

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

JANUARY 1, 2000 - DECEMBER 31, 2000

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INTRODUCTION

The Fisheries Information Network (FIN) is a state-federal cooperative program to collect, manage, and disseminate statistical data and information on the marine commercial and recreational fisheries of the Southeast Region.¹ The FIN consists of two components: Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)].

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

Efforts by state and federal agencies to develop a cooperative program for the collection and management of commercial and recreational fishery data in the Region began in the mid to late 1980s. In 1992, the National Marine Fisheries Service formally proposed a planning activity to establish the RecFIN(SE). Planning was conducted by a multi-agency Plan Development Team through October 1992 at which time the program partners approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 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 FIN includes the Region's commercial and recreational fisheries for marine, estuarine, and anadromous species, including shellfish. Constituencies served by the program are state and federal agencies responsible for management of fisheries in the Region. Direct benefits will also accrue to federal fishery management councils, the interstate marine fisheries commissions, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries Program. Benefits which accrue to management of fisheries will benefit not only commercial and recreational fishermen and the associated fishing industries, but the resources, the states, and the nation.

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

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

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

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

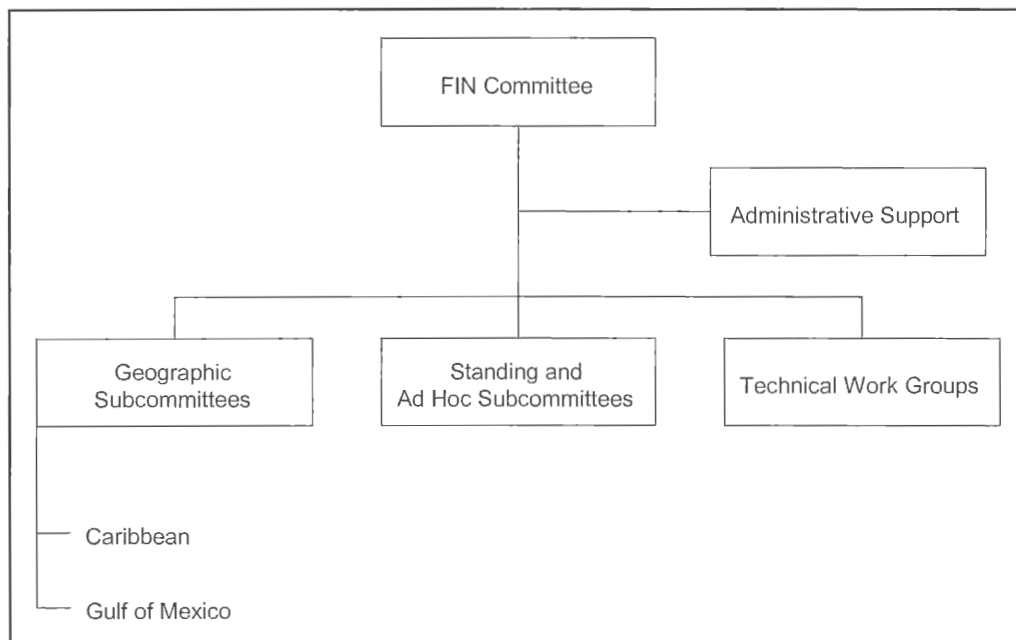


Figure 1. Organizational structure of the FIN.

The FIN Committee 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, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Puerto Rico Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Caribbean Fishery Management Council, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

As of October 1998, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission no longer actively participated on the FIN Committee. Although there is no representation of the South Atlantic on FIN, the South Atlantic continues to participate at the work group level and there is continued participation by staff member from both programs to ensure compatibility and comparability.

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

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The FIN is a comprehensive program comprised of coordinated data collection activities, an integrated data management and retrieval system, and procedures for information dissemination. Activities during 2000 were associated with addressing issues and problems regarding data collection and management and developing strategies for dealing with these topics. In addition to committee activities, FIN was involved in various operational activities concerning the collection and management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data. These activities were conducted by the various state and federal agencies involved in FIN. Each type of activity is discussed below. Future activities of the FIN Committee is outlined in Table 1.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

FIN Committee

The major FIN meetings were held in June 2000. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 2000 and instruction to Administrative Subcommittee and the Data Collection, Biological/Environmental, Social/Economic, Outreach, Data Collection Plan, Registration Tracking (formerly Permitting), Data Management and ad hoc work groups to either begin or continue work on these tasks;
- development of the 2001 FIN Operations Plan which presented the year's activities in data collection, data management, and information dissemination;
- discussion of data management issues;

- review of activities and accomplishments of 2000;
- continued evaluation of adequacy of current marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs for FIN and development of recommendations regarding these programs;
- review findings of and receive recommendations from technical work groups for activities to be carried out during 2001;
- preparation and submission of a proposal for financial assistance to support activities of the FIN; and
- continued internal evaluation of the program.

The FIN Committee members are listed in Table 2. The approved 2000 FIN Operations Plan is included in Appendix A and minutes for all meetings are included in Appendix B. The FIN goals and objectives are included in Appendix C.

Subcommittees and Work Groups

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

- Representatives from the Gulf states, GSMFC and NMFS met in February, July and November 2000 to review the performance of the MRFSS intercept survey and review and evaluate January - December (2000) catch and effort data.
- The Data Collection Work Group met in March 2000 to further discuss the development of the biological sampling module for FIN and review of existing quota monitoring activities in the Southeast and Northeast Regions and discuss the development of quota monitoring system for FIN.
- The FIN Outreach Work Group met in March 2000 to discuss and develop a strategy for the outreach program for the FIN. The group also met via conference call in August to begin the development of a RFP for the development of the FIN outreach strategy.
- The FIN/ACCSP Registration Tracking (formerly Permitting) Work Group met in April 2000 to begin the huge task of developing a system that provides a unique identifier to fishermen, dealers, vessels and other involved in the commercial fisheries that is trackable through geographic location and time.

- The RecFIN Biological/Environmental Work Group met in April 2000 to discuss an update on marine recreational fishery surveys in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands, further investigation of collection of night fishing data, discussion of development of sampling techniques for fishing tournaments, and discussion of recreational biological sampling methods.
- The FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group met in May and December 2000 to begin and continue the development a plan which outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming year as well as tracking of the collection for these data. The FIN has developed a data collection process which outlines a process for developing this plan. The first step of this process is for each partner to coordinate with their agency to identify the type and amount of data needed, and the geographic area over which the data need to be collected for the priority species. The charge to this group was to develop recommendations regarding the number of lengths, weights, otoliths, etc that are needed to conduct effective stock assessments for the species identified on the priority list. These recommendations will be the basis for the development of the FIN data collection plan and will direct the collection of data for the upcoming year.
- The FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group met in July 2000 to discuss the development of 3-5 year implementation strategy for ACCSP and FIN as well as discussion regarding the development of additional data management modules for the ACCSP and FIN systems.
- The Gulf of Mexico commercial port samplers met in August 2000 to address a variety of commercial issues. The main topics of discussion were a jack identification and otolith workshop, overview of ComFIN, discussion and review of commercial sampling methods, discussion of ways for building better rapport with dealers, identification of issues and problems associated with field data collection, and other pertinent issues.
- The FIN Data Management Work Group met in September 2000 to review the various data management issues that need to be resolved before the FIN DMS can become fully operational as well as a status report about the commercial catch/effort software.
- The Caribbean commercial port samplers met in October 2000 to address a variety of commercial issues. The main topics of discussion were the status of ComFIN, field sampling with Puerto Rico commercial fishermen for reef fishes and offshore pelagics, overview of sampling methods for Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP), fisheries research discussions for Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands, discussion regarding adaptation of sampling strategies for use in the Caribbean as well as round table discussions.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Coordination and Administration of RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN Activities - This task provided for the coordination, planning, and administration of FIN activities throughout the year as well as provide recreational and commercial information to the FIN participants and other interested personnel. This is an continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data - This task provided for the conduct of the MRFSS survey in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida for shore, for-hire, and private modes, an activity under the RecFIN(SE). This task provided for coordination of the survey, a field intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. These data were combined with the NMFS effort estimate telephone survey. In addition, the states conducted supplemental sampling of the intercept portion for the MRFSS for charter boats in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and the west coast of Florida. The states also conducted 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 2000, NMFS adopted this method as the official methodology for estimation of charter boat effort. This is an continuation of an activity from the previous year. Also, the charter boat telephone survey was expanded to include the east coast of Florida so the entire state is covered by this methodology.
- Head Boat Port Sampling in Texas, Louisiana, and Florida - This task provided for the sampling of catches, collection of catch reports from head boat personnel, and gathering effort data on head boats which operate primarily in the Exclusive Economic Zone from ports along the coasts of Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. This is an continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Gulf Menhaden Port Sampling - This task provided for sampling of gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels which operate at in Louisiana. Samples were processed for size and age composition for use in coast-wide stock assessments. In turn, gulf menhaden stock assessments are incorporated into the Fisheries Management Plan for the species, and are also utilized by the Gulf Coast states, the GSMFC, the menhaden industry, and the NMFS. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. In the past, it has been accomplished via independent contracts. This is the first year that it will be included in the FIN cooperative agreement.
- Development and Implementation of FIN Data Management System - This task provided for further implementation of a fishery information system for the FIN based on the ACCSP model. This task provided funding for an Information

Technology Manager who will, in conjunction with the ACCSP, work on developing more data modules for the FIN and ACCSP data management systems. This is a continuation of development of the FIN data management system. In addition, the Information Technology Manager will be responsible for transferring Louisiana trip ticket data into the FIN data management system on agreed upon schedule. It is the next step for implementing a regional system for FIN.

- Upgrade and Expand Florida's Saltwater License Information System - This task provided for the design and initiate the development of the system necessary to convert the Saltwater Commercial License database to the database management software system Oracle to enhance fisheries management efforts. The ADABAS/Natural software system currently in use is outdated, inflexible and very difficult to maintain. Qualified programmers and trouble shooters to assist saltwater staff are very hard to find. The obsolete IBM mainframe currently housing the database system is being replaced by a more efficient, cost effective network of servers, as it is increasingly difficult to obtain the resources to resolve/prevent problems for systems that still remain on the mainframe. As other related databases are converted to Oracle, it is increasingly difficult to maintain critical linkages; for example: saltwater license, saltwater product landings, finance and accounting receipts records, and law enforcement records databases are currently interfaced to a substantial degree. Although this is a new task, it was discussed and approved for funding last year. However, due to a shortfall of funds, this task was dropped from the list.
- Collection of Shrimp Effort, Area Fished, Size Frequency, and Aging Data - This task provided for the intercept of shrimp fishermen and collection of information on the amount of time the vessel was fishing and the area(s) where fishing occurred. In addition, collection of length and weight data, hard parts and tissue samples from various species under Federal or state fisheries management were accomplished. 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 were collected from other federal or state managed species during the remainder of the year. This is an continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Trip Ticket Program Development - This task provided for the initiation and development of a commercial trip ticket system for Texas, Mississippi and Alabama, an activity under the ComFIN. This task provided for development of components for a commercial trip ticket system to census the commercial fisheries landings in Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama using the data elements and standards developed by the ComFIN. It will ultimately be combined with other commercial fisheries data collected from around the Gulf of Mexico. In Mississippi and Alabama, the states continued to develop and began initial implementation of a trip ticket program. In Texas, the Department continued to identify the major seafood restaurants and other

potential sources of unreported landings by commercial fishermen to determine the extent of non-reporting as well as prepare a list of seafood dealers to participate in outreach meetings to determine the feasibility of implementing a trip ticket system or an alternate means of data collection. In Louisiana, the Department continued the development of a system for dealers to electronically capture and transfer trip ticket data to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

- Completion of for-hire vessel directory for Texas - This task provided for the completion of the identification of the current charter boat fleet in Texas and attempted to contact coastal owner/operators in the charter boat industry. After all information about the charter boat vessels has been compiled, Texas, GSMFC and NMFS addressed the issue of implementing the appropriate methodology for collection effort information. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year.

Coordination and Administrative Support

Working closely with the Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation was a major function of FIN coordination and administrative support. Other important coordination and administrative activities included but were not limited to providing coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the Committee, subcommittees, and work groups; serving as liaison between the Committee, other program participants, and other interested organizations; preparing annual operations plans under the direction of the Committee; preparing and/or supervising and coordinating preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings; and distributing approved FIN information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures.

Information Dissemination

Committee members and staff provided program information in 2000 via a variety of different methods such as distribution of program documents, presentation to various groups interested in the FIN, and via the Internet:

- FIN Committee. 2000. *2000 Operations Plan for Fisheries Information Network (FIN)*. No. 72 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 25 pp + appendix.
- FIN Committee. 2000. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 1999 - December 31, 1999*. No. 77 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 17 pp + appendices.
- FIN articles in the GSMFC newsletters.

- Variety of informal discussions occurred throughout the year during ASMFC, GSMFC, NMFS, and other participating agencies meetings and workshops.
- NPS personnel periodically provided information concerning the FIN (meeting notices, available documents, etc.) to the EPA's Gulf of Mexico Program computer Bulletin Board System.
- NMFS provides a user-friendly data management system for the MRFSS.
- GSMFC has developed a home page which provides programmatic and operational information regarding FIN.

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

TABLE 1.

Time Table

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

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
Data Collection (continued)					
Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process	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

TABLE 2.

FIN COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2000

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TABLE 3.

FIN SUBCOMMITTEE AND WORK GROUP MEMBERS FOR 2000

FIN Administrative Subcommittee

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APPENDIX A
2000 Operations Plans

**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.

III. OPERATIONS

A. Data Collection and Management Activities

The tasks below cover all 2000 objectives. 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 the 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

The tasks below cover all 2000 objectives. 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 agreed 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 as 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 conducted in the Southeast Region. Once the current situation has been assessed, the group will 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.

APPENDIX B

Minutes

SOUTHEAST RECREATIONAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK [RecFIN(SE)] MINUTES
Tuesday, June 13, 2000
Austin, Texas

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

Members

Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX, (proxy for L. Green)
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC (proxy for D. Frugé)
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Joe O'Hop, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Brady Trahan, MDMR, Biloxi, MS (proxy for K. Cuevas)

Others

Joe Moran, ACCSP, Washington, DC

Staff

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

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as amended.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)] meeting held on September 21, 1999 in Tampa, Florida were approved as presented.

Marine Recreational Fisheries Survey Issues

Discussion of Adding "Trip Time" to Survey - D. Donaldson reported that the issue of *trip time* was raised at a recent Wave meeting. The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) has added *trip time* to their list of data elements and it was noted that this action was driven by stock assessment needs. This issue was also discussed at the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) Data Management Subcommittee (DMS) meeting held in March. The Subcommittee asked for clarification on the purpose of collecting information on *trip time* since *hours fished* is already being collected. J. Moran noted that a recent General Accounting Office (GAO) report on data collection called for the review of data elements and the elimination of any that were unnecessary so this should be considered before adding additional elements. Donaldson questioned the utilization of *trip time* data in assisting in fisheries management. S. Holiman noted that economists would find this information useful and noted that within the recreational demand model there is a time component, which includes travel from home to the fishing site, hours fished, and return, which is probably not the total amount of time involved in fishing activity. M. Osborn noted that any additional survey questions would cost more and questioned whether *trip time* was necessary. The Committee then discussed the various problems associated with adding another data element, including reprinting all forms, retraining personnel, revising the data entry program, etc. After lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed to evaluate the results of the collection of these data and its use by the ACCSP, and make no changes to the program at this time.

Discussion of Time Frame for Social/Economic Questions - D. Donaldson reported that a request to continue collecting baseline economic data (flex questions) was also raised at the recent Wave meeting. J. Shepard questioned whether this information could be collected every three to five years instead of every year since the refusal rate increases when economic questions are asked. J. O'Hop suggested that these flex questions should be reviewed since some of them appear to be awkward

for both the sampler and the public. M. Osborn explained that these flex questions are needed to allow for the modeling of recreational demand during years that the complete economic add-on survey is not being conducted. S. Holiman noted that up until now the time and resources have not been available to utilize these data, and also that economists recognize that these questions are very sensitive. Holiman noted that perhaps with time and familiarity there would be a better response to these questions and suggested that they not be dropped at this time. Members of the Committee expressed concern regarding the analysis and usefulness of the data and want to see some results from this data collection. The Committee agreed to reassess the situation at the 2001 meeting and have a presentation regarding all the economic data being collected, as well as and how the data were used. M. Osborn will provide justification for the field interviewers to help explain why these questions are asked.

Comparison of the Alabama Inshore Creel Survey and MRFSS

D. Donaldson stated that one of the goals of the FIN is to avoid duplication of effort when possible. The Mississippi Creel Survey has recently been replaced with the MRFSS survey as a result of this goal. Donaldson explained that the Alabama Inshore Creel Survey does have some overlap with the MRFSS, and K. Anson requested input from the Committee on the possibility of merging the two surveys. An evaluation form was distributed to the Committee comparing the MRFSS and the Alabama Creel Survey.

