

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

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

The scope of the FIN includes the Region's commercial and recreational fisheries for marine, estuarine, and anadromous species, including shellfish. Constituencies served by the program are state and federal agencies responsible for management of fisheries in the Region. Direct benefits will also accrue to federal fishery management councils, the interstate marine fisheries commissions, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries Program. Benefits that accrue to management of fisheries will benefit not only commercial and recreational fishermen and the associated fishing industries, but the resources, the states, and the nation.

The mission of the FIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial, anadromous and recreational fishery data and information for the conservation and management

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

of fishery resources in the Region and to support the development of a national program. The four goals of the FIN include planning, managing, and evaluating commercial and recreational fishery data collection activities; to implement a marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program; to establish and maintain a commercial and recreational fishery data management system; and to support the establishment of a national program.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

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

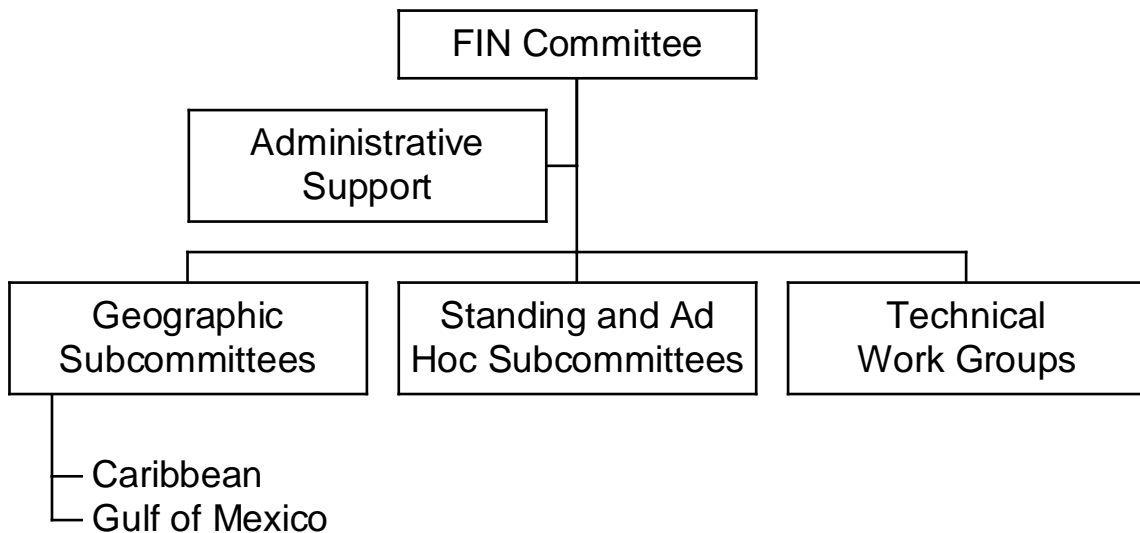


Figure 1. Organizational structure of the FIN.

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

As of October 1998, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission no longer actively participated on the FIN Committee. Although there is no representation of the South Atlantic on FIN, staff members from both FIN and the Atlantic

Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) continue to coordinate, ensuring that there is compatibility and comparability between the two regions.

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 2011 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.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

FIN Committee

The major FIN meeting was held in June 2011. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- Identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 2011 and instruction to Administrative and Geographic Subcommittees and the Commercial Technical, Data Collection Plan, Data Management, For-Hire, Outreach, Recreational Technical, Social/Economic and ad hoc work groups to either begin or continue work on these tasks;
- Development of the 2012 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 2011;
- 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 2012;
- 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 2011 FIN Operations Plan is included in Appendix A and minutes for the FIN Committee meeting are included in Appendix B. The FIN goals and objectives are included in Appendix C.

Subcommittees and Work Groups

The FIN subcommittees and work groups met during the year to provide recommendations to the Committee to formulate administrative policies, address specific technical issues for accomplishing many of the FIN goals and objectives, and examine other issues as decided by the Committee. Their activities included:

- The Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey data review meetings were held in March, September and October 2011 to present the results of the RDD and intercept surveys for the East coast and Gulf Region, sampler performance issues, update on MRIP and Gulf logbook pilot study, update of national economic surveys, discussion of site register re-design, discussion of APAIS sampling topics, review of wave report fish tables and estimate tables and review of Gulf States For-Hire Telephone Survey;
- The Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee met in March and October 2011 to discuss status of biological sampling activities, presentation of Commercial Vessel Information project, discussion of data reconciliation and data quality, national registry projects, status of MRIP Gulf of Mexico For-Hire Logbook project discussion of future activities, discussion of shrimp data issues, commercial data delivery issues, status of federal quota monitoring/electronic reporting activities, discussion of compilation of oil spill monitoring protocols/data, trip tickets and traceability, migrating to APEX development tool, weight vs. numbers for recreational data, presentation of inshore shrimp survey results, update on angler expenditure survey and new recreational data capture technology, demo of FIS GulfFIN FOSS project, update of traceability program, presentation of unified trip ticket program, status of metadata data entry and review of 2010 commercial data;
- The FIN Administrative Subcommittee met in April (via conference call) to review and discuss the FIN recommendations document;
- The FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group met (via conference call) in May 2011 to review 2010 and 2011 otolith and length data collection and processing activities and develop recommendations for necessary lengths and otoliths for FIN priority species;

