M. Cahall of ACCSP stated that they had also been contacted for this information. Sestak and Cahall will discuss releasing this information.

Presentation of Alabama Head Boat Data Collection Activities

K. Anson gave a presentation on the 2004 pilot at-sea head boat study conducted in Alabama. Anson reported that this study incorporated standard MRFSS sampling of individual anglers on randomly selected boats. Standard intercept questions were asked, as well as information on discards. Anson stated that for effort analysis the head boats were incorporated into the For-Hire Telephone Survey, all trips were considered head boat trips for final estimates, and no correction factors were used in the analysis. The goal was to sample 10% of all head boat trips in Alabama for each wave. Anson provided the data for each wave, including species, catch, variance, and landings, as well as information on other factors such as hurricanes and tropical storms.

Presentation of Recreational Social/Economic Data

B. Gentner of NOAA Fisheries in Silver Spring, Maryland gave a presentation on social and economic data collection in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Gentner noted that all the data presented are preliminary data.

Gentner described the economic add-on conducted in Puerto Rico noting that anglers used maps divided into quadrants to show where they hooked the most fish and where they spent the most time fishing. The data were collected from November 2003 to October 2004 and the top species were dolphin, billfish, tarpon and snook. So far the data for Puerto Rico trip expenditures is not completed but should be done shortly.

Gentner explained that a conjoint survey is used to determine damage assessment, effects of closures, and to get regional or national total value estimates. Gentner illustrated various simulations to demonstrate welfare effects and economic impacts. Focus groups of recreational fishermen were used for these surveys.

Gentner reported that in the Recreational Strategic Plan, the method of collecting data is going to change. The expenditure survey will be conducted every five years and the evaluation survey will be done when money allows. The next expenditure survey will be done in 2006 and it will be done nationally. Gentner stressed the need for support from the states and noted that he would be happy to hold interviewer trainer sessions.

Discussion of Collection of Latitude/Longitude for Recreational Fishing Access Sites

D. Donaldson distributed maps of sampling locations in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, as well as a SAS table showing the percentage of intercept sites with latitude/longitude information. There is no lat/long information in the database for Texas since they do not participate in the MRFSS. P. Campbell stated that Texas does have lat/long and she will provide this information. Donaldson requested that the states review these data for accuracy and provide lat/long for those sites that do not have this information. This information will be used for outreach purposes, etc. The Committee discussed standardizing the reporting of lat/long. T. Sminkey noted that the standard is degrees, minutes, seconds, however GIS uses degrees and decimal minutes. Sminkey will verify this and inform Donaldson.

Discussion of Data Collection Concerns from Recreational Fishermen

D. Donaldson reported that S. Atran of the GMFMC had forwarded a letter from a Capt. R. Bryant of St. Petersburg, Florida expressing concern with the collection methodology of recreational fishing effort and harvest data. Capt. Bryant also included suggestions for recreational angling statistic gathering. Atran wanted to know if this is an issue for FIN to discuss. Donaldson checked and found that T. Sminkey of NMFS is handling this particular situation, however he stated these are the types of issues that the FIN Committee should address.

T. Sminkey stated that the basic problem in this case is recreational and commercial red grouper landings for 2004 were high. Emergency closures were implemented by NMFS at that time. MRFSS staff was requested by the GMFMC and the Regional administrator to do a full review of the red grouper estimates. Some minor corrections were made, but no substantial changes were made to the estimates. Sminkey noted that NMFS will try to develop a pilot survey to shorten the recall period on the telephone survey in order to get better date information. Sminkey stated that in the future NMFS would like to use a recreational fishing license sampling frame survey rather than Random Digit Dialing; however not all the states meet the criteria to use this methodology at this time.

This year at the Constituent Review Workshop, preliminary estimates for red grouper were reviewed, and no unusual conditions in the data were identified. A conference call with Sminkey, R. Crabtree, and several recreational fishermen will be held to review this situation.

