

ANNUAL REPORT

FISHERIES  
INFORMATION NETWORK IN  
THE SOUTHEAST REGION

(FIN)

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## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

The scope of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) includes the Region's commercial and recreational fisheries for marine, estuarine, and anadromous species, including shellfish. Constituencies served by the program are state and federal agencies responsible for management of fisheries in the Region. Direct benefits will also accrue to federal fishery management councils, the interstate marine fisheries commissions, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries Program. Benefits which accrue to management of fisheries will

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

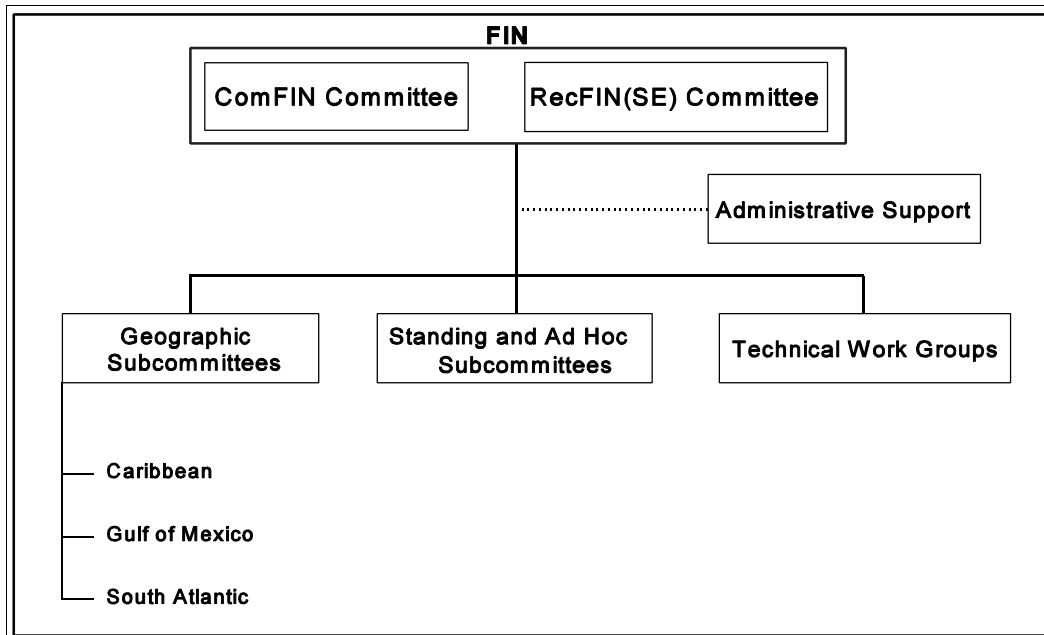
benefit not only commercial and recreational fishermen and the associated fishing industries, but the resources, the states, and the nation.

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

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

### PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

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



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

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

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

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

## **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) are comprehensive programs comprised of coordinated data collection activities, an integrated data management and retrieval system, and procedures for information dissemination. Activities during 1998 were associated with addressing issues and problems regarding data collection and management and developing strategies for dealing with these topics. In addition to ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) activities, ongoing marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys were conducted by the various state and federal agencies involved in these programs. The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees reviewed and evaluated progress towards the integration of these surveys into the respective programs. Future activities of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees are outlined in Table 1.

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

Major ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) meetings were held in March and November 1998. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- C identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 1998 and instruction to Committees, Administrative Subcommittee and the Data Collection, Future Needs, Biological/Environmental, Social/Economic, and ad hoc work groups to either begin or continue work on these tasks;
- C development and completion of the 1998 ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Operations Plans which presented the year's activities in data collection, data management, and information dissemination as well as development of a 5-year time table;
- C development of the 1999 ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Operations Plans;
- C review of activities and accomplishments of 1998;
- C continued evaluation of adequacy of current marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs for ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) and development of recommendations regarding these programs;
- C review findings of and receive recommendations from technical work groups for activities to be carried out during 1999;
- C preparation and submission of a proposal for financial assistance to support activities of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE); and
- C continued internal evaluation of the program.

The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committee members are listed in Table 2. The approved 1998 ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Operations Plans are included in Appendix A and minutes for all meetings are included in Appendix B. The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) goals and objectives are included in Appendix C.

## **Subcommittee and Work Groups**

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

- C The FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group met in May 1998 to review the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) program design document in respects to compatibility/comparability with ACCSP. The group examined the similarities and differences in the catch and effort, discards, confidentiality, data management, and other components of the programs.
- C The RecFIN(SE) Social/Economic Work Group met in July 1998 to identify the minimum data elements for the social and economic aspects of fisheries, review and expand the quality assurance and quality control and RecFIN(SE) QA/QC document to include standards for collection and management of social and economic data, and discussion regarding the market and social/economic modules for ComFIN.
- C A commercial port samplers meeting was held in July 1998 to discuss the review of commercial data collection methods, focusing on the TIP including an overview of the program sampling techniques/protocols and review of the individual data elements.
- C The Data Collection Work Group met in August 1998 to further refine the catch/effort module for the ComFIN, begin discussing the discards and protected species interactions modules for ComFIN and RecFIN(SE), and address several issues regarding data collection activities in the Southeast Region.
- C The Data Collection Procedures Work Group met in August 1998 to develop a document which outlines the procedures for the collection of data under the ComFIN.
- C The ComFIN Recommendations Work Group met in August 1998 to develop a recommendations document which will guide the ComFIN. The group utilized a report developed from the ComFIN brainstorming session which outlines the issues and problems regarding commercial data collection in the Southeast Region. From these issues, the group developed recommendations and associated tasks that will guide ComFIN into the future.
- C The RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group met in November 1998 to, in conjunction with the Caribbean, begin discussing the development of marine recreational fishery surveys methodologies for collection of data in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands, review of compilation of metadata related to changes in fishing regulations, develop criteria for defining private access sites, compile potential sources of information, and develop plan of compiling this information, and determine magnitude of night fishing activities by state and develop recommendations by state, by mode.

### **Coordination and Administrative Support**

Working closely with the Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation was a major function of ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) coordination and administrative

support. Other important coordination and administrative activities included but were not limited to providing coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the Committees, subcommittees, and work groups; serving as liaison between the Committees, other program participants, and other interested organizations; preparing annual operations plans under the direction of the Committees; preparing and/or supervising and coordinating preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings; and distributing approved ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures.

### **Information Dissemination**

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

- C ComFIN Committee. 1998. *1998 Operations Plan for ComFIN Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN)*. No. 54 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 10 pp + appendix.
- C FIN Committee. 1998. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 1997 - December 31, 1997*. No. 53 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 15 pp + appendices.
- C RecFIN(SE) Committee. 1998. *1998 Operations Plan for RecFIN(SE) Fisheries Information Network for the Southeast United States [(RecFIN(SE))]*. No. 48 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 18 pp + appendix.
- C ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) articles in the ASMFC and GSMFC newsletters.
- C Variety of informal discussions occurred throughout the year during ASMFC, GSMFC, NMFS, and other participating agencies meetings and workshops.
- C NPS personnel periodically provided information concerning the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) (meeting notices, available documents, etc.) to the EPA's Gulf of Mexico Program computer Bulletin Board System.
- C NMFS has begun the development of an user-friendly data management system for the MRFSS.
- C GSMFC has developed a home page for the world wide web which provides programmatic information regarding ComFIN and RecFIN(SE).

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

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

[ComFIN Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

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

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

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

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



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

**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.**

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**TABLE 3.**

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South Florida Research Center

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**Social/Economic Work Group**

Bob Mahood  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Lisa Kline  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Steve Holiman  
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**APPENDIX A**  
**1998 Operations Plans**

**1998 Operations Plan for the  
Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN)**

January 1, 1998 to December 31, 1998

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The ComFIN is a cooperative state-federal marine, anadromous and estuarine commercial fisheries data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future marine commercial fisheries data collection and data management activities through cooperative planning, innovative uses of statistical theory and design, and consolidation of appropriate data into a useful data base system. This operations plan implements the FIN Framework Plan for 1998. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

**II. MISSION AND GOALS**

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

The four goals of the ComFIN are:

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

**III. OPERATIONS**

**A. Data Collection and Management**

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

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<sup>2</sup>The Southeast Region (the Region) includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas and the U.S. Virgin Islands

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

The tasks below cover all 1998 objectives.

Task 1: Annual Operations Plan, 1999 (Goal 1, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop 1999 Annual Operations Plan, including identification of available resources, that implements the Framework Plan.  
Team Members: ComFIN Committee  
Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 1999.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: 1999 Annual Operations Plan  
Schedule: The Plan will be drafted by mid/late summer 1998 and submitted for approval by the Committee at the fall 1998 meeting.

Task 2: Development of a Recommendations Document (Goal 1, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop a recommendations document which will guide the program.  
Team Members: Ad Hoc Work Group  
Approach: Using the information from the CSP facilitated session in 1993, the group will develop a document which outlines the recommendations and related tasks for the future of ComFIN. This document will guide the program and by used to develop annual operations plans. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail.  
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.  
Product: Recommendations document  
Schedule: The Work Group will begin addressing this issue in early 1998 and will present the document at the fall 1998 meeting.

Task 3: Development of an Implementation Plan (Goal 1, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop an implementation plan for ComFIN  
Team Members: ComFIN Committee  
Approach: Using the information developed from the Committee and various work groups, the Committee will draft a plan which will be used by the program partners to implement ComFIN. Staff will compile existing information and present a draft document to the Committee in early 1998. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail. This plan will be developed in conjunction with the ComFIN implementation plan.  
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.  
Product: Implementation plan  
Schedule: The Committee will address this at the spring 1998 meeting.