- The annual Otolith Processor Training Workshop was held in May 2011 to conduct otolith reading and review of FIN priority species, discuss the various reference sets, storage of otolith issues and standardized format for reporting APEs;
- The FIN Committee met in June 2011 for their annual meeting. The Committee met to address a variety of important issues including status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP); FIN Data Management System (DMS) issues, presentation of commercial vessel project, presentation of results from economic inshore shrimp project, status of federal quota monitoring/electronic reporting activities, update on MRIP Gulf Logbook Pilot project, status of states' national registry projects and discussion of future activities, presentation of new MRIP estimation process and intercept survey design, status of Fisheries One-Stop Shop (FOSS), presentation of new recreational data capture technology, view and approval of 2010 FIN Annual Report, various subcommittee and work group reports, status of 2011 activities, review and approval of 2012 Operations Plan and discussion of 2012 FIN funding priorities;
- The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee met in August 2011 to determine the activities for inclusion in the 2012 FIN cooperative agreement;
- In addition, the Program Manager also attended the various Fisheries Information System (FIS), Marine Recreational Informational Program (MRIP), ACCSP, SEDAR data workshops and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council meetings as a liaison for the FIN.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities - This task provides for the coordination, planning, and administration of FIN activities throughout the year as well as provides recreational and commercial information to the FIN participants and other interested personnel. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data - This task provided for the conduct of the MRFSS survey in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida for shore, for-hire, and private modes, an activity under the RecFIN(SE). This task provided for coordination of the survey, a field-intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. These data were combined with the NMFS effort estimate telephone survey. In addition, the states conducted supplemental sampling of the intercept portion for the MRFSS for charter boats in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (east and west coast). The states also conducted weekly telephone calls to a 10% random sample of the Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (east and west coast) charter boat captains to obtain estimates of charter boat fishing effort. In 2000, NMFS adopted this method as the official methodology for estimation of charter boat effort. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. Table 4 shows the

number of interviews the state samplers conducted for each mode as well as the amount over (or under) the base quota for each state and mode.

- **Head Boat Sampling Activities** – The port sampling portion of this task provided for the sampling of catches, collection of catch reports from head boat personnel, and gathering effort data on head boats which operate primarily in the Exclusive Economic Zone from ports along the coasts of Texas and Florida. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. Table 5 shows the number of interviews, fish measured and hard parts collected by port samplers from the head boat fishery.
- **Menhaden Data Collection Activities** - This task provided for sampling of gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels that operate in Louisiana. The samples were processed for size and age composition for use in coast-wide stock assessments. In turn, gulf menhaden stock assessments are incorporated into the Fisheries Management Plan for the species, and are also utilized by the Gulf Coast states, the GSMFC, the menhaden industry, and the NMFS. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. In 2011, four menhaden factories were active in the northern Gulf of Mexico at Moss Point, MS, and Empire, Abbeville, and Cameron, LA. A total of 37 purse-seine vessels fished for gulf menhaden in 2011. Menhaden biostatistical samples are acquired from the top of the fish hold; individual specimens are measured for fork length, weighed to the nearest gram, and a patch of scales is taken for ageing; other data include date and location of catch and vessel name. Total purse-seine landings of gulf menhaden for reduction in 2011 were approximately 613,000 metric tons. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. Table 6 shows the number of 10-fish samples collected by port during the 2011 fishing season. And Table 7 presents the age composition of the gulf menhaden biostatistical samples by port in 2011.
- **Development and Implementation of FIN Data Management System (DMS)** - This task provided for further implementation of a fishery information system for the FIN based on the ACCSP model. This task will provide funding for the FIN Data Base Manager and ComFIN Survey Coordinator who will, in conjunction with the ACCSP, work on developing more data modules for the FIN and ACCSP data management systems. Responsibilities include further development of data modules structures; routine loading of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi (oyster and finfish only) Alabama, and Florida commercial catch effort data, Gulf biological data, Gulf recreational data; and maintenance of DMS. It is the next step for implementing a regional system for FIN. Table 8 provides the record counts and years represented by the commercial, recreational and biological data in the FIN DMS. For the commercial data, the record count roughly represents the number of trips by state and for the biological data, the counts represents the total number of hard parts collected by state.
- **Biological Sampling of Commercial and Recreational Catches** - This task provided funding for collection of biological data from the recreational and commercial fisheries. These data are essential to accurately assessing the status of commercial and recreational species. For the commercial aspects, port samplers collected this information based on established guidelines. For the recreational side, samplers went to sites and collected the

necessary biological data using a modified MRFSS method. This task provided funding for collection, processing and analysis of these data. The primary target species include black drum, gag, gray snapper, gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, king mackerel, red drum, red grouper, red snapper, sheepshead, flounders (gulf & southern), spotted seatrout, striped mullet and vermilion snapper. The secondary target species include Spanish mackerel, scamp, yellowtail snapper, cobia, black grouper, black sea bass, red porgy, snowy grouper, speckled hind and Warsaw grouper. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. Table 9 and Table 10 present the number of age structures that were collected by state samplers for the FIN priority species for the commercial and recreational fisheries, respectively.

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 2010 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. 2011. *2012 Operations Plan for Fisheries Information Network (FIN)*. No. 201 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 25 pp + appendix.
- FIN Committee. 2011. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 2010 - December 31, 2010*. No. 182 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 24 pp + appendices.
- Variety of informal discussions occurred throughout the year during ASMFC, GSMFC, NMFS, and other participating agencies meetings and workshops.
- The FIN has developed a data management system that provides access to commercial and recreational data for the Gulf States. There are two levels of access: confidential and non-confidential and users can request access via the FIN DMS web site (www.gsmfc.org/data.html)
- NMFS provides a user-friendly data management system (DMS) for the MRFSS that is accessible via the web (www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/recreational/index.html)

- GSMFC has developed a home page that provides programmatic and operational information regarding FIN.