K. Anson gave an overview of the of the Creel Survey noting that it began in 1996 in Mobile and Baldwin Counties. The first year of the survey personnel were trained to interview anglers, with spotted seatrout being the targeted species. Overflights were used to estimate pressure within the areas. Six overflights per month are now conducted both on weekdays and weekends. Incomplete vs. complete trips were also tested in the first two years of the survey. Anson noted that for the past five months they have had a stock assessment person on staff in preparation for a final report which will be completed this fall.

In addition to private ramp fishing pressure, the Creel Survey provides an opportunity to gather more length information on inshore species. Anson stated that the data will be meshed with other independent sampling programs to provide information for stock assessment purposes. There may be a short term hiatus from the Creel Survey in order to evaluate the data. The Committee discussed the survey at length and K. Anson agreed to give a presentation on the preliminary results at the 2001 FIN meeting.

Discussion of Potential Improvements to Intercept Site Selection Process

D. Donaldson noted that this agenda item is a task from the Operations Plan. M. Osborn reported that the current draw program is not perfect, but to change it would have cost implications.

However, under the current arrangement of cooperative agreements there is more flexibility to modify existing activities. Osborn noted that on the west coast they have gone to a one stage sampling process for the draws, first doing a geographical sort by county, then the sampling is set up with a random draw. There are some concerns regarding the impact on data and estimates, therefore Osborn would prefer to wait for some simulations over several years before making any changes. Osborn noted that Florida is interested in going to regional state estimates which will necessitate drawing separately for each regional area beginning in 2001. Osborn asked for assistance in reviewing species composition, and catch rates by category of pressure for sites.

Committee discussion followed regarding analysis by site for inshore and offshore using stratification or weighing.

R. Lukens moved to charge the Biological/Environmental Work Group with addressing the issue of stratifying samples by inshore or offshore by having the states collect information to update the site register or looking at historical data.

The Work Group will make their recommendations to the Committee at the next FIN meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Biological/Environmental Work Group Report - (Attachment A)

A copy of the Biological/Environmental Work Group Report from April, 2000 was distributed to Committee members. D. Donaldson reported that M. Osborn gave an update to the Work Group on marine recreational data collection in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It was suggested that other sources of funding be utilized to insure the continuation of sampling in the Caribbean. Subsistence fishing in the Caribbean was also discussed and the possibility of NMFS adding some flex questions to the intercept survey. Donaldson noted that the Work Group asked for guidance from the Committee on whether they should continue to address the issue of data collection in the Caribbean and the Committee agreed that they should continue.

Donaldson then reported that the Work Group discussed metadata, the development of the data management module, and fishing regulations for the Gulf of Mexico. Donaldson reported that GSMFC staff will develop a time frame for creating the data base as well as entering data.

The Work Group then addressed the recreational module and M. Osborn noted that NMFS is working on getting MFRSS data into the ACCSP system. Donaldson noted that there had been a meeting with ICF Consulting to determine who

would load the data into the FIN and ACCSP systems. Donaldson reported that the Work Group recommended that once the recreational module is finalized, FIN set up a link with the MFRSS system instead of having an actual copy of the data in the FIN data management system. After some time period, the performance of this setup will be evaluated and the appropriate action will be taken. R. Lukens noted that the member states of the GSMFC want the Commission office to serve as the data management center for the Gulf of Mexico. Lukens expressed concern that time and possibly money was being spent to no avail since it had already been decided that the issue of having the data physically reside on two or three different systems is not an insurmountable issue. There are significant implications to having a dedicated system in a region to serve data management and distribution needs. Lukens stated that this is a due diligence issue, not a technical issue. **R. Lukens made a motion to not follow the recommendation of the Biological/Environmental Work Group, but move forward and have the Gulf of Mexico recreational data physically housed on the Gulf regional data management system. The motion was seconded.** Committee discussion followed with M. Osborn noting that NMFS will not relinquish the MRFSS regional data since it is part of a national database, however the Gulf will have a copy. Further discussion covered the availability of data and R. Lukens stated that the GSMFC has a dedicated staff and system for that purpose which was a directive from the state directors. M. Osborn commented on the cost of having redundant storage and noted that the location of the data is irrelevant. It was noted that at this point it is all theory and at such time as the systems (FIN and ACCSP) are operational, testing will have to be done to assure accuracy on all systems. **The Committee voted on the above motion which passed with NMFS opposed and USFWS abstaining.**

Night Fishing Activities - D. Donaldson reported that the RecFIN(SE) Committee had recommended creating a night fishing site register for the Gulf states in preparation for sampling in 2001, however the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S-FFMC) did not agree that this was a high priority issue and asked that it be further explored. The Work Group decided to reduce the area for a pilot study from the entire Gulf coast to Mississippi and/or Alabama. Donaldson distributed and reviewed information from the telephone survey showing the potential impact of night fishing. The pilot study will focus on the shore mode. Donaldson reported that he had spoken to K. Cuevas who estimated the cost of conducting this pilot study in Mississippi would be approximately \$60,000. **After discussion, the RecFIN Committee made the following recommendation: that the FIN Committee consider placing the pilot study on night fishing in Mississippi on the list for possible funding in 2001.**

Tournament Sampling - D. Donaldson reported that the National Seafood Inspection Laboratory (NSIL) had been tasked with getting information on highly migratory species (HMS) fishing tournaments. A representative from NSIL gave a presentation to the Biological/Environmental Work Group noting that they are in the process of compiling a list of fishing tournaments. Donaldson noted that since the Work Group had developed a list of fishing tournaments, this was provided to Tony Lowry of NSIL. The Work Group recommended that the states provide updates to NSIL staff regarding fishing tournaments in their states. FIN staff will have the states update the current FIN list and forward the updated list to NSIL staff. The NSIL would then be responsible for maintaining the list of all tournaments. After discussion the Committee agreed to await the outcome of the NSIL project. Donaldson noted that NSIL staff may be able to give a presentation to the Work Group or the FIN Committee in 2001. Donaldson will get a list of the tournaments in the NSIL database and distribute to Committee members for updating.

Recreational Biological Sampling - D. Donaldson reported that the Biological/Environmental Work Group recommended that the existing MRFSS biological sampling methods be adopted by FIN and that the *Implementation of Recreational Biological Sampling* be added to the list of potential activities for funding in 2001. M. Osborn noted that biological sampling cannot be added to routine MRFSS sampling because it could possibly impact sampling productivity and not be a representative sample, therefore a separate site register would have to be developed. Discussion followed and it was noted that if the collection of more data is a priority for this Committee then processing and analysis of this data is equally important and the issue of funding for this work was raised. A regional processing center was discussed by the Committee and it was also noted that GSMFC Interjurisdictional Fisheries funds were currently allocated for the coordination of processing of otoliths. The Committee agreed to include this activity on the list of potential items for funding in 2001.

D. Donaldson noted that during the Biological/Environmental Work Group meeting, G. Fitzhugh and B. Dixon asked if the states would be willing to collect otoliths after all MRFSS interviews had been conducted. Donaldson contacted the states with this request and at this time there has been no response.

Donaldson reported that the Work Group also discussed minimum data elements for the biological sampling module. The Work Group discussed adding multiple length variables and length type. Donaldson reported that there was lengthy discussion on this topic and no consensus was reached by the Work Group. This topic will be further discussed by the FIN Committee.

Other Business

M. Osborn requested comments on the NMFS video that had recently been sent to members. Osborn also noted that regional brochures on the MRFSS will be sent to partners for interviewers to distribute.

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

RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group
Meeting Summary
April 25-26, 2000
Atlanta, Georgia

The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m. The following people were present:

Jeff Brust, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Tom Schmidt, NPS, Homestead, FL
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Tony Lowery, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Kim Dawson, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Gary Fitzhugh, NMFS, Panama City, FL
Guy Davenport, NMFS, Miami, FL
David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Purpose of the Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the main topics of discussion were an update on marine recreational fishery surveys in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; discussion of metadata and the recreational catch/effort data management module; further investigation of collection of night fishing data; discussion of development of sampling techniques for fishing tournaments; and discussion of recreational biological sampling methods.

Update on Marine Recreational Fishery Surveys in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands

D. Donaldson stated that this group had been charged with assisting the Caribbean in developing a strategy for implementing marine recreational fishery surveys in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The group has been working on this issue for a number of years and this year the NMFS had some funds to conduct the MRFSS in the Caribbean.

M. Osborn stated that the MRFSS has been conducted in the Caribbean in the past. However, whenever there are reductions to the budget, the Caribbean is one of the first places that gets cut. As stated earlier, NMFS has identified some funds to conduct the MRFSS in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. The MRFSS staff has been working cooperatively with staff from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands as well as MACRO International to implement the survey. To ensure good precision, sample sizes were increased. For the telephone survey, activities began in wave 6 1999. All activities were supposed to begin in wave 6 as a start-up wave but due to start-up problems, data collection for the intercept did not start until early 2000. All the participating agencies were also involved in compiling population information regarding Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands which will be used to develop the effort estimates. The preliminary telephone estimates for waves 6 1999 and wave 1 2000 should be available some time in May. Initially, there was concern regarding lack of households with telephones, however, this appears to no longer be a problem. For the intercept portion of the survey, data collection by MACRO began in Puerto Rico during wave 1. The U.S. Virgin Islands was considering conducting the intercept portion of the survey but decided that they could not, so MACRO began collecting the data in wave 2. Beginning in wave 2, questions regarding shellfish were added to the telephone survey to enable collection of data regarding this type of fishing. There has been some problems with low productivity. This is primarily due to the fact that there are many low-pressure sites in the islands and it is difficult to obtain samples as well as the prevalence of subsistence fishing. Although the U.S. Virgin Islands is collecting some economic data, there is currently no economic data being collected through the MRFSS since there is very little base-line data available. As for the continuation of this activity in the Caribbean, the future is unknown. It cost approximately 300K to conduct the survey in the Caribbean. It is unknown if funds will be available in 2001 to continue the survey. One way to help ensure continuation of sampling is utilization of other sources of funds. Puerto Rico is currently using some of their Wallop/Breaux funds to help conduct the survey. Although the U.S. Virgin Islands is not doing this, the RecFIN(SE) might want to point out that this would be one way to ensure a continuation of sampling. M. Osborn and D. Donaldson will contact Toby Tobias and discuss this issue with him.

The group discussed the issue of subsistence fishing in the Caribbean. Subsistence fishing is very prevalent in the Caribbean and there needs to be some action taken to get a handle on the magnitude of this activity. Since data collection just began, there really is not enough data to assess the magnitude. As more data are collected, the group may need to meet again

(later this year) to address this issue. M. Osborn noted that NMFS has the ability to add some flex questions to the telephone survey. These questions could begin to compile some information on subsistence fishing. M. Osborn will develop some potential questions to be added to the telephone survey and will distribute to the group for review. **The group continued to discuss this issue and decided that the FIN Committee should address it at the upcoming meeting.**

Discussion of Metadata Activities

D. Donaldson stated that during a meeting with ICF Consulting, the issue of metadata was discussed. Although this group has been addressing the issue of metadata for quite some time, currently there is no activity being conducted. D. Donaldson stated that he was concerned that this issue may be brushed off and wanted to keep it in front of this group as well as the Committee to ensure that it is not forgotten. The group discussed what the next step would be and decided that the data base structure of the fishing regulations information needs to be developed. D. Donaldson noted that this is one of the items to be addressed by Mike Sestak, the FIN Data Manager. After some discussion, the group decided that GSMFC should continue to develop the data base structure as well as actual entry of the fishing regulation metadata. It was suggested that M. Sestak develop a time schedule for creating the data base as well as entry of data. This will allow the FIN Committee to assess the amount of time needed to complete this task and enable them to decide on the appropriate actions to take regarding this topic.

Discussion of Recreation Module for the FIN Data Management System

M. Osborn stated that she is working with her staff to set up the data transfers of MRFSS data into the ACCSP data management system. They are also working on modifying the documents developed by ICF Consulting for Business Objects. D. Donaldson noted that M. Sestak is available to help with these activities if needed. He also noted that during a meeting with ICF Consulting, it was suggested that the FIN would take the lead on loading the data into the recreational catch/effort module and the ACCSP would get a copy of these data once they have been loaded. This would ensure that the data went through only one upload procedure and would minimize the chance of having different data in the FIN and ACCSP systems. M. Osborn noted that the MRFSS would actually be responsible for loading the recreational data into the correct Oracle format. She mentioned that there really was not a need to have separate data bases in the MRFSS, FIN and ACCSP systems. This could potentially cause problems by having different data bases on these systems. She suggested that FIN and ACCSP could link to the MRFSS system. D. Donaldson noted that this idea has been suggested in the past and there was concern regarding performance of this link. It was suggested that the speed of accessing the data would be greatly reduced. It was also noted that when more recreational data are put into the system (Texas survey data, NMFS head boat data, etc.), this method may not be feasible since there would have to be links to each data base and this might significantly affect performance. **After some discussion, the group recommended that once the recreational module is finalized, FIN set up a link with the MRFSS system instead of having an actual copy of the data in the FIN data management system. After some time period, the performance of this setup will be evaluated and the appropriate action will be taken.**

Further Investigation of Collection of Night Fishing Data

D. Donaldson stated that the group has discussed this issue in the past and developed a strategy for creating a night fishing site register as an initial step in conducting night fishing sampling. However, this idea was not approved by the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S-FFMC). The S-FFMC believed that night fishing activities in the Gulf may not be that significant and asked that this issue be further explored by the FIN. Therefore, this group needs to readdress this issue on a smaller scale and determine the magnitude of night fishing for that area. The group decided that the next logical step would be to simply reduce the area covered from Gulf-wide to one or two small states (Mississippi or Alabama) and develop a pilot survey for the smaller area. **After some discussion, the group recommended that a pilot survey for sampling night fishing activities be developed for Mississippi and/or Alabama.** This pilot survey would be conducted similar to the regular MRFSS in that a site register will be compiled, draws will be made for appropriate sites, and the basic MRFSS intercept survey will be conducted. Roving counts will be used to develop effort estimates for sites where night fishing occurs. The basic methods utilized for the field intercept will be used with the exception that two samplers will be sent to sites during night fishing interviews. Also, staff will develop a summary of the night fishing information which will show the potential impact of night fishing. The summary information is attached.

Discussion of Development of Sampling Techniques for Fishing Tournaments

D. Donaldson stated that this group has been charged with the development of a sampling program for fishing tournaments. Information was distributed to the group regarding various sampling programs in the Southeast Region. Based on the distributed information as well as a presentation from Office of Sustainable Fisheries, the group needs to develop

recommendations regarding sampling of fishing tournaments. K. Dawson presented the tournament sampling activities being conducted by the Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Seafood Inspection Laboratory (NSIL). This office has recently been charged with registering all highly migratory species (HMS) fishing tournaments; determining defined universe of non-billfish tournaments; and receiving summary reports of 100% of all registered non-billfish tournaments. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center will continue to handle all billfish tournament reporting as well as a new task of billfish registration which previously was handled by the Southeast Regional Office. The landings per species will be accomplished via the initial registration and reporting of tournaments. Once a universe has been developed, it could be used to sub-sample tournaments to collect additional information such as social and economic data, biological data, etc. NSIL has been coordinating with the other offices of NMFS as well as the GSMFC and ASMFC to ensure that all HMS tournaments are included in the universe. It was noted that the FIN has developed a list of all fishing tournaments conducted in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. NSIL is in the process of developing a list of all HMS tournaments and compiling and maintaining a list of all fishing tournaments. **After some discussion, the group recommended that states provide updates to NSIL staff regarding fishing tournaments in their states. FIN staff will have the states update the current FIN list and forward the updated list to NSIL staff. The NSIL would be responsible for maintaining the list of tournaments.** It appears that the methods developed by NSIL for sampling tournaments would ultimately work for all fishing tournaments. However, since this process has just begun, **the group recommended that FIN await the outcome of these activities before moving forward with this issue.** For this method to work properly, the states would have to require all fishing tournaments within their state to register. Currently, that is not possible but a current list of tournaments compiled by FIN could be used as a sampling frame (after some of the blanks are filled in).

Discussion of Recreational Biological Sampling Methods

M. Osborn stated that biological sampling was conducted in 1998 under the MRFSS contract. The group discussed the methods needed for sampling biological data. Biological sampling cannot be added onto the routine MRFSS sampling because it has the potential to impact the sampling productivity and will not reflect representative sampling. Therefore, a separate strata is needed to sample biological information. It was noted that if one is attempting to develop age/length keys, sampling does not need to be representative; however, for information to be included in VPAs, the sampling does need to be representative. A separate site register needs to be developed for sampling. This site register is a subset of the sites which includes sites where a sampler is likely to encounter priority species. This type of sampling would be directed by the FIN data collection plan which will be developed by a work group. There is a meeting scheduled for this work group to begin developing targets for lengths, weights, hard parts, etc. These targets will be used when selecting sites for biological sampling. G. Fitzhugh noted that an integral part of this activity is the analysis of data. Funds need to be allocated for the analysis of the collected information if this activity is to be successful. Budgets for this activity need to include who is responsible and where this information will be processed. **After some discussion, it was recommended the existing MRFSS biological sampling methods be adopted by FIN and that *Implementation of Biological Sampling* be added to the list of potential activities for funding in 2001.**

B. Dixon and G. Fitzhugh asked if the states would be willing to collect biological samples after all MRFSS interviews have been conducted at a site. This would be opportunistic sampling and any information would be greatly appreciated. D. Donaldson stated that he would contact the states and determine their willingness to collect biological samples in 2000.

