

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

JANUARY 1, 2001 - DECEMBER 31, 2001

JUNE 2002

Number 105

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 an MOU and a draft framework plan for the ComFIN. During the development of the ComFIN MOU, the SCSC, in conjunction with the RecFIN(SE) Committee, decided to combine the MOU to incorporate the RecFIN(SE). The joint MOU creates the FIN which is composed of both the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE). The MOU confirmed the intent of the signatory agencies to participate in implementing the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE).

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

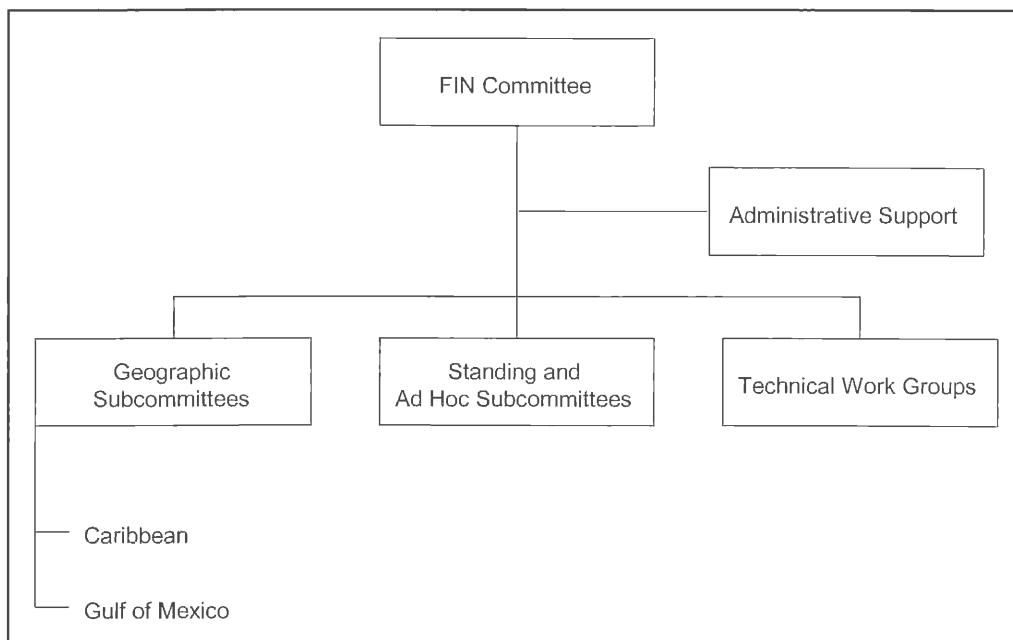


Figure 1. Organizational structure of the FIN.

The FIN Committee consists of the signatories to the MOU or their designees, and is responsible for planning, managing, and evaluating the program. Agencies represented by signatories to the MOU are the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Puerto Rico Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Caribbean Fishery Management Council, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

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

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

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The FIN is a comprehensive program comprised of coordinated data collection activities, an integrated data management and retrieval system, and procedures for information dissemination. Activities during 2001 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 meeting was held in June 2001. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 2001 and instruction to Administrative Subcommittee and the Data Collection, Biological/Environmental, Social/Economic, Outreach, Data Collection Plan, Registration Tracking, Data Management and ad hoc work groups to either begin or continue work on these tasks;
- development of the 2002 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 2001;
- 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 2002;
- 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 2001 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:

- The FIN Outreach Work Group met (via conference call) in January 2001 to review the draft Outreach RFP which was designed to solicit proposals for the development of an outreach program for the FIN.
- The ACCSP/FIN Registration Tracking Work Group met in February 2001 to continue the huge task of developing a system that provides a unique identifier to fishermen, dealers and other involved in the commercial fisheries that is trackable through geographic location and time.
- The Administrative Subcommittee also met (via conference call) in February and April 2001 to review and provide recommended changes to the FIN Framework Plan.
- The FIN Gulf of Mexico Subcommittee met in March 2001 to discuss the development of a feasibility study for using marine recreational fishing licenses as a sampling frame in the Gulf of Mexico.
- The ComFIN Data Collection Work Group also met (via conference call) in March 2001 to discuss the development of the fishery module and discuss the development of the discards module.

- Representatives from the Gulf states, GSMFC and NMFS met in March, September and November 2001 to review the performance of the MRFSS intercept survey and review and evaluate January - December (2001) catch and effort data.
- The FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group met (via conference call) in April 2001 to determine how to allocate sampling targets for each of the established cells. From this, a draft data collection plan for the FIN will be developed. This plan will guide the collection of biological data for commercial and recreational fisheries.
- A program review of the FIN occurred in April 2001 to evaluate the FIN's success in meeting the data collection and management needs in the Southeast Region and determine the effectiveness of the FIN program in meeting its stated goals, objectives and mission.
- The RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group met in May 2001 to discuss the optimization of sampling for offshore and inshore fishing activity; update on the night fishing pilot study; status of tournament sampling; review of recreational biological sampling methods; and review and action on the FIN metadata module.
- The Social/Economic Work Group also met in May 2001 to review ongoing social/economic data collection activities and the development of a social/economic pilot study in the Gulf of Mexico for funding consideration in 2002.
- The Administrative Subcommittee met in July 2001 to discuss revising the program review process, developing a new time line for the FIN, and developing a clearer charge to the Outreach Work Group.
- The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee met in August 2001 to discuss the finalization of activities for funding for the 2002 FIN cooperative agreement.
- The Caribbean commercial port samplers met in October 2001 to address a variety of commercial issues. The main topics of discussion were the status of Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN), discussion of Gulf of Mexico port samplers data collection methods, fisheries research activities in the Caribbean, discussion regarding adaptation of sampling strategies for use in the Caribbean and a round table discussions.
- The Gulf of Mexico commercial port samplers met in November 2001 to address a variety of commercial issues. The main topics of discussion were the status of Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN), discussion of law enforcement and confidentiality issues, presentation of collection of social/economic data, trip ticket programs presentations from Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama and other pertinent issues. In addition, there was an otolith extraction technique workshop for red snapper, king mackerel, southern flounder and other species.

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 a continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data - This task provided for the conduct of the MRFSS survey in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida for shore, for-hire, and private modes, an activity under the RecFIN(SE). This task provided for coordination of the survey, a field intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. These data were combined with the NMFS effort estimate telephone survey. In addition, the states conducted supplemental sampling of the intercept portion for the MRFSS for charter boats in 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 a 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 a continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Commercial Fisheries Data Collection Activities - This task provided for sampling of gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels which operate in Louisiana as well as 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. For menhaden, 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. For collection of shrimp effort, area fished, size frequency, and aging data, 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 a continuation of an activity from the previous year although the menhaden and effort and ageing activities were combined.

- 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 an agreed upon schedule. It is the next step for implementing a regional system for FIN.
- 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.
- Night Fishing Pilot Survey for Shore Mode in Mississippi - This task provided for the conduct of a pilot survey for developing a night sampling site register on the Mississippi coast for shore mode as well as conducting an intercept survey for night fishing activities. This information is potentially needed in order to improve estimates of recreational fishing catch and effort. The shore fishing mode was the primary target mode for the development of the nighttime site register and intercept survey. The GSMFC/NMFS produced expanded estimates of catch and effort by wave using the existing MRFSS methodology. These estimates will be compared with daytime catch estimates to determine if significant differences exist between day and night fishing activities.