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

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.  
Team Members: ComFIN Committee and staff  
Approach: The Committee will distribute information concerning the structure, mission, goals and objectives, etc., to cooperators and interested parties documented by a request log. Each committee member is responsible for maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the ComFIN staff.  
Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: A report which compiles a record of information distributed and presentations given by the Committee and staff.  
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 5: Current and Future Data Needs (Goal 2, Objective 1)

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

Team Members: ComFIN Committee

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

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

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

Schedule: A preliminary report will be presented at the spring 1998 meeting. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 6: Development of a Generic Trip Ticket Program (Goal 2, Objective 1)

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

Team Members: Future Needs Work Group

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

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

Product: Outline for a trip ticket program

Schedule: The Work Group began addressing this issue in 1997 and will continue working on it during 1998.

Task 7: Development of the Discards and Protected Species Interactions Modules (Goal 2, Objective 1)

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

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group

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

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

Product: Discard and Protected Species Interactions collection program

Schedule: The Work Group began addressing this issue in 1997 and will continue working on it during 1998.

Task 8: Development of the Market Module (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop the market module for the ComFIN.  
Team Members: Data Collection/Social Economic Work Groups  
Approach: Using information developed by the ACCSP and other pertinent information, the Work Group will design a data collection module for the compilation of market information for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program will outline the data elements that need to be collected for compilation of economic information. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.  
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.  
Product: Market data collection module  
Schedule: The Work Groups began addressing this issue in 1997 and will continue working on it during 1998.

Task 9: Development of the Social/Economic Module (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop the social/economic module for the ComFIN.  
Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group  
Approach: Using information developed by the ACCSP and other pertinent information, the Work Group will design a data collection module for the compilation of social/economic information for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program will outline the data elements that need to be collected for compilation of social/economic data. This module will be similar to the market module. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.  
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.  
Product: Social/Economic data collection module  
Schedule: The Work Group will begin addressing this issue during 1998.

Task 10: Development of Data Collection Procedures Document (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop a document which outlines procedures for the collection of data under the ComFIN.  
Team Members: Ad hoc work group  
Approach: The work group will develop a document which describes the various techniques and methods for collection of marine commercial data. The group will utilize existing procedures for the Trip Interview Program and other related information.  
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.  
Product: Procedures document  
Schedule: The work group will meet in 1998 to address this issue and present their results to the Committee at the fall 1998 meeting.

Task 11: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Develop a plan which outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming year.  
Team Members: ComFIN Committee  
Approach: The Committee has develop a data collection planning process which identifies the priority species (and associated data needed to be collected) for the state, interstate and federal entities. The plan will provide guidance to the states, NMFS, and FWS for the development of funding mechanisms that are implemented to provide funding support for collecting the data. During the fall meeting, the Committee will conduct an evaluation of the adherence to prior year's plan and final review of prior year's data.  
Resources: Mail cost, telephone costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Data collection plan  
Schedule: The plan is currently being developed and will be discussed by the Committee at the fall 1998 meeting.

**C. Administrative Activities**

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

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

**D. Time Table for ComFIN**

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

**Data Management**

Standard coding system			X	X	
Data management system		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard management protocols		X	X		
Data confidentiality	X	X			



**E. Committee and Work Group Membership**

**ComFIN Committee**

Steven Atran  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Mgmt. Council

Joe O'Hop  
Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection

Page Campbell  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Dee Lupton  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Lisa Kline  
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John Poffenberger  
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**Data Collection Work Group**

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### **Data Management Work Group**

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### **Future Needs**

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**1998 Operations Plan for the  
Recreational Fisheries Information Network in the  
Southeastern United States [RecFIN(SE)]**

January 1, 1998 to December 31, 1998

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The RecFIN(SE) is a cooperative state-federal marine recreational fisheries (MRF) data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future MRF data collection and data management activities through cooperative planning, innovative uses of statistical theory and design, and consolidation of appropriate data into a useful data base system. This operations plan implements the FIN Framework Plan for 1998. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

**II. MISSION AND GOALS**

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

The four goals of the RecFIN(SE) are:

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

**III. OPERATIONS**

**A. Data Collection and Management**

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

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

The tasks below cover all 1998 objectives (see Section D).

Task 1: Annual Operations Plan, 1999 (Goal 1, Objective 3)

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<sup>3</sup>The Southeast Region (the Region) includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Objective: Develop 1999 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources, that implements the Framework Plan.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.  
Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 1999.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: 1999 Annual Operations Plan.  
Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by late summer 1998 and addressed by the Committee at the fall 1998 meeting.

Task 2: Development of an Implementation Plan (Goal 1, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop an implementation plan for RecFIN  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee  
Approach: Using the information developed from the Committee and various work groups, the Committee will draft a plan which will be used by the program partners to implement RecFIN(SE). Staff will compile existing information and present a draft document to the Committee in early 1998. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail. This plan will be developed in conjunction with the ComFIN implementation plan.  
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, inkind support and staff time.  
Product: Implementation plan  
Schedule: The Committee will address this at the spring 1998 meeting.

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

Objective: Support the establishment of long-term, comprehensive MRF surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.  
Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group  
Approach: The Work Group will work in conjunction with the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (PRDNER) and U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife (USVIDFW) to develop marine recreational fishery surveys (MRF) in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. The PRDNER is currently working on project to implement a MRF survey in Puerto Rico. The Work Group will be working with the Department as well as USVIDFW to develop a coordinated survey. The group will first focus on the type of method(s) that should be used to collect MRF data in the Caribbean and later address the development of a document to secure funding for the activity.  
Resources: Travel, copy and mailing expenses and staff time.  
Product: Develop of a MRF survey outline for the Caribbean.  
Schedule: This task will be discussed at the 1998 spring meeting and further explored throughout the year.

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

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee and staff.  
Approach: The Committee will distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties documented by a request log. Each committee member is responsible for

maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the RecFIN(SE) staff. In addition, the MRFSS staff has developed a home page where users are able to access the MRFSS data for their use. The user is able to specify the area, species, gear, etc. that he/she is interested in obtaining. Also, the GSMFC has developed a home page which includes information concerning the RecFIN(SE). In an effort to best utilize the Internet, a survey will be developed to determine the Internet capabilities of RecFIN(SE) participants.

Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and staff time.  
Product: Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning RecFIN(SE) and a report which compiles a record of information distributed and presentations given by the Committee and staff. This information is included in the FIN Annual Report.  
Schedule: This task will be an ongoing activity.

Task 5: Social/Economic Data Elements (Goal 2, Objective 2)

Objective: Identify social and economic data elements required for each fishery component.  
Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group.  
Approach: The ASMFC Committee on Economic and Social Sciences has addressed the identification of necessary social and economic data elements. The ASMFC Committee has produced a document which outlines the minimum data elements for the social and economic aspects of fisheries. It is recommended that the RecFIN(SE) Social and Economic Work Group use this information and review and modify the document, as appropriate. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.  
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: List of social and economic data elements  
Schedule: This task will be completed in 1998.

Task 6: Biological/Environmental Data Elements (Goal 2, Objective 2)

Objective: Compile metadata for inclusion into a metadata database for the Southeast Region.  
Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group/RecFIN(SE) Committee  
Approach: The group has worked on this issue in the past and has developed a criteria for creating a metadata database. The Committee discussed the issue of metadata and decided that the Work Group should focus on compilation of regulatory changes. The staff will begin compiling this information from each program participant as well as compiling other pertinent sources of information. Subsequent categories to be collected will be determined by the Committee.  
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Development of metadata database  
Schedule: The initial compilation of data will begin in 1998 and this will be an ongoing activity.

Task 7: Social/Economic Quality Assurance and Quality Control (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Identify and determine standards for sociological and economic data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.  
Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group.  
Approach: Determine standards for collection and management of social and economic data. Review and expand the quality assurance and quality control document developed

by the Biological/Environmental Work Group. This expanded document will encompass all quality assurance and quality control standards for the RecFIN(SE). Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: RecFIN(SE) Quality assurance and quality control document.  
Schedule: This task will be completed by the 1998 fall meeting.  
Task 8: Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Implement an annual review process including guidelines for reviewing the data, through the RecFIN(SE), to evaluate MRFSS data.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee/MRFSS staff  
Approach: The Committee approved the a process for reviewing the MRFSS preliminary data which was presented at the last meeting. It was decided that MRFSS staff will set up automated e-mail messaging for notifying program participants regarding changes to the preliminary data as well as when the data becomes final.  
Resources: Meeting costs/travel, mail costs, report costs, and staff time.  
Product: Process for MRFSS data finalization.  
Schedule: The data evaluation will be an ongoing task. The automated processes will be implemented by spring 1998.

Task 9: Increase of Precision of Estimates for Priority Species (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Evaluate methods to achieve desired target precision levels  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee/MRFSS staff  
Approach: The group will examine and evaluate a variety of methods either through enhancements of the MRFSS or through special studies. Where possible, the discussions will include ACCSP personnel as well to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.  
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, and staff time.  
Product: Precision levels for priority species.  
Schedule: This task will be addressed in 1998

Task 10: Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current and future programs for meeting RecFIN(SE) standards.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.  
Approach: Periodically evaluate surveys based on their adequacy for meeting RecFIN(SE) standards and make appropriate recommendations.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Report containing recommendations for MRF surveys as well as an evaluation and report on recommendations.  
Schedule: Continue reviewing MRF surveys. In 1998, a presentation regarding MRFSS will be presented to the Committee. This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 11: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Identify and combine duplicative data collection and management efforts.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee

Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group has identified redundancies in MRF data collection and management in the Southeast Region and provided recommendations to the RecFIN(SE) Committee concerning these activities. One of the areas identified included a comparison of cost between the Mississippi Creel Survey and the MRFSS. From this information, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts in the Southeast Region.