R. Lukens noted that since the CCA is pleased with the MRFSS, the FIN should try to work more closely with this group by providing information in the form of pamphlets or brochures. Lukens recommended forwarding this issue to the TCC Data Management Subcommittee for their next meeting which will be held in October. The FIN Committee agreed with this recommendation.

Review of SEDAR Recommendations Document

Committee members were provided with copies of the SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) Workshop Recommendations and were asked to review this document. D. Donaldson asked the Committee when reviewing these recommendations to see if there were subjects for FIN to address, and check to see if any modifications to collecting data would be appropriate. After discussing the SEDAR document, the FIN Committee agreed that it was too complex for an in depth review at this time, and an Ad Hoc Work Group should be formed and tasked to review the SEDAR document and identify items relevant to FIN. Members of the Ad hoc Work Group will be K. Anson, R. Lukens, D. Matos, P. Campbell, T. Sminkey, J. O'Hop, and G. Davenport. The Work Group will address this issue in the near future and will forward their findings to the FIN Committee for review and approval.

Discussion of Collection of Area Fished and Size Information for Shrimp via Trip Tickets

D. Donaldson reported that this issue was suggested by J. Nance and discussed at the Geographic Subcommittee meeting in October. Area fished and size are not always routinely collected on trip tickets. Donaldson suggested that the states that have trip tickets review their data on size and area fished for completeness. Donaldson suggested that this may be an educational issue for dealers and fishermen. After discussion, the Committee agreed that it is easier to collect this information during an interview rather than on a trip ticket. Donaldson noted that if money becomes available in the future for implementation of a detailed effort module this information will be readily available.

Discussion of Conducting FIN Program Review in 2006

D. Donaldson noted that the last external FIN program review was conducted in 2001 and possibly because of misinterpretation of instructions, the review did not meet expectations. The Administrative Subcommittee has been tasked with developing another review process. ACCSP is currently in the process of conducting a program review and they are working with a contractor. J. O'Hop explained the process ACCSP is using to develop their program review. R. Lukens suggested conducting the review by using staff to organize and facilitate with a contractor, and the contractor would be charged with choosing a review panel and providing a final report. The Committee agreed on this procedure.

Review and Approval of 2004 FIN Annual Report

The Committee had been provided with copies of the draft 2004 FIN Annual Report previously. Committee members were asked to review this report and give any editorial comments to D. Donaldson by June 20, 2005. **R. Lukens moved to approve the 2004 FIN Annual Report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Subcommittee and Work Group Reports

Members of the FIN Committee were provided with copies of the Subcommittee and Work Group reports.

Commercial Port Sampler Meetings (Attachment A)

D. Donaldson reported that the Caribbean Port Samplers met in September 2004 in Galveston, Texas. Various presentations were given including, the Gulf Shrimp Program by J. Nance of NMFS Galveston, the NMFS SEDAR process in the Caribbean by G. Davenport, overviews of several fisheries in Puerto Rico by D. Matos, and in the Virgin Islands by J. Vasques. The port samplers also spent time visiting shrimp operations in the Galveston area.

The Gulf Port Samplers met in November 2004 in Panama City, Florida. Several issues were discussed including the status of ComFIN, otoliths, hurricane impacts on commercial fishing, and the TIP online data entry program.

R. Lukens moved to accept the Commercial Port Sampler Meetings reports. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee (Attachment B)

The GOM Geographic Subcommittee (TCC Data Management Subcommittee) met in October 2004 in Biloxi, Mississippi and in March 2005 in Point Clear, Alabama. D. Donaldson reported at the October 2004 meeting of the Subcommittee P. Campbell of Texas was elected Chairman and K. Anson of Alabama was elected Vice Chairman.

