

2000 Operations Plan
for the
Fisheries Information Network
in the Southeastern United States
FIN

by: FIN Committee

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Number 72

**2000 Operations Plan for the
Fisheries Information Network in the
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2000

I. INTRODUCTION

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

The FIN is a cooperative state-federal marine commercial and recreational fisheries data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future marine commercial and recreational fisheries data collection and data management activities through cooperative planning, innovative uses of statistical theory and design, and consolidation of appropriate data into a useful data base system. This operations plan implements the FIN Framework Plan for 2000. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

II. MISSION AND GOALS

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

The goals of the FIN are:

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

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

III. OPERATIONS

A. Data Collection and Management Activities

The tasks below cover all 2000 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a ComFIN activity; an 'R' denotes a RecFIN(SE) activity; and an 'F' denotes a FIN activity.

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

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

Team Members: Gulf States and Data Collection Work Group

Approach: With available funds, the states of Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama will begin implementing trip tickets programs in their states. This task will provide for development of components for a commercial trip ticket system to census the commercial fisheries landings in Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama using the data elements and standards developed by the ComFIN. In addition, Louisiana will continue the development of a system for dealers to electronically capture and transfer trip ticket data to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. All these activities will ultimately be combined with other commercial fisheries data collected from around the Gulf of Mexico. Accomplished by meeting, telephone, mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

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

Product: Gulf-wide trip ticket program

Schedule: The Work Group addressed this issue in 1997 and will continue working on it during 2000.

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

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

Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, NMFS

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

for the MRFSS for charter boats in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

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

Task A3: Implementation of Methods to Monitor the For-Hire Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

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

Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS

Approach: The purpose of this task is to implement the charter boat captain telephone survey in the Gulf of Mexico. Various methods have been tested. The states will conduct weekly telephone calls to a 10% random sample of the Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida charter boat captains to obtain estimates of charter boat fishing effort which will be compared with the MRFSS estimates. In addition, Texas will compile a charter boat vessel directory which will enable the state to implement the captains' telephone survey for the for-hire fishery in Texas. Also, 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 staff time.

Product: Participation in the Charter boat Pilot Survey to determine the best methodology for surveying charter boats.

Schedule: This task will begin in January 2000.

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

Objective: Continue the support of commercial data collection activities

Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS

Approach: The purpose of this task is to intercept shrimp fishermen and collect information on the amount of time the vessel was fishing and the area(s) where fishing occurred. In addition, to collect length and weight data, hard parts and tissue samples from various species under Federal or state fisheries management. A principal sub-objective is to increase the amount of size frequency and aging data for red snapper. However, because the commercial fishery for this species is only opened for a limited number of weeks during the year, the size frequency and aging data will be collected from other federal or state

managed species during the remainder of the year.
Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and staff time.
Product: Collection of necessary commercial data
Schedule: This task will begin in January 2000.

Task A5: Continue the Collection of Menhaden Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (C)

Objective: Continue the support of menhaden sampling in the Gulf of Mexico.
Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS
Approach: The purpose of this task is to sample gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels which operate at the ports of Empire, Morgan City, Abbeville, and Cameron, Louisiana. Samples will be processed for size and age composition for use in coast-wide stock assessments. In turn, gulf menhaden stock assessments are incorporated into the Fisheries Management Plan for the species, and are also utilized by the Gulf coast states, the GSMFC, the menhaden industry, and the NMFS.
Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and staff time.
Product: Collection of necessary menhaden data
Schedule: This task will begin in January 2000.

Task A6: Continue the Collection of Head Boat Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Continue the support of head boat sampling in the Gulf of Mexico.
Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS
Approach: The purpose of this task is to sample catches, collect catch reports from head boat personnel, and gather effort data on head boats which operate primarily in the Exclusive Economic Zone from ports along the coasts of Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. This task will be conducted in accordance with existing NMFS head boat methodology.
Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and staff time.
Product: Collection of necessary head boat data
Schedule: This task will begin in January 2000.

Task A7: Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: To design, implement, and maintain an marine commercial and recreational fisheries data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).
Team Members: FIN and ACCSP program partners.
Approach: The ACCSP is currently developing a data management system for the Atlantic coast. Since the FIN and ACCSP have been designed to be

compatible and comparable, the FIN will utilize the data management system being developed for the ACCSP. A prototype for Louisiana trip ticket program is being developed and will serve as the FIN data management system. The FIN will be hiring an Information Technology person in 2000 to work with the ACCSP IT manager to further develop the different modules (biological sampling, discards, recreational catch/effort, etc.) for the programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and staff time.
Product: FIN data management system
Schedule: The ACCSP system is being prototyped in Florida and the Northeast in 1998. The FIN will begin addressing this issue during 2000.