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

Product: Recommendations for reducing duplicative data collection and management efforts.

Schedule: This is an ongoing task. The cost benefit analysis between the Mississippi Creel Survey and the MRFSS may be addressed later this year, depending on availability of personnel and funds.

Task 12: Determination of Catch and Effort for Non-Hook-and-Line Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Determine catch and effort of shellfish and finfish harvested using non-hook-and-line methods.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee

Approach: Compile a list of non-hook-and-line recreational fisheries and related sampling programs in the Southeast Region. From this list, the Committee will develop/modify sampling programs to collect this information. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

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

Product: List of non-hook-and-line recreational fisheries

Schedule: This task will be addressed at the 1998 spring/fall meeting.

Task 13: Determination of Catch and Effort from Private Access Groups (Goal 2, Objective 5)

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

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: Determine the distribution of private access points by state in the Southeast Region. Also, the Committee will evaluate the North Carolina study and other pertinent studies regarding private access groups. And the Committee will develop an acceptable methodology for determining catch rates and species composition from private access groups. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

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

Product: List of private access points for recreational fisheries

Schedule: This task will be addressed at the 1998 spring/fall meeting.

Task 14: Determination of Catch Rates and Species Composition from Night Fishing (Goal 2, Objective 5)

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

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Committee will evaluate existing information and/or conduct special studies to determine the distribution and magnitude of night fishing by state and develop an acceptable methodology for determining catch rates and species composition for night fishing. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: List of night fishing activities for recreational fisheries  
Schedule: This task will be addressed at the 1998 spring/fall meeting.

Task 15: Collection of Tournaments Data (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Collect appropriate information from fishing tournaments, and integrate with other MRF data.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee  
Approach: Compile a list which identifies all ongoing tournaments in the Southeast Region. Once the list is completed, the Committee will identify and recommend data requirements and consistent methodologies for tournament sampling. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: List of tournaments for recreational fisheries  
Schedule: This task will be addressed at the 1998 spring/fall meeting.

Task 16: Implementation of Methods to Monitor the For-Hire Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Identify evaluate, and test methodologies to survey charter and head boat fisheries.  
Team Members: Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee  
Approach: The purpose of this task is to make comparisons between various methods for estimating charter boat effort, catch per trip, and total catch. The three methods that will be compared are the current MRFSS method, a captain's telephone survey, and a log panel survey. All methods will be conducted simultaneously and the results will be compared to determine the best methods for estimating effort in the charter boat fishery. The evaluation of the data from these methods will be conducted based on various criteria. In addition, the ACCSP is planning a similar study in South Carolina to compare the MRFSS, captain phone, and mandatory logbook methodologies.  
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Participation in the Charter boat Pilot Survey to determine the best methodology for surveying charter boats.  
Schedule: This is multi-year task. The testing of the methodologies began in September 1997 and will be completed in August 1998. The evaluation of the methods will be begin in late 1998.

Task 17: Evaluation of Licensing System as Sampling Framework (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Evaluate the licensing systems for use as sampling framework in the Southeast Region.  
Team Members: Administrative Subcommittee  
Approach: The subcommittee has developed a criteria that ensures that state marine recreational fishery licenses can be used as a regional sampling frame. In addition, a justification paper has been developed by the group that outline the rationale and need for a marine recreational license. The Committee needs to examine each state and recommend that they either establish or modify a MRF license system that include the identified criteria. In subsequent years, the group will conduct a survey comparing the license frame versus the MRFSS methodology on a regional basis.



Resources: Mail costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Recommendations  
Schedule: This is a multi-year task. Development of recommendations will be addressed at the 1998 spring meeting. The development of a survey comparing the various methods will be addressed at a later date.

Task 18: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5)

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

Task 19: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Develop a plan which outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming year.  
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee  
Approach: The Committee has develop a data collection planning process which identifies the priority species (and associated data needed to be collected) for the state, interstate and federal entities. The plan will provide guidance to the states, NMFS, and FWS for the development of funding mechanisms that are implemented to provide funding support for collecting the data. During the fall meeting, the Committee will conduct an evaluation of the adherence to prior year's plan and final review of prior year's data.  
Resources: Mail cost, telephone costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: Data collection plan  
Schedule: The plan is currently being developed and will be discussed by the Committee at the fall 1998 meeting.

Task 20: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6)

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

Task 21: Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Obj 3)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Task 22: Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4)

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

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

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

Resources: MRFSS staff time and RecFIN(SE) Committees, and staff time as needed.

Product: Standard protocols and documentation on-line on the MRFSS Home Page and other non-MRFSS home pages.

Schedule: Documentation and standardization of MRFSS intercept and telephone historical data bases was begun in 1993. The final intercept format was adopted by MRFSS staff by March 1995 and is available for distribution as well as similar documentation for the telephone data base. Basic documentation of the catch and

trip estimate data bases exists and will be added to the MRFSS Home Page. Standardization of variables was achieved by the MRFSS staff during the clean-up effort during 1994 and 1995 prior to re-estimation.

Task 23: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee

Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies which will aid in the management of MRF data. Also, industry personnel will report to the Committee concerning such advancements.

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

Product: Progress reports.

Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task 24: Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1)

Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.

Approach: The RecFIN(SE) Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will attend Pacific RecFIN and ASMFC Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics meetings and coordinate activities as appropriate. Accomplished by mail and meetings.

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

Product: Record of coordination activities.

Schedule: The planning aspect of this task is an ongoing activity.

Task 25: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative MRF Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3)

Objective: Coordinate RecFIN(SE) with other regional cooperative MRF programs and encourage consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee/Ad Hoc work group

Approach: The RecFIN(SE) Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and Pacific RecFIN on the West Coast. The MRFSS staff is revising data files and will get input from the RecFIN(SE) Committee. An ad hoc work group was created to examine the differences/similarities between the FIN and ACCSP. Distribute appropriate program results and recommendations to other RecFIN programs. The topic of a joint meeting among FIN, ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN has been discussed and staff will examine the possibility of conducting these types of meetings. Accomplished by mail and meetings.

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

Product: Ensure adequate information exchange, consistency and comparability between all regional RecFIN programs and compilation of a record of information exchange.

Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity. The ad hoc work group is scheduled to meet in mid-1998.

**C. Administrative Activities**

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

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

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

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

**Data Collection**

Data components

Review of components of fisheries X

Needed data elements

Develop process for metadata X X X X

Collection of metadata X X X

Identify social/economic data elements X

Use existing social/economic panels for RecFIN(SE) X

Identify other social scientists to participate in RecFIN(SE) X

Standard data collection protocols

Adoption of QA/QC standards X

Review of QA/QC standards X

Calculate precision estimate for Headboat Survey X

Determine precision levels for priority species X

Evaluate methods for achieving desired precision levels X

Quality control/assurance

Recommendations regarding duplicative collection and management X

Evaluate compatibility of Texas Survey data X

Coordination of data collection

Compile marine recreational licensing report X

Develop license sampling frame criteria X

Establish/modify licenses to meet criteria X

Conduct comparison survey of license frame and MRFSS X

Implement the appropriate methodology X

Evaluate methods for surveying the for-hire fishery X X

Test methods for surveying the for-hire fishery X X X

Determine methods for collecting catch data for private access points X

Determine methods for collecting catch data for night fishing X

Develop process for collecting needed data on priority species X

1996 1997 1998 1999 2000

**Data Collection**

Develop method for collecting data on fishing tournaments X

Develop methods for collecting data on non hook-and-line fisheries X

Evaluate the potential for stratifying at finer geographic levels X

Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process X

Select preferred method for site selection process X

Evaluate methods to improve enforceability of reporting requirements X

Conduct comparison study between preferred and MRFSS methods X

Determine the extent of non-consumptive activities X

Innovative collection technology

Evaluate innovative data collection technologies X X X X X

Data management system

Review location and responsibility of DMS X

Hardware/software capabilities

Review hardware/software capabilities X

Data maintenance

Provide finalized data in electronic form X X X X

Standard data management protocols

Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data X

Integration of data bases

Identify databases for integration in MRF DMS X X X X X

Innovative data management technology					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data confidentiality					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Development of National Program</b>					
Long-term planning					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

**E. References**

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

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

### **RecFIN(SE) Committee**

Steven Atran  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
Council

Graciela Garcia-Moliner  
Caribbean Fishery Management Council

Lee Green  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Steve Holiman  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Regional Office

Lisa Kline  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Wilson Laney  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Skip Lazauski  
Alabama Department of Conservation  
and Natural Resources

Ronald Lukens  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Theo Brainerd  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Representative  
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Nick Nicholson  
Georgia Coastal Resources Division

Joseph O'Hop  
Florida Department of Environmental  
Protection

Maury Osborn  
National Marine Fisheries Service

Craig Lilyestrom  
Puerto Rico Department of Natural and  
Environmental Resources

Thomas Schmidt  
Everglades National Park

Bob Dixon  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Beaufort Laboratory

Joseph Shepard  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and  
Fisheries

Doug Mumford  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Thomas Van Devender  
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Joe Moran  
South Carolina Department of Natural  
Resources

**Administrative Subcommittee**

Lisa Kline  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Nick Nicholson  
Georgia Coastal Resources Division

Bob Dixon  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Beaufort Laboratory

Maury Osborn  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Silver Spring

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

Joseph Shepard  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and  
Fisheries

Ronald Lukens  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

**Biological/Environmental Work Group**

Bob Dixon  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Beaufort Laboratory

Thomas Schmidt  
South Florida Research Center  
Everglades National Park

Jeff Brust  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Tom Van Devender  
Mississippi Bureau of Marine Resources

Representative  
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Joe Moran  
South Carolina Department of Natural  
Resources

Doug Mumford  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Steve Meyers  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Silver Spring

**Social/Economic Work Group**

Tony Lamberte  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
Council

Representative  
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Theo Brainerd  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Steve Holiman  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Regional Office

Lisa Kline  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Ron Lukens  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Minutes**

**COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (ComFIN)  
MINUTES  
Monday, February 23, 1998  
Orlando, Florida**

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

**Members**

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Tom Schmidt, NPS, Homestead, FL  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

**Others**

Steve Brown, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Tom Sminkey, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL

**Staff**

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

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as revised with additional items under Other Business.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on September 23, 1997 in San Antonio, Texas were approved as written.