D. Donaldson reported that as a result of the March meeting the subject of recreational outreach needs to be discussed by the FIN Committee. Donaldson attended an ACCSP outreach meeting in January where outreach activities for MRFSS were discussed. ACCSP conducted a baseline survey to determine perceptions about MRFSS and they are considering conducting another survey in 2006 and asked if FIN would be interested in participating. Donaldson reported that a conference call with the ACCSP will be held next week to discuss funding and he asked the Committee for their input. After Committee discussion, **R. Lukens made a motion for the FIN to cooperate with the ACCSP in developing a survey questionnaire if money is available and engage in a cooperative program. The motion was seconded and passed.**

R. Lukens moved to accept the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Otolith Processors Training Workshop (Attachment C)

D. Donaldson reported that an otolith processors workshop was recently held in St. Petersburg, Florida. These workshops are held as part of FIN quality assurance/quality control activities and this was the third year for this workshop. Otolith readers from various state and federal agencies have attended these workshops where various topics of interest are discussed as well as actual otolith reading and other activities. **M. Kasprzak moved to accept the Otolith Processors Training Workshop report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Biological/Environmental Work Group (Attachment D)

HMS sampling protocols/HMS study – D. Donaldson reported that a request from the GMFMC resulted in the B/EWG being tasked with looking at methodologies for collecting information on HMS species. The Work Group examined the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) which is a telephone survey to collect effort, as well as a dockside sampling program for catch information. North Carolina is using a catch card to survey anglers. The B/EWG has recommended implementing a combination of both surveys. Catch information would be collected using a catch card as North Carolina does, and a dockside component where the catch card would be validated, as well as collection of biological information. The Committee agreed to send this task back to the B/EWG for further details and development. D. Donaldson will report to the GMFMC on the results.

D. Donaldson explained that included in the B/EWG report was a proposal from D. Stone seeking to improve the accuracy of catch and effort information for the recreational HMS fishery in the Gulf of Mexico. Stone requested feedback from FIN and wanted to know if this seems like a viable methodology for collecting catch and effort information. Several members of the Committee felt that this particular methodology contained questionable procedures and would not improve catch and effort information for the recreational HMS fishery in the Gulf. D. Donaldson will discuss this issue with D. Stone.

D. Donaldson reported the B/EWG had recommended that bycatch for private boat, shore, and charter boats continue to be collected via the MRFSS and that the at-sea sampling methodology be used to collect bycatch for the head boat fishery. The B/EWG also recommended that FIN examine the possibility of conducting a pilot study comparing discards reported between the MRFSS and the captains and mates of charter boats. Apparently a comparison study has already been conducted and the Committee agreed to get more information on this study before proceeding.

D. Donaldson reported that the B/EWG discussed adding questions to the Random Digit Dialing (RDD) survey for the collection of private access site fishing data. The Work Group recommended that a pilot study utilizing a panel study methodology be implemented in the Gulf. The phone contractor is currently compiling a panel of anglers willing to participate in future surveys. The cost would include mailing and printing, as well as

funds to purchase incentives to help insure participation. **M. Kasprzak moved to place the RDD add-on questions for private access site fishing data on the list of 2006 FIN priorities for funding. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

D. Donaldson reported that last year the B/EWG recommended developing a pilot study for using catch cards for tournaments to be filled out by anglers. This project was undertaken by Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. Of the 400 cards distributed to anglers, only four were returned. The B/EWG recommended that Mississippi conduct the pilot survey again with the inclusion of some type of incentive. The Work Group also recommended that FIN readdress the need for tournament sampling. **S. Holiman moved that the FIN partners should continue with tournament sampling on their own and FIN should cease attempting to establish any standardized protocol for sampling tournaments. The motion was seconded and passed.** D. Donaldson reported that the B/EWG recommended that a pilot study to collect catch and effort data regarding recreational shrimp activity be conducted in 2006 with the location of this study to be determined by FIN. Donaldson noted that if this activity gets approved to go forward, it will need to be conducted in a state that requires a recreational shrimping license in order to use it as a sampling frame. After Committee discussion, **R. Lukens moved to keep this item on a list for future consideration, but not forward it to the 2006 FIN priority list at this time. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

D. Donaldson reported that the B/EWG was tasked with determining the extent of non-consumptive marine activities. The Work Group could not identify any benefit for having these data and asked FIN to provide some direction on this issue. S. Holiman noted that in Florida non-consumptive activities are very popular and millions of dollars are spent annually however, after a discussion, the Committee agreed that this type of data collection would be premature at this time and the issue was tabled.