Task A8: Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN/ACCSP program partners

Approach: The ACCSP is currently developing a data management system for the Atlantic coast. As part of the development, standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application are being developed. Through the involvement with the ACCSP Computer Technical Committee, the FIN will provide input into the development of this information. In addition, the FIN Committee has tasked an ad hoc work group to begin looking at standard codes for species, gear, etc. This work group will work closely with the ACCSP to ensure compatibility among programs. This task will also be addressed during the development of FIN prototype system for Louisiana.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Standard protocols and documentation for the FIN data management system.
Schedule: The ACCSP system is being developed and the FIN will begin addressing this issue during 2000.

B. Program Activities (see Section E for Committee and work group membership)

The tasks below cover all 2000 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a ComFIN activity; an 'R' denotes a RecFIN(SE) activity; and an 'F' denotes a FIN activity.

Task B1: Development of a Program Design Document (Goal 1, Objective 1) (F)

Objective: Develop a program design document for FIN
Team Members: FIN Committee
Approach: Using the information developed from the Committee and various work groups, the Committee has drafted a plan which will be used by the program partners to implement FIN. The draft document was presented to the Committee in 1998. The Committee will continue working on refining the document as the program develops. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail.
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
Product: Program design document
Schedule: The Committee will continue working on this issue and FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group will address the progress at their summer meeting. The Work Group will present a report at the 2000 FIN meeting.

Task B2: Review of FIN Framework Plan (Goal 1, Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Review the FIN Framework Plan
Team Members: FIN Committee.
Approach: The FIN Committee needs to review the existing Framework Plan to ensure that the goals and ideas presented in the plan are still pertinent.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Updated FIN Framework Plan
Schedule: This task will be addressed by the Committee at the 2000 meeting.

Task B3: Annual Operations Plan, 2001 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2001 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources, that implements the Framework Plan.
Team Members: FIN Committee.
Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 2001.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: 2001 Annual Operations Plan.
Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by summer 2000 and addressed by the Committee at the 2000 meeting.

Task B4: Development of Funding Initiatives to Establish MRF Surveys (Goal 1, Objective 3) (R)

Objective: Support the establishment of long-term, comprehensive MRF surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.
Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group
Approach: The Work Group will work in conjunction with the Puerto Rico

Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (PRDNER) and U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife (USVIDFW) to develop marine recreational fishery surveys (MRF) in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. The PRDNER has secured funding for implementing a MRF survey in Puerto Rico. The Work Group will be working with the Department as well as USVIDFW to develop a coordinated survey. The group will first focus on the development of a site register and then direct their attention to the type of method(s) that should be used to collect MRF data in the Caribbean. The NMFS has secured funding for conducting the MRFSS in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands, beginning in wave 6 of 1999.

Resources: Travel, copy and mailing expenses and staff time.
Product: Develop of a MRF survey outline for the Caribbean.
Schedule: The work group met in 1999 and will continue working on this task in 2000.

Task B5: Information Dissemination (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.
Team Members: FIN Committee and staff.
Approach: The Committee will distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties documented by a request log. Each committee member is responsible for maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the staff. In addition, the MRFSS staff has developed a home page where users are able to access the MRFSS data for their use. The user is able to specify the area, species, gear, etc. that he/she is interested in obtaining. Also, the GSMFC has developed a home page which includes information concerning the FIN.

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

Task B6: Development of Outreach Program (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Develop an outreach program for FIN
Team Members: Outreach Work Group
Approach: The Work Group will meet in conjunction with the ACCSP Outreach Committee to develop an outreach program for FIN. The group will be charged with identifying the types of end users and compiling a list of these users for the fisheries data; developing and disseminating

program information that provides notification of accomplishments to the public; and developing other pertinent outreach materials.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
Product: FIN outreach program
Schedule: The Work Group will meeting in early 2000 and provide a report to the FIN Committee at the 2000 meeting.

Task B7: Conduct FIN Program Review (Goal 1, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Conduct a formal external program review of the FIN to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in achieving the goals and objectives.

Team Members: FIN Committee/Administrative Subcommittee

Approach: The FIN Committee will conduct a external program review. A written report will be prepared by an external review team and presented to all the FIN signatory agencies, with a recommendation on the continuation of the FIN. It has been suggested that the American Fisheries Society - Marine Fisheries Section be utilized for this review.