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

J. Poffenberger distributed a list of personnel with access to confidential data and requested that members make corrections, deletions, and additions. Poffenberger reported that C. Laborini is now in charge of the data management division of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Miami and K. Zinniger is responsible for maintaining the list of personnel. D. Donaldson will contact committee members not present and provide them with the list of personnel with access to confidential data for their agencies.

**Discussion of Periodic Meetings of Port Samplers**

D. Donaldson reported to the committee on the subject of periodic meetings of the state and federal port samplers. J. Shepard and J. O'Hop described how their agencies have handled meetings of personnel involved in the pilot charter boat survey and the trip interview program (TIP). Various data collection methods and goals were

reviewed by the committee to determine which needed to be presented to the port samplers and in what format. The possibility of combining meetings of recreational and commercial samplers was also discussed, since some agencies have the same personnel collect data for both. P. Campbell noted that commercial federal port agents in Texas should be included in port sampler meetings. J. Poffenberger noted the need to update the TIP procedures manual for port samplers. He will send the manual to D. Donaldson who will distribute it to committee members for their comment. Fish identification, safety during sampling at sea, sanitation, and other issues were discussed. R. Lukens noted the importance of a standard presentation of procedures in order to begin dialog in a port samplers meeting.

It was determined by the committee that there are two areas of consideration, the updating of a procedures manual, and port samplers meetings. The committee agreed to have D. Donaldson contact L. Bishop of NMFS, Galveston regarding meetings of port samplers. **J. Shepard moved to have a series of regional workshops for federal and state port agents in 1998. The workshop will review the TIP data collection procedures. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** R. Lukens noted that there should be an administrative record of any proceedings and recommendations made as a result of the port agents workshop. Any recommendations resulting from a port agents workshop will be reviewed by the Committee before being incorporated into a procedures manual.

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

R. Lukens distributed the handout, "Process for Developing Annual Data Collection Plans". The Committee had agreed to produce a data collection document annually to provide the samplers with the species, type, and number of samples to be collected each year in order to conduct stock assessments. Lukens noted that he had contacted members of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) Stock Assessment Team for their input.

Lukens explained the process being developed. A list of species had been discussed by this Committee at a previous meeting. All data will be compiled for these listed species. An evaluation and analysis will be conducted of those data to determine if the data that are available provide us with enough information to conduct a stock assessment. Recommendations will be developed regarding species specific data deficiencies. Those recommendations will be put into the format of a data collection plan in conjunction with the data that have already been collected. Provisions can be made for emergency data needs. Lukens noted that the Committee can solicit proposals from individuals with this expertise to conduct an analysis of the current data and provide recommendations. Funding should be available within the next few years for this procedure. Committee members discussed the importance of connecting the needs of stock assessment scientists to the development of a data collection plan, as well as utilizing historical data and future needs. Cooperation between the states, commissions, and councils in prioritizing species was also discussed.

R. Lukens stated that as a demonstration, an outside individual or organization could be contracted to conduct a project which would collect all data currently residing in databases as though a stock assessment were being conducted. This project would then determine which data are lacking in order to conduct a stock assessment in the future. The results of this demonstration project would then be reviewed by this Committee to determine if it is a useful, cost-effective product. This product could be funded in part with Wallop-Breaux funds, possibly beginning in January 1999.

Lengthy discussion ensued and **R. Lukens moved that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission develop a request for proposal (RFP) during 1999 to initiate a study to determine data needs for conducting stock assessments. The motion was seconded and passed with S.Atran opposed.**

#### **Discussion of the Compatibility Between ComFIN and ACCSP Trip Ticket Programs**

D. Donaldson reported that the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee has addressed the issue of compatibility between ComFIN and ACCSP. It appears that there are some minor differences, however it is understood that not every state will be able to collect the same data initially. There are some differences in terminology, but essentially both programs and survey methods are compatible. Both RecFIN/ComFIN and ACCSP share the goal of coordinating activities to insure compatibility and comparability.

#### **Final Approval of 1998 Operations Plan**

Committee members reviewed the 1998 Operations Plan and minor changes and additions were addressed. Staff will make corrections and mail revised Operations Plan to Committee members. **W. Laney moved to accept the 1998 Operations Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

J. Poffenberger will name a replacement for M. Camp to the Data Management and Future Needs Work Groups.

**Other Business**

R. Lukens stated that at a recent Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) meeting there was some concern expressed that procedures regarding statistical validity of sampling may need to be examined. Lukens asked Committee members if there were any statistical sampling activities in commercial data collection currently taking place. Lukens also noted that at another GMFMC meeting, it was proposed that a joint GSMFC and GMFMC data workshop be held.

Lukens reported that the GMFMC also was concerned about training for at-sea observers and dockside samplers. Many commercial samplers have been involved in this work for years, are very proficient, and turnovers are very low however, Committee members agreed that future plans should include development of educational and training material. D. Donaldson noted that a training program and guidelines would be developed as part of the Quality Assurance/Quality Control document.

Committee members agreed that the RecFIN/ComFIN should attempt to make presentations to the GMFMC and keep them informed. L. Kline stated that the ACCSP makes presentations to the three Atlantic Fisheries Management Councils. Kline will check with Greg Waugh concerning routine presentations to these Councils.

R. Lukens reported that at the GMFMC meeting, while discussing the validity of commercial data, the question of red snapper otoliths and lengths was raised. S. Atran explained that there has been a large discrepancy in ageing Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico red snapper. D. Donaldson noted that the GSMFC is currently developing an otolith handbook.

J. Poffenberger stated that the NMFS Miami Laboratory must have a plan in place by December 31, 1998 to deal with computer systems and the year 2000. Poffenberger requested that all states that provide data to the NMFS notify him as to whether they will be using a two or four digit year field. Poffenberger also noted that in accessing data on the SEFHost with a PC, Windows 95 is now required.

D. Donaldson asked Committee members to review Committee roster and notify him of any changes.

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.**

**FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK  
MINUTES  
Tuesday, February 24, 1998  
Orlando, Florida**

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

**Members**

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Lee Green, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC  
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Doug Mumford, NCDMF, Washington, NC  
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

**Others**

Tom Sminkey, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL

**Staff**

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

**Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as written.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on September 24, 1997 in San Antonio, Texas were approved as written.

**Discussion and Review of 1997 FIN Annual Report**

The 1997 FIN Annual Report was sent to Committee members prior to the meeting for their review. D. Donaldson stated that until two years ago there had been ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Annual Reports, but beginning last year they were merged into one FIN Annual Report. Donaldson asked Committee members to submit any editorial comments. M. Osborn suggested merging the RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN Operations Plans into a unified plan with details for both Committees, including work groups, with recreational and commercial components. Donaldson noted

some overlapping situations in RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN, such as the Social/Economic Work Group, and the Data Collection Work Group discussion of the discards issue which is common to both commercial and recreational fisheries. R. Lukens noted that Committee members are encouraged to suggest agenda items. **M. Osborn moved to approve the 1997 FIN Annual Report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Discussion of Publication and Distribution of FIN Brochure**

Committee members reviewed the draft FIN brochure and discussed changes, distribution and budget. Committee members suggested that the brochures should be sent to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC), the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) mailing list, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), various state extension offices, and state agencies for distribution. R. Lukens suggested that the revised FIN brochure be reviewed by the GSMFC Commercial/Recreational Advisory Panel at the upcoming Spring Meeting. After some discussion, **J. O'Hop moved to scrap this version of the FIN brochure and rewrite and redesign the entire brochure. There was no second to the motion. M. Osborn moved to present the FIN brochure to the GSMFC Commercial/Recreational Advisory Panel for their comment. The motion was seconded and passed with J. O'Hop opposed.**

#### **Discussion of Bycatch Definition**

At the RecFIN(SE) meeting held in September 1997, L. Kline stated that she would send the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Bycatch Proceedings to this Committee to discuss the issue of bycatch definitions. D. Donaldson reported that yesterday at the ComFIN meeting, that Committee agreed to change the word *bycatch* to *discards* for data collection purposes. M. Osborn noted that the ACCSP definition includes *discards and protected species interactions*. After lengthy discussion the Committee agreed on the following definition:

Discards are that portion of the catch of marine resources that are not landed, whether discarded live or dead. Protected species interactions include any interactions as defined by state and federal statutes.

(Footnoted with state and federal statutes)

**M. Osborn moved to adopt the definition of *discards*. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** This definition will be sent on to the Data Collection Work Group for their work in developing this module.