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

TABLE 1. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR FIN IN 2011 – 2015 [Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

| | <u>2011</u> | <u>2012</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2014</u> | <u>2015</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 recreational licenses in PR & VI | X | X | X | X | X |
| Information dissemination | | | | | |
| Evaluate and improve current industry outreach program through use of Commission Outreach Committee | | X | X | X | X |
| Coordinate with ACCSP and NMFS to develop outreach/education materials | X | X | X | X | X |
| Use Internet communications | X | X | X | X | X |
| Program Review | | | | | |
| Conduct internal program review | X | X | X | X | X |
| Data Collection | | | | | |
| Data components | | | | | |
| Review of components of fisheries | | | | | X |
| Needed data elements | | | | | |
| Assess need for trip-level commercial data in USVI | X | X | X | | |
| Quality control/assurance | | | | | |
| Develop methods for validating recreational discards information | X | X | X | X | X |
| Develop methods for validating commercial discards information | | | | X | X |
| Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards | | | | | X |
| Coordination of data collection | | | | | |
| Development of data collection plan | X | X | X | X | X |
| Expand collection of metadata | X | X | X | X | X |
| Full implementation of trip ticket systems for MS | X | X | X | X | X |
| Evaluate suitability of new data sources and integrate | | | | | |
| FIN data system | X | X | X | X | X |
| Continue to develop protocol for private access | X | X | X | X | X |
| Explore feasibility of logbook program for for-hire | | X | | | |
| Identify species that should be targets for specific surveys | | | | X | |
| Implement surveys for identified species | | | | | X |
| Evaluate detailed effort module | | X | X | | |
| Implement detailed effort module pilot | | | | X | X |
| Explore development of more detailed area fished codes | | X | | | |
| Improve quality and completeness of state license databases | X | X | | | |
| Implement effort surveys using national registry | | | X | X | X |
| Continue recreational sampling in Puerto Rico | X | X | X | X | X |
| Implement recreational sampling in U.S. Virgin Islands | | | X | X | X |
| Explore feasibility of sampling on finer geographic areas | | X | X | | |
| Implement sampling on finer geographic levels | | | | X | X |
| Implement FIN Social and Economic module | X | X | X | X | X |
| Prioritize species for additional biological sampling | X | X | X | X | X |
| Continue coordination of biological sampling | X | X | X | X | X |
| Collect soft tissue, etc samples, as time permits | X | X | X | X | X |

| Data Collection (continued) | <u>2011</u> | <u>2012</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2014</u> | <u>2015</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Develop protocols for long-term storage of biological samples | X | | | | |
| Innovative collection technology | | | | | |
| Discuss strategy for implementation of in-season quota monitoring | | | X | | |
| Review opportunity to improve timeliness of data to support commercial quota monitoring | X | X | | | |
| Recommend improvements to programs | | | X | | |
| 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 |
| Data maintenance | X | X | X | X | X |
| Standard data management protocols | | | | | |
| Implement vessel registry tracking system | X | X | X | | |
| Implement similar system for dealers and fishermen | | | | X | X |
| Integration of databases | | | | | |
| Hire metadata coordinator | X | | | | |
| Identify appropriate databases for integration in DMS | X | X | X | X | X |
| Improve timeliness and compatibility of TX recreational data | | X | X | | |
| Innovative data management technology | | | | | |
| Evaluate innovative data management technologies | X | X | X | X | X |
| Test electronic field data entry | | X | X | | |
| Protect data 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 2011

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TABLE 4. NUMBER OF RECREATIONAL INTERVIEWS OBTAINED UNDER THE MRFSS PROTOCOL, BY STATE, BY WAVE