Resources: Meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Program review report.
Schedule: This task will be addressed at 2000 FIN meeting so the appropriate actions can be taken.

Task B8: Development of the Discards, Releases, and Protected Species Interactions Modules (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

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

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group

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

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
Product: Discard, Releases, and Protected Species Interactions collection program
Schedule: The Work Group addressed this issue in 1998 and will continue working on it during 2000.

Task B9: Development of the Social/Economic Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Develop the social/economic module for the ComFIN.
 Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group
 Approach: Working in conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group will design a data collection module for the compilation of social/economic information for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program will outline the data elements required for each fishery component that need to be collected for compilation of social/economic data. The ACCSP is currently conducting a pilot survey for commercial harvesters in Georgia. In addition, the NMFS is conduct various pilot studies in the Southeast and Northeast Regions. The Social/Economic Work Group will be involved in the evaluation of these surveys and will await the outcome of these surveys before progressing further with the development of social and economic data collection activities. The Committee agree to include members of the Work Group on the ACCSP committee for social and economic issues. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
 Product: Social/Economic data collection module and data collection surveys for collection of the data.
 Schedule: The Work Group begin addressing this issue during 1998 and will continue working on it during 2000.

Task B10: Development of Data Collection Procedures Document (Goal 2, Obj 2) (C)

Objective: Develop a document which outlines the procedures for the collection of data under the ComFIN.
 Team Members: Data Collection Procedures Work Group/ComFIN Committee
 Approach: The work group developed a draft document which describes the various techniques and methods for collection of marine commercial data. The group utilized existing procedures for the Trip Interview Program and other related information. The group, in conjunction with the Committee, will continue to develop this document and the program evolves.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
 Product: Procedures document
 Schedule: The work group starting addressing this issue in 1998 and will continue working on it during 2000.

Task B11: Development of Metadata Database (Goal 2 , Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Compile metadata for inclusion into a metadata database for the Southeast Region.
 Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group has worked on this issue in the past and has developed a criteria for creating a metadata database. The Committee discussed the issue of metadata and decided that the Work Group should continue looking at compilation of fishing regulations. The development of the FIN data management system has a task which calls for the development of a metadata module for inclusion in the data base. Subsequent categories to be collected will be determined by the Committee.

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

Product: Development of metadata module

Schedule: The initial compilation of data will begin in 2000 and this will be an ongoing activity.

Task B12: Examination of Commercial Quota Monitoring (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Identify current programs and examine alternatives to quota monitoring in the commercial fisheries.

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group

Approach: The work group will determine what is currently being conducting in the Southeast Region. Once the current situation has been assessed, the group with begin examining alternatives to quota monitoring and develop recommendations regarding the use of quota monitoring. 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, and staff time.

Product: Alternatives to quota monitoring.

Schedule: The Work Group will meet prior to 2000 FIN meeting to address this issue.

Task B13: Development of Permitting/Licensing Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Begin the development of a permitting module for ComFIN.

Team Members: Permitting Work Group.

Approach: In conjunction with the ACCSP, the work group will begin the development of a permitting system for the program. The system must be able to integrate the vessel registration system (VRS) with the landings data. It is imperative that these two data sets be able to be integrated. The work group will examine the existing permitting and licensing system and current VRS and determine how to make these systems compatible. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

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

Product: FIN Quality assurance and quality control document.

Schedule: The commercial aspects of the document will be addressed in 2000.

Task B14: Commercial Quality Assurance and Quality Control (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

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

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group.

Approach: Determine standards for collection and management of commercial catch/effort data. Review and expand the quality assurance and quality control document developed by the Biological/Environmental Work Group. This expanded document will encompass all quality assurance and quality control standards for the FIN. This information will be part of the Data Collection Procedures Document being developed by the Committee. 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, and staff time.

Product: FIN Quality assurance and quality control document.

Schedule: The commercial aspects of the document will be addressed in 2000. This is an ongoing activity.

Task B15: Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data (Goal 2, Objective 3) (R)

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

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee/MRFSS staff

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

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

Product: Process for MRFSS data finalization.

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

Task B16: Port Samplers Workshops (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

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

Team Members: State and federal commercial port samplers and staff.