The meeting recessed at 5:15 p.m. and reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on June 8, 2005.

Data Collection Work Group (Attachment E)

D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Work Group met via conference call in February and May of 2005. The purpose of the February meeting was to identify and prioritize fisheries for their potential for bycatch. Donaldson requested that the Committee discuss the definition of "bycatch" and noted that the ACCSP had recently developed a definition. The Committee reviewed this definition and agreed on the following: *"The discarded catch of any living marine resource plus catch not otherwise accounted for as landed."* **S. Holiman moved to accept the Data Collection Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Donaldson provided a spreadsheet for the Committee developed from input from program partners. Since NMFS covers offshore shrimp trawls, the Data Collection Work Group recommended that FIN focus on shrimp and skimmer trawl fisheries inshore and develop a pilot study to test the FIN bycatch sampling protocols using at-sea sampling and alternate methods as necessary. Several suggestions were made to monitor bycatch, including video monitoring. **S. Holiman moved to approve the Data Collection Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Data Collection Plan Work Group (Attachment F)

D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Plan Work Group met in May 2005 where G. Fitzhugh of NMFS Panama City Lab gave a presentation on an alternative method for developing sampling targets. Included in the presentation was a table listing species, gears, regions, otoliths, and responsible partner. The Work Group recommended that FIN develop an RFP to identify the key strata needed for each priority species. The RFP should outline the process and identify the desired products for the various species. This new process will not be functional until 2007; therefore the Work Group also recommended that FIN use the existing targets for the priority species for sampling in 2006. R. Lukens suggested that a letter should be written to the appropriate NMFS SEDAR authority and make the evaluation of the data a mandatory part of the SEDAR report. Lukens also stressed the importance of getting feedback on this method of handling otolith collection. **D. Matos made a motion to accept the Data Collection Plan Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Recommendations Work Group (Attachment G)

D. Donaldson reported that at the last FIN meeting a facilitated session was held to guide FIN into the future. As a result of that session the FIN Committee tasked an Ad Hoc Work Group with developing recommendations and tasks. The FIN Committee was provided with a list of recommendations and tasks developed

as a result. The Committee reviewed this recommendations document and made several changes. Donaldson will make the changes in the document and develop a timeline from 2006 through 2010 and send to FIN Committee members.

Social/Economic Work Group (Attachment H)

D. Donaldson reported that the Social/Economic Work Group met via conference call in February to discuss the development of the FIN social/economic data collection plan. The Work Group expressed concern that there was not a clearly defined need for these data by state partners which makes it difficult to develop a data collection plan. Donaldson reported that this issue had been discussed at the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee and the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee in March. The Committee discussed the fact that FIN had created the modules, identified data elements, knows the products that can be derived from survey data, and no one is asking for information. Donaldson noted that perhaps the work being done on the Federal side is enough and there is not a need for more data. The FIN Committee agreed that the module has been developed and is ready to use when the time is right and do nothing further at this time.

Operations Plan

The FIN Committee was provided with a handout listing the status of all activities for 2005. Donaldson reported that the development of a metadata database needed to be discussed by the Committee. Donaldson explained that at a recent Fishery Information System (FIS) meeting he learned that ACCSP is hiring a contractor to go to each state partner to determine the procedures and protocols used for data collection. The contractor will then enter this information into the Inport system. Donaldson felt that it would be less costly if FIN worked in conjunction with ACCSP and the contractor. This also would aid with compliance of the Data Quality Act. M. Cahall noted that this would be the beginning of a national repository for metadata. The Committee agreed to proceed.