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

L. Kline reported that the ACCSP has developed an Implementation Plan, now known as the Program Design Document, and is working on Technical Source Document IV. When this document is complete the ACCSP will ask the RecFIN/ComFIN for comments on both documents. The Program Design Document has been reviewed by the ACCSP technical committees and in March it will be given to the Advisory Committee. The public comment period will be through the end of April then it will go back to the Operations Committee for finalization. The document will then go to the Coordinating Council for approval.

R. Lukens suggested forming an Ad Hoc work group comprised of FIN and ACCSP Committee members to review the FIN Program Design Document and the ACCSP Program Design Document for comparison. Known as the FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group, members will be L. Kline, R. Lukens, D. Lupton, M. Osborn, N. Nicholson, J. Shepard, M. Alexander, B. Beal, and B. Joule. The work group will hold their initial meeting sometime in the end of May 1998.

#### **Discussion and Review of Program Design Document for ComFIN/RecFIN**

Committee members began the review and edit of the draft FIN Program Design Document and completed sections I, II, and III. These revisions represent the administrative record for this portion of the meeting. **R. Lukens moved to have the Ad Hoc Compatibility Work Group address the issues of confidentiality, and verification of self-reported data and report to this Committee at the Fall 1998 meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Given the time restraints at this meeting and the lengthy process of editing the document, the Committee agreed to have the revised Program Design Document reviewed and edited by the Ad Hoc Compatibility Work Group

in May and presented at the Fall 1998 meeting. Committee members should send any comments or corrections to D. Donaldson by March 25, 1998.

**Discussion of Vessel Registration System/Fishery Information System**

J. Poffenberger reported that the Core Design Team is meeting on March 4 and 5 and will review comments they have received to date on the Vessel Registration System/Fishery Information System (VRS/FIS). M. Osborn noted that the *Federal Register* notice will be out in March, then there is a 60 day public comment period after which it will go to Congress sometime in late June or July. Committee discussion followed concerning the need for input on the VRS/FIS from the states, Commissions, FIN, PacFIN, ACCSP, etc. R. Lukens noted that a national data collection program is the ultimate goal and input from all entities is critical. A letter from the Core Design Team stated that the NMFS would be initiating meetings with the interstate Commissions in the January - March timeframe to discuss options and preferred alternatives concerning the VRS/FIS. M. Osborn noted that the Core Design Team will be meeting next week. Another draft plan will be developed at that time to go into the *Federal Register* and there is still time to schedule meetings with interested parties. J. Poffenberger suggested that a meeting be held before July 1, 1998.

**Time Schedule and Location for Next Meeting**

D. Donaldson reported that the meeting rotation calls for the Caribbean to be the location of the Fall 1998 meeting. The Committee agreed that the meeting will be held in Puerto Rico from September 23 to 25, with the last week in September being the alternate date, and Atlanta, Georgia being the alternate location. Staff will work with members from Puerto Rico and investigate possible locations in the Ponce area. Committee members will be notified of final plans.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.**

**SOUTHEAST RECREATIONAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK [RecFIN(SE)] MINUTES  
Orlando, Florida  
February 24 and 25, 1998**

Chairman Joe Shepard called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

**Members**

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Lee Green, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Doug Mumford, NCDMF, Washington, NC  
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL  
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

**Others**

Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Martha Norris, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Tom Sminkey, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL

**Staff**

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

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as written.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on September 24 - 25, 1997 in San Antonio, Texas were approved with minor editorial changes.

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

R. Lukens reported that this issue was addressed at the ComFIN meeting held on Monday, February 23, 1998. The ComFIN Committee, at that time, approved a motion to have the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) develop a request for proposal (RFP) during 1999 to initiate a study to determine data needs for conducting stock assessments. Lukens reviewed the handout, "Process for Developing Annual Data Collection Plans". The initial process would be contracted out to conduct a project to analyze existing data bases regarding the species listed on the handout (Attachment A). The report would determine where an increase in data collection for specific items would be necessary and where data collection would need to be initiated for areas with no information. The impetus behind this exercise is to begin the process of integration between the data collection process and those involved in conducting stock assessments.



Lukens stated that this study is being viewed as a demonstration project. The Fisheries Information Network (FIN), Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), the Caribbean, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council (GMFMC) need to determine their data needs in order to develop an initial data collection plan. This approach is a preliminary step to determining data needs for stock assessments. W. Laney suggested contacting a professional organization such as the American Fisheries Society to ascertain what basic data are needed for stock assessment on a given species. D. Donaldson noted that the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Committee developed the sample list of priority species. S. Atran expressed concern over the fact that there were no offshore fish on the sample species list. Committee members agreed to add triggerfish and gray snapper to the sample species list. Lengthy discussion followed and **W. Laney moved to initiate a study to determine data needs for conducting stock assessments and to decide if this tool is sufficient for integrating data collection needs. The move was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Development of Methods for Compiling Information Regarding Non-Hook and Line Fisheries**

D. Donaldson noted that this agenda item is Task 12 of the RecFIN(SE) 1998 Operations Plan. Committee members developed a list of non-hook and line gear and divided the list into two categories, finfish and crustaceans. The matrix represents the administrative portion of this meeting (Attachment B). Staff will develop two matrices, one for finfish and one for crustaceans. Included will be information currently being collected, the magnitude of activity will be described, i.e. statewide or localized, management concerns and conflict, licensing and permits, ongoing state data collection activities, etc.

#### **Development of Methods for Compiling Data Concerning Private Access Groups**

This agenda item is Task 13 of the RecFIN(SE) 1998 Operations Plan. The Committee has charged the Biological/Environmental Work Group with developing a plan for compiling an inventory of private access sites. The work group will refer to the ACCSP Technical Source Document 3 for criteria and sources.

#### **Development of Methods for Compiling Information Regarding Night Fishing**

This agenda item is Task 14 of the RecFIN(SE) 1998 Operations Plan. M. Osborn distributed copies of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) Wave 1 & 2 meeting summary (August 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 1997) which addresses the subject of night fishing (Attachment C).

M. Osborn reported that the MRFSS plans to include information on night fishing in site registers by 1999. J. Shepard noted that the Charter Boat Survey could also include this information. After discussion, it was agreed that T. Sminkey of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and an MRFSS staff member will examine intercepts and telephone data to determine the magnitude of night fishing. The Committee charged the Biological/Environmental Work Group with the task of developing recommendations on how to determine night fishing on a state by state basis.

#### **Development of Methods for Compiling Data on Fishing Tournaments**

This agenda item is Task 15 of the RecFIN(SE) 1998 Operations Plan. The Committee agreed to have staff contact the states and request a list of marine fishing tournaments conducted in each state. Information requested will include contact points, duration, species focus, location, and time of year. W. Laney suggested including information on anadromous species.

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

D. Donaldson reported that the Charter Boat Pilot Survey was started in September of 1997 in the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and the west coast of Florida including the Keys, in conjunction with the NMFS and the GSMFC. The pilot survey compares several different methodologies to improve charter boat effort estimates in the Gulf of Mexico. The states involved are doing the field intercepts for the charter boat mode only. The MRFSS phone methodology is being conducted by the contractor, and the states are conducting a phone survey of the charter boat captains on a weekly basis. The vessel frame includes all charter boat vessels in the Gulf of Mexico, approximately

2,500 boats. S. Lazauski noted the importance of updating the frame. Donaldson noted that the response rate for the telephone survey is about 70%.

M. Osborn reported that D. Van Voorhees will be giving a presentation at the upcoming American Fisheries Society (AFS) meeting in Lexington, Kentucky. This presentation will include preliminary results from Wave 5 and 6. M. Osborn will send copies of this presentation to Committee members. Donaldson noted that the charter boat captains were told that they would be given feedback, and a newsletter and brochure are planned for this purpose. The newsletter will also be sent to Committee members and the information will be on the NMFS website.

M. Osborn noted that non-coastal zones in four states will be sampled starting with Wave 3, and programs for new estimates have been completed. This change in the MRFSS methodology may affect the Charter Boat Survey.

The Committee discussed the subject of Texas' involvement in the Pilot Charter Boat Survey. R. Lukens noted that Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is not currently participating in the survey since the MRFSS is not conducted in Texas, however they have been involved in the planning process. This will insure that in the future all Gulf states will be using the same methodology. L. Green noted that TPWD is open minded concerning the Pilot Charter Boat Survey, however they are satisfied with the current situation. D. Donaldson noted that this matter is addressed in the Recommendations Document for RecFIN and is also identified as a task in the 1998 Operations Plan.

R. Lukens stated that in the early stages of the Pilot Charter Boat Survey, there was an agreement with the NMFS Beaufort Head Boat Survey that no head boats on the Beaufort list would be called by the Charter Boat Survey. B. Dixon reported that approximately a year and a half ago the Beaufort Head Boat Survey began to include vessels that carried 7 or more passengers. The Committee discussed the problem of defining head boats, charter boats, and guide boats and the differences in the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. The issue of expanding the Beaufort Head Boat Survey was also discussed, and several Committee members expressed concern. R. Lukens recommended that definitions not be established for for-hire vessels at this time. M. Osborn noted that any changes taking place during the Pilot Charter Boat Survey could be very damaging to this program. B. Dixon stated that he would continue to send a list of vessels included in the head boat survey and no new boats will be added to that list. Staff will send a list of vessels included in the Charter Boat Survey to B. Dixon. S. Lazauski suggested that no changes be made for the remainder of the year and any changes made after that will be discussed by and agreed to by Committee members.