Approach: In an effort to provide a forum for discussing various issues concerning commercial data collection activities, the ComFIN Committee decided to convene workshops of state and federal port agents. There will be several workshops: Texas/Louisiana; Mississippi/Alabama/Florida; and Caribbean. These workshops will be attended by the state and federal port agents from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands, the ComFIN chairman, appropriate NMFS staff and other interested personnel. Some of the suggested topics for these meeting includes species identification workshop, overview of ComFIN program, trip ticket information, regulations, ways to build better rapport with dealers, sampling and sub-sampling techniques.

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

Product: Provide a forum for field personnel to discuss problems and issues related to commercial data collection activities. List of recommendations regarding commercial data collection activities.

Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for mid-2000.

Task B17: Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current and future programs for meeting FIN standards.

Team Members: FIN Committee.

Approach: Periodically evaluate surveys based on their adequacy for meeting FIN standards and make appropriate recommendations.

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

Product: Report containing recommendations for commercial and recreational surveys as well as an evaluation and report on recommendations.

Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task B18: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee

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

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

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

Schedule: This is an ongoing task. The cost benefit analysis between the Mississippi Creel Survey and the MRFSS may be addressed in 2000, depending on availability of personnel and funds.

Task B19: Determination of Catch Rates and Species Composition from Night Fishing Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

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

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Work Group will further investigate the issues of collecting night fishing data. The group needs to identify a smaller geographic area to begin examining this issue for the purpose of conducting a pilot survey. The purpose of the pilot will be to determine if the information collected provides useful information and will enable RecFIN(SE) to decide how to proceed. A more detailed proposal for collecting data at night needs to be developed as well as justification for doing night fishing activities. The group also needs to examine the liability issues regarding night fishing. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

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

Product: Detailed plan for the compilation of night fishing activities in the Southeast Region.

Schedule: This task will be addressed prior to the 2000 FIN meeting.

Task B20: Collection of Tournaments Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Collect appropriate information from fishing tournaments, and integrate with other marine recreational fisheries data.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: A list that identifies all ongoing tournaments in the Southeast Region has been compiled and reviewed by the Committee. The next step is the Work Group will identify and recommend data requirements and consistent methodologies for tournament sampling. The Work Group will work with the NMFS since they are developing sampling protocols for billfish and large pelagics tournaments. This provides a perfect opportunity to coordinate with NMFS to ensure consistency and compatibility in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean regions regarding 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 staff time.
Product: Recommendations regarding sampling methods for tournaments
Schedule: The Committee addressed this issue in 1998 and the Work Group will meet in 2000 to continue examining this issue. This task will be addressed at the 2000 meeting.

Task B21: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

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

Task B22: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Develop a plan which outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming year as well as tracking of the collection for these data.
Team Members: FIN Committee and other appropriate personnel
Approach: The Committee has developed a data collection planning process which identifies the priority species (and associated data needed to be collected) for the state, interstate and federal entities. The plan will provide guidance to the states, NMFS, and FWS for the development of funding mechanisms that are implemented to provide funding support for collecting the data. The FIN Committee asked the GSMFC stock assessment team as well as the appropriate Caribbean personnel to begin development of this plan. A meeting will be scheduled to address this issue. The preliminary step will be to compile the number of lengths, weights, otoliths, etc. that has been collected for each species on the priority list. The group will examine this list and make modifications to the numbers. Accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.
Resources: Meeting costs, mail costs, telephone costs, and staff time.
Product: Data collection plan
Schedule: The group will meeting prior to the 2000 FIN meeting.

Task B23: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.
Team Members: FIN Committee and other appropriate personnel
Approach: The FIN program partners will report to the Committee any new technologies which will aid in the collection of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Progress reports concerning data collection technologies.
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B24: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
Team Members: FIN Committee and industry personnel
Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies which will aid in the management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Progress reports.
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B25: Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1) (F)

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

Task B26: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative Marine Commercial and Recreational Fisheries Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Coordinate FIN with other regional cooperative marine commercial

	and recreational fisheries programs and encourage consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.
Team Members:	FIN Committee/ FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group
Approach:	The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Pacific RecFIN, and PacFIN on the West Coast. The MRFSS staff is revising data files and will get input from the RecFIN(SE) Committee. The FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group was created to examine the differences/similarities between the FIN and ACCSP. It was decided that this group would meet on an annual basis to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs. Distribute appropriate program results and recommendations to other cooperative fisheries programs. The topic of a joint meeting among FIN, ACCSP and Pacific has been discussed and staff will examine the possibility of conducting these types of meetings. Accomplished by mail and meetings.
Resources:	Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product:	Ensure adequate information exchange, consistency and comparability between all regional fisheries programs and compilation of a record of information exchange.
Schedule:	This task is an ongoing activity. The Work Group will meet in mid-2000.