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 2001 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. 2001. *2002 Operations Plan for Fisheries Information Network (FIN)*. No. 91 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 25 pp + appendix.
- FIN Committee. 2001. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 2000 - December 31, 2000*. No. 97 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 18 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.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR FIN 2001 - 2005

[Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
Planning, Management, and Evaluation					
FIN Committee					
Maintenance of FIN Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Development of annual operations plans	X	X	X	X	X
Support establishment of MRF surveys in PR & VI	X	X	X	X	X
Identify funding needs for MRF programs	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination					
Implement outreach strategy	X	X			
Develop outreach materials and list of users		X			
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

Data Collection (continued)	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
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	
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 2001

Kevin Anson Alabama Marine Resources Division	Barbara Kojis Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife
Steven Atran Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council	Craig Lilyestrom Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources
Page Campbell Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Ron Lukens Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Kerwin Cuevas Mississippi Department of Marine Resources	Daniel Matos Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources
Guy Davenport National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Fisheries Science Center	Joe O'Hop Florida Marine Research Institute
Bob Dixon National Marine Fisheries Service Beaufort Laboratory	Maury Osborn National Marine Fisheries Service Headquarters Office
Doug Frugé US Fish and Wildlife Service	Tom Schmidt National Park Service
Graciela Garcia-Moliner Caribbean Fishery Management Council	Joe Shepard Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Lee Green Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	
Steve Holiman National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office	
Christine Johnson Mississippi Department of Marine Resources	

TABLE 3.

FIN SUBCOMMITTEE AND WORK GROUP MEMBERS FOR 2001

FIN Administrative Subcommittee

Kevin Anson Alabama Marine Resources Division	Ronald Lukens Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Bob Dixon National Marine Fisheries Service Beaufort Laboratory	Maury Osborn National Marine Fisheries Service Headquarters Office
Doug Frugé U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Joe Shepard Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Lisa Kline Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	

FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group

Mark Alexander Connecticut Marine Fisheries Division	Dee Lupton North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
Page Campbell Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Maury Osborn National Marine Fisheries Service
Bruce Joule Maine Department of Marine Resources	Joe Shepard Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Lisa Kline Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	
Ron Lukens Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission	

FIN Social/Economic Work Group

Darren Benjamin
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Walter Keithly
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Brian Bohnsack
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Tony Lamberte
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Manuel Valdez-Picinni
Puerto Rico Sea Grant Program

FIN Outreach Work Group

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Marcia Taylor
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Quenton Dokken
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Rick Wallace
Alabama Sea Grant Extension Service

Graciela Garcia-Moliner
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FIN Registration Tracking Group

Mike Cahall
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Page Campbell
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Carlos Farchette
Virgin Islands Department of Planning
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Tom Hoopes
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Christine Johnson
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Steve Koplin
National Marine Fisheries Service
Silver Spring

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North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Jeff Marsten
New Hampshire Fish and Game

Ramón Martínez
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Cheri Patterson
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Gene Proulx
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FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group

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Bob Muller
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FIN Data Management Work Group

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Mike Sestak
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Joe Shepard
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
Fisheries

Guy Davenport
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Tom Sminkey
National Marine Fisheries Service
Headquarters Office

Joe O'Hop
Florida Marine Research Institute

ComFIN Data Collection Work Group

Kevin Anson
Alabama Division of Marine Resources

Dee Lupton
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

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Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

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Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
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Guy Davenport
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Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Geoff White
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Barbara Kojis
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group

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Thomas Schmidt
National Park Service

Kerwin Cuevas
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

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Bob Dixon
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Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Bryan Stone
South Carolina Department of Natural
Resources

Barbara Kojis
U.S. Virgin Islands Division of Fish and
Wildlife

APPENDIX A

2001 Operations Plan

**2001 Operations Plan for the
Fisheries Information Network in the
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 2001 to December 31, 2001

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 2001. 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 2001 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a ComFIN activity; an 'R' denotes a RecFIN(SE) activity; and an 'F' denotes a FIN activity.

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

Objective: Develop and implement a trip ticket program for the Southeast Region.
Team Members: Gulf states and Data Collection Work Group
Approach: With available funds, the states of Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama will continue the implementation of 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: Mississippi, Alabama and Texas began implementation in 1999 and will continue working on it during 2001.

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

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

Product: Collection of recreational fisheries data for the Gulf of Mexico.
Schedule: This is an on-going task.

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

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

Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, and NMFS

Approach: For charter boats, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida have implemented the Charter Boat Telephone Survey. Texas has compiled a charter boat vessel directory which will enable the state to implement the telephone survey in Texas. Regarding head boats, the FIN will coordinate with the ACCSP and await the outcome of the South Carolina pilot survey which is comparing the MRFSS RDD, captain telephone survey, and mandatory logbook methodologies.

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

Product: For-hire survey methodology

Schedule: FIN staff will attend For-Hire Subcommittee meetings to keep informed about the South Carolina Study.

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 costs, and staff time.

Product: Collection of necessary commercial data

Schedule: This task is an on-going activity.

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 costs, and staff time.
Product: Collection of necessary menhaden data
Schedule: This task is an on-going activity.

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 costs, and staff time.
Product: Collection of necessary head boat data
Schedule: This task is an on-going activity.

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

Objective: To design, implement, and maintain a marine commercial and recreational fisheries data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).
Team Members: FIN and ACCSP program partners.
Approach: The FIN will continue to develop the Data Management System. Development of the permitting module and finalization of the biological sampling module will be address by the FIN Data Manager. These modules will be used by both FIN and ACCSP. FIN will continue to work in conjunction with the ACCSP to ensure compatibility and comparability between the programs.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: FIN data management system
Schedule: A contract for development of the permitting module will be initiated in 2001.

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 FIN and ACCSP are currently developing a data management system for their respective coasts. As part of the development, standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application are being developed. Through the involvement with the ACCSP Computer Technical Committee, the FIN will provide input into the development of this information.

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

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

Schedule: The FIN began addressing this issue during 2000 and will continue working on it in 2001.

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

The tasks below cover all 2001 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a ComFIN activity; an 'R' denotes a RecFIN(SE) activity; and an 'F' denotes a FIN activity.

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

Objective: Develop a program design document for FIN

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: Using the information developed from the Committee and various work groups, the Committee has drafted a plan which will be used by the program partners to implement FIN. The draft document was presented to the Committee in 1998. The Committee will continue working on refining the document as the various components of the program are developed. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Program design document

Schedule: A draft of the revised program design document will be reviewed by the FIN Committee at the 2001 meeting.

Task B2: Annual Operations Plan, 2002 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2002 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 2002.

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

Product: 2002 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by spring 2001 and addressed by the Committee at the 2001 meeting.

Task B3: Development of Funding Initiatives to Establish Marine Recreational Fisheries (MRF) Surveys (Goal 1, Objective 3) (R)

Objective: Support the establishment of long-term, comprehensive MRF surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Work Group has been working on this issue for several years. In 2000, the NMFS secured funding for conducting the MRFSS in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. The FIN will continue to 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 continue MRF surveys in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. The PRDNER has secured funding for implementing an MRF survey in Puerto Rico.

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

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

Schedule: The Work Group will continue monitoring this task in 2001.

Task B4: Information Dissemination (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Team Members: FIN Committee and staff

Approach: The Committee will distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties. Each committee member is responsible for maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the staff. In addition, the MRFSS staff has developed a home page where users are able to access the MRFSS data for their use. The user is able to specify the area, species, gear, etc. that he/she is interested in obtaining. Also, the GSMFC has developed a home page 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 B5: Implementation of Outreach Program (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Further development and implementation an an outreach program for FIN

Team Members: FIN Outreach Work Group/FIN Committee

Approach: The Work Group has developed a strategy for outreach. A request for proposals (RFP) will be developed 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 FIN will also continue to disseminate program information via newsletters, brochures, etc. The RFP will request the development of program materials such

as program information, brochure, public service announcements, magazine articles, a presentation, and poster.

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

Product: FIN outreach program

Schedule: The Work Group met in early 2000 and will meet in 2001 to address the development of the RFP.

Task B6: Conduct FIN Program Review (Goal 1, Objective 5) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee/Administrative Subcommittee

Approach: The FIN Committee will conduct an external program review. A written report will be prepared by an external review team and presented to all the FIN signatory agencies, with a recommendation on the success and 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: A review panel will be selected and the review meeting will be scheduled for early 2001.

Task B7: 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 FIN.

Team Members: ComFIN 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 2001.