| STATE | WAVE | SH | CH | PR | Total | x of Base Quota | | |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-----------------|-------|------|
| | | | | | | SH | CH | PR |
| FLORIDA - EAST | 1 | 628 | 130 | 1,299 | 2,057 | 1.37 | 2.55 | 1.35 |
| | 2 | 637 | 174 | 1,440 | 2,251 | 1.28 | 2.68 | 1.26 |
| | 3 | 707 | 166 | 1,415 | 2,288 | 1.33 | 2.63 | 0.95 |
| | 4 | 701 | 164 | 1,696 | 2,561 | 1.31 | 2.78 | 1.28 |
| | 5 | 604 | 100 | 1,247 | 1,951 | 1.29 | 2.27 | 1.30 |
| | 6 | 575 | 159 | 1,418 | 2,152 | 1.18 | 3.70 | 1.27 |
| | Total | | 3,852 | 893 | 8,515 | 13,260 | 1.29 | 2.75 |
| FLORIDA - WEST | 1 | 759 | 677 | 1,791 | 3,227 | 1.65 | 7.87 | 1.44 |
| | 2 | 1,165 | 1,529 | 2,391 | 5,085 | 2.04 | 9.56 | 1.63 |
| | 3 | 1,274 | 1,399 | 2,950 | 5,623 | 1.72 | 7.44 | 1.40 |
| | 4 | 1,112 | 1,395 | 2,600 | 5,107 | 1.58 | 9.89 | 1.30 |
| | 5 | 1,011 | 1,170 | 2,379 | 4,560 | 1.90 | 13.93 | 1.85 |
| | 6 | 886 | 732 | 2,086 | 3,704 | 1.65 | 8.71 | 1.47 |
| | Total | | 6,207 | 6,902 | 14,197 | 27,306 | 1.75 | 9.29 |
| ALABAMA | 1 | 93 | 59 | 139 | 291 | 1.26 | 2.27 | 1.13 |
| | 2 | 135 | 70 | 160 | 365 | 1.29 | 2.06 | 0.88 |
| | 3 | 178 | 114 | 322 | 614 | 1.16 | 2.59 | 1.15 |
| | 4 | 159 | 191 | 263 | 613 | 1.37 | 4.15 | 1.20 |
| | 5 | 186 | 85 | 316 | 587 | 1.69 | 2.50 | 1.77 |
| | 6 | 102 | 101 | 171 | 374 | 1.19 | 3.74 | 1.21 |
| | Total | | 853 | 620 | 1,371 | 2,844 | 1.32 | 2.94 |
| LOUISIANA | 1 | 96 | 78 | 467 | 641 | 1.22 | 2.44 | 1.21 |
| | 2 | 121 | 98 | 581 | 800 | 1.03 | 2.28 | 1.27 |
| | 3 | 147 | 192 | 950 | 1,289 | 1.12 | 2.53 | 1.14 |
| | 4 | 128 | 161 | 866 | 1,155 | 1.06 | 2.60 | 1.24 |
| | 5 | 138 | 152 | 688 | 978 | 1.27 | 3.04 | 1.26 |
| | 6 | 115 | 120 | 804 | 1,039 | 1.05 | 2.93 | 1.38 |
| | Total | | 745 | 801 | 4,356 | 5,902 | 1.12 | 2.63 |

TABLE 4. CONTINUED

| STATE | WAVE | SH | CH | PR | Total | x of Base Quota | | |
|--------------------|-------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|------|------|
| | | | | | | SH | CH | PR |
| MISSISSIPPI | 1 | 71 | 0 | 102 | 173 | 1.42 | 0.00 | 1.06 |
| | 2 | 77 | 47 | 153 | 277 | 1.40 | 1.74 | 1.20 |
| | 3 | 134 | 65 | 218 | 417 | 1.56 | 2.32 | 1.03 |
| | 4 | 117 | 54 | 196 | 367 | 1.72 | 1.86 | 1.25 |
| | 5 | 98 | 54 | 216 | 368 | 1.56 | 2.00 | 1.23 |
| | 6 | 74 | 12 | 142 | 228 | 1.61 | 0.46 | 1.00 |
| | Total | 571 | 232 | 1,027 | 1,830 | 1.55 | 1.43 | 1.13 |
| PUERTO RICO | 1 | 138 | 86 | 140 | 364 | 1.06 | 0.96 | 0.70 |
| | 2 | 170 | 135 | 107 | 412 | 1.31 | 1.50 | 0.54 |
| | 3 | 139 | 149 | 129 | 417 | 1.07 | 1.66 | 0.65 |
| | 4 | 139 | 136 | 236 | 511 | 1.07 | 1.51 | 1.18 |
| | 5 | 116 | 88 | 157 | 361 | 0.89 | 0.98 | 0.79 |
| | 6 | 133 | 80 | 109 | 322 | 1.02 | 0.89 | 0.55 |
| | Total | 835 | 674 | 878 | 2,387 | 1.07 | 1.25 | 0.73 |
| GRAND TOTAL | | 13,063 | 10,122 | 30,344 | 53,529 | | | |

TABLE 5. NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS, FISH MEASURED AND HARD PARTS COLLECTED UNDER THE HEAD BOAT LOGBOOK PROTOCOL, BY STATE

| STATE | NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS | NUMBER OF FISH MEASURED | NUMBER OF HARD PARTS |
|-------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| AL/FL | 255 | 9,104 | 679 |
| TX | 62 | 1,134 | 476 |
| TOTAL | 317 | 10,238 | 1,155 |

TABLE 6. NUMBER OF 10-FISH GULF MENHADEN SAMPLES COLLECTED, BY PORT

| PORT | NUMBER OF SAMPLES |
|----------------|-------------------|
| MOSS POINT, MS | 278 |
| EMPIRE, LA | 146 |
| ABBEVILLE, LA | 205 |
| CAMERON, LA | 206 |

TABLE 7. AGE COMPOSITION OF GULF MENHADEN BIOSTATISTICAL SAMPLES, BY PORT

| AGE | MOSS POINT, MS | | EMPIRE, LA | | ABBEVILLE, LA | | CAMERON, LA | | ALL | |
|-----|----------------|----|------------|----|---------------|----|-------------|----|--------|----|
| | NUMBER | % | NUMBER | % | NUMBER | % | NUMBER | % | NUMBER | % |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 2 | 6 | <1 | 0 | | 28 | <1 |
| 1 | 1,528 | 60 | 821 | 64 | 524 | 32 | 1,248 | 70 | 4,121 | 57 |
| 2 | 953 | 38 | 394 | 31 | 911 | 55 | 460 | 26 | 2,718 | 37 |
| 3+ | 48 | 2 | 47 | 3 | 218 | 3 | 74 | 4 | 387 | 6 |
| ALL | 2,529 | | 1,284 | | 1,659 | | 1,782 | | 7,254 | |