C. Administrative Activities

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

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

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

D. Time Table

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Planning, Management, and Evaluation					
FIN Committee					
Maintenance of FIN Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Establish senior-level policy board			X		
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Support establishment of MRF surveys in PR & VI		X	X	X	X
Identify funding needs for MRF programs	X	X	X	X	X
Identify funding sources	X	X	X	X	X
Review of legislation					X
Develop funding mechanism for short-term projects					X
Information dissemination					
Establish educational work group				X	
Establish commercial and recreational user advisory panel		X			
Process for notification of program accomplishments				X	
Develop outreach materials and list of users				X	
Use Internet communications	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					
Conduct program review					X
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
Develop social/economic data module		X	X	X	X
Develop catch/effort modules		X	X	X	X
Identify recreational social/economic data elements		X			
Use existing social/economic panels for RecFIN(SE)			X		
Identify other social scientists to participate in RecFIN(SE)			X		
Standard data collection protocols					
Develop data collection procedures manual			X	X	
Develop standard codes for species, gear, etc.				X	
Calculate precision estimate for Head boat Survey					X
Determine precision levels for priority species			X		
Evaluate methods for achieving desired precision levels				X	
Quality control/assurance					
Develop commercial QA/QC standards				X	X
Develop recreational QA/QC standards		X	X	X	X
Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards					X
Recommendations regarding duplicative collection and management		X			
Evaluate compatibility of Texas Survey data			X		
Coordination of data collection					
Development of data collection plan		X	X	X	X
Develop list of stock assessment methods					X
Identify uses of fishery independent data					X
Assess duplication of effort between fishery-dependent and -independent activities					X
Evaluate current fishery independent data activities					X
Make recommendations to appropriate fishery independent programs					X
Compile marine recreational licensing report		X			

Data Collection (continued)	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Develop recreational license sampling frame criteria		X			
Establish/modify recreational licenses to meet criteria			X	X	
Conduct comparison survey of license frame and MRFSS					X
Implement the appropriate methodology					X
Evaluate methods for surveying the for-hire fishery		X	X		
Test methods for surveying the for-hire fishery		X	X	X	
Determine methods for collecting recreational data for private access points			X	X	
Determine methods for collecting recreational catch data for night fishing			X	X	
Develop process for collecting needed commercial and recreational data on priority species			X	X	
Develop method for collecting recreational data on fishing tournaments			X	X	
Develop methods for collecting recreational data on non hook-&-line fisheries			X	X	
Evaluate the potential for stratifying at finer geographic levels				X	
Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process			X		
Select preferred method for site selection process				X	
Evaluate methods to improve enforceability of reporting requirements				X	
Conduct comparison study between preferred and MRFSS methods					X
Determine the extent of non-consumptive activities					X
Innovative collection technology					
Evaluate innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data Management					
Data management system					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
Hardware/software capabilities					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard data management protocols					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			
Integration of data bases					
Identify recreational databases for integration in DMS	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative data management technology					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data confidentiality					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
Development of National Program					
Long-term planning					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

E. Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group Membership

ComFIN Committee

Kevin Anson
Alabama Marine Resources Division

Joe O'Hop
Florida Marine Research Institute

Steven Atran
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Ron Lukens
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Page Campbell
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Daniel Matos
Puerto Rico Department of Natural and
Environmental Resources

Guy Davenport
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Miguel Rolón
Caribbean Fishery Management Council

Doug Frugé
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Tom Schmidt
National Park Service

Christine Johnson
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Joe Shepard
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
Fisheries

Barbara Kojis
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

RecFIN(SE) Committee

Kevin Anson
Alabama Marine Resources Division

Steven Atran
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Kerwin Cuevas
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Bob Dixon
National Marine Fisheries Service
Beaufort Laboratory

Doug Frugé
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Graciela Garcia-Moliner
Caribbean Fishery Management Council

Lee Green
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Steve Holiman
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office

Craig Lilyestrom
Puerto Rico Department of Natural and
Environmental Resources

Ron Lukens
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Barbara Kojis
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Joe O'Hop
Florida Marine Research Institute