D. Donaldson noted that it was decided that this module should incorporate not only commercial samples but recreational and at-sea observer, etc. samples as well. Therefore, the group discussed the minimum data elements for the biological sampling module developed by the ComFIN Data Collection Work Group. There was significant discussion regarding the elements and revised table is attached. The revised table represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting. The group discussed adding additional elements for lengths which will allow for multiple length measurements. Some of the group believed that a length type (fork, total, etc.) should accompany each length measurement. It was noted that there needs to be length type since this module will be used not only for finfish but invertebrates, marine mammals, etc. B. Dixon suggested that this module could be set up for finfish only and develop other modules for the other types of organisms. D. Donaldson noted that this is the opposite of the goal of FIN (to develop a comprehensive data management system) and it would not resolve the issues currently being faced with the existing data bases. B. Dixon stated that by allowing length type, there is the potential for creating errors in the data because samplers will not fill in the length type and then the user of the data will not know what type of length was taken. It was pointed out that there will be quality control and assurance procedures in place to address issues like these and these procedures will prevent problems like this from occurring. **There was a great deal of discussion about this issue and the group finally decided that this issue needs to be further discussed and a decision needs to be made by the FIN Committee.**

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.
NIGHT FISHING INFORMATION

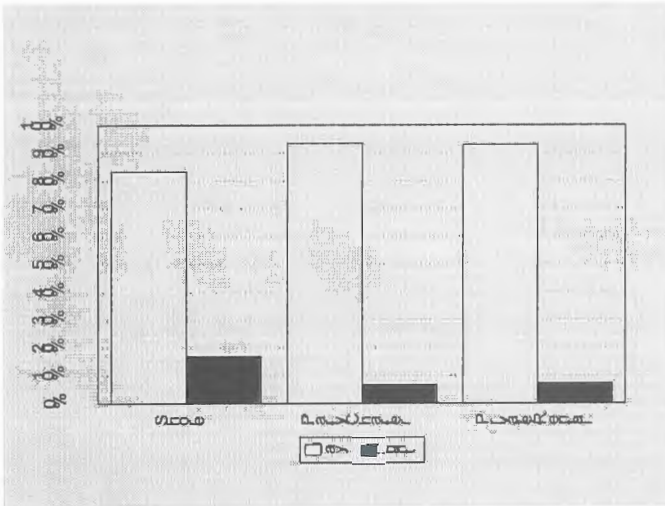


Figure 2. Day vs. night fishing, Gulf of Mexico and east coast of Florida.

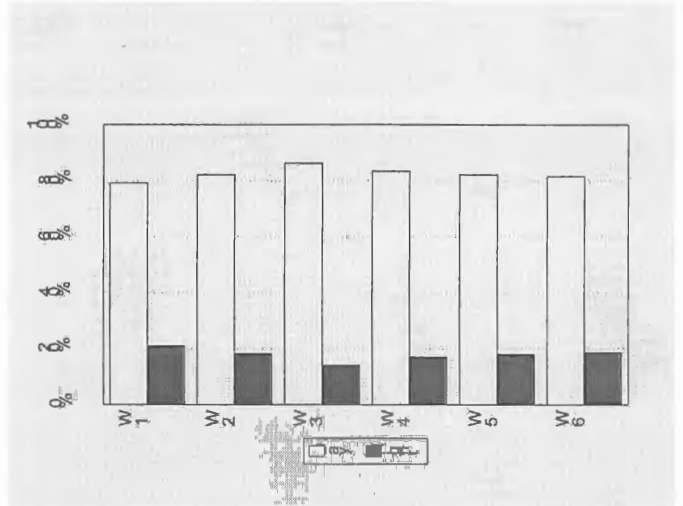


Figure 4. Day vs. night fishing in west Florida, by wave.

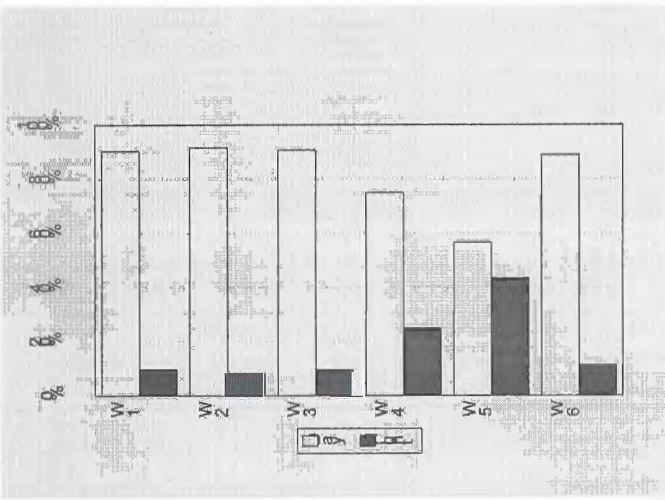


Figure 2. Day vs. night fishing in Alabama, by wave.

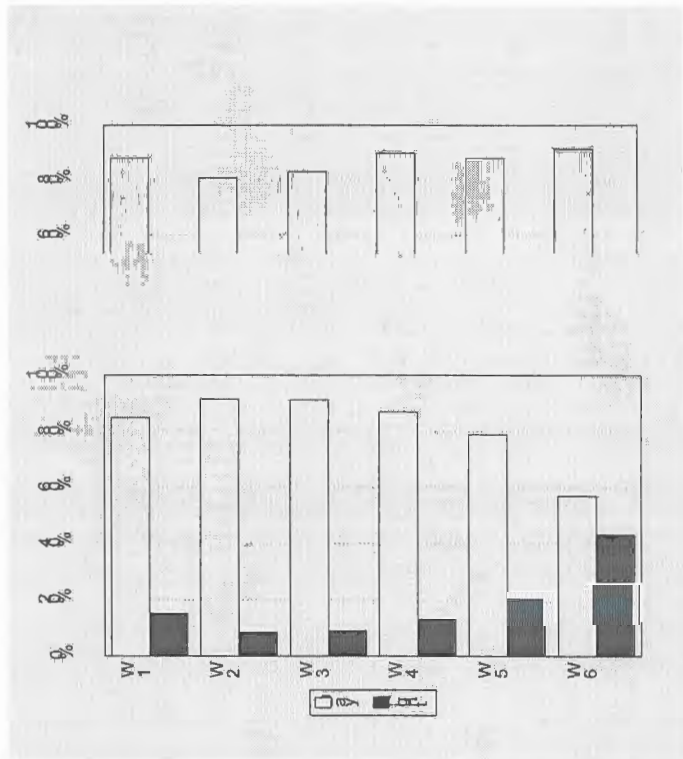


Figure 6. Day vs. night fishing in Mississippi, by wave.

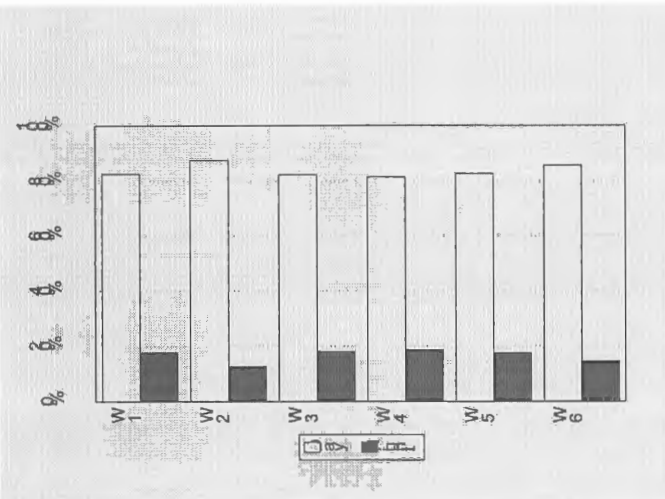


Figure 3. Day vs. night fishing in east Florida, by wave.

NIGHT FISHING INFORMATION (continued)

Night and Day Fishing Catch rates for selected species - 1998-1999									
		Night Fishing				Day Fishing			
Species	State	Effort (hours)	# Caught	CPE	n (# of trips)	Effort (hours)	# Caught	CPE	n (# of trips)
Blacknose shark	West Florida	21	7	0.33	5	30	3	0.10	3
Clearnose skate	West Florida	62	14	0.23	10	67	16	0.24	13
Ladyfish	West Florida	52.5	22	0.42	13	727.5	502	0.69	168
Scaled Sardine	West Florida	91.5	474	5.18	20	1116	9009	8.07	346
Gaftopsail catfish	West Florida	103	77	0.75	32	1253	1068	0.85	292
Hardhead catfish	West Florida	146	74	0.51	40	1228.5	858	0.70	306
Jack crevalle	West Florida	63.5	33	0.52	14	2598.5	2131	0.82	643
Blue runner	West Florida	62.5	119	1.90	17	2074	2762	1.33	576
Gray snapper	West Florida	90	42	0.47	27	2482	2198	0.89	761
White grunt	West Florida	59.5	22	0.37	12	1325	1180	0.89	304
Pigfish	West Florida	92.5	61	0.66	23	1288.5	1183	0.92	343
Pinfish	West Florida	253	676	2.67	11	4994	9410	1.88	1394
Sheepshead	West Florida	36	17	0.47	54	1447.5	892	0.62	558
Spotted seatrout	West Florida	114	112	0.98	30	1418.5	1097	0.77	442
Sand seatrout	West Florida	21.5	102	4.74	45	1661	2312	1.39	758
Silver perch	West Florida	125	150	1.20	34	381	508	1.33	107
Southern kingfish	West Florida	91.5	35	0.38	20	568.5	308	0.54	206
Atlantic spadefish	West Florida	52	28	0.54	15	665	552	0.83	228
Striped mullet	West Florida	9.5	27	2.84	16	502.5	955	1.90	320
Spanish mackerel	West Florida	78	72	0.92	16	3479	2670	0.77	1146
Bluefish	East Florida	101	40	0.40	11	1913	1411	0.74	567
Margate	East Florida	20	13	0.65	12	64	73	1.14	20
Spotted seatrout	Louisiana	32	48	1.50	7	1906	2845	1.49	942
Atlantic croaker	Louisiana	44	40	0.91	7	1067	980	0.92	290

Minimum Data Elements for the Biological Sampling Module

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	FORMAT
Unique Identifier	Some Combination of Data Elements That Allows for the Unique Identification of this Action. Use Trip Ticket Number If Available. For the recreational component, it will be site #, data, interviewer id.	see Table A.1
Record Number	Annual Sequential Interview Number by port sampler/recreational interviewer	3 digit numeric
Record Type	Type of data collection activity that data was captured under: Recreational: MRFSS; Texas survey; Biological sampling add-on Commercial At-sea observer	2 digit numeric
Sample Date	Month / Day / Year	see Table A.1
Sampler	Port Agent Code/Recreational interviewer ID	4 digit numeric
State (Landing)	State Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
County (Landing)	County Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
Sampling Location	Dealer Number/MRFSS site number	see Table A.1
Gear Code	Gear Code	see Table A.1
Area Fished	Area Code (with detail to lat/long, if possible)	see Table A.1
Depth	Depth of water (in feet) where fishing occurred	4 digit numeric
Landing Condition	Condition Landed (Whole, Guttled, Headed, Etc.). For recreational, this would be a disposition code	see Table A.7
Market Size Range	Actual Size Range	4 digit numeric
Market Category	Code that will specify any market or grade categories that affect price, usually size related.	see Table A.6
State (Sampled)	State Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
County (Sampled)	County Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
Total sample weight	Weight of sample	4 digit numeric
Species Code	ITIS species code	see Table A.8
Mode	Mode of fish: charter boat, head boat, private/rental, shore	2 digit character
Specimen Method	Method used to collect the specimen	
Number Measured	Number of Fish Measured	3 digit numeric
Length1	First length of individual fish (in millimeters)	4 digit numeric
Length1 Type	Type of measurement taken for first length (total length, forked length, etc)	2 digit alphanumeric
Length2	Second length of individual fish (in millimeters)	4 digit numeric
Length2 Type	Type of measurement taken for second length (total length, forked length, etc)	2 digit alphanumeric
Length3	Third length of individual fish (in millimeters)	4 digit numeric
Length3 Type	Type of measurement taken for third length (total length, forked length, etc)	2 digit alphanumeric

Weight	Weight of individual fish	4 digit numeric
DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	FORMAT
Weight Units	Units weight was collected in (pounds, kilograms, etc.)	2 digit alphanumeric
Sex	Sex Code	2 digit alphanumeric
Age Tag Number1	First Age Structure Identifier, sequential # by port sampler/rec interview	4 digit numeric
Age Tag Number2	Second Age Structure Identifier, sequential # by port sampler/rec interview	4 digit numeric
Gonad Tag Number	Gonad Identifier, sequential # by port sampler/rec interviewer	4 digit numeric
Stomach Tag Number	Stomach identifier, sequential # by port sampler/rec interviewer	4 digit numeric
Tissue Tag Number	Tissue Identifier, sequential # by port sampler/rec interviewer	4 digit numeric
Tissue Type	Type of Tissue collected - muscle, eye parts, etc	see Table A.3

FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (FIN)

MINUTES

Wednesday, June 14, 2000

Austin, Texas

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

Members

Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Guy Davenport, NMFS, Miami, FL
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Christine Johnson, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC (proxy for D. Frugé)
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Joe O'Hop, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Tom Schmidt, NPS, Homestead, FL
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Brady Trahan, MDMR, Biloxi, MS (proxy for K. Cuevas)

Staff

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

Others

Brian Bohnsack, TPWD, Austin, TX
Joe Moran, ACCSP, Washington, DC
Vicki Swann, TPWD, Austin, TX
Scott Tribbie, ICF Consulting, Fairfax, VA
Dawn Whitehead, USFWS, Austin, TX

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as amended.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on September 22, 1999 in Tampa, Florida were approved with minor changes.

Subcommittee and Work Group Reports

Administrative Subcommittee Report - (Attachment A)

Standard Definitions - D. Donaldson reported that the FIN Administrative Subcommittee met in February to compare the FIN and the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) standard definitions as well as prepare for the external review of the FIN program. FIN Committee members were provided with a summary of the conference call held by the Administrative Subcommittee where recommendations were made for changes to the definitions. The Committee reviewed the definitions and changes recommended by the Subcommittee, and noted the difficulty in refining definitions. R. Lukens suggested putting the definitions on a web page and have them reviewed periodically for compatibility. **P. Campbell moved to approve the definitions as amended by the Administrative**

Subcommittee and have the FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group further address these definitions making modifications and changes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

FIN Program Review - D. Donaldson noted that periodic reviews of the FIN program are conducted to ensure that goals and objectives are being met. The Administrative Subcommittee recommended that the American Fisheries Society (AFS) Marine Fish Section conduct this review and that the review panel include members from the recreational, commercial, and socio-economic areas. The Subcommittee also suggested that M. Osborn and D. Donaldson coordinate the review with commercial and socio-economic members appointed by the FIN Committee. D. Donaldson requested that the FIN Committee nominate two members with commercial and socio-economic expertise. After Committee discussion, K. Anson will be the commercial representative, and S. Holiman will be the socio-economic representative.

R. Lukens noted that the purpose of this review is to evaluate the administrative and operational activities of the committee and determine if goals are being met.

Outreach Work Group Report - (Attachment B)

Outreach Strategy - D. Donaldson reported that the Outreach Work Group met in March and was tasked with the development of an outreach strategy for the FIN. The Work Group discussed several different approaches and recommended a request for proposals (RFP) to develop an outreach strategy as the most effective method. The RFP would seek proposals that would include a strategy for disseminating information on the FIN to commercial and recreational groups, and the general public. Methods utilized to accomplish this would include informational brochures, public service announcements, magazine articles, newsletters, and presentations to various user groups.

Donaldson noted that the Work Group also discussed the potential cost of this project and determined that \$50,000 to \$75,000 would be appropriate to attract quality proposals. Committee discussion followed concerning timing, budgeting, and approval by the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S-FFMC). **R. Lukens moved to accept the recommendation of the Outreach Work Group regarding outreach strategy and develop an RFP as soon as possible for funding in 2002. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** W. Laney suggested including information on the ACCSP in the outreach materials to aid in the compatibility and comparability of both programs. M. Osborn suggested referencing the Report to Congress.

Data Collection Work Group Report - (Attachment C)

Biological Sampling - D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Work Group met in March and one of the issues addressed was biological sampling. As a result of the meeting, the Work Group recommended that the official FIN weight unit be kilograms with enough decimal places for clarity to grams. The Work Group also recommended that if the FIN length and weight standards are not met by a partner, the actual measurements be included in the data base, not conversions, and the type of measurement be recorded.

Donaldson introduced Scott Tribbie of ICF Consulting and explained that he would give an update on the status of development of the biological sampling modules for the FIN data management system (DMS). The Committee then discussed the problems associated with measurements and conversions. (Attachment D) S. Tribbie noted that the plan was for the data provider to do the conversions and to provide information on the conversion methods used. This information would then be part of the data base. After further Committee discussion, **J. Shepard moved to accept the Data Collection Work Group recommendation that weight in kilograms be the FIN standard. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

J. Shepard moved that actual measurements be included in the data base with the appropriate units of measure and that there be a second field that is converted by the partners to FIN standards. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The Committee then agreed to charge the Data Collection Work Group with discussing length and weight conversions and providing recommendations for a standard FIN conversion.