TABLE 8. RECORD COUNTS FOR COMMERCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND BIOLOGICAL SAMPLING ACTIVITIES IN THE FIN DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

| STATE | COUNT | YEARS | LAST UPDATED |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| COMMERCIAL LANDINGS | | | |
| FLORIDA | 19,468,630 | 1985 - 2012 | 02-MAY-12 |
| ALABAMA | 514,566 | 1985 - 2012 | 14-MAY-12 |
| MISSISSIPPI | 150,782 | 1985 - 2011 | 04-APR-12 |
| LOUISIANA | 5,557,369 | 1985 - 2012 | 04-MAY-12 |
| TEXAS | 212,931 | 1985 - 2012 | 24-SEP-09 |
| PUERTO RICO | 1,769,959 | 1985 - 2011 | 2011 |
| RECREATIONAL CATCH ESTIMATES | | | |
| FLORIDA | | 1981 - 2010 | 07-Nov-11 |
| ALABAMA | | 1981 - 2010 | 07-Nov-11 |
| MISSISSIPPI | | 1981 - 2010 | 07-Nov-11 |
| LOUISIANA | | 1981 - 2010 | 07-Nov-11 |
| TEXAS | | - | - |
| PUERTO RICO | | 2000 - 2010 | 07-Nov-11 |
| RECREATIONAL EFFORT ESTIMATES | | | |
| FLORIDA | | 1982 - 2010 | 07-Nov-11 |
| ALABAMA | | 1982 - 2010 | 07-Nov-11 |
| MISSISSIPPI | | 1982 - 2010 | 07-Nov-11 |
| LOUISIANA | | 1982 - 2010 | 07-Nov-11 |
| TEXAS | | - | - |
| PUERTO RICO | | 2000 - 2010 | 07-Nov-11 |
| BIOLOGICAL DATA | | | |
| FLORIDA | 27,425 | 2003 - 2011 | 22-Feb-11 |
| ALABAMA | 32,532 | 2002 - 2011 | 22-MAR-12 |
| MISSISSIPPI | 7,649 | 2002 - 2011 | 04-MAY-12 |
| LOUISIANA | 92,530 | 2002 - 2011 | 01-MAY-12 |
| TEXAS | 37,500 | 2002 - 2011 | 27-APR-12 |

TABLE 9. NUMBER OF AGE STRUCTURES COLLECTED FROM THE COMMERCIAL FISHERY BY FIN PRIORITY SPECIES, BY STATE

| PRIMARY SPECIES | FL | AL | MS | LA | TX | TOT |
|------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| AMBERJACK, GREATER | - | - | - | 54 | | 54 |
| DRUM, BLACK | - | - | - | 271 | 60 | 331 |
| DRUM, RED | - | - | 3 | - | - | 3 |
| FLOUNDER, GULF | 6 | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| FLOUNDER, SOUTHERN | 4 | 37 | 131 | 145 | - | 317 |
| GAG | 125 | - | - | - | - | 125 |
| GROUPE, RED | 520 | - | - | - | - | 520 |
| MACKEREL, KING | 1 | - | - | 106 | - | 107 |
| MULLET, STRIPED | 587 | 334 | 244 | 215 | - | 1,380 |
| SHEEPSHEAD | - | - | 28 | 247 | - | 275 |
| SNAPPER, GRAY | 149 | - | - | 48 | - | 197 |
| SNAPPER, RED | 352 | 31 | 28 | 193 | 253 | 857 |
| SNAPPER, VERMILION | 204 | 15 | - | 45 | 75 | 339 |
| TRIGGERFISH, GRAY* | 10 | - | - | 6 | - | 16 |
| TOTAL | 1,958 | 417 | 434 | 1,330 | 388 | 4,527 |

*dorsal spines collected

TABLE 10. NUMBER OF AGE STRUCTURES COLLECTED FROM THE RECREATIONAL FISHERY BY FIN PRIORITY SPECIES, BY STATE

| PRIMARY SPECIES | FL | AL | MS | LA | TX | TOT |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|--------|
| AMBERJACK, GREATER | 115 | 52 | - | 98 | 67 | 332 |
| DRUM, BLACK | 7 | 38 | - | 1,254 | 280 | 725 |
| DRUM, RED | 326 | 195 | 21 | 1,543 | 586 | 2,671 |
| FLOUNDER, GULF | - | 7 | - | - | - | 7 |
| FLOUNDER, SOUTHERN | - | 199 | 319 | 499 | 355 | 1,372 |
| FLOUNDER, ALL** | 244 | - | - | - | - | 244 |
| GAG | 273 | 1 | - | - | - | 274 |
| GROUPEL, RED | 301 | 9 | - | - | - | 310 |
| GROUPEL, YELLOWEDGE | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| MACKEREL, KING | 105 | 96 | 3 | 221 | 511 | 936 |
| MULLET, STRIPED | 1498 | 552 | 504 | 728 | - | 3,282 |
| SEATROUT, SPOTTED | 551 | 246 | 35 | 1,606 | 1,263 | 3,701 |
| SHEEPSHEAD | 219 | 162 | - | 1,095 | 32 | 1,508 |
| SNAPPER, GRAY | 578 | 12 | 12 | 363 | 58 | 1,023 |
| SNAPPER, RED | 1,172 | 460 | 57 | 466 | 493 | 2,648 |
| SNAPPER, VERMILION | 1,158 | 186 | - | 16 | 767 | 2,127 |
| TRIGGERFISH, GRAY | 1 | 140 | - | 52 | 18 | 211 |
| TOTAL | 6,548 | 2,355 | 951 | 7,941 | 4,430 | 21,371 |

*dorsal spines collected

**unable to separate flounder totals by species at time of analysis

APPENDIX A
2011 Operations Plan

**2011 Operations Plan for the
Fisheries Information Network in the
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011

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 2011. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

II. MISSION AND GOALS

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

The goals of the FIN are:

- To plan, manage, and evaluate data collection and management activities;
- To implement data collection activities;
- To establish and maintain a data management system; and
- To support the establishment of a national program.