Maury Osborn
National Marine Fisheries Service

Tom Schmidt
Everglades National Park

Joe Shepard
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
Fisheries

FIN Administrative Subcommittee

Bob Dixon
National Marine Fisheries Service
Beaufort Laboratory

Daniel Matos
Puerto Rico Department of Natural and
Environmental Resources

Lisa Kline
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Maury Osborn
National Marine Fisheries Service
Silver Spring

Doug Frugé
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Gulf Fisheries Coordination Office

Joe Shepard
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
Fisheries

Ron Lukens
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group

Mark Alexander
Connecticut Department of Marine Fisheries

Ron Lukens
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Mike Cahall
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Dee Lupton
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Page Campbell
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Joe Moran
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Bruce Joule
Maine Department of Marine Resources

Maury Osborn
National Marine Fisheries Service

Lisa Kline
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Joe Shepard
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
Fisheries

FIN Outreach Work Group

Rick Wallace
Alabama Sea Grant Extension Service
Auburn University Marine Extension and
Research Center

Quenton Dokken
Center for Coastal Studies
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Graciela Garcia-Moliner
Caribbean Fishery Management Council

Michael Bailey
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office

Marcia Taylor
Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service
University of Virgin Islands

FIN Permitting Work Group

Ed Burgess
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office

Page Campbell
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Carlos Farchette
U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Environmental
Enforcement

Christine Johnson
Mississippi Bureau of Marine Resources

Ramón Martínez
Puerto Rico Department of Natural and
Environmental Resources

Toby Tobias
U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Fish and
Wildlife

FIN Social/Economic Work Group

Steve Holiman
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office

Lisa Kline
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Tony Lamberte
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
Council

Ron Lukens
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Barbara Kojis
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

ComFIN Data Collection Work Group

Kevin Anson
Alabama Marine Resources Division

Barbara Kojis
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Julie Califf
Georgia Coastal Resources Division

Dee Lupton
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Page Campbell
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Joe Shepard
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
Fisheries

Guy Davenport
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Geoff White
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Comm.

ComFIN Data Management Work Group

Steven Atran
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Kevin Anson
Alabama Marine Resources Division

Guy Davenport
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Barbara Kojis
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

ComFIN Future Needs

Kevin Anson
Alabama Marine Resources Division

Guy Davenport
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Barbara Kojis
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Dee Lupton
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Steven Atran
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

ComFIN Data Collection Procedures Work Group

Guy Davenport
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Joe Shepard
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
Fisheries

Ron Lukens
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group

Jeff Brust
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Representative
National Marine Fisheries Service

Kerwin Cuevas
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Tom Schmidt
South Florida Research Center
Everglades National Park

Bob Dixon
National Marine Fisheries Service
Beaufort Laboratory

Bryan Stone
South Carolina Department of Natural
Resources

Barbara Kojis
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

APPENDIX A

FIN Goals and Objectives

- Goal 1:** To plan, manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.
- Objective 1** To establish and maintain FIN, ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees consisting of MOU signatories or their designees to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the program.
 - Objective 2** To develop and periodically review a Framework Plan that outlines policies and protocol of the program
 - Objective 3** To develop annual operation plans, including identification of available resources, that implement the Framework Plan.
 - Objective 4** To distribute program information to the cooperators and interested parties.
 - Objective 5** To conduct a program review at least every five years of operation to evaluate the program's success in meeting needs in the Region.
- Goal 2:** To implement and maintain a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.
- Objective 1** To characterize and periodically review the commercial and recreational fisheries and identify the required data priorities for each.
 - Objective 2** To identify and periodically review environmental, biological, social and economic data elements required for each fishery.
 - Objective 3** To identify, determine, and periodically review standards for data collection, including statistical, training and quality assurance.
 - Objective 4** To identify and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) requirements.
 - Objective 5** To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) requirements.
 - Objective 6** To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection methodologies and technologies.

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

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

Objective 2 To periodically evaluate the hardware, software and communication capabilities of program partners and make recommendations for support and upgrades.

Objective 3 To implement, maintain, and periodically review a marine commercial and recreational fishery data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs.

Objective 4 To develop, maintain, and periodically review standard protocols and documentation for data formats, inputs, editing, storage, access, transfer dissemination, and application.

Objective 5 To identify and prioritize historical databases for integration into the marine commercial and recreational fisheries database.

Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.

Objective 7 To protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

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

Objective 1 To provide for long-term inter-regional program planning.

Objective 2 To coordinate FIN with other regional and national marine commercial fisheries programs.

Objective 3 To encourage consistency and comparability among regional and national marine commercial fisheries programs over time.