D. Donaldson reported that the Work Group discussed whether tag numbers for various hard parts should be an annual number or a trip based number. At this time a biological sample is not related back to the trip taken by a commercial fisherman. Lengthy Committee discussion followed regarding the variety of ways of identifying otoliths and hard parts for biological sampling.

S. Tribbie gave an update on the contract with ICF Consulting and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. The period of performance was from April to September for \$152,000 to take the biological sampling which had initially been identified by the ACCSP program design. This was then integrated with the data elements provided by the FIN Committee. Tribbie attended two ACCSP Biological Panel meetings and collected information to determine the needs of the FIN program since both programs have basically the same needs. Tribbie noted that the logical model for the data base design had been completed and distributed copies to the Committee. This information should be in the Oracle data

base by August 1, as well as the initial reports. A core set of reports will be developed for the partners to review and comment. Tribbie noted that he and Tom Fazio were working on this project.

The Committee discussed the possibility of having an online data entry system. J. Moran noted that the ACCSP has had similar discussions regarding TIP data entry procedures and some type of online data entry may be a possibility in the future. The Committee agreed that at this time it would be premature to develop a web based data entry system and decided to wait until 2001 to determine how to handle data entry for biological data.

Quota Monitoring - D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Work Group had been charged with developing recommendations concerning the various methods for quota monitoring. The Work Group agreed that electronic trip tickets for commercial fisheries would be an ideal method for quota monitoring, however since not all dealers have computers this method would not be feasible at this time. It was noted that in the Northeast Region, dealers use an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system and are required to report on a weekly basis. The Data Collection Work Group recommended that an IVR/phone reporting system be used for quota monitoring in commercial fisheries. R. Lukens noted that at a past S-FFMC meeting, the state directors believed that a trip ticket program would not be an appropriate vehicle for quota monitoring and requested that the FIN make recommendations on quota monitoring for commercial and recreational fisheries. Following Committee discussion concerning the pros and cons of the various methods of quota monitoring, **M. Osborn moved to accept the recommendation of the Data Collection Work Group to use IVR for quota monitoring unless there is a better electronic version that can be used in lieu of IVR. Recreational fishermen would be required to purchase a special stamp or permit to land a quota-monitored species and would be required to report via an IVR system. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The Committee also discussed some of the problems associated with recreational quota monitoring, particularly enforcement. The Work Group recommended that quota monitoring should not be used as a management tool for recreational fisheries.

Water Body Codes - D. Donaldson reported that there were only a few water body codes in the data management system (DMS) for Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. The Data Collection Work Group reviewed these codes and noted that since the NMFS has established codes for these areas, the FIN could use these codes to describe the inshore areas. Donaldson distributed the revised list of water body codes for the FIN DMS to the Committee for their review. Minor changes were made to the revised list of water body codes and represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

Permitting Work Group Report - (Attachment E)

Data Elements - D. Donaldson reported that the FIN Permitting Work Group met jointly with the ACCSP to work on a permitting module which will provide unique identifiers for commercial fishermen, dealers, and vessels. Having both groups work on permitting together will assure compatibility and comparability between the programs. Donaldson then described some unique identifiers now in use in other areas. The ACCSP Commercial Technical Committee identified the following items that could be used to develop a unique ID: birth month, birth year, birth day, first letter of last name, last letter of last name, first letter of first name, and sequential number. There was Committee discussion on how to deal with assigning sequential numbers, corporations, multiple locations, responsibility for maintaining system, etc. The Committee agreed to give feedback to the Permitting Work Group as a result of this meeting, and suggested that the Work Group continue working on this issue with the possibility of meeting later this year or early next year.

Data Collection Plan Work Group Report - (Attachment F)

Data Collection Process - D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Plan Work Group is made up of the GSMFC Stock Assessment Team, as well as personnel from Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and NMFS. This Work Group has been charged with the development of a data collection plan for data that are needed to conduct stock assessments. G. Davenport provided information on historical landings for various species to the Work Group. Donaldson reported that the Work Group discussed devising a process for identifying the amount of data needed. Some of the steps would include, characterization of the population structure, description of the catch, development of the strata structure, catch sample, and subsample numbers. The Gulf of Mexico would be divided into 10 regions, Puerto Rico into 2 regions, and the U.S. Virgin Islands into 2 or 3 regions. There would be 6 sampling periods per year (divided into 2 month intervals). Donaldson noted that information is being compiled and another Data Collection Plan Work Group meeting will be held later this year to further develop the FIN data collection plan.

Discussion of FY2001 FIN Funding Priorities

Responding to a question concerning the charge to this Committee regarding funding priorities, D. Donaldson stated that this Committee is responsible for identifying activities for inclusion in the cooperative agreement for 2001 and providing those recommendations to the S-FFMC. J. Shepard noted that the FIN was formed to develop a program for data collection and dissemination, and not to be concerned with funding but with the types of activities required for a successful program. Donaldson noted that a prioritized list would be developed at this meeting and a prepared list of suggested items for funding (Attachment G) was distributed to the Committee. Committee members had the opportunity at this time to add items for funding to this list.

R. Lukens noted that once the prioritized list of funding activities is completed by this Committee, it will be forwarded to the S-FFMC which will be meeting in August to make final decisions. Budgets and statements of work will be due in early September so the cooperative agreement for 2001 can be completed. Lukens noted that projects suggested should be part of the progression of implementing the FIN, and also that funding from the GulfFIN line item is intended to go to the states for projects. M. Osborn noted that the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) intercept data collection budget will not allow for the purchase of trucks and computers on an annual basis. Osborn suggested developing a replacement schedule for equipment and including justification where possible. R. Lukens suggested that the members of the S-FFMC be made aware of the situation for budgeting purposes regarding equipment and vehicles.

The Committee then reviewed the list of items for funding consideration in 2001. Various items for funding were discussed including harmonizing log book and trip ticket data, measuring boards and laptops for head boat samplers, cost earning survey for charter boat captains (which will be included with charter boat outreach), vessel registration system, etc. G. Davenport noted that funding for the Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP) in the Gulf and the east coast of Florida may not be available after November and requested that Committee members keep this in mind when prioritizing items for funding. During Committee discussion on Gulf Menhaden Port Sampling, it was suggested to combine collection of menhaden and commercial landings, biological, and shrimp effort data into one job in the cooperative agreement. **R. Lukens moved to revisit the prioritization of the Menhaden Port Sampling project. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. R. Lukens then moved to include Menhaden Port Sampling in the Medium #1 priority category. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

The following is the prioritized list of suggested items for funding consideration in 2001 to be presented to the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee:

HIGH PRIORITY

- Coordination and Administration of RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN Activities
 - Including FIN Data Manager \$ 355,000
- (H) Purchase of Full Access Business Objects Software \$ 220,000
- Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data Including Outreach \$2,150,000
- (H) Trip Ticket Program Development and Maintenance
 - Alabama \$ 120,000
 - Mississippi \$ 100,000
 - Louisiana \$ 500,000
- (H) Pilot Charter Boat Telephone Survey in Texas \$ 150,000

MEDIUM PRIORITY

(The first three items have equal priority, the remainder are numbered according to priority.)

- (M-1) Head Boat Port Sampling in Texas, Louisiana, and Florida \$ 125,000
- (M-1) Gulf Menhaden Port Sampling \$ 40,000
- (M-1) Collection of Commercial Landings, Biological, and Shrimp Effort Data
 - Commercial Samplers - GSMFC \$ 245,000
 - State Portion of Cooperative Statistics Program \$ 455,000
- (M-2) Night Fishing Pilot Study in Mississippi \$ 60,000
- (M-3) Recreational Biological Sampling \$ 115,000
- (M-4) Expand Biological Sampling - Florida West Coast (4 samplers) \$ 140,000

(M-5)	Regional Otolith Processing (NMFS PC and Beaufort Labs & FL)	\$?
(M-6)	King Mackerel Cost Earnings Studies for Commercial Vessels in Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida West Coast	\$	120,000
	Florida East Coast	\$	60,000

D. Donaldson requested that statements of work and detailed budgets for the projects designated as High Priority and Medium #1 Priority be prepared by July 24, 2000.

Operations Plan

D. Donaldson requested that Committee members review the Operations Plan and send any comments or corrections to him. Modifications to the Operations Plan will be made pending final decisions on activities, and comments received will be incorporated as well. The revised Operations Plan will be sent Committee members with a mail ballot for approval.

Discussion Regarding Coordination of Fishery-independent Surveys

R. Lukens explained that this would be the beginning of discussions on what would be needed for companion data to fishery-dependent data including the perceptions and ideas of the Committee on this subject. Lukens asked the Committee if they would be interested in moving forward and requested direction to staff. J. Shepard stated that coordinated fishery-independent surveys were needed particularly for interjurisdictional species, as in the case of red drum where NMFS requires fishery-independent data.

M. Osborn questioned how this would relate to SEAMAP, and the availability of funds for this type project. R. Lukens stated that funds would not be available immediately, however, he suggested the possibility of holding a meeting of people who conduct fishery-independent surveys sometime in the future. Lukens stated that this survey would be a companion survey to SEAMAP, not part of it. D. Donaldson noted that this issue was raised at the facilitated session held in 1995 and an identified task under that recommendation was to compile the information available. Donaldson suggested listing the different programs that collect fishery-independent data by the partners and have that as an agenda item to be discussed at the next FIN meeting. J. Moran noted that L. Kline of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has begun to compile this information for the Atlantic coast.

M. Osborn stated that both fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data are necessary to effectively manage fisheries resources, as well as economic data. Osborn noted that cost earning data are needed to answer management questions, and feels that the issue of socio-economic data needs to be addressed before beginning a new project. After Committee discussion, **M. Osborn moved to re-direct the Social/Economic Work Group to evaluate the FIN socio-economic data collection activities and develop some projects for funding consideration for 2002. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Discussion of Legal Issues

D. Donaldson reported that legal issues had been discussed at a recent ACCSP Operations Committee meeting and that these same issues affect the FIN. Donaldson noted that there is no policy to cover a request for data from the regional warehouse. There is an Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among the FIN partners that states when there is an issue of releasing confidential data it goes back to the state of origin. However, it isn't clear if FIN is legally covered by the MOA. Donaldson suggested getting legal advice on this issue and requested input from the Committee on which direction to follow. Following Committee discussion, it was agreed that staff will draft a letter to Bill Hogarth requesting an opinion from the NOAA General Counsel on this matter. Copies of this letter will be sent to P. Kurkul, J. Moran and the FIN Committee.

Review and Approval of 1999 FIN Annual Report

D. Donaldson requested that the Committee review the 1999 FIN Annual Report and send any comments and changes to him by July 10, 2000. These comments and changes will be incorporated in the Annual Report and then it will be published and distributed to members.

Review of FIN Framework Plan

D. Donaldson noted that the review of the FIN Framework Plan is a periodic review of the FIN program documents and it would be appropriate for the Administrative Subcommittee to handle this task. **R. Lukens moved to task the Administrative Subcommittee with the review of the FIN Framework Plan. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Time Schedule and Location for the Next Meeting

The Committee discussed the time and location for the next FIN meeting and agreed to hold that meeting the week of June 4 or June 11, 2000 in St. Thomas or St. Croix, USVI.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

FIN Administrative Subcommittee
Conference Call Summary
February 22, 2000

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m and the following people were present:

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

Purpose of Meeting

R. Lukens stated that the purpose of the meeting was to review and compare the ACCSP and FIN standard definitions and make recommendations regarding additions and changes and begin planning for the external review of the FIN program.

Discussion of FIN Standard Definitions

R. Lukens stated that the FIN Committee believed both programs (ACCSP and FIN) should have comparable definitions and charged the Subcommittee with making recommendations regarding changes to the definitions. The FIN and ACCSP standard definitions were distributed to the group. The group began reviewing the two lists of definitions. It was noted that almost all the FIN definitions are included in the ACCSP standard definitions. The only definition not included was "Harvest". The group discussed the necessity of having "Harvest" in the definition. L. Kline pointed out that the ACCSP group did discuss inclusion of "Harvest" and decided to leave it out of the list. M. Osborn noted that "Harvest" is referenced in the MRFSS and it might be useful to include it but was not adamant that it be put in the definitions. After some discussion, the group decided to leave "Harvest" off of the list. Although Craig Lilyestrom was not present on the call, he sent some comments to D. Donaldson. He suggested that the wording be changed for "Immediate Use Catch" to reflect similar language with the other catch definitions and that Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands language be added to the "Territorial Waters" definition. The group accepted these suggestions. It was also noted that the FIN Committee should ensure that the definitions for "Recreational and Commercial Fisherman" meet the needs of the FIN. These definitions need to be examined and discussed by the FIN Committee at their upcoming meeting. After some discussion, **the Administrative Subcommittee recommended that the FIN adopt the ACCSP standard definitions as the FIN definitions, with the noted changes.**

Discussion of FIN External Review

R. Lukens stated that this group has been charged with beginning the process of planning the external review of the FIN. It was noted that last time, the RecFIN(SE) utilized the Marine Fish Section of American Fisheries Society (AFS). **The Administrative Subcommittee recommended that FIN use Marine Fish Section of AFS again to conduct the review.** The last review consisted of only recreational expertise. **The group recommended that the review panel include not only recreational people but folks from the commercial and social/economic arenas as well.** The format of the review should be similar to the format used in the previous review - presentation about the program and its activities, a question and answer period and time for reviewer to meet and begin developing a report. The group discussed the purpose of the review. It was stated that FIN wants the review team to examine the program as a whole and assess the success of program activities in terms of meeting the program goals and objectives. It was suggested that the review panel should focus of general areas of improvement (i.e. more social/economic sampling, using fishing licenses as sampling frames, etc.) and not on specific methods used to collect the data. The group discussed the time frame for this meeting and decided that the meeting should be held in late January/early February 2001 at a location to be determined. **The group recommended that a subset of the Administrative Subcommittee be charged with setting up and coordinating the review. The Review Work Group will consist of:**

Maury Osborn
NMFS
Dave Donaldson
GSMFC

Commercial representative
(to be appointed by FIN Committee)
Social/Economic representative
(to be appointed by FIN Committee)

Other Business

M. Osborn noted that the IG office is now requiring independent merit reviews for all cooperative agreements that are funded through the NMFS. Last year, NMFS was able to meet the requirements without any additional work, however, this year, it may require some additional action. She stated that if the external review of FIN could be conducted this year, it should meet the needs for this independent merit review. Unfortunately, the external review will not be conducted until 2001. It was noted that this has implications not only for FIN, but SEAMAP, the IJF program, etc. M. Osborn stated she will continue looking into this issue and keep the group informed about any needed action to meet this new requirement.

There being no further business, the call was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

FIN Standard Definitions

<u>Access sites</u>	Areas where fishermen fish from shore, or board or leave a boat to go fishing.
<u>Bank</u>	A stretch of rising land at the edge of a body of water not washed by high water, which could be rocks or an overhanging cliff.
<u>Beach</u>	A level stretch of pebbles, bed rock shore, or sand beside a body of water, often washed by high water.
<u>Breachway</u>	Shore along a connecting channel.
<u>Breakwaters</u>	An offshore structure used to protect a harbor or beach from the forces of waves.
<u>Bridge</u>	A structure carrying a pathway or roadway over a body of water.
<u>Bulkhead, Seawall</u>	A retaining wall along a waterfront.
<u>Catch</u>	The total number or weight (or other measure) of marine resources (fish, invertebrates, others) captured, which are retained, released or discarded.
<u>Discarded or Released Catch</u>	The portion of the catch that is not retained, (i.e. discarded or released at sea dead or alive) and includes incidental take of protected species.
<u>Immediate Use Catch</u>	The portion of the retained catch used Use of the retained catch for food or bait before the end of the trip.
<u>Landed Catch</u>	The total number or weight (or other measure) of all marine resources (fish, invertebrates, others) captured, brought to shore and retained at the end of a trip. This includes catch that is discarded or not sold after being landed. This type of catch is indicated by disposition codes. The number or weight of marine resources caught and kept for immediate use (bait, food) or for landing.
<u>Causeway</u>	An elevated or raised way across wet ground or water.
<u>Charter boat</u>	<i>Trip Definition</i> - Any trip of a vessel-for hire engaged in recreational fishing (VHERF) that is hired on a per trip basis. For survey purposes, and possible alternative definitions, information should be gathered on: a) number of anglers (refers to all marine recreational resource users); b) size of boat; and c) where fishing occurred. <i>Boat Definition</i> - A charter boat is any vessel-for hire engaged in recreational fishing (VHERF) that typically is hired on a per trip basis.

Commercial and
Recreational Fishermen

**NEEDS TO BE DISCUSSED BY FIN
COMMITTEE**

For statistical purposes only, anyone who sells or barter any portion of the catch from a trip is a commercial fisherman for that trip, and any marine resources that are sold or bartered are considered a commercial product. All other fishermen and catches are considered recreational. Commercial trips with effort but no catch are still commercial trips and should be reported.