III. OPERATIONS

A. Operational Activities

The tasks below cover all 2011 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a commercial activity; an 'R' denotes a recreational activity; and an 'F' denotes a commercial/recreational activity.

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

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

Team Members: Gulf States and Data Collection Work Group

Approach: The state of Mississippi will continue the implementation of trip ticket programs in their state. This task will provide for development of components for a commercial trip ticket system to census the commercial fisheries landings in Mississippi using the data elements and standards developed by the ComFIN. Mississippi is currently collecting trip-level data for oyster, bait shrimp and finfish landings. They are attempting to pass legislation that would allow for the expansion of collection of trip-level data for all commercial species. For Texas, Louisiana and Alabama, funding will be provided for the majority of operation of their trip ticket programs. In addition, GSMFC will contract with Bluefin Data to implement and maintain electronic trip ticket reporting for Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Ultimately, all states will have operating trip tickets program and all commercial landings will be captured via these systems. This task will be accomplished by meeting, telephone, mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

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

Product: Gulf-wide trip ticket program

Schedule: Implementation of trip tickets began in 1999 and will continue during 2011 for Mississippi. Operations of trip ticket will continue in 2011 for Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida.

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

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

Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC, NOAA Fisheries

Approach: This task will provide for the conduct of the MRFSS survey in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Puerto Rico for shore, for-hire, and private modes. This task will provide for coordination of the survey, an intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. The states will also conduct weekly telephone calls to a 10% random sample of the Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida charter boat captains to obtain estimates of charter boat fishing effort. The NOAA

Fisheries and GSMFC will produce expanded estimates of catch and effort by wave using the existing MRFSS methodology. 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: Continue the Collection of Head Boat Logbook Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Continue the support of the head boat logbook program in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC, and NOAA Fisheries

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 and Florida. This task will be conducted in accordance with existing NOAA Fisheries 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 A4: Collection of Biological Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Implement the collection of recreational and commercial sampling of biological data (otoliths and lengths) in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC, and NOAA Fisheries

Approach: The purpose of this task is to conduct biological sampling interviews of recreational and commercial fishermen using the modified MRFSS and Trip Interview Program protocols. Samplers will collect length frequencies, identifications of species, trip and gear characteristics, weights of catches, hard parts (otoliths) and make comparisons of interview data to trip ticket data for quality assurance purposes. The GSMFC will provide coordination and tracking of targets and provide feedback to the states. The Data Collection Plan Work Group and FIN will determine the priority species for 2012.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: Collection of necessary biological data
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task A5: Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System

(Goal 3, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: To design, implement, and maintain a marine commercial and recreational fisheries data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).

Team Members: FIN and ACCSP program partners, FIN Data Base Manager, and ComFIN Survey Coordinator

Approach: The FIN will continue to develop the Data Management System (DMS). The FIN Data Base Manager and ComFIN Survey Coordinator will continue to receive routine delivery of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi (oyster, bait shrimp and finfish data only), Alabama, and Florida trip ticket data into the FIN DMS. The Data Base Manager will also maintain the historical data in the system and provide support of outside users of the system. In addition to the commercial data, regular loads of recreational and biological data into the DMS will be accomplished. FIN will continue to work in conjunction with the ACCSP to ensure compatibility and comparability between the programs.

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

Product: FIN data management system

Schedule: Further development registration tracking system (vessel data) and routine delivery of data will continue in 2011.

Task A6: Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN/ACCSP program partners/FIN Data Management Work Group

Approach: The FIN and ACCSP are currently operating data management systems for their respective coasts. As part of the implementation and operation, standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application have been developed. The FIN Data Management Work Group and ACCSP Computer Technical Committee will continue to develop this information and there will be coordination between the programs to insure comparability and compatibility.

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

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

Schedule: The appropriate FIN and ACCSP groups will meet (if necessary) in 2011 to address any issues.

B. Committee Activities

The tasks below cover all 2011 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a commercial activity; an 'R' denotes a recreational activity; and an 'F' denotes a commercial/recreational activity.

Task B1: Development of Annual Operations Plan, 2012 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2012 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 2012.

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

Product: 2012 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by spring 2011 and addressed by the Committee at the 2011 meeting.

Task B2: Development of Funding Initiatives to Establish Marine Recreational Fisheries (MRF) Surveys (Goal 1, Objective 3) (R)

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

Team Members: The Recreational Technical Work Group/NOAA Fisheries/GSMFC

Approach: The Work Group has been working on this issue for several years. In 2000, the MRFSS was re-established in the U.S. Caribbean, although there were severe problems with attracting and retaining reliable intercept interviewers in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Sampling in Puerto Rico began in 2001 and is continuing to date; however, sampling was dropped in the U.S. Virgin Islands during 2001. In 2011, the GSMFC reinstated the coordination and administration of the recreational data collection activities in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, NOAA Fisheries and GSMFC personnel are exploring ways to ensure long-term collection of recreational data in the Caribbean.

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

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

Schedule: The Work Group and FIN will continue monitoring this task in 2011.