Task B8: 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 conducting 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. Also, the Work Group will meet during the year to explore the possibility of conducting a pilot survey in the Gulf of Mexico. The Committee agree to include members of the Work Group on the ACCSP committee for social and economic issues. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

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

Product: Social/Economic data collection module and data collection surveys for collection of the data.

Schedule: The Work Group began addressing this issue during 1998 and will continue working on it during 2001.

Task B9: 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 Work Group utilized existing procedures for the Trip Interview Program and other related information. The Work 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 started addressing this issue in 1998 and will continue working on it during 2001.

Task B10: Development of Metadata Database (Goal 2 , Objective 2) (F)

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

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

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 Work Group recommended that the FIN Data Manager begin developing the data structure for the data base

and develop a time frame for creating the structure as well as inputting the fishing regulations information into the system. Once the fishing regulations information is in the system, subsequent categories to be collected will be determined by the Committee.

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

Product: Development of metadata module

Schedule: The initial development of the data base structure began in 2000 and will continue in 2001. The compilation of these data will be an ongoing activity.

Task B11: Development of Permitting/Licensing Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Development of a permitting module for FIN.

Team Members: Permitting Work Group

Approach: In conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group will continue the development of the permitting system for both programs. This module will provide a unique identifier for fishermen, dealers, and others involved in commercial fisheries that is trackable through geographic location and time. The data management structure will also be developed in 2001. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

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

Product: Permitting module

Schedule: The Work Group addressed this issue in 2000 and will meet in 2001 to continue development of this module.

Task B12: 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 costs, and staff time.

Product: FIN quality assurance and quality control document

Schedule: The document will be revised as new and existing modules are addressed. This is an ongoing activity.

Task B13: 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 the Caribbean. These workshops will be attended by the state and federal port agents from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands, the ComFIN chairman, appropriate NMFS staff and other interested personnel. Some of the suggested topics for these meetings 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- and late-2001.

Task B14: 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 B15: 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. From this information, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts in the Southeast Region.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: Recommendations for reducing duplicative data collection and management efforts
Schedule: This is an ongoing task.

Task B16: 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 met and further investigated the issues of collecting night fishing data. The group needs to identify a smaller geographic area (Mississippi or Alabama) 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 allow RecFIN(SE) to decide how to proceed. The group developed a more detailed proposal for collecting data at night which included a justification for doing night fishing activities. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.
Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: Detailed plan for the compilation of night fishing activities in the Southeast Region.
Schedule: This task will be continued to be addressed in 2001.

Task B17: Collection of Tournaments Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Collect appropriate information from fishing tournaments, and integrate with other marine recreational fisheries data.
Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group
Approach: A list that identifies all ongoing tournaments in the Southeast Region has been compiled and reviewed by the Committee. The Work Group met and discussed this issue. It was decided 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. Since NSIL is currently developing methods for sampling tournaments, FIN will await the outcome of these activities before moving forward with this issue. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: Recommendations regarding sampling methods for tournaments
Schedule: The Committee addressed this issue in 1998 and the Work Group will meet in 2001 to continue examining this issue.

Task B18: 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 B19: 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 the collection of 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 NMFS and Caribbean personnel to begin development of this plan. As trip ticket systems are implemented Gulf-wide, the data from these systems will allow for better allocation of samples. Accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Data collection plan

Schedule: The group met in 2000 and will continue to do so into the future.

Task B20: Evaluation of Fishery-Independent Data Activities (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Evaluate current fishery-independent data activities

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The Committee will compile a list of fishery-independent activities being conducted in the region. From this list, the Committee will evaluate each activity and make standardization recommendations to appropriate fishery-independent programs.

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

Product: Standardize fishery-independent program

Schedule: The FIN Committee began discussing this issue at the 2000 meeting and will continue addressing it during 2001.

Task B21: Establish/modify recreational licenses (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee

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

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

Product: Recreational fishing licenses suitable for use as sampling directory

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

Task B22: Evaluation of potential improvements to intercept site selection process (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The MRFSS staff has been working on this issue for several years. The Committee needs to discuss the status of the activities and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages for each of the potential improvements.

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

Product: Best site selection process to ensure more efficient sampling

Schedule: The FIN Committee began discussing this issue at the 2000 meeting and will continue addressing it during 2001.

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 the ACCSP. It was decided that this group would meet on an annual basis to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs, and to 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 2001.

C. Administrative Activities

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

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

D. Time Table

	<u>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
Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process	X				
Determine the extent of non-consumptive activities					X

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

E. Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group Membership

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Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Joe Shepard
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and
Fisheries

Ron Lukens
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group

Jeff Brust
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Tom Sminkey
National Marine Fisheries Service

Kerwin Cuevas
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Tom Schmidt
South Florida Research Center
Everglades National Park

Bob Dixon
National Marine Fisheries Service
Beaufort Laboratory

Bryan Stone
South Carolina Department of Natural
Resources

Barbara Kojis
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

APPENDIX B

Minutes

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

FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (FIN)

MINUTES

June 5, 6, 7, 2001

St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

Tuesday, June 5, 2001 - 1:00 p.m.

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

Members

Kevin Anson, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Bill Cole, USFWS, Morehead City, NC (proxy for D. Frugé)
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Guy Davenport, NMFS, Miami, FL
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Christine Johnson, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Joe O'Hop, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Tom Schmidt, NPS, Homestead, FL
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Roger Uwate, USVIDPNR, St. Thomas, USVI (proxy for B. Kojis)

Staff

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

Others

Joe Moran, ACCSP, Washington, DC
William Tobias, USVIDPNR, Frederiksted, St. Croix, USVI

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as amended.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)] meeting held on Tuesday, June 13, 2000, The Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on Wednesday, June 14, 2000, and the Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) meeting held on Thursday, June 15, 2000 in Austin, Texas were approved.

Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)

J. Moran reported that the ACCSP is implementing the commercial trip ticket system with New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Georgia ready to start providing data. The ACCSP provided funding for Maryland to collect statewide blue crab commercial trip reports and they will begin sending data within 30 days. This will serve as a model for other states with large fisheries, such as lobster. Funding has been approved for South Carolina to begin a trip ticket program with their first data feed to begin in August or September. North Carolina and Florida have had a trip ticket program in place for some time. Virginia is working with the ACCSP to assure that their data elements are compatible and it is anticipated that data feed will begin sometime this year.

Moran reported that M. Cahall has been working with T. Sminkey of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) staff to transfer MRFSS data into the ACCSP system. Moran also reported that the data collection section of the for-hire pilot study in South Carolina has been completed. The ACCSP For-Hire Subcommittee has requested that an independent review panel of the marine fisheries section of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) evaluate this pilot study. This review should take place sometime this fall. Moran also noted that in the 2001 RFP it has been proposed to increase MRFSS sampling in the northeast region of the Atlantic by 50% which should provide much better data. Moran reported that registration tracking will be a joint effort between the ACCSP and the FIN. Some very productive meetings have been held and recommendations concerning data elements have been made, as well as unquing dealers across state lines.

Moran reported that the data management system will begin receiving data feeds from partners in the near future and a computer analyst will be hired. Another data analyst will be added in January or February when the system is opened to the general public. The ACCSP website contains further information on the above reported items. The new ACCSP e-mail address is accsp.org.

Moran noted that M. Cahall of ACCSP and M. Sestak of FIN are in constant contact to assure compatibility of the two programs in anticipation of the FIS. Abbey Hafner has recently been hired as an outreach coordinator and is available to assist program partners. The Biological and Discard Committees

have completed their technical recommendations for TSD #5 which is the ACCSP standard for collection of released discards, protected species interaction, and biological sampling. Moran noted that D. Donaldson attended these meetings to assure coordination with the FIN program. It is anticipated that this will be approved by the Coordinating Council by the end of 2001. Moran noted that the Coordinating Council has some concerns about the vision for ACCSP in regard to a national program and they are planning on hiring a facilitator to assist in this area.