Commercial Dealer

A seafood dealer is defined as any person or entity other than the final consumer who purchases, ships, consigns, transfers, transports, barter, accepts (maintains) or packs any marine fishery products received from marine resource harvesters or marine aquaculturists. Any marine fishery products landed in any state must be reported by a dealer or a marine resource harvester acting as dealer in that state. Any marine resource harvester or aquaculturist who sells, consigns, transfers, or barter marine fishery products to anyone other than a dealer would himself be acting as a dealer and would therefore be responsible for reporting as a dealer. This definition is provided for purposes of statistical gathering only.

Confidential Information

Information identifiable with any person or entity and prohibited by law from being disclosed to the public. It is data used as a basis for reasoning, discussion or calculation that a person may submit, either voluntarily or as required by Federal or State statute.

Docks

Structure built out over water and supported by pillars/anchors with long-term docking facilities for boats.

Entanglements

A condition in which any part of a protected species is tangled, wrapped and snared, hooked, or otherwise attached to fishing gear.

Fisheries-Dependent

Information collected directly from the commercial, for-hire, and recreational fisheries.

Fisheries-Independent

Information gathered independent of the fisheries through direct or indirect sampling of the stocks.

Fishing Guide

A person hired by a recreational fisherman to aid in fishing.

Fishing Trip

A period of time over which fishing occurs. The time spent fishing includes configuring, deploying, and retrieving gear, clearing animals from the gear, and storing, releasing or discarding catch. When watercraft are used, a fishing trip also includes the time spent traveling to and from fishing areas or locales and ends when the vessel offloads product at sea or returns to the shore. When fishing from shore or man-made structures, a fishing trip may include travel between different fishing sites within a 24-hour period.

Commercial Trip

Any trip where the retained catch is or would be sold or bartered. This includes trips with effort but no catch.

<u>For-Hire Trip</u>	Any shore or vessel trip whose participants are engaged in a marine resources recreational activity that is contracted for a fee.
<u>Recreational Trip</u>	Any trip for the purpose of recreation from which none of the catch is sold or bartered. This includes trips with effort but no catch.
<u>Split Trip</u>	A split trip is any angler trip in which a portion of the landings are sold commercially and a portion of the landings are retained for personal use.
<u>Recreational Trip Duration</u>	A day of fishing measured in hours fished for the shore mode and dock to dock duration for the private/rental boat mode.
<u>For-Hire Trip Duration</u>	Dock to dock duration measured in hours fished.
<u>Gear</u>	Anything used to catch marine resources (See Tables 2 and 22 and Appendix A. for specific definitions)
<u>Gear Configuration</u>	Materials, construction, measure (i.e., mesh size, length of gear), and deployment of gear.
<u>Guideboat</u>	A boat carrying a fishing guide and recreational fishermen engaged in fishing. A guide boat is considered a subset of charter boats for survey purposes.
<u>Guided Beach Trip</u>	Any shore-based trip where a guide is hired or provided.
<u>Guided Fishing Trip</u>	A fishing trip on which a fishing guide is hired to provide services directly related to fishing activities.
<u>Head boat</u>	<p><i>Trip Def.</i> - Any trip of a vessel-for-hire engaged in recreational fishing (VHERF) that is hired on a per person basis. For survey purposes, and possible alternative definitions, information should be gathered on: a) number of anglers (refers to all marine recreational resource users); b) size of boat; and c) where fishing occurred.</p> <p><i>Boat Def.</i> - A head boat is any vessel-for-hire engaged in recreational fishing (VHERF) that typically is hired on a per person basis.</p>
<u>Intercept Survey</u>	On-site interviews which gather data from fishermen during or upon completion of their fishing trip at access sites.
<u>ITIS</u>	Integrated Taxonomic Information System. A taxonomic database for terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals. The product of a partnership of federal agencies collaborating with systemists in the federal, state and private sectors to provide scientifically credible taxonomic information.

<u>Jetties</u>	A kind of wall, usually made of rocks, built into the water to restrain currents or protect a harbor.
<u>Metadata</u>	Metadata are corollary or descriptive information, both numeric and non-numeric, which may qualify or explain primary data.
<u>Mode of Fishing</u>	The method by which a recreational fishing trip is taken, e.g. private/rental boat, shore, or for-hire.
<u>Multi-Trip Fisheries</u>	Multiple trip fisheries are characterized by a large number of relatively short duration trips employing the same type of gear, (e.g. lobster pots), and resulting in catch of the same species (e.g. lobster), or relatively few species.
<u>Non-Consumptive Use</u>	Any activity related to marine resources where no take of marine resources is attempted. Examples include photographing wildlife in natural or managed areas, SCUBA diving to view jewfish, whale watching, etc.
<u>Observer</u>	A trained agent (employee, contractor, grantee, etc.) of any ACCSP partner acting as an unbiased data collector observing fishing operations on fishing vessels at sea.
<u>Other Fishing Modes</u>	Any other non-boat fishing.
<u>Piers</u>	Structure built out over water and supported by pillars without long-term docking facilities for boats.
<u>Port Agent/Sampler</u>	A trained agent (employee, contractor, grantee, etc.) of any ACCSP partner acting as an unbiased data collector, collecting data after the completion of a fishing trip.
<u>Post-Stratification</u>	Summarization of data into strata different from strata design used during data collection.
<u>Price</u>	The dollar amount per landed unit (e.g. pounds, bushels) of a given species (or species landing condition and market category).
<u>Private Access Sites</u>	Privately owned riparian land with dock/shoreline, waterfront residential developments, or marinas inaccessible to intercept sampling.
<u>Private Boat</u>	<i>Trip Definition</i> - Any boat trip for which no fee is paid for use of the boat. <i>Boat Definition</i> - Any boat for which no fee is paid for use of the boat.
<u>Protected Species</u>	Any organism listed under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, or the Migratory Bird Treaty or any state protected species legislation. The term protected species can include protected fish species (e.g., Atlantic salmon, shortness

sturgeon), invertebrates (e.g., Queen conch), sea birds, and plants (e.g., sea oats).

Protected Species Interactions

Any interaction with a fishery which is incidental to such activity and results in the harassment, harm, or death of the species.

Rental Boat

Trip Definition - A trip on a boat that is rented or leased. No captain or crew is hired.

Boat Definition - A boat that is rented or leased. No captain or crew is hired.

Strandings

A marine mammal or sea turtle where: 1) the specimen is dead and/or moribund on the beach or shore or in a coastal waterway, or the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters, or 2) the specimen is alive and is on the beach or shore and is unable to return to the water under its own power, or 3) the specimen is in the EEZ or a coastal waterway where the water is so shallow and/or inhospitable that the specimen is unable to return to its natural habitat under its own power.

Stratification

The process of dividing a population into two or more nonoverlapping comprehensive subpopulations, called strata, for the purpose of conducting independent surveys of these subpopulations.

Stratum

An identifiable sub-population of a population that is being sampled.

Unique Identifier for Commercial Fisheries

The unique identifier for commercial fisheries trip data is the trip start, the vessel identifier, and trip number when a vessel is involved; the trip start, the individual identifier, and the trip number when a vessel is not involved. Reporting of the unique identifier is required of both commercial fishermen and dealer on all submitted reports.

Unique Identifier for Recreational Fisheries

The unique identifier for recreational trip data is the date of return, the sampler number, the record number, and the individual.

Value

The total landed dollar amount of a given species (or species landing condition and market category). Example: 100 lbs of lobster at a PRICE of \$3.50 per pound will have a VALUE of \$350.

Vessel Directory Frame

A list of known vessels operating in a particular fishery which can be used to sample that fishery.

Waterbodies

Bodies of waters used for defining areas fished and identified by standard codes (See Table A.3.).

<u>Inland</u>	Waterbodies less than zero miles from the shoreline - waterbodies found inside the boundaries for territorial waters.
<u>Territorial waters</u>	Inshore - 0-3 miles on Atlantic, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and U.S. Virgin Islands coast, 0-9 nautical miles on Florida and Texas Gulf, and Puerto Rico coast from the shoreline.
<u>EEZ</u>	Exclusive Economic Zone - Offshore waters 3-200 miles on Atlantic coast, 9-200 miles on Florida and Texas Gulf coast from the shoreline.
<u>International</u>	Offshore waters greater than 200 miles from the shore line

FIN Outreach Work Group
Meeting Summary
March 28, 2000
Biloxi, Mississippi

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. and the following people were present:

Michael Bailey, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Rick Wallace, AES, Mobile, AL
Marcia Taylor, UVI, St. Croix, USVI
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Purpose of the Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the main purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the Fisheries Information Network (FIN), discussion of the charge to the work group, and development of an outreach strategy for the FIN.

Overview of FIN

D. Donaldson presented a general overview of the program to provide members with an overall picture of the program. He stated that the FIN consists of two major components: Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)]. Each program has its own mission, goals and objectives and addresses specific issues related to the area of emphasis. The constituencies served by FIN include state and federal agencies responsible for management of fisheries in the region, federal fishery management councils, interstate marine fisheries commissions, and the commercial and recreational fishermen and the associated fishing industries. The mission of FIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial, anadromous, and recreational 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. There are four goals of FIN: (1) Plan, manage, and evaluate commercial and recreational fishery data collection activities; (2) Implement a marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program; (3) Establish and maintain a commercial and recreational fishery data management system; and (4) Support the establishment of a national program. D. Donaldson presented the organizational structures for the program which outlined the different modules of data collection and management and outreach. He also described the process of how the committees operate, and address and resolve issues and problems. He discussed some of the benefits of the program which include compatibility of state and federal data bases; avoidance of duplication of effort; improvements in estimation of fishing effort and catch; providing more precise catch and effort estimates; improvement of the ability to access and analyze most commercial and recreational fishery survey data bases; and providing a common forum to plan, coordinate, and evaluate commercial and recreational data collection and management activities. He reviewed some of the current activities being addressed by FIN such as development of FIN data management system and prototype; initiation of the development of trip ticket programs for Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas; recreational data collection in the Gulf of Mexico; Gulf of Mexico pilot charter boat survey; and development of charter boat vessel frame for Texas and the east coast of Florida. He concluded the presentation by comparing the current and long-term situations regarding commercial and recreational data collection.

Discussion of Charge to Work Group

D. Donaldson stated that the FIN Committee has charged this work group with developing an outreach strategy for FIN. The strategy needs to address methods for disseminating program information to the desired audiences. The group discussed some of the problems and issues regarding outreach. In the past, there has not been much attention given to outreach and because of that, the fishing industry and public have had some negative perceptions about commercial and recreational data collection activities. The job of the FIN outreach program is to address these perceptions and attempt to clarify some of the perceived problems with data collection.

Development of Outreach Strategy for FIN

R. Wallace stated that there are two approaches that can be used in developing an outreach program for FIN. The first is to develop a program that informs the fishing industry and general public about why the activities that are being conducted are being utilized. The other approach is to develop a program that “sells” the activities and is much more directed. After some discussion, the group decided that they should use the approach that informs interested parties about the program. This approach is really a two-pronged method where there is a general component as well as a component that address outreach for specific activities that are being implemented (i.e. trip ticket programs).

The group discussed the types of materials that need to developed for the FIN outreach program. R. Wallace stated that FIN should consider utilizing a contractor to develop these materials. The group could develop a request for proposals (RFP) that solicits proposals from various groups for the development of a strategy for disseminating information about the FIN to the variety of commercial and recreational groups as well as the general public. The group suggested that this strategy should focus a little more on the recreational and general public since many of the commercial groups are aware of the program due to implementation of trip ticket programs in the various states. Although there will be more emphasis on recreational and public groups, the commercial component would not be totally ignored. After some discussion, **the group recommended that the FIN utilize the RFP approach for the development of outreach strategy.** It was noted that FIN should also continue to disseminate program information via newsletters, brochures, etc. The RFP approach would not replace the existing dissemination method, but would enhance the existing ways and improve the distribution of program materials.

The group then discussed the various component of the RFP. The first component is the development of program materials. The following materials were identified by the group:

- Program information - it was noted that there is a lot of existing material that could be modified for distribution
- Brochure - although a brochure has been developed, it would be useful to examine it for potential improvements
- Public service announcements - this is a fairly inexpensive way to provide information to a wide area. These announcements could be designed to include local information depending on where they are presented
- Magazine articles - use of existing program information could be modified into an article format for inclusion into various fisheries group magazines
- Presentation - develop a dynamic presentation for presentation to various target groups such as charter boat associations, CCA, commercial and recreational fishing groups, environmental groups, etc.
- Poster - develop an eye-catching poster about the program that could be distributed and displayed at marinas, fish houses, bait shops, etc.

The group further discussed the idea of developing a FIN presentation for outreach. It was suggested that Sea Grant could be used as a vehicle for conducting these presentations. Since Sea Grant has an extensive network within fishing communities, they could easily provide the presentation to the various groups they talk to during the year. The RFP would provide for training of Sea Grant personnel regarding the presentation and then Sea Grant could make presentations to the various groups within their area. This approach does make the assumption that Sea Grant personnel would be willing to make these presentations as part of their normal activities. The group realized that this issue needs to be further explored and discussed by the FIN Committee.

Another component of the RFP is the development of a dissemination plan. Once the materials have been developed, how will those materials be presented to the targeted groups? This needs to be identified in the proposals to ensure that a structured plan has been considered to properly disseminate the materials. The last component discussed by the group was cost. After some discussion, the group determined that approximately \$50 - 75K should be allocated for this project to ensure quality applicants. The group briefly discussed the target audience of this RFP. It was

suggested that the RFP be distributed to only Sea Grant offices. D. Donaldson noted that FIN may not want to limit the distribution that much but wording in the RFP could be included to encourage Sea Grant offices to apply.

Review of the FIN Outreach Strategy

D. Donaldson stated that he had distributed a draft of strategy for outreach. The group reviewed the strategy and made some minor editorial changes. The group believed that the strategy outlined in the write-up was consistent with the approach developed by the group during this meeting. The revised strategy is attached and will be presented to the FIN Committee for their approval.

The group discussed the next steps in this process. If the recommendations are approved, it would probably be necessary to have another meeting later in the year. To help facilitate that meeting, D. Donaldson noted that he would develop a skeleton RFP and the group could discuss that document, via conference call, prior to the actual face-to-face meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

FIN Outreach Strategy

Target Audience

The target audience for the outreach program for Fisheries Information Network (FIN) will be the general public. It was decided that since the overall design of the program has been decided, it would be more effective to target the public and provide a general overview of the program. As the different components for the commercial and recreational data collection activities come on-line, there will be specific outreach meetings regarding the data collection module(s) being implemented. These meetings will involve participation from the commercial industry and recreational anglers to get feedback about the proposed activities and garner grassroots support. This will help ensure the overall success of the program. The FIN Outreach Work Group will provide guidance and input regarding the outreach materials to individual partners who are implementing specific modules presented to the commercial and recreational arenas.

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) has utilized the approach of specific outreach meetings/workshops regarding several pilot studies being conducted on the east coast. The ACCSP has yet to develop an overall, formal strategy for outreach but it is envisioned that it will be similar to what is developed by the FIN.

Presentation Format

The format of the presentation will be a general educational approach. There will be a general overview of the program, goals and objectives, structure of the program, basic design of the commercial and recreational data collection and management systems, and other pertinent information. This approach will give the audience a basic understanding of the program without providing technical details and thus reduce the probability of confusing the audience. The technical details of the data collection modules will be presented during the specific outreach activities when a module is being implemented.

Mechanisms

The mechanisms that will be used to implement the outreach program are utilizing existing networks as well as using a contractor. Both methods will be utilized to provide the maximum amount of information to the most number of people. This will help insure the success of the FIN.

The method of utilizing existing networks include sending brochures to targeted groups such as recreational fishing clubs and organizations, commercial fishing groups, etc.; providing program information to other organizations that deal with the commercial and recreational fishing industries which can be presented at organizational meetings, provided in newsletters, etc.; and making presentations regarding the FIN to organizations involved in the commercial and recreational fishing industry such as state extension services, Sea Grant programs, etc. The advantage of this method is that it is fairly inexpensive since it will be utilizing an existing infrastructure to disseminate information about the program. The program only needs to develop information for inclusion in brochures, newsletters, etc. The disadvantages of this method are that it provides limited distribution of information in terms of only providing written material, and it does not allow for feedback from the audience.

The other method for implementing the outreach strategy is using a public relations (or related field) contractor to disseminate program information. The advantage of this method is that it utilizes a professional who is trained in the field of disseminating information and has experience in conducting this type of work. Obviously, the disadvantage is that the cost for conducting this type of activity can be extremely expensive and without dedicated funding, nearly impossible to accomplish.

ComFIN Data Collection Work Group
 Meeting Summary
 March 22, 2000
 Clearwater, Florida

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

Guy Davenport, NMFS, Miami, FL
 Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
 Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
 Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL
 David Libby, MDMR, West Boothbay Harbor, ME
 Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Purpose of the Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the main purposes of the meeting were to further discuss the development of the FIN biological sampling module, examine various quota monitoring issues, and finalize the FIN water body codes.