#### **Final Approval of 1998 Operations Plan**

Committee members reviewed the 1998 Operations Plan, and earlier modifications to the Plan were noted. S. Lazauski of Alabama will give a presentation on the Inshore Creel Survey at the fall 1998 meeting. M. Osborn reported that work is being done to improve the site selection process. This will be implemented on the Pacific coast in 1998 and Osborn will give a report at the fall 1998 meeting. **D. Mumford moved to approve the 1998 Operations Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Other Business**

M. Osborn reported that the procurement RFP should be available on March 12, 1998. Some of the options incorporated are alternate site selection procedures, minimum data elements, social/economics, biological, etc. Options being included are to do the Caribbean and Western Pacific, biological sampling, license frame sampling in any state, non coastal county dialing, charter boat sampling frame, anadromous experiments in selected states, etc. Osborn noted that all Committee members will be mailed the procurement documents when they are available. N. Nicholson requested an update on the MRFSS annual review process. M. Osborn reported that a broadcast FAX list has been established and will be utilized until the automated e-mail system can be perfected. The preliminary estimates for Waves 5 and 6 will be distributed to those who have immediate needs by the end of this week, then the data will be reviewed at the Wave meeting, and final estimates will be available sometime in March.

After lengthy discussion on the subject of quota monitoring, the Committee agreed to address the issue at the fall 1998 meeting. D. Donaldson outlined the possible agenda items as: general overview of quota monitoring, presentation on quota monitoring by Rex Herron, recommendations regarding the red snapper issue, and discussion of development of quota monitoring system.

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

**SOUTHEAST RECREATIONAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK [RecFIN(SE)] MINUTES  
Tampa, Florida  
Wednesday, November 11, 1998**

Michelle Kasprzak, proxy for J. Shepard, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. The following members, staff, and others were present:

**Members**

Page Campbell, (proxy for L. Green), TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Christine Johnson, (proxy for T. Van Devender), MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Michelle Kasprzak, (proxy for J. Shepard), LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL  
Bryan Stone, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Carter Watterson, (proxy for D. Mumford), NCDMF, Washington, NC

**Others**

Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Bruce Joule, MDMR, West Boothbay Harbor, ME  
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL

**Staff**

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

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted as presented.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)] meeting held on February 24 and 25, 1998 in Tampa, Florida were approved as written.

**Presentation of Information Regarding Non-Hook-and-Line Fisheries**

D. Donaldson reviewed decisions made at the last meeting concerning the task dealing with non-hook-and-line fisheries. This task was identified as high priority from the facilitated session held in Miami. Donaldson distributed a compilation of the information on various gears which was supplied by Committee members. Committee members reviewed the document and M. Osborn noted that two tables may be necessary; one to cover shellfish and one to cover finfish. After discussion, it was agreed that D. Donaldson will modify the tables, to include species, and send to Committee members for prioritization and completion. In the future this fishery will be referred to as *non-rod-and-reel*.

**Presentation of Information on Fishing Tournaments**

This is Task 15 in the Operations Plan. D. Donaldson noted that at the last meeting it was decided that the members would begin compiling information about fishing tournaments. The first part of this task is complete and a

list of fishing tournaments was distributed to Committee members. R. Lukens noted that the magnitude of participation is unknown and there is no real accountability. Other issues discussed were the impact on the resource, economic impact on communities involved in fishing tournaments, the use of samplers at tournaments, issuing catch cards to tournament directors, budget considerations, and the possibility of having graduate students analyze data from fishing tournaments. Members discussed the problems associated with regulating tournaments and the public's perception of government interference. The possibility of a pilot study was also discussed. **M. Osborn moved to have the Biological/Environmental Work Group review the list of fishing tournaments and develop a plan for sampling tournaments, to include costs, and collection methods. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

### **Quota Monitoring**

S. Holiman reported that there is a congressionally mandated quota monitoring requirement for the recreational red snapper fishery in the Gulf of Mexico. This involves a projection of expected harvest prior to the start of the fishing year and evaluation of current data as it becomes available.

For the benefit of the management process, projections are available in the fall prior to the November Council meeting. In subsequent years the closure will be based on original projections. MRFSS, head boat, and Texas data are utilized to calculate the projections. In 1997 the red snapper fishery closed on November 27; in 1998 it closed on September 30, and the projection for 1999 (with a 5 fish bag limit and 15 inches minimum size limit) is a closure occurring on August 30.

Discussion followed with some Committee members expressing concern over using quotas and closures to manage a recreational fishery. R. Lukens suggested that this may be the time for this Committee to develop a policy statement on the use of quotas for managing recreational fisheries. L. Kline noted that the ACCSP has discussed quota monitoring and agrees that this is not the best way to manage a fishery. The ACCSP Coordinating Council wants information on the alternatives, costs, etc. The ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee is investigating this issue.

**R. Lukens moved to have the RecFIN(SE) coordinate with the ACCSP to develop a position statement regarding the use of quota monitoring and closures in recreational fisheries. In the process, rationale will be provided for the statement as drafted. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The Committee agreed that R. Lukens and D. Donaldson will be added to the ACCSP Recreational Quota Monitoring Subcommittee until such time as someone from one of the Gulf states is available.

### **Evaluation of Compatibility of Texas Survey Data**

A table was distributed to Committee members comparing the MRFSS with the Texas survey. P. Campbell reported that Texas is considering using the current pilot methodology being tested in the Gulf of Mexico for collecting charter boat effort. There was discussion on the issue of the perception that Texas is not involved as are the other Gulf states. M. Osborn suggested putting Texas data on the website. It was noted that merging the Texas data with the MRFSS data is one of the goals for the RecFIN and the ACCSP. Although the Texas survey does not address discards or shore mode data for anglers, the two surveys are compatible. The Committee agreed that R. Lukens will initiate discussion with H. Osburn of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) concerning what would be required to begin the process of establishing a charter boat sampling frame for the state of Texas. P. Campbell will also discuss this with Osburn. It was also noted that Texas has done a pilot study to estimate the number of fish released by anglers. Campbell will send a copy of the federal report on this study to D. Donaldson for distribution to the Committee.

### **Evaluation of Potential Improvements to Intercept Site Selection Process**

M. Osborn gave a presentation to the Committee on improvements to the intercept site selection process. (Attachment A) Staff will distribute copies of the presentation to Committee members. D. Donaldson noted that the purpose of this presentation, as identified at the facilitated session, was to address the potential problem of geographic distribution of samples. As indicated in M. Osborn's presentation, it appears that this issue has been resolved.

### **Work Group Reports**

**Biological/Environmental Work Group** - D. Donaldson reported that the Biological/ Environmental Work Group met on November 10, 1998. There were five topics discussed which included the Marine Recreational Fisheries Survey in the Caribbean, the QA/QC document, metadata relating to fishing regulations, private access, and night

fishing. One of the high priority issues identified by the Committee was to have some routine data collection activities for recreational fishing in the Caribbean. The Work Group has recommended the following concerning the Marine Recreational Fisheries Survey in the Caribbean:

- C an access point intercept survey is the best method to collect catch information.
- C compile a site register in the U. S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.
- C evaluation of methods for estimating effort
- C investigate possible sources of funding, possibly the USFWS proposal

C. Lilyestrom will provide a copy of the proposal between the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Puerto Rico to staff for distribution to Committee members. Lilyestrom noted that a creel survey has been implemented in the Virgin Islands with Ivan Mateo of St. Croix in charge of that program. D. Donaldson requested that C. Lilyestrom send him a copy of the current site register database and form. A workshop to be held in the Caribbean to discuss these issues was postponed because of Hurricane George, but will be rescheduled in the future.

Donaldson distributed copies of the QA/QC document to Committee members and noted that this document has been modified by the Work Group. Final approval of the QA/QC will be sought at a later time due to time constraints, however members can contact Donaldson with any comments or corrections. Some of the modifications were as follows:

- C Language on mandatory reporting, participation, and review of data is included.
- C In the form design section, pre-testing language has been added.
- C A validation section has been added.
- C Language on scanning and other technology has been added to the data entry section.

The Biological/Environmental Work Group next reviewed Metadata and made the following recommendations:

- C Since the GSMFC produces a Law Summary each year for the Gulf, request that the ASMFC Law Enforcement Committee consider a similar document for the Atlantic states.
- C Have the ACCSP Operations Committee consider development of a data base design for metadata for fishing regulations.
- C Investigate web access for metadata updates by law enforcement personnel.

**R. Lukens moved to accept the recommendations of the Biological/Environmental Work Group. These recommendations are not listed in priority order. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Staff will provide a copy of the GSMFC Law Summary to L. Kline.

D. Donaldson reported that another task discussed by the Work Group was the compilation of a list of private access sites in the Southeast. The following definition was developed: *Private access sites are sites where the public does not readily have access and these include, privately owned shoreline, waterfront residents, waterfront communities, private marinas, and business owned shoreline.* The Work Group suggested developing test areas. P. Campbell will send the Texas Technical Series - *Inventory of Sites* to D. Donaldson, and C. Watterson will check on the North Carolina site inventory. After discussion, it was agreed that Committee members would examine area maps for possible selection sites to be used as test areas. This subject will be on the agenda for the next RecFIN meeting.

The Work Group also addressed the task of examining the issue of night fishing activity. The Work Group found that the most activity is during waves 4 through 6 and they suggested examining the MRFSS intercept and telephone data for additional information. Finfish only will be considered for this activity. The Work Group agreed to concentrate on North Carolina and the Gulf states for pilot studies.