Moran reported that Georgia is in the third year of a pilot study on socio/economic data. Information is available on the ACCSP website. It is anticipated that this study will be completed in 2002.

The FIN Committee discussed at length a FIN outreach strategy to the various Fishery Management Councils throughout the Gulf, Caribbean, and Atlantic. Committee members from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands will investigate giving a presentation on the FIN to the Caribbean Fishery Management Council.

Review of List of Personnel with Access to Confidential Data

G. Davenport distributed an updated list of state personnel who had signed non-disclosure forms and requested that Committee members review the list and add or delete names as necessary. Non-disclosure statements were also available for new personnel.

Discussion of Commercial Port Sampler Meetings

D. Donaldson reported that a port sampler meeting that had been tentatively scheduled for July, 2001 was being postponed due to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) travel restrictions. If possible, this meeting will be held in October or November of 2001 in the Tampa area and will include samplers from all the Gulf states. Topics to be addressed will be the importance of the collection of social/economic data, the transition into a new way to approach field operations, and new biological sampling methods. The Committee agreed to send a letter to NMFS explaining the need and importance of these meetings.

Donaldson reported that the third meeting of Caribbean port samplers will be held during the first week of October. ComFIN activities will be discussed, a visit to fish houses to review sampling techniques is planned, as well as other issues of importance to port samplers.

Status of Texas Charter Boat Telephone Survey

P. Campbell reported that the start up for the Texas Charter Boat Telephone Survey is planned for July 1, 2001. Sampling frames and preparation of data sheets have been completed. Campbell distributed

a charter boat brochure which will be used as outreach material both at meetings and as mailouts. Three more captains outreach meetings will be held prior to the start of the Telephone Survey. Campbell noted that there are approximately 600 boats on the list which include charter boats, head boats, and guide boats. This list will be sent to B. Dixon for the head boat survey.

Status of FIN Data Management System

D. Donaldson gave an update on the Data Management System. The hardware and software for the system have been purchased and currently some data are being entered into the system. M. Sestak and M. Kasprzak are working out details to allow Louisiana trip ticket data to be entered. Test data from Mississippi oyster trip tickets will also be entered into the data management system. Alabama has also sent some test data. The ACCSP has the trip ticket data for Florida and it will be transferred to the FIN data management system. Business Objects is also being tested and when the confidentiality issues are resolved, named users will have access to the data on Business Objects. Recreational data will be available from the ACCSP, FIN, and NMFS in the near future.

Data from several programs will be entered into the data management system. Donaldson reported that J. Smith of NMFS Beaufort Lab had requested that the GSMFC assist with entering the backlog of menhaden data. When the confidentiality issue is resolved these data will also be available. Biological sampling data (TIP) is also being configured for the data management system. Donaldson noted that a web based data entry program has been created for metadata. A web based data entry program for the Charter Boat Survey is being developed and may also be utilized for Texas charter boat activities. Donaldson noted that historically there were problems associated with gaining access to SEAMAP data however these data will now be readily accessible on the web. At the joint SEAMAP meeting being held in August 2001, the development of a public database will be discussed.

Discussion of Revised Estimates of the Red Snapper Harvests in Texas

S. Holiman noted that several years ago Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) revised estimates for the harvest of red snapper. The effect of this re-estimation was that in the years 1992 through 1997 there was a five-fold increase in the harvest of red snapper, and in 1998 there was a two-fold increase. These new estimates were provided to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) by TPWD. Holiman noted that these revised estimates have been used by the GMFMC in their documents, however the original database has not changed and partners need to be aware of this when accessing data from a centralized data base system. P. Campbell noted that red snapper is the only species affected.

Presentation of Recreational Social/Economic Data

M. Osborn gave an presentation on recreational social/economic data which was prepared by B. Gentner of NMFS. (See Attachment A) This presentation was prepared since there are multiple and conflicting groups competing for a limited resource and it explains why economic data are collected on marine angling.

Discussion on public outreach followed this presentation. The Committee discussed the lack of participation on the part of the public in regard to questions of an economic nature. D. Donaldson noted that at a recent MRFSS wave meeting, B. Gentner had distributed information giving rationale for the collection of social/economic data. M. Osborn noted that there are economic fact sheets on the website and these could be printed as brochures and used for public distribution. Donaldson suggested that an agenda item for the next wave meeting be the development of a brochure explaining the social and economic impact of recreational fishing.

Discussion of FIN and MRFSS Water Body Codes

J. O'Hop reported that the subject of water body codes had been discussed by FIN and ACCSP for several years and noted the need for information on a smaller water body area. On both the recreational and commercial side there appears to be an increasing need for information on where fish were caught. O'Hop noted that as a result of two projects currently underway in Florida the idea of designing an instrument for samplers use was developed. A one minute grid system was developed for Charlotte Harbor. This allows fishermen to identify fishing areas and the samplers to code this information on data sheets.

O'Hop then discussed hatchery-raised red drum being released into Tampa Bay and the need to know where these fish were caught. The one minute grid system was used in this situation also. O'Hop asked Committee members if finer scale water body codes would be appropriate for the MRFSS survey at this time. M. Osborn indicated that discussions on this issue had been held with the contractor and NMFS would not have any objection to investigating this further although changing water body codes would have an impact on the MRFSS program. In addition to changing the forms and the data entry program, the samplers would have to be retrained. The Committee discussed the various problems associated with changing to finer scale codes and suggested doing a pilot study. J. O'Hop suggested sending the samplers out with information to enable them to translate a point on a map indicated by a fisherman to a code that is in the FIN and ACCSP systems. After lengthy Committee discussion on water body codes, J. O'Hop suggested conducting a pilot study using shrimp grids, which would give a finer scale, and the inshore water body codes in the FIN and ACCSP systems.

Meeting recessed at 5:15 p.m. and reconvened on Wednesday, June 6, 2001 at 9:00 a.m.

J. O'Hop had some examples of forms for samplers to use. D. Donaldson stated that the work group had developed a list of inshore and offshore water body codes but questioned whether these codes provide enough detail. R. Lukens suggested that any partner could, at any time, attempt to get finer resolution. J. O'Hop will continue to investigate the issue of water body codes in Florida and will report back to the Committee.

Discussion of FIN Program Review Report and Recommendations

Copies of the FIN Program Review Report and Recommendations were distributed to Committee members. D. Donaldson reported that the review was conducted in April 2001. Donaldson, M. Osborn, K. Anson, and S. Holiman were in attendance with reviewers A. Loftus, B. Ditton, D. Hayes and D. Sampson. The reviewers were given an overview of the FIN program and a synopsis of the activities that had been conducted over the course of the past five years. A question and answer period followed, then the reviewers were left to develop their report.

The FIN Committee reviewed the report and recommendations and addressed each of the recommendations as follows:

Data Issues and Technical Needs

Socio-economic data needs

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that FIN should take the lead in recognizing the need for high quality biological, social, and economic data to successfully meet present and future fishery management challenges.

FIN Response: This is being addressed and FIN will continue to work on this issue. The Committee finds that there is no need to take additional action at this time.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that economic data collected as part of the MRFSS should be analyzed and evaluated in a timely fashion in order to be useful for fishery management.

FIN Response: This is being addressed by FIN. No need for FIN to take any action at this time.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that end users of the data need to be much more involved in defining social and economic data needs as well as in the evaluation of data that have been collected.

FIN Response: Being addressed by FIN. End users have been involved through the various work groups of FIN. The Committee agrees that there is no need for FIN to take any additional action at this time.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that social and economic data needs to be determined by a process involving managers and constituents rather than by default.

FIN Response: FIN does not agree. It appears that there was a miscommunication or a misunderstanding on the part of the Review Panel.

Additional data needs

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that essential fish habitat (EFH) and environmental data should be a part of the FIN and receive high priority.

FIN Response: Although the FIN has not focused attention on Essential Fish Habitat and fishery independent data, these subjects are being addressed later in this meeting. This may not be the appropriate body to deal with these matters, however FIN will continue to explore these areas.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that collection and management of discard data for commercial fisheries should receive high priority.