Discussion of the further development of the FIN biological sampling module

D. Donaldson noted that the GSMFC recently entered into a contract with ICF Consulting to develop the data management module for the Biological Module of FIN. This group needed to finalize the biological sampling module for FIN so work can begin on the data management module. The group reviewed the data elements in the existing FIN biological sampling module. The group decided to add several tag number fields for gonads and tissue as well as adding a *tissue type* element to describe the type of tissue that was sampled. In addition, the group add a *total sample weight* element but stated that it needs to be made very clear when a sample can be obtained instead of the complete catch. The group discussed the length and weight elements included in the table. **The Data Collection Work Group recommends that the official FIN weight unit be kilograms with enough decimal places for clarity to grams. The Work Group also recommends that if the FIN length and weight standards are not met by a partner, the actual measurements be included in the data base (not conversions). The type of measurement recorded would be captured in the length and weight type data elements.** The revised module is attached. The group then discussed the existing data collection plan and tracking processes. The group made various modifications to reflect changes in the processes and the revised processes are attached.

The group then discussed the information needed on the envelopes that contain the hard parts that were sampled. Currently, a variety of information is provided. It is envisioned that the amount of information could be reduced to the appropriate tag number (based on what was sampled), port sampler id and date. This would provide a unique identifier that would enable a user to associate the necessary trip information to the ageing structure, gonads, or tissue sample. The group stated that there needs to be additional tables for the age structure, gonads, and tissue samples information. This would allow for the data to be put into the data management system once the samples have been analyzed and the age or other parameters have been determined. These tables need to be linked back to the biological sampling module and can be tracked via the unique identifier. In addition, these tables should include where the samplers are being processed. The Work Group needs to develop these additional tables and ensure that the necessary elements are present that will allow for the linking of all of the data. The group had a long discussion regarding if the tag number should be annual- or trip-based. Obviously, a trip-based number is easier to handle and if the unique identifier is used, it would be the best way to proceed. **After some discussion, the group believed the ComFIN Committee needed to address this issue.**

Quota monitoring issues

D. Donaldson noted that this group has been charged with developing recommendations regarding the various methods for quota monitoring for both commercial and recreational fisheries. To help facilitate these discussions, information about the existing quota monitoring activities in the Southeast and Northeast Regions were reviewed and

discussed by the group. In the Southeast, letters are sent to the major dealers for the various species that are quota-monitored, selecting them to report. These dealers are required to provide landings and other data for various time periods. In the Northeast, dealers report via an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. Dealers are given dealer codes and PINs to access the system and are required to report on a weekly basis. Dealers report all landings (including no landings) in pounds by species. They also provide area fished (by zones). The information is directly inputted into the computer and the system produces confirmation numbers to let the dealers know that their data have been entered.

The group discussed their recommendations regarding commercial quota monitoring. After some discussion, **the group recommended that quota monitoring for the commercial fisheries would ideally be accomplished through electronic trip tickets.** This would allow for timely reporting of the data and allow for effective quota monitoring. Since electronic trip tickets are not currently feasible, **the group recommended that an IVR/phone reporting system, similar to the one used in the Northeast, be used for quota monitoring of the commercial fisheries.** The IVR system would allow for dealers (via codes and PINs) to provide landings data by species and area fished on an established reporting period. The reporting period would depend on the species. The group noted that electronic trip tickets could not be used for the for-hire sector but an IVR/phone reporting system could be utilized to capture landings in the for-hire fishery. The group then discussed quota monitoring for the recreational fisheries. After some discussion, **the group recommended that quota monitoring should not be used as a management tool for recreational fisheries. However, since it is already being used, the group recommended that in order to land quota-monitored species, recreational fishermen would be required to purchase special stamps. In addition to these stamps, a form would be distributed and fishermen would be required to report landings for that particular species. The reporting would be mandatory and fishermen would use an IVR/phone reporting system to provide the data. It was noted that the for-hire sector would be required to report based on the commercial requirements.**

Discussion of FIN Water Body Codes

D. Donaldson stated that he had examined the water body codes in the FIN Data Management System (DMS) and there were only a few codes for Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. The group needs to develop codes for these states so the area fished data element can be completed. It was noted that NMFS has established codes for these areas and it was suggested that FIN uses these codes to describe the inshore areas for these states. The group discussed which codes to add to the system and the revised water body codes are attached. It was noted that G. Davenport will match up the Louisiana inshore codes to the existing offshore grid system and provide that to staff for inclusion into the system. It was suggested that a geo-referenced file be developed to look at the water body codes in a graphical sense. The revised water body codes for the FIN DMS are attached.

Other Business

The group discussed attending the upcoming ACCSP Biological Review Panel meeting at the end of April. D. Donaldson noted that he will not be able to attend this meeting and it would be beneficial if someone from FIN attending the meeting. J. Shepard, P. Campbell and K. Anson will check their schedules and one of them will attend the meeting.

J. Shepard stated that Louisiana is currently developing electronic reporting for their trip ticket program. He noted that several dealers asked if it was possible to develop a data base which will allow dealers to check if fishermen have valid permits for the various species. D. Donaldson stated that a similar program has been developed by zip codes and it should not be a problem to develop one for fishermen's permits. Obviously, this task does not need to be address right now but should be developed as data is fed into the FIN DMS.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

VI. BIOLOGICAL SAMPLING PROGRAM

The FIN will use and expand existing systems to collect biological data on commercial and recreational fisheries, while utilizing regional panels to determine assessment needs of both state and federal partners. The FIN will utilize a formalized process for the development of species priorities and target sampling levels. The objective of the process is to determine the species that will be targeted for size frequency and bioprofile sampling. The procedures are:

- The Data Collection Plan Work Group will coordinate with their agency to identify species of priority (that will need stock assessments), the type and amount of data needed, and the geographic area over which the data need to be collected. The group will meet prior to the FIN meeting and develop a draft data collection plan. The plan will contain state, interstate, and federal priority species, type and amount of data needed, and the geographic distribution of the proposed data collection. This plan will be presented to the Committee at the annual FIN meeting for review and approval.
- This 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.
- Each year, during the annual FIN meeting, the Committee will review progress regarding current year's data collection efforts as well as conduct an evaluation of the prior year's effort, including evaluation of adherence to prior year's plan.

All commercial and recreational data collection programs should collect the standard data elements listed in Table 6, based on the priorities and target levels determined by the Committees. Base level biological data for recreational species should be collected through the site intercept survey and additional samples should be coordinated with the survey. Base level biological data for commercial species should be collected through the port sampling program.

Table 6. Standard data elements of biological sampling.

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	FORMAT
Unique Identifier	Some Combination of Data Elements That Allows for the Unique Identification of this Action. Use Trip Ticket Number If Available	see Table A.1
Record Number	Annual Sequential Interview Number by port sampler	3 digit numeric
Record Type	Random or Bioprofile (length frequency vs. hard parts)	2 digit numeric
Sample Date	Month / Day / Year	see Table A.1
Sampler	Port Agent Code	4 digit numeric
State (Landing)	State Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
County (Landing)	County Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
Sampling Location	Dealer Number	see Table A.1
Gear Code	Gear Code	see Table A.1
Area Fished	Area Code	see Table A.1
Species Code	ITIS species Code	see Table A.8
Landing Condition	Condition Landed (Whole, Guttled, Headed, Etc.)	see Table A.7
Market Size Range	Actual Size Range	4 digit numeric
Market Category	Code that will specify any market or grade categories that affect price, usually size related.	see Table A.6
State (Sampled)	State Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
County (Sampled)	County Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
Total sample weight	Weight of sample	4 digit numeric
Number Measured	Number of Fish Measured	3 digit numeric
Length	Length of Individual Fish (in millimeters)	4 digit numeric
Length Type	Total Length, Standard Length, etc.	2 digit alphanumeric
Weight	Weight of Individual Fish	4 digit numeric
Weight Units	(Pounds, Kilograms, Etc.)	2 digit alphanumeric
Sex	Sex Code	2 digit alphanumeric
Sex Stage	Stage of Reproduction	2 digit alphanumeric
Age Tag Number	Age Structure Identifier, sequential # by port sampler	4 digit numeric
Gonad Tag Number	Gonad Identifier, sequential # by port sampler	4 digit numeric
Tissue Tag Number	Tissue Identifier, sequential # by port sampler	4 digit numeric
Tissue Type	Type of Tissue collected - muscle, eye parts, stomachs etc	see Table A.3

Table A.3. Summary of standard FIN codes and formats for units of measurement, length type, dealer identification, general fishing area, access site type and tissue type.

Data Element	Coding
Units of Measurement	BG: bags or sacks BR: barrels BU: bushels or baskets BX: boxes CM: centimeters DZ: dozens GL: gallons GM: grams HH: hogsheads (1225 pounds; used in sardine industry) KG: kilograms LB: pounds LT: liter MM: millimeters MP: meat pounds MT: metric tons NO: numbers OZ: ounces PS: pounds in shell QT: quarts TH: thousands of standard fish (670 pounds; used in menhaden industry) TN: short tons
Length Type	SL: standard length FL: fork length TL: total length CF: curved fork length CW: carapace width CL: carapace length SD: shell diameter CO: core length LT: lip thickness (for conch, VI) SG: shell length (for conch, VI) SH: shell thickness (clams, NC) CC: curved carapace width (turtles) CU: curved carapace length (turtles)

Data Element	Coding
Dealer Identification	ST1234567 ST: indicates state (or part of dealer ID number in LA) 1234567: indicates dealer ID number
Area Fished	NMFS area codes plus 4 decimal places For the purposes of data management., go with two fields. One for the larger area, and one for the smaller inshore area, i.e. statistical area, sub-area (waterbed code) .0000: 0-3 miles .0001-.9997: Inshore waterbed codes .9998: EEZ .9999: International waters * - The decimal points can also be used for more detailed area data such as 10' grids.
Distance From Shore (generated values for the database)	1 = inland < 0 2 = inshore (0-3 miles on Atlantic and Gulf coasts and U.S. Virgin Islands; 0-9 nautical miles on Florida Gulf coast, Puerto Rico, and Texas coasts (<i>Territorial waters</i>) 3 = EEZ (3-200 miles on Atlantic and Gulf coasts and U.S. Virgin Islands; 9-200 miles on Florida Gulf coast, Puerto Rico, and Texas coasts. 4 = International (Greater than 200 miles)
Access Site Type	0 = NA Public Access 1 = launch ramp 2 = boat slip 3 = moored from dock 4 = other Private Access 5 = personal residence/dock 6 = private locked gate marina 7 = private property unlocked marina 8 = other
Tissue Type	This is a two digit numeric code that designates what type of tissue sample was taken: 01 = Muscle 02 = Eyes 03 = Stomach

DATA TRACKING PROCESS

Objective: Determine whether the size frequency and bioprofile data identified by the FIN Data Collection Plan have been provided.

Procedures:

- **Identify data needs:** This is the development of a data collection plan that will identify priority species for data collection and how much and what type of data should be collected.
- **Tracking of data:** Done by the FIN Data Management System (DMS), utilizing Business Objects software. The ComFIN Survey Coordinator and FIN Data Manager will be responsible for tracking the data. Their duties include:
 - Work with the FIN Data Manager, the Data Program Manager, and the FIN Committee to assure quality control/quality assurance of the data that are collected by the state samplers.
 - Provide constant communication between the GSMFC office and the State Supervisors to assure that sampling assignments are being conducted and that sampling targets are being met and notify FIN Committee when targets are being exceeded.
 - Conduct reviews of data as they are transferred from the State Supervisors to the GSMFC office to identify outliers and to assure the validity of species reported.
 - Assist in ongoing training for state samplers and State Supervisors.
 - Interface, when appropriate, with National Marine Fisheries Service personnel to assure quality control/quality assurance of data that are collected by the state samplers.
- **Analysis of data tracking:** Based on the analysis of the amount, type, and distribution of data that have come in, adjustments can be made, if necessary.
 - Summary reports will be available through the FIN DMS. These reports would contain the progress to date in achieving the data collection goals for the various species. From those reports, recommendations for adjustments in data collection activity based on what has been collected could be developed.
- **Emergency data needs in-season**
 - requestor notifies coordinator of the species and the type, amount, and distribution of data needed
 - conduct conference call (either a work group or the whole committee) to discuss the nature of the emergency data request and its relative priority
 - implement action as determined

000	Unknown	Unknown	0000	Unknown
001	Key West		0000	Offshore Waters
001	Key West		0001	North of Us 1
002	Tortugas		0000	Offshore Waters
003	Everglades		0000	Offshore Waters
003	Everglades		0001	Rookery Bay
003	Everglades		0002	Whitewater Bay
004	Fort Myers		0000	Offshore Waters
004	Fort Myers		0001	Charlotte Harbor
004	Fort Myers		0002	Lemon Bay/Gasparilla Sound
004	Fort Myers		0003	Pine Island Sound/San Carlos Bay
004	Fort Myers		0004	Estero Bay
004	Fort Myers		0005	Rookery Bay
004	Fort Myers		0006	Other Inland Waters
004	Fort Myers		0008	Lake Okeechobee
005	Tampa		0000	Offshore Waters
005	Tampa		0001	Tampa Bay
005	Tampa		0002	St. Josephs Sound
005	Tampa		0003	Sarasota Bay
005	Tampa		0004	Anna Maria Sound
006	Crystal River-Tarpon Springs		0000	Offshore Waters
006	Crystal River-Tarpon Springs		0001	St. Joseph Sound
006	Crystal River-Tarpon Springs		0002	Inland Waters
007	Apalachee Bay		0000	Offshore Waters
007	Apalachee Bay		0001	St. Vin. Sound/Apala. Bay/E. Bay
007	Apalachee Bay		0002	St. George Sound
007	Apalachee Bay		0003	Other Inland Waters
008	Panama City		0000	Offshore Waters
008	Panama City		0001	St. Andrew Bay
008	Panama City		0002	St. Joseph Bay
008	Panama City		0003	West Bay/north Bay
009	Destin		0000	Offshore Waters
009	Destin		0001	Choctawhatchee Bay
009	Pensacola		0002	Escambia Bay
010	Pensacola - Alabama		0000	Offshore Waters
010	Pensacola		0001	Pensacola Bay/east Bay
010	Mobile Bay		0002	Lower Mobile bay
010	Pensacola		0003	Perdido Bay
010	Alabama		0004	Bon Secour Bay
010	Alabama		0005	Little Lagoon
010	Alabama		0006	Upper Mobile Bay
011	Alabama-Mississippi		0000	Offshore Waters
011	Alabama-Mississippi		0001	MS Sound (Mobile Bay to Gulfport Ship Channel)
011	Alabama-Mississippi		0002	MS Sound - AL state waters
011	Alabama-Mississippi		0003	MS Sound - MS state waters

012	E. Louisiana		0000	Offshore Waters
013	Mississippi River Delta		0000	Offshore Waters
014	S.W. Louisiana		0000	Offshore Waters
015	S. Louisiana		0000	Offshore Waters
016	S. Louisiana		0000	Offshore Waters
017	Louisiana-Texas		0000	Offshore Waters
018	Galveston		0000	Galveston - Offshore Waters
018	Galveston		0001	Galveston Bay System
018	Galveston		0101	Offats Bayou to South tip of North Deer Island
018	Galveston		0102	Jones Lake
018	Galveston		0103	Carancahua Reef to North Deer Island
018	Galveston		0104	Bay Harbor to Carancahua Reef
018	Galveston		0105	Mud Island to Bay Harbor
018			0106	Chocolate Bay
018	Galveston		0107	Bastrop Bay
018	Galveston		0108	Christmas Bay
018	Galveston		0109	West Bay - Unclassified Waters
018	Galveston		0201	Cedar Point South to Smith Point: East to Lone Oak Bayou - North to Umbrella Point
018	Galveston		0202	Umbrella Point South to Lone Oak Bayou: East to Black Point - North to HL&P discharge canal
018	Galveston		0203	All waters east of a line from HL&P discharge canal south to Black Point
018	Galveston		0209	Trinity Bay - Unclassified waters
018	Galveston		0301	Clear Lake Channel - South to Eagle Point: East to Houston Ship Channel marker at southern tip of Redfish Island - North to Marker 65
018	Galveston		0302	Bayport Channel - South to Clear Lake Channel: East to Marker 65 - North to Bayport Channel
018	Galveston		0303	All waters north of a line from Bayport Channel east to Lost Reef: Northwest to Baytown
018	Galveston		0304	All waters south of a line from Bayport Channel to Lost Reef - South to Smith Point on the East to and including the Houston Ship Channel to a point at the south end of Redfish Island
018	Galveston		0309	Upper Galveston Bay - Unclassified waters
018	Galveston		0401	Smith Point southward to Intracoastal Canal at Robins Marina: Eastward to Sun Oil Channel at Long Point - North to Robinson Bayou Channel
018	Galveston		0402	Waters east of the line from Sun Oil Channel to the south to Robinson Bayou Channel to the north
018	Galveston		0409	East Bay - Unclassified waters
018	Galveston		0501	All waters lying between the Texas City Dike - South to US 75 Causeway on the west: Pelican Island to the Intracoastal Canal - Eastward to Port Bolivar
018	Galveston		0502	Dollar Point east to Houston Ship Channel Marker 39: South to a line between Port Bolivar and the Intracoastal Canal - Northwest to Texas City Dike