Social/Economic Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the Social/Economic Work Group met in Tampa in July. Donaldson distributed a list of minimum data elements that were accepted by the Work Group. The Work Group agreed, that since the ACCSP Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (CESS) has done a great deal of work in these areas, it would be counterproductive for the Social/Economic Work Group to do the same. Therefore, the Work Group has agreed to review what has been compiled by the ACCSP. The structure of the two committees was compared, and it was noted that with the exception of Tony Lamberte of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC), all other members were on both groups. The Work Group

recommended that T. Lamberte be added to the CESS, and that D. Donaldson attend meetings of both groups to provide coordination between the programs.

The Work Group next examined the issue of quality assurance/quality control standards. Recommended changes in language will be incorporated into the document. The Work Group recommended that the next section

developed be on mail surveys. They also suggested that the document be expanded to cover both commercial and recreational aspects which would move the development of this document to the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Committee. **R. Lukens, moved that Tony Lamberte be added to the CESS as liaison between RecFIN(SE) and ACCSP for the purposes of social and economic data management. The motion passed unanimously. R. Lukens moved to task the Social/Economic Work Group with the development in the Quality Assurance/Quality Control document of the section on mail surveys. The motion passed unanimously. R. Lukens moved that this Committee recommend to the ComFIN that a QA/QC document be developed for commercial data collection activity.**

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

D. Donaldson reported that in September 1997 the NMFS and the Gulf states and GSMFC began a charter boat pilot survey. This survey compares the current MRFSS phone survey, a captains phone survey, and the logbook panel survey. This program was initially scheduled to run through August 1998. The GSMFC acquired additional funding and the partners decided to continue the survey until December 1998. The project will continue through waves 5 and 6, however the panel logbook survey ended in August. During summer months the response rate was as high as 75 - 80%. The refusal rate throughout the survey has been between 2 - 5%. The closure of the red snapper fishery may effect refusal rate. The methodologies will be evaluated to determine the best method for collecting charter boat effort data. Information is being compiled for the evaluation. The evaluation is planned for late spring or early summer of 1999. R. Lukens noted that the survey will continue into 1999.

#### **Other Business**

M. Osborn gave an update on the MRFSS 1999 to 2001 contract. The contract for the intercept surveys was awarded to Macro International on September 30, 1998. Debriefings have been held with Quantech, the incumbent contractor. However, Quantech has filed a protest with the GAO. The GAO has 100 days to resolve the protest, which is February 12, 1999. M. Osborn stated that Macro International has been doing the telephone survey since 1996. When amendments and negotiations are complete a contract award for the telephone survey should be finalized by the end of December 1998. Osborn will notify Committee members when this is accomplished.

B. Dixon noted that funding for the head boat survey would come from MARFIN funds and would cover through the end of September 1999.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.**

**FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK  
MINUTES**

**Thursday, November 12, 1998  
Tampa, Florida**

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

**Members**

Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC  
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Christine Johnson, (proxy for T. Van Devender), MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Michelle Kasprzak, (proxy for J. Shepard), LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD  
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Bryan Stone, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL  
Carter Watterson, (proxy for D. Mumford), NCDMF, Morehead City, NC

**Others**

Mark Alexander, CDEP, Old Lyme, CT  
Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Bruce Joule, MDMR, West Boothbay Harbor, ME

**Staff**

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

**Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted with minor changes.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on February 24, 1998 in Orlando, Florida were approved as written.

**Operations Plan**

D. Donaldson reported to the Committee on the status of the activities for the past year and plans for 1999. At the last meeting it was decided to merge the RecFIN and ComFIN Operations Plans into one Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Operations Plan. Donaldson reviewed the tasks and their status with Committee members and noted that all the identified tasks have been addressed; some tasks have been completed and others are in the process of completion or are ongoing. (See attached list) The new combined Operations Plan has been organized by goals and objectives with both recreational and commercial components.

M. Osborn noted that D. Schaefer of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) had requested that the term *released* be added to the definition of *discards*. **R. Lukens moved to adopt the language developed by the ACCSP. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The definition reads as follows: *Discards are that portion of*

*the catch that is not retained, i.e. discarded or released at sea dead or alive. Protected species interactions include any interactions as defined by state and federal statutes.* (Footnoted with state and federal statutes)

Under Task 15 of the Operations Plan, S. Lazauski will give a presentation on the Alabama Inshore Creel Survey at the Spring, 1999 meeting. Under Task 24 L. Green will report on Scriptwriters at the Spring 1999 meeting. In the future, the term *non-hook-and-line* will be changed to *non-rod-and-reel*.

After reviewing the Operations Plan, the Committee agreed that each task will be identified as either RecFIN, ComFIN, or FIN. D. Donaldson will make the recommended changes and modifications to the 1999 Operations Plan and copies the modified plan will be sent to Committee members. **W. Laney moved to approve the 1999 Operations Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Discussion of Establishing Senior-level Policy Board for FIN**

R. Lukens noted that there have been some comparisons made between the structure of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) and the FIN. The ACCSP has the Coordinating Council and the FIN has the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S-FFMC). The S-FFMC membership is composed of the State Directors from each of Gulf states, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the NMFS, and the GSMFC Executive Director who is currently Chairman and a non-voting member. Lukens noted that there is no representation to the S-FFMC from the South Atlantic states and the Caribbean. After lengthy discussion by the members of the Committee comparing the differences in numbers and other contrasts in the two bodies, it was agreed that although there are some differences in these two administrative groups, they both work effectively and the FIN should remain as it is at this time.

#### **Development of a Data Collection Plan**

R. Lukens reported to the Committee on methods of achieving the means to have an annual data collection plan which integrates the collection of data with stock assessment needs. At this time there is not a clear picture of what data deficiencies currently exist to conduct stock assessments. To decide what data will need to be collected in future years to produce a reliable stock assessment, it is necessary to determine what data are currently available. In establishing a process and goals for data collection, stock assessment needs must be considered. Lukens distributed a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) which was reviewed by Committee members. The following species are to be considered: spotted seatrout, sheepshead, Spanish mackerel, Gulf flounder, southern flounder, black drum, red drum, striped mullet, gray triggerfish, and gray snapper. Several suggestions and recommendations were made by Committee members and it was agreed that after the RFP has been edited and fleshed out, it will be distributed by R. Lukens. Lukens requested that Committee members contact him with any suggestions and advice on the RFP.

M. Osborn reported that the NMFS will be conducting a data users workshop for their new employees in late January or February, 1999. This workshop could also be beneficial for state employees using the NMFS database. A notice giving the details will be forthcoming.

#### **FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group**

Discussion of Meeting Summary - D. Donaldson reported that the work group met to compare the FIN and the ACCSP Program Design Documents for compatibility. Several recommendations were presented as a result of that meeting. The recommendations were:

- C Law Enforcement - to have the GSMFC Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) develop a law enforcement policy and also to address the issue of confidentiality
- C Standard forms and codes - L. Kline suggested having the list of standard codes, which has been approved by ACCSP, reviewed by FIN members to assure that issues in the Caribbean and Gulf are included in this list. The ACCSP Standard Codes Committee is meeting in January, 1999 and it was agreed that D. Donaldson will attend that meeting. M. Osborn requested input from the Gulf states in formulating water body codes and noted that she needs any changes to the current list.
- C Aquaculture - Since aquaculture is one of the areas covered by the ACCSP and not by the FIN, this subject was discussed by the Committee. The ACCSP Management and Science Committee will meet at the Spring meeting and L. Kline will report back to this Committee on their findings. R. Lukens noted that the GSMFC is currently compiling information on aquaculture projects in the Gulf and he and L. Kline will exchange information. It was suggested that since the ACCSP has already developed a data management system, the FIN should work together with the ACCSP to utilize their design system instead of developing an entirely new system. The Committee agreed and directed staff to pursue this topic.



C D. Donaldson reported that J. Shepard is on the ACCSP Computer Technical Committee and he will act as proxy when Shepard cannot attend.

D. Donaldson noted that he, R. Lukens, and L. Kline meet periodically, as well as the FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group, to compare similarities and differences in the ACCSP and the FIN to assure compatibility and comparability between the two groups. The Committee decided to schedule Work Group meetings annually to ensure compatibility and comparability.

Review and Discussion of FIN Program Design Document - As noted above the Work Group recommended that the GSMFC Law Enforcement Committee develop a law enforcement policy statement and address the issue of confidentiality. After lengthy discussion on the issues of law enforcement and confidentiality, this Committee agreed that law enforcement agencies are already considered a user group and would be governed by the same rules as they apply to all user groups. The Committee also made some revisions to the FIN Program Design Document and those revisions represent the administrative record for this portion of the meeting. D. Donaldson will discuss changes to the Program Design Document with the Gulf states law enforcement agencies and request that they draft a Law Enforcement Policy statement at their next meeting.

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

L. Kline reported that the ACCSP Coordinating Council met in October and made some minor modifications to the Program Design Document. Final approval from the Council is expected in December. The Florida trip ticket system and the NMFS-NE are on schedule for being brought into the data management system. Authorized users will be designated for the evaluation period. The FIN Committee decided to have Tom Fazio, project manager for ICF Kaiser, give a presentation at the next meeting on how the ACCSP data management system is set up. A budget prioritization process has been developed for distributing available funds. This process will solicit proposals from the ACCSP partners for funding needs. The Operations Committee will evaluate these proposals and use ACCSP funds to assist the state and federal partners in implementation. 1999 will see further development of the program. A pilot study will be conducted by the state of Massachusetts for processing multi-trip reporting forms particularly the lobster fishery. The state of Georgia is implementing a trip ticket program with the ACCSP providing some funding. The NMFS Southeast Region, North Carolina, and possibly Connecticut also will start moving their data into the data management system. A pilot study for the Social/Economic modules is being conducted focusing on commercial harvesters with the states of Georgia, Virginia, and Massachusetts. M. Osborn noted that prototype development will continue on other modules, i.e. biological, social/economic, metadata, and technological improvements.