FIN Response: The FIN has not focused on discards to date, however the importance of this issue has not been overlooked and FIN will be working on this in the near future. Discard data is being addressed by the Data Collection Work Group and they will be asking the FIN Committee for direction in this area.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that if funding needs for the Caribbean cannot be met through some agreement, then the U.S. Caribbean area should be dropped from the FIN.

FIN Response: FIN disagrees with this recommendation and feels that the conclusion of the Review Panel is incorrect. The FIN recognizes the need for Caribbean funding. Caribbean partners want to continue participation in FIN and FIN will continue to

explore ways to help the Caribbean secure funding for data collection in the Caribbean.

Data Collection

Recommendation: The Review Panel was concerned that after five years of program activity, no commercial data is yet available covering all of the FIN states.

FIN Response: The review of the FIN program covers the period from 1996 to 2000. Transition funding was secured in 1998 and operational funding has only been available since 1999. Tremendous advances have been made since that time. FIN considers this recommendation to be incorrect and inappropriate.

Recommendation: The Review Panel questioned whether the proposed complete census of commercial fishing trips is essential, or whether a statistical sampling design would yield the necessary data.

FIN Response: FIN rejects this recommendation since it does not address the charge to the Review Panel. The Panel was asked to review FIN activities in relation to the implementation of the goals and objectives of the program, not a review of the methodologies for collecting data. In addition, this recommendation does not take into consideration modern management methods.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that a mechanism for determining the statistical adequacy of biological sampling allocations (e.g., number of scales or otoliths collected annually) should be developed. This mechanism should reflect the priorities of the various species/fisheries, as well as the precision required for their management.

FIN Response: The Data Collection Plan had not been produced by 2000 and therefore was not presented to the Review Panel. However this Plan has been developed and is being reviewed by the FIN. Work is in progress to begin implementation .

Metadata

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that FIN undertake a program to develop “true metadata” for the FIN program as a whole.

FIN Response: Apparently it was unclear in the presentation to the Review Panel of what is included in the data management system. This has been addressed by FIN and is part of the data management system.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that, to the extent possible, FIN develop metadata for each of the component data sets of FIN.

FIN Response: The FIN program has metadata for each of the component data sets. This has been addressed by FIN and is part of the data management system.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that FIN metadata reporting complies with the FGDC standards.

FIN Response: FIN believes that these standards are being met and will confirm this with data management personnel.

Data Management

Recommendation: Considering the substantial cost-savings that *may* be achieved without sacrifices to data integrity, the Review Panel recommended that it would be worthwhile for FIN to evaluate and consider alternatives to the centralized data base system for ComFIN before proceeding with additional investments in infrastructure and personnel.

FIN Response: At the last FIN meeting the issue of alternatives to the centralized data base system was considered and the decision was made to continue using the current system.

Quality Assurance /Quality Control

Recommendation: The Review Panel urged that further development of QA/QC documents be completed, and that the FIN managers recognize that QA/QC should be an ongoing activity; it is crucial to the success of the program and does not stop with the completion of the QA/QC documents.

FIN Response: FIN agrees and appreciates the support of the Review Panel. QA/QC will continue to be an ongoing activity during the development of the different modules, including trip tickets, collection of social and economic data, detailed effort data, etc. Individual states also provide training for their samplers on a periodic basis.

Recommendation: The Review Panel urged the continuation of organizing workshops for the state and federal port samplers and consider using these workshops to educate these personnel about their important role as outreach providers.

FIN Response: FIN agrees and will continue to support these activities by coordinating port sampler meetings. MRFSS wave meetings are also held throughout the year.

Institutional Issues

Commitment of Partners

Recommendation: The Review Panel was a little surprised, and somewhat concerned, that the program review process did not involve more of the partners. It was not clear to the Review Panel whether participation by partners was limited to minimize costs of the review, or was the result of limited interest on the part of the FIN partners.

FIN Response: It appears that the assumption of the Review Panel regarding the program review meeting was incorrect. The FIN members involved in the review explained to the Panel that it was not necessary for everyone involved to be present. FIN documents were provided to the Review Panel prior to the meeting for their review. It was not necessary for all FIN members to attend since those present were able to address questions posed by the Panel.

Recommendation: The Review Panel strongly recommended that all partners reevaluate their level of commitment to fully implement FIN from a fiscal perspective and from a program implementation perspective.

FIN Response: Although funds are appropriated by Congress for a dedicated purpose, FIN agrees that partners should consider assisting in funding projects where appropriate and when possible.

Prioritization

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that FIN develop a consistent method for ranking the potentially competing needs and desires of these different users as well as consistent approach for prioritizing the various fisheries to be sampled.

FIN Response: This is being done. FIN utilizes the funding decision process to prioritize various projects. This process was developed by the FIN partners in order to make recommendations to the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee which makes the final decisions for Gulf of Mexico component.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that the cost of sampling should be taken into account when choosing among possible sampling programs to develop. Using such an approach, FIN could maximize the benefits (in terms of information beneficial for fishery assessment and management) of current and new resources available to implement sampling programs.

FIN Response: FIN agrees. Cost is one of the criteria considered as part of the funding decision process.

Budgeting Concerns

Recommendation: The Review Panel saw a need for clear priorities for additional funding sought from Congress. The FIN should develop a process for establishing state level data needs and funding priorities.

FIN Response: FIN agrees and will continue.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that there needs to be broad-based congressional support for the fisheries information line item in the budget among members of Congress instead of reliance upon only one or two powerful members. Without greater support across the Gulf states, the Review Panel is concerned that the program may be in jeopardy in the future.

FIN Response: Although not every state in the Gulf of Mexico has a delegate on the Appropriations Committee, support has been garnered from Congressional representatives from each state in the Gulf as well as others. This issue will be presented to the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee in October 2001.

Recommendation: The Review Panel believed that the perceived lack of state-level buy-in and support continues to limit the FIN program. The federal funds that are secured could be made available to the states on a matching basis to insure state level buy-in and support of agreed upon FIN priorities and programs. At the very least, state-level in-kind support should be documented on a regular basis to demonstrate state-level participation in the FIN program.

FIN Response: Information on in-kind support has been collected in the past for RecFIN(SE). The possible lack of in-kind support does not necessarily indicate lack of commitment on the part of the program partners.

Personnel Involvement

Recommendation: The Review Panel was concerned that not all data clients/users are completely integrated in FIN development. Active involvement of stock assessment scientists, as well as other users, will be critical to developing feedback regarding the adequacy of the data collected for stock assessment and other fishery management-related purposes.

FIN Response: FIN agrees and will continue to keep stock assessment scientists involved as Data Collection Plan Work Group members and in other capacities.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended developing feedback between the end users of the data and the FIN is also important to help better define the benefits produced through FIN implementation.

FIN Response: FIN agrees that this is an important issue and it will be addressed in the outreach effort being undertaken.

Recommendation: The Review Panel strongly encouraged the FIN and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council staff to develop stronger working relationships in order to reduce duplication of effort and address the management needs of the Council.

FIN Response: FIN agrees and will continue to work with the Council by giving periodic reports on the FIN. Discussions have been held with Council staff regarding representation on FIN Committees. FIN appreciates the support of the Review Panel and these activities will continue.

Dissemination

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that FIN needs to develop a process for connecting data collection to information delivery.

FIN Response: FIN agrees and recognizes the importance of this issue. This will be incorporated into the outreach strategy.

ComFIN/RecFIN Merger

Recommendation: The Review Panel believed that there are benefits in maintaining the current level of separation between ComFIN and RecFIN(SE).

FIN Response: It appears that there was a misunderstanding on the part of the Review Panel. There will not be a merger of operational activities regarding commercial and recreational fisheries data. The merger of ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) is solely administrative for meeting purposes.