018	Galveston		0503	Eagle Point east to the southern tip of Redfish Island - South to Marker 39 - West to Dollar Point
018	Galveston		0504	Southeastern tip of Redfish Island East to Smith Point: South to Robins Marina, Southwest to and including Houston Ship Channel
018	Galveston		0505	Intracoastal Canal, east of Pelican Island, south to Galveston Sulphur Docks, east including Galveston Channel, north to Fort Travis: west around western end of Port Bolivar to intersection
018	Galveston		0509	Lower Galveston bay - Unclassified waters
019	Freeport/Aransas		0000	Freeport/Port Aransas - Offshore Waters
019	Freeport/Aransas		0001	Matagorda bay
019	Freeport/Aransas		0002	San Antonio Bay
019	Freeport/Aransas		0003	Aransas Bay
019	Freeport/Aransas		0009	Intracoastal Waterway
019	Freeport/Aransas		0101	East Matagorda Bay - All waters east of the Colorado River
019	Freeport/Aransas		0102	From and including the Colorado River west to a line from Palacios Point to Greens Bayou: Includes Tres Palacios and Turtle Bays
019	Freeport/Aransas		0103	From southern shoreline of Carancahua Pass outward to the north side of New Cut where it intersects Matagorda Island - includes Carancahua Bay
019	Freeport/Aransas		0104	From Sand Point westward to Indian Point (mouth of Lavaca Bay) to and including the New Cut Canal, and Pass Cavallo inside of Matagorda Island
019	Freeport/Aransas		0105	Lavaca and Keller Bays
019	Freeport/Aransas		0109	Matagorda Bay - Unclassified waters
019	Freeport/Aransas		0201	San Antonio Bay north of Intracoastal Canal
019	Freeport/Aransas		0202	San Antonio Bay south of Intracoastal Canal
019	Freeport/Aransas		0203	Espiritu Santo Bay
019	Freeport/Aransas		0204	Mesquite Bay
019	Freeport/Aransas		0209	San Antonio Bay - Unclassified waters
019	Freeport/Aransas		0301	Aransas Bay north of Intracoastal Canal includes St. Charles and Copano Bays
019	Freeport/Aransas		0302	Aransas Bay south of Intracoastal Canal to and including Lydia Ann Channel
019	Freeport/Aransas		0303	Redfish Bay east of Aransas Channel
019	Freeport/Aransas		0309	Aransas Bay - Unclassified waters
020	Corpus Christi		0000	Corpus Christi - Offshore Waters
020	Corpus Christi		0001	Corpus Christi Bay
020	Corpus Christi		0002	Upper Laguna Madre
021	Brownsville		0000	Brownsville - Offshore Waters
021	Brownsville		0001	Lower Laguna
022	Mexico		0000	Offshore Waters
052	Honduras-Nicaragua		0000	Offshore Waters
136	Barbados		0000	Offshore Waters
186	Jamaica		0200	Offshore Waters

186	Haiti		0300	Offshore Waters
186	Virgin Islands		0500	Offshore Waters
186	Cuba		0100	Offshore Waters
186	Bahamas		0000	Offshore Waters
186	Dominican Republic		0400	Offshore Waters
186	Puerto Rico		0600	Offshore Waters

Discussion of Recreational Biological Sampling Methods

M. Osborn stated that biological sampling was conducted in 1998 under the MRFSS contract. The group discussed the methods needed for sampling biological data. Biological sampling cannot be added onto the routine MRFSS sampling because it has the potential to impact the sampling productivity and will not reflect representative sampling. Therefore, a separate strata is needed to sample biological information. It was noted that if one is attempting to develop age/length keys, sampling does not need to be representative; however, for information to be included in VPAs, the sampling does need to be representative. A separate site register needs to be developed for sampling. This site register is a subset of the sites which includes sites where a sampler is likely to encounter priority species. This type of sampling would be directed by the FIN data collection plan which will be developed by a work group. There is a meeting scheduled for this work group to begin developing targets for lengths, weights, hard parts, etc. These targets will be used when selecting sites for biological sampling. G. Fitzhugh noted that an integral part of this activity is the analysis of data. Funds need to be allocated for the analysis of the collected information if this activity is to be successful. Budgets for this activity need to include who is responsible and where this information will be processed. After some discussion, **it was recommended the existing MRFSS biological sampling methods be adopted by FIN and that *Implementation of Biological Sampling* be added to the list of potential activities for funding in 2001.**

B. Dixon and G. Fitzhugh asked if the states would be willing to collect biological samples after all MRFSS interviews have been conducted at a site. This would be opportunistic sampling and any information would be greatly appreciated. D. Donaldson stated that he would contact the states and determine their willingness to collect biological samples in 2000.

D. Donaldson noted that it was decided that this module should incorporate not only commercial samples but recreational and at-sea observer, etc. samples as well. Therefore, the group discussed the minimum data elements for the biological sampling module developed by the ComFIN Data Collection Work Group. There was significant discussion regarding the elements and revised table is attached. The revised table represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting. The group discussed adding additional elements for lengths which will allow for multiple length measurements. Some of the group believed that a length type (fork, total, etc.) should accompany each length measurement. It was noted that there needs to be length type since this module will be used not only for finfish but invertebrates, marine mammals, etc. B. Dixon suggested that this module could be set up for finfish only and develop other modules for the other types of organisms. D. Donaldson noted that this is the opposite of the goal of FIN (to develop a comprehensive data management system) and it would not resolve the issues currently being faced with the existing data bases. B. Dixon stated that by allowing length type, there is the potential for creating errors in the data because samplers will not fill in the length type and then the user of the data will not know what type of length was taken. It was pointed out that there will be quality control and assurance procedures in place to address issues like these and these procedures will prevent problems like this from occurring. **There was a great deal of discussion about this issue and the group finally decided that this issue needs to be further discussed and a decision needs to be made by the FIN Committee.**

Minimum Data Elements for the Biological Sampling Module

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	FORMAT
Unique Identifier	Some Combination of Data Elements That Allows for the Unique Identification of this Action. Use Trip Ticket Number If Available. For the recreational component, it will be site #, data, interviewer id.	see Table A.1
Record Number	Annual Sequential Interview Number by port sampler/recreational interviewer	3 digit numeric
Record Type	Type of data collection activity that data was captured under: Recreational: MRFSS; Texas survey; Biological sampling add-on Commercial At-sea observer	2 digit numeric
Sample Date	Month / Day / Year	see Table A.1
Sampler	Port Agent Code/Recreational interviewer ID	4 digit numeric
State (Landing)	State Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
County (Landing)	County Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
Sampling Location	Dealer Number/MRFSS site number	see Table A.1
Gear Code	Gear Code	see Table A.1
Area Fished	Area Code (with detail to lat/long, if possible)	see Table A.1
Depth	Depth of water (in feet) where fishing occurred	4 digit numeric
Landing Condition	Condition Landed (Whole, Gutted, Headed, Etc.). For recreational, this would be a disposition code	see Table A.7
Market Size Range	Actual Size Range	4 digit numeric
Market Category	Code that will specify any market or grade categories that affect price, usually size related.	see Table A.6
State (Sampled)	State Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
County (Sampled)	County Code (FIPS)	see Table A.1
Total sample weight	Weight of sample	4 digit numeric
Species Code	ITIS species code	see Table A.8
Mode	Mode of fish: charter boat, head boat, private/rental, shore	2 digit character
Specimen Method	Method used to collect the specimen	
Number Measured	Number of Fish Measured	3 digit numeric
Length1	First length of individual fish (in millimeters)	4 digit numeric
Length1 Type	Type of measurement taken for first length (total length, forked length, etc)	2 digit alphanumeric
Length2	Second length of individual fish (in millimeters)	4 digit numeric
Length2 Type	Type of measurement taken for second length (total length, forked length, etc)	2 digit alphanumeric
Length3	Third length of individual fish (in millimeters)	4 digit numeric
Length3 Type	Type of measurement taken for third length (total length, forked length, etc)	2 digit alphanumeric
Weight	Weight of individual fish	4 digit numeric
Weight Units	Units weight was collected in (pounds, kilograms, etc.)	2 digit alphanumeric
Sex	Sex Code	2 digit alphanumeric

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	FORMAT
Age Tag Number1	First Age Structure Identifier, sequential # by port sampler/rec interview	4 digit numeric
Age Tag Number2	Second Age Structure Identifier, sequential # by port sampler/rec interview	4 digit numeric
Gonad Tag Number	Gonad Identifier, sequential # by port sampler/rec interviewer	4 digit numeric
Stomach Tag Number	Stomach identifier, sequential # by port sampler/rec interviewer	4 digit numeric
Tissue Tag Number	Tissue Identifier, sequential # by port sampler/rec interviewer	4 digit numeric
Tissue Type	Type of Tissue collected - muscle, eye parts, etc	see Table A.3

ACCSP/FIN Permitting Work Group
Meeting Summary
April 18, 2000
Washington, DC

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. and the following people were present:

Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Jeff Marston, NHFG, Durham, NH
Cheri Patterson, NHFG, Durham, NH
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Christine Johnson, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
John Nagle, NMFS, Gloucester, MA
Dee Lupton, NCMF, Morehead City, NC
Ramon Martinez, PRDNER, Puerta Terra, PR
Robert Sadler, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Steve Koplín, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Purpose of the Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the main purpose of the meeting was to begin the task of developing the permitting module which provides a unique identifier for fishermen, dealers, and others involved in commercial fisheries that is trackable through geographic location and time.

Overview of ACCSP/FIN

D. Donaldson presented a general overview of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) and the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) to provide members with an overall picture of these programs. Both of these programs are state/federal cooperative programs for the collection, management and dissemination of marine commercial and recreational data. The ACCSP addresses both the commercial and recreational aspects of fisheries while the FIN consists of two components: Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)]. The missions of these programs are to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial, anadromous, and recreational fishery data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf regions and to support the development of a national program. There are four major goals of programs: (1) Plan, manage, and evaluate commercial and recreational fishery data collection activities; (2) Implement a marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program; (3) Establish and maintain a commercial and recreational fishery data management system; and (4) Support the establishment of a national program. D. Donaldson explained that each program consists of data collection and management, and outreach components. Under data collection, the programs are designed in a modular format where different data are collected via the different modules. The modules for the programs include recreational catch/effort, commercial catch/effort, biological sampling, social/economic, discards and protected species interactions, vessel registration and permitting. He stated that this group was charged with developing the permitting module for these systems.

Discussion of Charge to Work Group

D. Donaldson stated that the FIN and ACCSP Operations Committees have charged this work group with developing the permitting module for the respective programs. This task is being conducted jointly since both the FIN and ACCSP need to develop this module and by having both groups involved, it will ensure compatibility and comparability between the programs. The main component of the module is a unique identifier for fishermen, dealers, and others involved in commercial fisheries that is trackable through geographic location and time.

Review of Permitting Information

D. Donaldson stated that information has been compiled for the various agencies involved in licensing and permitting on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Since most people are familiar with the existing activities, there wasn't a need to review this information. However, since there was not information regarding activities in the Caribbean, R. Martinez provided an overview of Puerto Rico's licensing system. He stated that the old system did not distinguish between commercial and recreational fishermen. The new law has created four different commercial licenses (full-time, part-time, beginner, and non-resident) as well as creating recreational licenses. Commercial fishermen are now required to report their catch on a monthly basis. The details for these licenses are still being worked out such as cost, duration, etc. In addition to the licenses, commercial fishermen will also be required to purchase special permits to harvest a variety of organisms such as live rock, spiny lobster, conch, tuna, land crab, swordfish, etc.

D. Lupton noted that North Carolina has instituted a new licensing system in their state. She stated that the system was implemented in July 1999. The data base was developed around an identification number which is unique to a fishermen/business/dealer. To purchase licenses, permits, etc., the person must show a photo ID to prove the person is who he/she claims before a license is sold. The unique identifier is a 15-digit participant ID. Under this ID, a person/business can purchase as many licenses and permits as are needed to conduct his/her activities. The participant ID is unique to that particular fisherman/business and is trackable within the state. There are also a variety of quality controls and security measures to ensure that duplicates are not put into the system as well as ensuring that the correct licenses/permits are associated with the correct fisherman/business. D. Lupton noted that this system also handles the registration of vessels. The group discussed utilizing this type of system for ACCSP and FIN. Although the system works quite well in North Carolina, it probably would not be effective for a coast-wide program.

The group then discussed the creation of a unique identifier. At a previous ACCSP Commercial Technical Committee meeting, the group had identified several items that could be used to develop a unique ID. The elements included:

- Birth Month
- First letter of Last Name
- Last letter of Last Name
- First Letter of First Name
- Birth Year
- Birth Day

Sequential number - allows for entries with same individual codes but number will make it unique

The group believed that these elements would create a unique identifier and recommended adopting these elements as the components of the unique ID. It is critical that date of birth and name be collected by the licensing agency to ensure the unique ID can be created. The group discussed who would be responsible for maintaining the master fishermen/dealers data base (which will contain the unique ID) and matching up fishermen/dealers from the partners data bases with the ones in the master set. D. Donaldson stated that for the FIN, the GSMFC will provide this service to the program. The states will be responsible for providing data feeds to the system and responsible agencies (GSMFC for FIN) will run quality control measures to ensure duplicate records are not entered into the system. This will be accomplished by comparing vessel name, vessel number, fishermen name, dealer number, etc. from the partner data bases and the master data base. The group also discussed the need for coordination between ACCSP and FIN regarding maintenance of these systems. As the modules are developed, the details of how the GSMFC and the responsible agency on the Atlantic coast will coordinate will be addressed.

Development of Data Elements for Permitting System

D. Donaldson stated that the first step in developing the permitting module is identification of the necessary data elements. The group discussed the various data elements needed for this module. It was noted that minimum data elements for vessel, fishermen, and dealers need to be developed. The group discussed the various elements for each component and the resulting tables are attached. There was discussion regarding the number of fields needed for addresses. It was noted that in the Northeast Region, 2 fields are used for address while in the Southeast Region, only one field is utilized. **This issue needs to be addressed by the FIN and ACCSP Operations Committee and some standard needs to be adopted.** The group also identified several fields that would be useful if the information could be collected but were not considered minimum data elements. This information included social security number or federal tax ID as well as fax numbers for fishermen and/or businesses.

There was a discussion about federal tax numbers and the possibility of cross-referencing their data base to obtain the tax numbers. Also, the group discussed how the responsible agency ensures that duplicate records are not entered since it appears they could have similar problems with making sure only one number is given to a business. After some discussion, S. Koplin stated that he would contact the U.S. Treasury Department or appropriate agency to explore these issues and report back to the group.

Development of Recommendations for Permitting Standards

D. Donaldson stated that J. Poffenberger had developed a discussion paper regarding issues that needed to be addressed when designing the permitting module. Although most of the issues identified in the paper were addressed by the group, there were still some topics that needed to be discussed. The group talked about how to handle businesses with multiple locations. There are two methods to consider - separate license for each location or one license to cover all locations. It was agreed that having only one license per business would be the preferred alternative. **There was discussion regarding how the various states addressed this issue and it was decided that this issue needs to be discussed by the FIN and ACCSP Operations Committees.** The group then discussed the issue of non-resident dealers. The group talked about how the various states handled the topic of non-resident dealers. Some states do not allow out-of-state dealers while others have a provision to allow a dealer from another state to purchase a dealer license. **Since all states were not represented on the group, they decided that the states should be asked how they handle the issue of non-resident dealers.** This information will be presented to the appropriate committees for their consideration. The issue of frequency of data feeds was discussed. Ultimately, each state should have a point of sales system for licenses which would allow for near real-time updates to the permitting system. Obviously, this is the long-term goal of both programs. In the interim, the frequency of data loads should be often enough to ensure the data is placed into the system in a timely manner. The details of this issue will be worked out as the data management module is developed. The last issue discussed by the group concerned utilizing the permitting system (or subset of it) to check if fishermen/dealers have valid permits and/or licenses. This will allow states to not issue a permit or license to fishermen/dealers who have had their licenses revoked or suspended. J. Nagle noted that the NMFS-NE has already developed a system which will allow a user to check on this information. The web site is <http://www.nero.nmfs.gov>. This site needs to be explored and examined to determine if it can be adapted for use by the ACCSP and FIN.