The FIN Committee was provided with a copy of the Draft 2006 FIN Operations Plan. The Committee reviewed the Plan and made some changes based on actions during this meeting. The Committee will get any editorial changes to D. Donaldson by June 20, 2005. **R. Lukens moved to adopt the 2006 FIN Operations Plan with the appropriate updates. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** After the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee meeting in August, Donaldson will provide a finalized Operations Plan for 2006.

The Committee also agreed that an electronic copy of the Operations Plan and Annual Report on the GSMFC website is sufficient and it is no longer necessary to mail hard copies of these documents to Committee members.

Review of FIN Subcommittees and Work Groups

The FIN Committee was provided with copies of membership lists of Subcommittees and Work Groups. The Committee reviewed the lists and made corrections, deletions and additions. Some members will e-mail changes to D. Donaldson who will compile changes and create new membership lists.

Discussion of 2006 FIN Priorities

Committee members were provided with guidelines on the decision process for FIN and a list of items for consideration in 2006. D. Donaldson reported that the list was generated from activities conducted last year as well as discussions in work group meetings. Donaldson also mentioned that the FIN Committee will have to decide whether to develop a MARFIN project. Donaldson noted that there are four additional items added to Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities as a result of discussion the past two days. The Committee originally placed Pilot Study for Catch and Effort Data for Highly Migratory Species on the High Priority list, however after Committee discussion, it was agreed to include it on the Medium Priority list. The final prioritized list will be forwarded to the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S/FFMC) in August 2005 and they will decide which items will be included in the 2006 FIN cooperative agreement. Donaldson noted that any new items are contingent on additional funding.

The Committee agreed to list as high priority all ongoing activities. The prioritized list of activities in 2006 is as follows:

High Priority

Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities

Biological Sampling RFP

ACCSP Outreach Project

Program Review Contract

Metadata Contract

Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data

Charter Boat Survey Offshore Texas

Head Boat Port Sampling in Texas and Florida

Gulf Menhaden Port Sampling

Development and Implementation of FIN Data Management System

Trip Ticket Program Implementation and Operations in Mississippi

Trip Ticket Program Operations in Alabama

Trip Ticket Program Operations in Louisiana

Trip Ticket Program Implementation and Operations in Texas

Recreational/Commercial Biological Sampling

Implementation of For-Hire Telephone Survey (effort) and At-sea Sampling (catch) for Head Boats – Continuation for Alabama and Florida

Implementation of For-Hire Telephone Survey (effort) and At-sea Sampling (catch) for Head Boats – Implementation for Louisiana

Collection of Detailed Effort for Blue Crab Fishery in Louisiana

Medium Priority

Pilot Study for Collection of Catch (catch cards/dock-side) and Effort (telephone survey) Data for Highly Migratory Species

Low Priority

Implementation of For-Hire Telephone Survey (effort) and At-sea Sampling (catch) for Head Boats – Implementation for Texas

Biological Sampling for Additional Species

Pilot Study for Recreational Fishing Effort using Fishing Licenses as Sampling Frame

Donaldson stated that all new activities listed as High Priority will need statements of work and budgets, and all activities listed as High Priority and are ongoing will need updated budgets by July 5, 2005.

Time Schedule and Location of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to hold the FIN 2006 meeting in San Antonio, Texas or as second choice, Sanibel Island, Florida during the first full week in June.

Election of Officers

Page Campbell of Texas moves to Chairmanship, and Kevin Anson of Alabama was elected Vice Chairman.

Other Business

The Committee agreed to have staff draft a thank you letter to Joey and Lisa Shepard for their hospitality. R. Lukens suggested that a letter be sent the Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries commending Rose Higginbotham and her staff for their assistance.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 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.