Outreach

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommends that a strategy for outreach be developed that identifies desired outcomes (e.g., stock assessment scientists and Gulf Council staff members routinely consult the FIN databases) and alternative methods for achieving

those outcomes (presentations, mailing lists, newsletters, a website). Outreach activities should be planned at the forefront, not the end of the program. Two forms of outreach are needed: one to the end users of the data (stock assessment scientists, fishery managers, etc.) and one to the providers of the raw data (commercial harvesters, recreational anglers, etc.)

FIN Response: FIN agrees. The FIN Outreach Work Group had developed a Request For Proposals (RFP) to produce an outreach strategy and this will be addressed later in this meeting.

Recommendation: The Review Panel recommended that it would be advantageous for the FIN to include end-users (e.g., stock assessment scientists and Gulf Council staff) in its advisory program, in addition to members of the fishing industry, thereby expanding the range of participants in its programs.

FIN Response: The GSMFC Commercial/Recreational Fisheries Advisory Panel is utilized by FIN at this time. Staff gives updates on FIN to the Advisory Panel semi-annually. The Data Management Subcommittee, Stock Assessment Team, etc., are also involved.

Recommendation: The Review Panel suggested that FIN could take on the role of coordinating certain aspects of the outreach services pertaining to data collection and dissemination such as facilitating information exchange between the agencies, the commercial and recreational fishing communities, and the public by offering workshops to explain and discuss fishery data issues.

FIN Response: FIN agrees that coordination and facilitation of workshops, as well as other activities, will be considered in the development of the FIN outreach strategy.

After each Review Panel recommendation had been addressed by the Committee, the Committee agreed that the Administrative Subcommittee should hold a conference call to make recommendations on the review process for the next FIN review.

Review of Fishery-Independent Survey Activities

D. Donaldson reported that in March 1999 the Technical Coordinating Committee charged the GSMFC staff to review monitoring activities for fishery-independent sampling in each state. It was suggested that the FIN begin by compiling a list of the different activities. Donaldson noted that the

SEAMAP Marine Directory lists these activities for the Gulf of Mexico and he will develop a list for the Caribbean. Committee members were provided with a list of fisheries-independent survey activities.

J. Shepard noted that fishery dependent data collection programs are not that different from fishery independent programs and may only require coordination among the states to achieve these goals and objectives. D. Donaldson noted that the SEAMAP program is a regional program with established goals and objectives and perhaps it would be beneficial to discuss this with members of the SEAMAP Subcommittee at their upcoming meeting. J. Moran noted that L. Kline of the ASMFC is working on this issue for the Atlantic states and it may be beneficial to contact her. M. Osborn suggested forming a work group to develop goals and objectives and scope. T. Schmidt stated that there were several fishery-independent surveys which were not listed in the SEAMAP Marine Directory which he will forward to J. Rester of GSMFC. After lengthy Committee discussion on the pros and cons of using the SEAMAP program as a forum for fishery independent work, **R. Lukens moved to direct staff to begin investigating the appropriate people to sit on a work group and charge that work group with the development of framework issues such as goals and objectives, and looking at existing programs to identify deficiencies and the scope of the issue. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** J. Moran requested that L. Kline be included.

FIN Data Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

D. Donaldson reported that last year the FIN Committee decided to get a ruling to determine if the FIN MOA is a legally binding document that would allow for the enforcement of the confidentiality policy. NOAA General Counsel has not yet responded to this request since this ruling would have national implications. Donaldson noted that the Pacific states are in a similar situation and have confidential data in their system. Requests for confidential data have always gone to individual states.

The MOA currently covers the NMFS, GSMFC, and the five Gulf states. NPS, FWS, Fishery Management Councils, Puerto Rico and the U.S.V.I. are not included. Donaldson noted that in order for all partners to have access to confidential data, the MOA would need to be expanded to include those agencies as well. The Committee discussed the issue of requests for confidential data, including the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), court orders, enforcement agencies, etc. and agreed that it is essential to get a ruling from NOAA General Council as soon as possible. J. Moran noted that the ACCSP is also waiting for the response from NOAA General Counsel on the FIN request for a ruling on this matter. R. Lukens noted that the FIN policy at this time if for all requests for confidential data be referred to the state agency that collected the data. **R. Lukens moved that the FIN Committee write a letter to NOAA General Counsel expressing concern over the delay in getting a response on a legal ruling concerning confidential data**

since there are operational matters coming into play that require a timely answer. The motion was **seconded and passed unanimously**. Lukens also suggested waiting to expand the MOA with additional partners until this matter has been resolved and when revised to include legislative authority for the collection of data. G. Davenport suggested having staff bring this subject to the attention of the State Directors at their meeting being held next week.

Discussion of Inclusion of Caribbean Data into FIN Data Management System

D. Donaldson noted that this issue is related to the previous agenda item in that if Caribbean data is included in the FIN Data Management System, an expanded MOA would be required. C. Lilyestrom stated that Puerto Rico is interested in having their data included in the FIN Data Management System and would like to be considered a full partner by being a signatory of a revised MOA. M. Osborn noted that NMFS would be able to provide recreational data for Puerto Rico and the U.S.V.I. at no cost when it starts up. G. Davenport noted that commercial data could be handled in the same way as recreational data. Donaldson noted that since there are unlimited user licenses, the only cost in adding the Caribbean would be the time involved in translating data sets. D. Matos noted that commercial fisheries data for Puerto Rico from 1983 to present is being entered in the NMFS system in Miami. R. Lukens noted that since the U.S.V.I. and Puerto Rico are interested in being included in the FIN Data Management System, it would be appropriate for them to be signatories to the MOA. Staff will make the appropriate changes to the MOA to include Puerto Rico and the U.S.V.I. so they can have access to confidential data in the FIN Data Management system.

Review and Approval of 2000 FIN Annual Report

The FIN Annual Report for 2000 was distributed to Committee members for their review. D. Donaldson noted that the list of proposed activities in the Annual Report goes through the year 2000 and needs to be updated since this is essential for strategic planning and developing the Operations Plan. Donaldson requested that Committee members contact him with any comments or corrections by the end of June. **R. Lukens moved to accept the 2000 FIN Annual Report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The Committee agreed to charge the Administrative Subcommittee with developing tasks for 2002 through 2007. During Committee discussion relating to codes, J. O'Hop suggested modified tail length and natural tail length be added to the length type codes.

Subcommittee and Work Group Reports

Administrative Subcommittee - D. Donaldson reported that the Administrative Subcommittee was charged with the review and revision of the FIN Framework Plan. Conference calls were held in March and April 2001 to complete this task. FIN Committee members were provided with the revised Framework Plan for their review and approval. **K. Cuevas moved to accept the Administrative Subcommittee report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** D. Donaldson asked Committee members to send him any comments or corrections by the end of June.

Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee - D. Donaldson reported that GSMFC Recreational Fisheries Advisory Panel asked the FIN to address the topic of using recreational fishing licenses as a sampling frame. A conference call of the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee was held in March to discuss this matter. M. Osborn noted that a pilot study had been done in Oregon and concluded that this was a better way of estimating effort. Donaldson reported that the Subcommittee reviewed the criteria in each of the Gulf states to be able to utilize fishing licenses as a sampling frame. It appears that Louisiana and Texas meet the criteria, Mississippi licensing will be automated shortly, Alabama met most of the criteria and will be automated in July 2002, and Florida is automated but has several issues that need to be resolved.

The Committee then discussed the various recreational fishing license systems. C. Lilyestrom noted that Puerto Rico developed an RFP for an automated recreational fishing license. Central Bank of Missouri was selected with various retail stores, telephone, and internet sales being utilized. This system should be available for use in 2002. P. Campbell noted that Texas has 3,200,000 licenses, will have 2,200 retail outlets for license sales, as well as 130 TPWD offices and the program will cost \$3,500,000 per year to operate. There will be no up-front cost to TPWD and the cost to operate is recouped from sales over a five year period. The only cost to the state is personnel. **C. Lilyestrom moved to accept the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. R. Lukens moved to have the FIN Committee send letters to the Directors of each state agency requiring modifications to fishing licenses, a list of criteria for using recreational fishing licenses as a sampling frame and recommend that these changes be made in order to make their licenses compatible for use as a sampling frame.**

Biological/Environmental Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the Biological/Environmental Work Group met in May in Tampa. The first issue discussed was optimizing sampling for offshore and inshore fishing activities. Preliminary evaluation indicates that inland trips for private rental mode may be over-

sampled. GSMFC and NMFS personnel will further examine this data and report back to the Committee in the future.