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

VESSEL PERMITTING MINIMUM DATA ELEMENTS

*Please note that for those elements with *, these elements may not be applicable due to the size of the vessel.*

Data Element	Description/Criteria	Format
Vessel Identification	Unique vessel identifier (Coast Guard or state registration number). These identifiers must be trackable through time and space.	11 digit character
HIN	Hull identification number.	20 digit character
Name	Name of owner.	30 digit character
Physical Address	Physical address of owner.	50 digit character
Mailing Address	Mailing address of owner.	50 digit character
Business Telephone	Business telephone number of owner.	10 digit character
Home Telephone	Home telephone number of owner.	10 digit character
Date of Birth	Date of birth of owner. This is needed to create the unique identifier.	MM/DD/YYYY
State of Registration	State in which vessel is registered currently.	2 character postal code
Vessel Length	Overall length of vessel (feet), as provided in registration documentation.	3 digit numeric plus 1 decimal point
Gross Tons*	Gross loaded weight of the vessel.	3 digit numeric plus 1 decimal point
Net Tons*	Net weight of the vessel.	3 digit numeric plus 1 decimal point
Hull Construction Material	Primary material used to construct vessel hull.	15 digit character
Hold Capacity*	Total hold capacity of the vessel (tons).	3 digit numeric plus 1 decimal point
Year Built	Year the vessel was originally constructed.	4 digit numeric
Horsepower	Total horsepower for all engines on the vessel.	4 digit numeric
License types	Types of licenses and/or permits held for the vessel.	10 digit character
Issue Date	Date licenses and/or permits were issued.	MM/DD/YYYY
Expiration Date	Date licenses and/or permits expire.	MM/DD/YYYY

FISHERMEN PERMITTING MINIMUM DATA ELEMENTS

Data Element	Description/Criteria	Format
Participant Identification	Unique individual identifier (consists of: 1) month of date of birth; 2) first letter of last name; 3) first letter of first name; 4) last letter of last name; 5) year of date of birth; 6) day of date of birth; 7) sequential number. These identifiers must be trackable through time and space.	11 digit character
Name	Name of fisherman. If it is a business, this element would contain the contact person for the business.	30 digit character
Physical Address	Physical address of fisherman.	50 digit character
Mailing Address	Mailing address of fisherman.	50 digit character
Business Telephone	Business telephone number of fisherman.	10 digit character
Home Telephone	Home telephone number of fisherman.	10 digit character
Date of Birth	Date of birth of fisherman. This is needed to create the unique identifier.	MM/DD/YYYY
Business Name	Name of business, if applicable.	30 digit character
Business Physical Address	Physical address of business.	50 digit character
Business Mailing Address	Mailing address of business.	50 digit character
License types	Types of licenses and/or permits held by the fisherman.	10 digit character
Issue Date	Date licenses and/or permits were issued.	MM/DD/YYYY
Expiration Date	Date licenses and/or permits expire.	MM/DD/YYYY

DEALER PERMITTING MINIMUM DATA ELEMENTS

Data Element	Description/Criteria	Format
Participant Identification	Unique individual identifier (consists of: 1) month of date of birth; 2) first letter of last name; 3) first letter of first name; 4) last letter of last name; 5) year of date of birth; 6) day of date of birth; 7) sequential number. These identifiers must be trackable through time and space.	11 digit character
Name	Name of dealer.	30 digit character
Physical Address	Physical address of dealer.	50 digit character
Mailing Address	Mailing address of dealer.	50 digit character
Business Telephone	Business telephone number of dealer.	10 digit character
Home Telephone	Home telephone number of dealer.	10 digit character
Date of Birth	Date of birth of dealer. This is needed to create the unique identifier.	MM/DD/YYYY
Business Name	Name of business.	30 digit character
Business Physical Address	Physical address of business.	50 digit character
Business Mailing Address	Mailing address of business.	50 digit character

FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group
Meeting Summary
May 23, 2000
Miami, Florida

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. The following people were present:

Bob Muller, FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Mike Murphy, FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Behzad Mahmoudi, FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Billy Fuls, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Tut Warren, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Aida Rosario, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Jerry Scott, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, NPS, Homestead, FL
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Purpose of the Meeting

D. Donaldson stated that the main purpose of the meeting was to begin the process of developing the data collection plan for the Fisheries Information Network (FIN). This plan will guide the collection of biological data for commercial and recreational fisheries.

Overview of FIN

D. Donaldson presented a general overview of the program to provide members with an overall picture of the program. He stated that the FIN consists of two major components: Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)]. Each program has its own mission, goals and objectives, and addresses specific issues related to the area of emphasis. The constituencies served by FIN include state and federal agencies responsible for management of fisheries in the region, federal fishery management councils, interstate marine fisheries commissions, commercial and recreational fishermen, and the associated fishing industries. The mission of FIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial, anadromous, and recreational 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. There are four goals of FIN: (1) Plan, manage, and evaluate commercial and recreational fishery data collection activities; (2) Implement a marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program; (3) Establish and maintain a commercial and recreational fishery data management system; and (4) Support the establishment of a national program. D. Donaldson presented the organizational structures for the program which outlined the different modules of data collection and management and outreach. He also described the process of how the committees operate to address and resolve issues and problems. He discussed some of the benefits of the program which include compatibility of state and federal data bases; avoidance of duplication of effort; improvements in estimation of fishing effort and catch; providing more precise catch and effort estimates; improvement of the ability to access and analyze most commercial and recreational fishery survey data bases; and providing a common forum to plan, coordinate, and evaluate commercial and recreational data collection and management activities. He reviewed some of the current activities being addressed by FIN such as the development of the FIN data management system and prototype; initiation of the development of trip ticket programs for Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas; recreational data collection in Gulf of Mexico; Gulf of Mexico pilot charter boat survey; and the development of a charter boat vessel frame for Texas and the east coast of Florida. He concluded the presentation by comparing the current and long-term situations regarding commercial and recreational data collection.

Development of Process for Identifying Amount of Data Needed for Accurate Assessments

D. Donaldson stated that the first step in developing the data collection plan is to devise a process for identifying the amount of data needed. The biological module of FIN relies on the development of this plan. The plan will provide guidance to the port samplers in terms of the type and amount of data needed by species. B. Mahmoudi stated that the

question, “are the data that are being examined representative of the actual landings?” This is a very important question and is critical to the development of the plan. The amount of discards needs to be addressed as well to ensure that an accurate representation of the population is being used to determine sampling levels. The group believed that if inaccurate data were used to develop sampling levels, the samples collected might not provide enough information for fair assessments. D. Donaldson pointed out that this is the first attempt at developing such a plan and although there may be some problems with the data, it is all that is available and the group needs to start somewhere.

Although this group might not be able to develop the number of lengths and otoliths needed at this meeting, it was decided that a matrix for the type of information that needs to be collected can be developed. M. Murphy stated that the types of information that need to be compiled should include species, gear, time, and area components. If these data are compiled for each species, this should provide enough information to begin developing sampling targets. There were several documents which listed the number of lengths and otoliths needed for various species. However, the targets for just one large number were not broken down by regions, areas, gears, etc. This one number does not provide enough guidance to samplers in the field and has the potential to bias the sampling. B. Mahmoudi noted that there are several steps to this process which include, 1) characterization of the population structure; 2) description of the catch, temporally, spatially, and by gear; 3) development of strata structure; 4) catch sample; and 5) subsample numbers. These steps need to occur sequentially to ensure accurate sampling targets. The first step will be to compile the information necessary (development of strata structure) to allow for completion of the other steps.

The group discussed the development of the different strata that are needed. The Gulf of Mexico needs to be divided into various regions. Florida is divided into 3 regions; Alabama and Mississippi are one region each; Louisiana is divided into 3 regions; and Texas is divided into 2 regions, for a total of 10 regions Gulf-wide. In the Caribbean, Puerto Rico is divided into 2 regions and the U.S. Virgin Islands would probably be divided into 2 or 3 regions. Next, each region is subdivided into an inshore and offshore component. The last division is temporal and is divided into 6 sampling periods (2-month intervals). This division is used since that is how the recreational data are collected and this allows for easy combination of the commercial and recreational data. Essentially, the basic matrix for the Gulf consists of 120 cells (10 regions x 2 areas x 6 sampling periods). For the Caribbean, the matrix consists of 60 cells. Once a basic structure is developed, then sampling targets can be compiled, by species, by gear, for each cell. That does not mean that all cells will have a number of samples needed. It was noted that for some species and gears, there will be blanks for certain cells (king mackerel for various regions during various times of the year). The first step would be to compile the number of fish landed and the number of fish sampled for each identified region. Once these data are available, the landed number vs. sampled number can be compared, gaps can be identified, and appropriate sampling targets can be developed. B. Muller noted that Florida has already compiled this type of information for various species. He has not yet compared the landed vs. sampled information but plans to do that in the near future. The group discussed the types of species that this information should be compiled for and it was decided that species under management should be given priority. There were several lists of species from various sources presented to the group and from these lists, the group developed a list of target species (Attachment A).

The group discussed the next step in this process. It was decided that the other agencies need to compile information similar to what Florida has put together. Each state will compile data for both landed and sampled numbers of fish for the various regions, areas, and sampling periods within their state. B. Muller will provide an example of what Florida has compiled to provide a guide for completing this task. D. Donaldson will send out a memo asking each work group member to compile this information. Once this information has been compiled, another meeting will be set up. The purpose of this meeting will be to compare the number of landed fish vs. number of sampled fish. From this comparison, the group will begin to compile the number of samples needed to ensure successful assessments for the identified species.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

FIN SPECIES LIST***GULF OF MEXICO***

Red Snapper
Vermilion Snapper
Yellowtail Snapper
Mutton Snapper
Lane Snapper
Gray Snapper
Red Grouper
Black Grouper
Gag Grouper
Scamp
Snowy Grouper
Yellowedge Grouper
Warsaw
Speckled Hind
King Mackerel
Spanish Mackerel
Cobia
Dolphinfish
Red Drum
Golden Tilefish
Greater Amberjack
Lesser Amberjack
White Grunt
Red Porgy
Gray triggerfish
Wreckfish
Hogfish
Spiny Lobster
Golden Crab
Black drum
Gulf flounder
Southern flounder
Spotted seatrout
Striped mullet

CARIBBEAN

Bluestriped Grunt
Butterfly Fish
Coney
Gray Triggerfish
Honeycombed Cowfish
Jolthead Porgy
King Mackerel
Mutton Snapper
Queen Snapper
Queen Triggerfish
Red Hind
Redtail Parrotfish
Scrawled Cowfish
Silk Snapper
Stoplight Parrotfish
White Grunt
Yellowtail Snapper
Spiny Lobster
Queen Conch

ITEMS FOR FUNDING CONSIDERATION IN 2000	
Activity	Cost
Coordination and Administration of RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN Activities	\$355,000
Purchase of full access Business Objects software	\$220,000
Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data	\$2,150,000
Alabama increased sampling	\$ 90,000
Charter boat telephone survey in Texas	\$
Head Boat Port Sampling in Texas, Louisiana, and Florida	\$125,000
Gulf Menhaden Port Sampling	\$ 40,000
Development and Implementation of FIN Data Management System	\$150,000
Recreational Biological Sampling	\$
Collection of Commercial Landings, Biological, and Shrimp Effort Data	\$700,000
Trip Ticket Program Development	\$300,000
Louisiana operations	\$500,000
Night Fishing Pilot Study	\$300,000

**COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (ComFIN)
MINUTES
Thursday, June 15, 2000
Austin, Texas**

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

Members

Kevin Anson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Guy Davenport, NMFS, Miami, FL
Christine Johnson, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Wilson Laney, USFWS, (proxy for D. Frugé)
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Joe O'Hop, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL
Tom Schmidt, NPS, Homestead, FL
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA

Others

Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Joe Moran, ACCSP, Washington, DC
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Vicki Swann, TPWD, Austin, TX

Staff

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

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) meeting held on September 23, 1999 in Tampa, Florida were approved with minor editorial changes.

Review of List of Personnel with Access to Confidential Data

G. Davenport distributed the list of personnel with access to confidential data and asked that Committee members verify the information on that list. Davenport also provided forms for new employees. R. Lukens asked if the non-disclosure forms currently being used are for species under federal management only and Davenport responded that he understood they cover any data considered confidential and in the possession of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Lukens then noted that for state and federal data housed at Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) it may become necessary to develop an interstate non-disclosure form as well as the federal form. Davenport noted that this issue would be covered in a letter to W. Hogarth. A discussion followed on what constitutes confidential data and it was noted that license data are public record, however fisheries data attributable to an individual is considered confidential. J. Moran reported that the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is dealing with the same issue and noted that each partner sharing information should have a signed copy of the non-disclosure forms.

Discussion of Data Management Issues

A list of items for discussion was developed by FIN Programmer/Analyst M. Sestak and was distributed to the Committee. D. Donaldson reported that the only people who currently have access to the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) data management system are state personnel who have signed a federal non-disclosure form. He stated that he

needs forms from federal employees. Donaldson noted that currently anyone that is a named user has full access to all data. J. Shepard suggested that an intermediate format be developed for port agents to have access to review this data for accuracy before it is made available to others. There was Committee discussion on the confidentiality issue and non-disclosure forms and it was noted that the FIN has no legal authority. The Committee then discussed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) noting that it had been reviewed by each State Attorney, however it was unclear as to the legal standing of the MOA in the event of a lawsuit to relinquish data. The Committee agreed to have staff write to NOAA General Counsel for an opinion on the legal standing of the MOA. If it is determined that the FIN MOA does have legal standing, a FIN non-disclosure form could be designed. D. Donaldson noted that the signatories of the MOA include the five Gulf states and NMFS, but not the other FIN partners. Discussion followed concerning re-opening the MOA for other FIN partners. W. Laney noted that the USFWS would probably not need to access confidential data except in the case of stock assessment information. It was noted that the Fishery Management Councils as well as National Park Service would also require access in the event of stock assessment needs. J. Moran noted that the ACCSP had discussed at length the issue of public access and confidentiality and the Coordinating Council approved that the "rule of three" would prevail. The discussion on access to data continued and several issues were raised including recreational fisheries, trip ticket systems, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), charging for copies of data reports, personnel to handle data requests, legal issues, etc.

The Committee discussed reactivating the Data Management Work Group. **J. Shepard moved to activate the Data Management Work Group and charge them with reviewing these data management issues and report back to the ComFIN Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The Work Group will meet later this year and will be comprised of the following: J. Shepard, G. Davenport, P. Campbell, M. Sestak, M. Cahall, representatives from NMFS Headquarters and Florida Marine Research Institute.

Discussion of Reconciliation of Landings and Quota Monitoring Data

D. Donaldson reported to the Committee that J. Poffenberger raised the issue of assuring that the landings data for a state match the quota monitoring data by developing a formal process for reviewing these data sets. Donaldson noted that the implementation of trip tickets should prevent some discrepancies. G. Davenport stated that reconciliation of data is being done by hand at this time by reviewing and verifying the data and forwarding this information to the states. Committee members then discussed possible methods to automate this process by comparing trip ticket data, quota monitoring data, and log book data using the FIN data management system. The Committee agreed that M. Sestak of GSMFC will contact G. Davenport to discuss this issue. G. Davenport noted that since Texas does not have trip ticket data they will have to develop a method to provide their data, possibly utilizing a monthly report. M. Sestak will contact P. Campbell to discuss this issue.

Discussion of Commercial Port Sampler Meetings

D. Donaldson reported that a Gulf of Mexico Port Sampler meeting will be held in Tampa, Florida on August 9 and 10, 2000. There will be a jack identification and otolith workshop at the Florida Marine Research Institute on August 9. On August 10 a meeting will be held with the samplers reviewing ComFIN activities, the Cooperative Statistics Program, developing rapport with dealers, problems and issues encountered in the field, etc. Samplers from Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, as well as federal port agents will attend this meeting. Since federal samplers from Texas and Louisiana have recently attended a similar meeting, two representatives from these states' agencies will also attend the upcoming meeting. Donaldson noted that a Caribbean port samplers meeting is tentatively scheduled for October of this year.

Election of Officers

D. Donaldson noted that all members of the Committee are eligible to be elected as officers of this Committee. P. Campbell of Texas was elected Chairman and J. Shepard of Louisiana was elected Vice-Chairman. These offices are for a two year term.

Other Business

D. Donaldson noted that the subjects recently discussed at both the RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN meetings are not exclusively recreational or commercial issues, but crossover into both areas. Donaldson asked the Committee for their thoughts on combining the recreational and commercial sectors into the FIN Committee, continuing to meet for two and a half days, allowing a half day for discussion of funding priorities. R. Lukens noted that this action would require

restructuring the Framework Plan which will be under review in the near future by the Administrative Subcommittee. The Administrative Subcommittee will discuss revising the Framework Plan to change the structure to one Committee or to have the three Committees continue as they are. All Committee members will be asked for their input via e-mail. The Committee agreed to target the 2001 meeting for this change pending approval by the FIN Committee. It was noted that when voting, representatives of the same agency would have to caucus.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

APPENDIX C

Goals and Objectives

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

- Objective 1 To establish and maintain a FIN Committee consisting of MOU signatories or their designees to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the program.
- Objective 2 To develop and periodically review a Framework Plan that outlines policies and protocol of the program
- Objective 3 To develop annual operation plans, including identification of available resources, that implement the Framework Plan.
- Objective 4 To distribute program information to the cooperators and interested parties.
- Objective 5 To conduct a program review at least every five years of operation to evaluate the program's success in meeting needs in the Region.

GOAL 2: To implement and maintain a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.

- Objective 1 To characterize and periodically review the commercial and recreational fisheries and identify the required data priorities for each.
- Objective 2 To identify and periodically review environmental, biological, social and economic data elements required for each fishery.
- Objective 3 To identify, determine, and periodically review standards for data collection, including statistical, training and quality assurance.
- Objective 4 To identify and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting FIN requirements.
- Objective 5 To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet FIN requirements.
- Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection methodologies and technologies.

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

- Objective 1 To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the FIN data management system.
- Objective 2 To periodically evaluate the hardware, software and communication capabilities of program partners and make recommendations for support and upgrades.
- Objective 3 To implement, maintain, and periodically review a marine commercial and recreational fishery data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs.
- Objective 4 To develop, maintain, and periodically review standard protocols and

documentation for data formats, inputs, editing, storage, access, transfer dissemination, and application.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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