Task B3: Dissemination of Program Information (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Team Members: FIN Committee and staff

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

Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and staff time.

Product: Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning FIN has been developed. Results-oriented tables were included in the FIN Annual Report in 2009 and will continue in 2011.

Schedule: This task will be an ongoing activity.

Task B4: Implementation of Outreach Program (Goal 1, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Implement an outreach program for FIN.

Team Members: FIN Outreach Work Group/FIN Committee

Approach: The Work Group has developed a strategy for outreach. The group developed a draft strategy document that has been reviewed and approved by the FIN Committee. As outlined in the document, it is incumbent on the program partners to conduct outreach within their jurisdiction. The FIN staff will attend a variety of meetings to promote the program as well. FIN Committee will continue to work with the ACCSP in developing outreach activities.

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

Product: FIN outreach program

Schedule: The FIN Committee approved the strategy in June 2002. The Committee will periodically review outreach activities and institute the necessary actions.

Task B5: Implementation of Social/Economic Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Develop and implement the social/economic module for FIN.

Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group

Approach: Working in conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group has designed a data collection module for the compilation of social/economic information for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program outlines the data elements

required for each fishery component that need to be collected for compilation of social/economic data. Since the module has been developed, this module will provide guidance to interested agencies and organizations that wish to collect social/economic data. The GSMFC in conjunction with NOAA Fisheries has hired a term economist to work on various economic projects including coordination of Gulf of Mexico state and federal commercial and recreational fishing economic activities; development and implementation of information collection on public attitudes, knowledge and use patterns of coastal and marine ecosystems; development and implementation of a marine angler expenditure survey for the Gulf of Mexico; development and implementation of an economic survey of the Gulf of Mexico inshore shrimp fleet; and development and implementation of an economic survey of fishing-related businesses in the Gulf of Mexico. This task will be 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 for guidance on social/economic data collection.
 Schedule: The GSMFC economist will provide periodical updates about the data collection and analysis of the various economic tasks. This is an ongoing activity.

Task B6: Development of Metadata Database (Goal 2, Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Compile metadata from the FIN partners for inclusion into a metadata database.

Team Members: FIN and ACCSP staff and FIS personnel

Approach: The Recreational Technical Work Group has worked on this issue in the past and has developed criteria for creating a metadata database. FIN has populated the metadata data base using the InPort tool. States will routinely update and/or add information to the system. The FIN recommended that the Commission hire a part-time person to assist the states in compiling this information. This recommendation was approved by the S/FFMC and the Commission will hire a person to address this issue in 2012. This issue is a standing item on the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee.

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

Product: Development of metadata module

Schedule: The compilation of these data will be an ongoing activity and is routinely discussed by the Gulf of Mexico Geographic

Subcommittee. The subcommittee will provide a report to FIN at the June 2011 meeting.

Task B7: Implementation of Registration Tracking System (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Implement a registration tracking system for FIN.
Team Members: Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee
Approach: In conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group will continue the development of the registration tracking system for both programs. This system will provide a unique identifier for fishermen, dealers, and vessel involved in commercial fisheries that is trackable through geographic location and time. The basic data elements have been approved. The GSMFC contracted with IA-Team to assist the states in compiling this information. FIN is still awaiting the final report and will address the identified issues at the next FIN meeting. This task will be accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: Registration tracking system for FIN and ACCSP
Schedule: The Gulf States continue to work through the various issues and problems associated with loading these data into the system. This issue is a standing item on the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee. Once those data have been collected, data on dealers and fishermen will be compiled.

Task B8: Evaluation of QA/QC Standards (Goal 2, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Review the existing FIN commercial and recreational quality assurances/quality control (QA/QC) standards.
Team Members: The Recreational Technical and Commercial Technical Work Groups
Approach: The work groups met in 2010 to review the existing FIN QA/QC standards and determine the adequacy of the standards and make recommendations for improvements, where applicable. The FIN Committee approved the document and will add the appropriate sections, as necessary. This task will be accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: Updated FIN QA/QC standards
Schedule: The FIN Committee will periodically review the document to ensure the protocols and policies are still valid.

Task B9: 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 GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries

Approach: In an effort to provide a forum for discussing various issues concerning commercial data collection activities, the FIN Committee decided to convene workshops of state and federal port agents. The Gulf of Mexico workshop will be attended by the state and federal port agents from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, NOAA Fisheries and GSMFC staff as well as other interested personnel. In addition to commercial issues, the group will also dedicate some time to discuss biological sampling issues. Some of the suggested topics for these meetings include species identification workshop, trip ticket information, sampling and sub-sampling techniques and other pertinent topics.

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

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

Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for late summer 2011. The recommendations from this meeting will be presented to FIN at the June 2012 meeting.

Task B10: Otolith Processors Training Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Convene an annual workshop of state and federal otolith processors to discuss issues related to analyzing hard parts (otoliths, spines, etc.)

Team Members: State and federal processors and GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries

Approach: In an effort to provide a forum to ensure quality control and quality assurance for otolith processing, the FIN Committee decided to convene workshops of state and federal processors. Processing personnel from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and NOAA Fisheries, GSMFC staff as well as other interested persons will attend the workshop.

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

Product: Provide a forum for processing personnel to discuss problems and issues related to analysis of age structures.

Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for early to mid-2011.