The Work Group then discussed fishing tournament sampling. Responsibility within NMFS has changed regarding tournament sampling. B. Sutter is now in charge of registering Highly Migratory Species (HMS) tournaments and his office has developed a web-based registration system. Donaldson noted the importance of having the HMS and FIN databases be compatible and identified the necessary elements to assure compatibility. The Work Group decided that the FIN tournament list should be updated. Sutter will send staff the current list of HMS tournaments to avoid duplication of effort and to update the FIN list.

The Biological/Environmental Work Group also discussed the Night Fishing Pilot Study in Mississippi. Donaldson reported that the next step in the study would be analyzing the data to look at species composition, catch rate, etc. The Work Group recommended that sampling should end in December 2001 in order to develop analysis methods and analysis of data to determine if there are differences.

Donaldson reported that since there is a possibility of doing recreational biological sampling in 2002, the Work Group reviewed existing methodologies. The Work Group agreed to utilize a modified TIP sampling form in the field.

Donaldson reported that the Work Group then discussed the data entry module for metadata and decided that the module included all the necessary data elements and FIN should move forward with the entry of fishing regulations data.

The Committee discussed various aspects of the Work Group report. J. O'Hop will send a copy of the forms being used by Florida for biological sampling to D. Donaldson. K. Cuevas stated that Mississippi would like to conduct the Night Fishing Survey for one more year in order to have additional data. Following Committee discussion, **J. Shepard moved to accept the Biological/Environmental Work Group Report. The motion was seconded and passed with Mississippi opposed.**

Data Collection Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Work Group held a conference call in March. The Work Group discussed the development of the fishery and discards modules. The Work Group decided that pilot study sampling should be conducted at a detailed level for one state and also developed categorizations for type of fishery, gear, and area fished.

Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Work Group also discussed the discards module. The ACCSP has done work on this module and their first step was to compile releases and discards information. Based on the experience of the ACCSP, the Work Group recommended that FIN distribute a survey to the states requesting information about the presence of releases and discards within the various fisheries

occurring in their jurisdiction. **J. Shepard moved to accept the Data Collection Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Data Collection Plan Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Plan Work Group has met several times and is developing targets for otoliths, biological sampling, etc. The Work Group decided that trip sampling is the preferred method, although data can be collected without the trip information. Samplers must understand that trip ticket sampling is the priority method, and failing that, dealer samples will be accepted.

Donaldson reported that the Work Group then discussed the processing and analysis of otoliths. The GSMFC is currently developing otolith processing guidelines and compiling the otolith processing capabilities of each agency. The Work Group also discussed establishing regional otolith processing centers. The Committee discussed expanding otolith processing capacity and the additional personnel that would be required.

The Committee was provided with copies of the FIN Data Collection Plan for their review and discussed the collection of otoliths. **J. Shepard moved to accept the Data Collection Plan Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Data Management Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the Data Management Work Group met in September 2000 and discussed the development of a confidential user form and various data management procedures. The Committee was provided with copies of the FIN Confidential User ID form and an outline of the Data Management Procedures Manual which will be updated periodically. The Committee discussed various aspects of access to confidential data and determined that state members of the FIN Committee will be the gatekeepers of access to these data. The Committee agreed to *add expiration* date to the FIN user access code form. D. Donaldson will add language to the Procedures Manual regarding non-signatory agencies, and will add a list of names of personnel having access to data. **M. Osborn moved to accept the Data Management Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group met in July 2000 to develop a 3 to 5 year implementation plan, review standard definitions, and discuss additional data management modules. The Committee was provided with the Implementation Plan Outline which will be used to aid in the development of a planning document. The Work Group charged staff with the reordering of the existing definitions for the sake of clarity and this has been done. **J. Shepard**

moved approve the FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Outreach Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the Outreach Work Group has held several meetings and conference calls to develop an RFP to design an outreach strategy for the FIN. Potential funding for this project may be available in 2002. Copies of the RFP were distributed to Committee members for their review and comment. Several suggestions were made including, deleting the names of specific organizations in target groups; changing the term “program” to “strategy”; changing the word “should” to “must” in the section *General Proposal Information*; using the term “outreach materials”; leaving out the amount of money available for this project; outlining basic tasks, time, and pay scale. J. Moran will send D. Donaldson a draft copy of the ACCSP report on recommendations for their RFP and several methods of advertising the RFP. After lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed that the wording of the RFP needs to be more explicit and possibly done in three phases: design, development, and implementation. **M. Osborn moved to task the Administrative Subcommittee with giving clear direction on the RFP to the Outreach Work Group. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. R. Lukens moved to refer the issue of the RFP back to the Outreach Work Group with instructions to review the ACCSP draft RFP and to consider the comments made by this Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Registration Tracking Work Group - Copies of the summary of the FIN/ACCSP Registration Tracking Work Group meeting were distributed to Committee members. D. Donaldson reported that the purpose of the meeting was to continue the development of the permitting module. The purpose of this module is to have a unique identifier for individuals and vessels. Included in the summary were the minimum data elements for vessels, dealers, and fishermen. The Work Group also discussed how to maintain a history of changes, protocols, etc. Donaldson noted that J. Hoey is testing the NMFS system. The Committee discussed the problems associated with duplicates, name changes, vessel identification numbers, etc. It was noted that to date there has been no response or cooperation from the U.S. Coast Guard. The Committee agreed to await the results of Hoey’s project before going forward. **R. Lukens moved to accept the Registration Tracking Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Social/Economic Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the Social/Economic Work Group met in May 2001 and reviewed ongoing activities. The Work Group recommended that economic flex questions be asked beginning in 2002 in the Caribbean and the Caribbean should be included in the next cycle for collection of social/economic data in the Southeast Region. M. Osborn noted that they would begin with Puerto Rico and

after collecting data for approximately two years, the U.S.V.I. would be phased in. R. Uwate noted that the University of the Virgin Islands is conducting a socio/economic survey and when available will provide a copy of the survey to Committee members. The Work Group then discussed economic data collection and asked that the FIN Committee consider funding economic add-on questions to the Charter Boat Telephone Survey in 2002, and conduct a pilot study on social/economic data for commercial harvesters based on the methods identified in the Program Design Document using one species. S. Holiman noted that there is also going to be a cost and earnings survey of king mackerel commercial fishermen in Louisiana identified through pelagic permits. G. Davenport expressed concern regarding port agents current full time duties and their ability to conduct this add-on survey.

M. Osborn noted that B. Gentner asked that the FIN consider adding flex questions to do a conjoint study in the Gulf similar to the study conducted in the Northeast Region on summer flounder. This study would be conducted beginning with the 2002 Wave 3 or Wave 4. MRFSS would do the followup mail survey using a contractor. Osborn also noted that the Southeast Region would like to use flex questions for sea turtle and/or marine mammal interaction. These projects will be considered at the September Wave meeting.

K. Cuevas moved to accept the Social/Economic Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Standard Codes Work Group - D. Donaldson reported that the Standard Codes Work Group met in April 2001. The FIN Committee was provided with changes that were made to various codes. Donaldson noted that M. Sestak and M. Cahill are coordinating to assure that the codes are consistent and compatible. After discussing various aspects of the report, **R. Lukens moved to accept the Standard Codes Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Meeting recessed at 6:05 p.m. and reconvened on Thursday, June 7, 2001 at 8:00 a.m.