### **Discussion of FIN and ACCSP Integration**

R. Lukens reported to the Committee on the situation of having the South Atlantic states sitting on both the FIN and ACCSP. Since the two groups are coordinating their planning processes and are now moving into operational issues, Lukens proposed to take a recommendation to the ACCSP Coordinating Council and the GSMFC State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee, that by mid-1999 the South Atlantic states no longer attend the RecFIN/ComFIN meetings, but participate through the ACCSP. There will still be the opportunity for staff to attend one another's meetings and there would still be participation in work group activities. Presently the state and federal agencies are participating in two administrative activities. Lukens suggested that an addendum to the FIN MOU be drafted for approval by the Coordinating Council and the S-FFMC.

L. Kline noted that when the ACCSP program began three years ago, there was concern that the South Atlantic states be involved in RecFIN/ComFIN to assure that both programs were comparable. This has been done and there is compatibility. M. Osborn noted that this would be more efficient and would not duplicate travel, etc. After lengthy discussion by Committee members, **R. Lukens moved to recommend to the ACCSP Operations Committee and to the GSMFC State-Federal Management Committee that the South Atlantic states no longer attend FIN Committee meetings. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

### **Discussion of Vessel Registration System/Fishery Information System**

M. Osborn reported that public comments have been incorporated in the document concerning the Vessel Registration System (VRS)/Fishery Information System (FIS). This document is now at the regional office, headquarters office, and general counsel for review. After being approved, it will be sent to Congress. As soon as it is available, Osborn will notify Committee members. It will also be available on the NMFS website.

**Time Schedule and Location for Next Meeting**

Because of the lateness of the Fall FIN meetings, the Committee agreed to hold the next meeting in early April, 1999 in Puerto Rico, with the second choice being St. Croix. The Biological/Environmental Work Group will also meet prior to the Committee meetings. In the future, the meeting schedule will return to the February/September schedule.

**Other Business**

The FIN brochure was presented to the GSMFC Recreational/Commercial Advisory Panel in October and that group felt the brochure was easy to understand and would be beneficial as an educational tool. After discussion, the Committee agreed that staff would check with State Directors to determine the number of brochures needed by each agency.

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

**COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (ComFIN)  
MINUTES  
Tampa, Florida  
Thursday, November 12, 1998 and Friday, November 13, 1998**

Chairman, Joe Moran, called the meeting to order at 3:00p.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

**Members**

Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Christine Johnson, (proxy for T. Van Devender), MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Michelle Kasprzak, (proxy for J. Shepard), LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC  
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC  
Skip Lazauski, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL  
Craig Lilyestrom, (proxy for D. Matos), PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC  
Joe O'Hop, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL  
Tom Schmidt, NPS, Homestead, FL  
Carter Watterson, (proxy for D. Lupton), NCDMF, Morehead City, NC

**Others**

Steve Brown, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL  
Cynthia Pierce, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL  
Mark Alexander, CTDEP, Old Lyme, CT

**Staff**

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

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as written.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on February 23, 1998 in Orlando, Florida were approved as written.

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

J. Poffenberger reviewed the list of personnel with access to confidential data and asked that Committee members report any changes to him or C. Lavarini.

**Review and Discussion of Port Samplers Meeting Proceedings**

D. Donaldson reported on the Port Samplers meeting which was held in Tampa, Florida in July 1998. Approximately 30 people attended this meeting, including state and federal port samplers from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina, NMFS personnel, GSMFC personnel and members of the ComFIN Committee. Each sampler reported on the geographic area they cover, types of fishermen or dealers sampled, and a brief description of their sampling procedures. Sampling protocols and guidelines were reviewed with several suggestions and recommendations being made.

As a result of this meeting the following has been decided:

- C J. Moran will send staff a copy of presentation to ACCSP Law Enforcement Committee on measurement of different species
- C D. Donaldson will attend a future meeting of the ACCSP Standard Codes Committee in an effort to standardize measurement issues
- C D. Donaldson will check on status of recommendations made at port samplers meeting
- C Staff will send copy of Port Sampler Meeting Minutes to Louisiana and Texas samplers to facilitate future meeting of samplers from all Gulf states and Caribbean
- C Suggested topics for next samplers meeting include, Jack identification workshop, overview of ComFIN program, trip ticket information, regulations, ways to build better rapport with dealers, sampling and sub-sampling techniques
- C Staff will work out details for future samplers meeting
- C J. Poffenberger will work on developing a manual for sampling techniques
- C Recommend to the FIN Committee that measurement for whole finfish be fork length

### **Work Group Reports**

Recommendations Work Group - D. Donaldson distributed copies of the ComFIN Recommendations Document which was developed at the Recommendation Work Group meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia in August 1998. These recommendations and tasks will serve as a guide for the Committee. The Committee reviewed the Recommendations Document making some changes. The revised document represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting. The actions presented in the Work Group report were accepted and approved by the Committee.

During Committee discussion on the Recommendations Document, J. Poffenberger expressed concern that currently there is no process for establishing funding priorities and not all partners have had the opportunity to be involved in recent decisions on allocation of funds. R. Lukens noted that it was only recently that operational funds had become available for the Gulf and no decisions had been made. Lukens also noted that senior level decisions are made during the GSMFC State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S-FFMC) meetings. Membership on the S-FFMC includes representatives from each of the five Gulf states, NMFS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the GSMFC as a non-voting member. The Committee decided to further explore this issue under other business.

Data Collection Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Work Group met in Atlanta, Georgia in August 1998 to review the trip ticket module. The Work Group made several modifications and revisions to the trip ticket program, including the areas of discards and protected species, and data elements. In the course of Committee discussion, L. Kline suggested that the ComFIN Committee be represented at the ACCSP Biological Review Panel meeting. D. Donaldson will attend until such time as a volunteer comes forth. The subject of dealer codes was addressed and the Work Group agreed that the states need to provide dealer code updates to the NMFS on a monthly basis. J. Poffenberger will notify the states when dealer license codes are set up. Water body codes were discussed by the Work Group and J. Poffenberger distributed lists of water body codes to the Committee. M. Kasprzak noted that J. Shepard had requested expanding existing water body codes for the Gulf. D. Donaldson asked Gulf states Committee members to review the codes and return corrections to him as soon as possible since it was agreed that Donaldson will attend the ACCSP Standard Codes meeting scheduled for January 1999. The actions presented in the Work Group report were accepted and approved by the Committee.

Data Collection Procedures Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that this Work Group was charged with the development of a document which outlines the procedures for the collection of data under the ComFIN. The draft document was edited by the Work Group and the revised version was distributed to Committee members. Donaldson noted that this is a dynamic document and will undergo further revision and modification as the program develops. The actions presented in the Work Group report were accepted and approved by the Committee.

Social/Economic Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the Social/Economic Work Group met in Tampa, Florida in July 1998 and addressed several issues. Identification of minimum data elements for the social and economic aspects of fisheries management, expanding the QA/QC document to include social and economic data, and the market and social/economic modules for ComFIN. The results of the discussion of the Work Group were presented to and accepted by the Committee. Committee members discussed the lack of representation on the Work Group of members

from the South Atlantic. Since T. Brainerd, a sociologist, is no longer a member of this Committee, J. Moran suggested finding a replacement with similar interests.

#### **Discussion of GSMFC Data Confidentiality MOA**

R. Lukens reported that all partners have now become signatories of the Data Confidentiality Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). J. Poffenberger will request that any personnel in the Gulf states who have signed non-disclosure forms be given access to data online. This should be available within one month. Lukens noted that a similar agreement is being discussed for the Atlantic states.

#### **Election of Officers**

The following officers were elected by rotation: Daniel Matos of Puerto Rico, Chairman, and Tom Van Devender of Mississippi, Vice-Chairman.

#### **Other Business**

Cynthia Pierce, of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Grants Management Office in St. Petersburg, Florida reviewed the grants management process for Committee members. The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Grants home page was explained and it was noted that all forms are now available online.

M. Kasprzak requested that this Committee write a letter of endorsement to J. Roussel supporting Louisiana's efforts in the development of a trip ticket program. D. Donaldson will draft a letter for the Chairman's signature.

The Committee further discussed funding issues. Currently there is no formal budget process for the allocation of funds since until now, there has been no money appropriated for operational activities. After lengthy Committee discussion, **R. Lukens moved to have a standing agenda item to discuss funding for ComFIN activities. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** On a related matter, in order to facilitate the exchange of information among all partners, R. Lukens will suggest inviting A. Kemmerer of the NMFS to the GSMFC State Directors' Meeting scheduled for December 1998, and to continue reporting any decisions made by this Committee to the GSMFC S-FFMC which meets in March and October of every year.

L. Kline suggested, when considering budgetary items, to include software for partners when building a data management system. Kline noted that in the ACCSP agreement with I.C.F. Kaiser, Kaiser purchased the server and they are currently building the database, but the decision on the location of the server has not yet been made. R. Lukens noted that the Gulf members want the GSMFC office to be the regional data center for the Gulf of Mexico and to house the data at the GSMFC office.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.**

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Goals and Objectives**

## ComFIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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

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

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

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



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

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

- Objective 5: To identify and prioritize data bases for integration into the MRF data management system.
- Objective 6: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
- Objective 7 To protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

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

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