Discussion of 2002 FIN Funding Priorities

A list of suggested items for funding consideration was distributed to Committee members. (Attachment ??) D. Donaldson asked members if there were any additions to this list and there were none. Although it is not being considered for funding at this time, Donaldson noted that M. Travis of NMFS had requested that port samplers do some socio-economic data collection in the shrimp fishery possibly in 2003.

Donaldson noted that the first nine activities, except for trip ticket implementation in Texas, are continuing activities which have been funded in the past. The data entry clerk is a new addition to help enter

MRFSS data, as well as new projects that are being undertaken, such as the possibility of entering data for the Virgin Islands.

J. Shepard moved to rank the first nine items for funding consideration as high priority. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Committee discussion followed regarding the trip ticket program in Texas and P. Campbell noted that a decision would probably be made by October 2001. J. Shepard noted the importance of trip tickets being done across the Gulf coast. C. Johnson reported that in addition to oysters, other fisheries in Mississippi will be utilizing trip tickets this year.

It was noted that funding for commercial port samplers was not included on the funding list. Donaldson noted that at the last State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S-FFMC) meeting it was decided that the port samplers would be funded through 2001. G. Davenport noted that NMFS would be re-instituting those positions.

D. Donaldson noted that the remaining items on the list are new activities and were developed by the FIN Committee or various Work Groups.

Recreational/Commercial Biological Sampling - Until recently there had not been a data collection plan to help guide recreational and commercial biological sampling. However, now there are targets for otoliths and lengths and it was recommended by the Data Collection Plan Work Group, as well as the Biological/Environmental Work Group, that collection of biological samples begin in 2002. Donaldson noted that if the Committee agrees to go forward, statements-of-work and budgets will be required prior to the August meeting of the State Directors. Committee discussion followed on the details of beginning biological sampling, including budgets, statements-of-work, capacity, species selection, training of samplers, etc. It was agreed that the Work Group will hold a conference call prior to the S-FFMC meeting to work out the details. **G. Davenport moved to make Recreational/Commercial Biological Sampling a high priority funding item with costs to include processing. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Detailed Effort Pilot Study - D. Donaldson noted that detailed effort information is not collected on trip tickets and reported that the Data Collection Work Group agreed it was time to implement a pilot study in this area. Donaldson also noted that Louisiana has offered to conduct the detailed effort pilot study. After discussion with G. Davenport, J. Shepard suggested implementing the pilot study with detailed effort for shrimp since NMFS port agents are currently collecting this information and costs would probably be kept to a minimum depending on sample size. G. Davenport noted that it has yet to be determined what areas are to be targeted, what time of year, etc. and also the possibility of requiring assistance from state personnel.

Davenport also noted that this would also be a good opportunity for review of trip ticket data for QA/QC purposes. **J. Shepard moved to make the Detailed Effort Pilot Study a high priority item. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Social/Economic Pilot Study - For-Hire sector - The Committee reviewed the Social/Economic Work Group Report. D. Donaldson noted that there would be little or no additional cost for this pilot study since it would only add social/economic questions to the current Charter Boat Survey being conducted in the Gulf of Mexico. The other component of this pilot study would be an annual survey of cost earnings for operating charter boats. Donaldson noted that more charter boat outreach meetings are planned for Florida and information on this pilot study could be added. Outreach meetings could be planned for later this year in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The Committee agreed that outreach is a very important part of this pilot study in order to gain the cooperation of charter boat operators. It was noted that personnel involved in the Charter Boat Survey sign a confidentiality agreement and this information should be included in the outreach material. **R. Lukens moved to make the Social/Economic Pilot Study a high priority item and that it be limited to the charter boat sample frame in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** There was discussion on including head boats in the Social/Economic Pilot Study, and the Committee agreed to await the results of a project being conducted in South Carolina.

Commercial sector - **M. Osborn moved to make commercial cost earnings a high priority item for funding. The motion was not seconded.** J. Moran explained that a three year pilot study of summer flounder permit holders is being conducted by the ACCSP on the east coast. This program is similar to the commercial social/economic pilot study being considered for the Gulf of Mexico. The Committee agreed that further investigation and work needs to be done in this area. **J. Shepard moved to make the Social/Economic Pilot Study in the commercial sector a low priority item, and to charge the Social/Economic Work Group with further developing this project for funding consideration in 2003 and to investigate the feasibility of sampling by gear and area in every fishery. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The Committee requested that S. Holiman convey to the Work Group the thoughts expressed by the FIN Committee on this issue.

D. Donaldson noted that he will send statements-of-work for ongoing activities to the states for review, but detailed budgets must be provided for these activities. For Recreational/Commercial Biological Sampling and the Detailed Effort Pilot Study, statements-of-work and associated budgets need to be provided. Donaldson noted that B. Gentner has a statement-of-work for the For-Hire Social/Economic Pilot Study and that will be incorporated. Donaldson requested that these items be provided to him by June 30.

Donaldson reported to the Committee that the Texas Charter Boat Survey had been budgeted from January to December 2001. Because of contractual problems, this project will not begin until July 2001 which cuts that budget item in half leaving approximately \$76,000 in funds available. Donaldson explained that 2001 is the third year of a three year proposal and these funds cannot be carried over. Several suggestions were made including purchasing equipment for processing otoliths, recreational biological sampling, getting an extension on the cooperative agreement, electronic trip tickets, measuring boards, etc. After lengthy Committee discussion, **B. Dixon made a motion to provide \$50,000 to do recreational biological sampling in Florida; \$7,500 for the purchase of a computer and digital camera for enhancement of otolith processing in Alabama; and \$20,000 for FFWCC personnel to process otoliths at the Panama City Lab. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** K. Cuevas requested that if there are any funds remaining he would like to purchase a low speed saw for \$4,500. Donaldson noted that he would need a statement-of-work for these three projects as soon as possible.

Operations Plan

Committee members were provided with information on the status of 2001 FIN activities and the draft FIN Operations Plan for 2002. D. Donaldson reported that all the tasks identified in the Operations Plan for 2001 are either being worked on or have been completed. Donaldson noted that since there have been some significant changes in the Program Design Document, the Committee should review this document at the next FIN meeting.

Donaldson then briefly reviewed the 2002 draft Operations Plan and noted that based on some decisions made by the Committee at this meeting, various changes would need to be made to the Plan. Donaldson will make these modifications and requested that Committee members send any additional comments or corrections to him by June 30, 2001. **J. Shepard moved to accept the Operations Plan for 2002. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Time Schedule and Location of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to hold the next FIN meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana as first choice or Miami, Florida as an alternative during the first or second week of June 2002.

Election of Officers

K. Anson of Alabama was elected Chairman and J. Shepard of Louisiana was elected Vice Chairman of the FIN Committee. They will serve a two year term.

Other Business

D. Donaldson reported that the Cooperative Statistics Program currently runs from April to March. Because of a shortfall in funding the start date had changed and during discussions on this subject, it was noted that January to December would be preferred. However, E. Roche stated that federal aid coordinators wanted to keep the April to March dates because of new regulations in grants management and the difficulty in receiving funds by January 1 and requested input from the Committee. Following discussion, the Committee agreed on the April to March dates.

J. Shepard questioned the reasons for additions to the site registers. D. Donaldson stated that this was a first step in ascertaining the magnitude of night fishing activity. J. O'Hop noted that Florida has developed a change to the site summary form and will send one to Shepard. Shepard also questioned defining sufficient light and who makes this determination. The Committee discussed revisions to the site registers and agreed to have these issues reviewed at the next Wave meeting. D. Donaldson will present the results to the FIN Committee via conference call or e-mail ballot.

A letter from the GSMFC Flounder Technical Task Force (TTF) to the FIN Committee was distributed to members of the Committee. The TTF is developing a Flounder Fishery Management Plan and has requested that FIN begin to address data deficiencies for this species. Donaldson stated that it would be appropriate for the Committee to respond to the TTF stating that these issues are being addressed by FIN. The Committee discussed speciation, biological sampling, etc. and agreed to have staff respond to the TTF stating that the program is being developed and hopefully next year will be able to address this issue.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 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.