Task B11: Develop Methods for Validating Recreational Discards Data (Goal 2, Objective 3) (R)

Objective: Develop methods for validating the data regarding discarded recreational catch in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: The Recreational Technical Work Group

Approach: The Recreational Technical Work Group will work in conjunction with MRIP regarding the recreational redesign activities to address this issue. Several work group members and staff are already involved in the redesign work. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Validation process to be used by the FIN partners.

Schedule: The MRIP will provide periodical reports to the FIN Committee to keep them abreast of the progress on this issue.

Task B12: Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee

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

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

Product: Recommendations for commercial and recreational surveys.

Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task B13: 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 Recreational Technical Work Group has identified redundancies in MRF data collection and management in the Southeast Region and provided recommendations to the FIN Committee concerning these activities. From this information, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts in the Southeast Region.

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

Product: Recommendations for reducing duplicative data collection and management efforts

Schedule: This is an ongoing task.

Task B14: Evaluation of Recreational Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Periodically review the recreational catch and effort data collected under the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey methods.

Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries

Approach: The Gulf States GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries will meet about every 4 months to review the catch and effort data collected under the MRFSS methods. The group will examine the catch data looking for potential species misidentifications, outliers (overly large/small or light/heavy fish, etc.). For the effort data, the group looks at the historical data and compares it with the current wave data to determine if there are large decreases or increases. These reviews are conducted to ensure the best quality data are used in generating the recreational fishing estimates.

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

Product: Periodic review of recreational fisheries data.

Schedule: The group will meet in February/March, June/July, and October/November 2011 to review the recreational data collected during the year. Topics that need to be address include:

- Identification of geographic regions of interest for sampling;
- Examination of methods for post-stratification;
- Identify species that should be targeted by for specific surveys and implement these surveys;
- Investigate methods for improving sampling coverage of inshore tidal areas;
- Identify geographic regions of interest for recreational sampling;
- Increase recreational sampling levels Gulf-wide;
- Optimize sampling allocations to improve precision for key species;

Many of these issues are being addressed by the redesign of the recreational data collection activities. FIN should utilize these efforts to avoid duplication of effort.

Task B15: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Develop a plan that outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming years as well as tracking the collection of these data.

Team Members: FIN Committee/Data Collection Plan Work Group

Approach: The Committee has developed a data collection plan that identifies the priority species (and associated data needed to be collected) for the state, interstate and federal entities as well as establishes sampling target levels for biological data. The plan provides guidance to the states. And the Work Group will develop a

feedback mechanism to the SEDAR process regarding the adequacy of the level of biological sampling. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

Resources: Meeting costs, mail costs, telephone costs, and staff time
Product: Data collection plan
Schedule: The group will meet in 2011 to review activities, develop a biological sampling annual plan, and provide recommendations to FIN regarding sampling targets.

Task B16: Determination of Methods for Collecting Recreational Data from Private Access Sites Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Determine most appropriate methods for collecting recreational data from private access sites.

Team Members: FIN/Recreational Technical Work Group

Approach: The Recreational Technical Work Group met to determine the best method of collected data from private access sites. This issue is a major component of the recreational data collection redesign. The FIN should utilize these efforts to avoid duplication of effort. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Determination of the best method of the collected these data.

Schedule: The MRIP will provide periodical reports to the FIN Committee to keep them abreast of the progress on this issue.

Task B17: Establish/modify Recreational Licenses (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The FIN has developed criteria that allow state marine recreational fishing licenses to be used as a regional sampling frame. Based on these criteria, each state needs to either adopt a recreational fishing license or modify existing licenses to meet the criteria. In 2007, the Gulf States, GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries conducted a pilot survey utilizing recreational fishing licenses as a sampling frame for the collection of effort in the private boat and shore modes. MRIP has continued this activity in Louisiana (due to the quality of their database).

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

Product: Recreational fishing licenses suitable for use as sampling directory

Schedule: The MRIP will provide periodical reports to the FIN Committee to keep them abreast of the progress on this issue.

Task B18: Development of Methodologies for Sampling Highly Migratory Species (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R.)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee/ Recreational Technical Work Group

Approach: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council asked the FIN to examine the best methods for collecting catch and effort data for HMS species, specifically yellowfin tuna. This issue is a major component of the recreational data collection redesign. The FIN should utilize these efforts to avoid duplication of effort. In 2010, FIN recommended that the Recreational Technical group further explore this issue and provide recommendations to FIN at the next meeting. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Determination of the best method of the collected these data.

Schedule: The MRIP will provide periodical reports to the FIN Committee to keep them abreast of the progress on this issue.

Task B19: Estimation of Recreational Fishing Participation (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Explore methods to accurately estimate recreational fishing participation in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: FIN Committee/ Recreational Technical Work Group

Approach: The FIN Committee tasked the Work Group with exploring methods for determining recreational fishing participation, by state, in the Gulf. This information is currently being estimated via the MRFSS and it was believed a separate survey could potentially provide more accurate data. Therefore, the Work Group will work in conjunction with the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) to explore this issue. The ASMFC has produced a report that could be a good source of data for this task. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Recommendations regarding estimating recreational fishing participation.

Schedule: The MRIP will provide periodical reports to the FIN Committee to keep them abreast of the progress on this issue.

Task B20: 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 B21: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: Evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies

Team Members: FIN Committee and other appropriate personnel.

Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys to the appropriate personnel.

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

Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.

Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B22: Implementation of In-Season Quota Monitoring (Goal 2, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: Explore strategies for implementing in-season quota monitoring for the recreational fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: FIN Committee and other appropriate personnel

Approach: This issue was identified during the 2005 facilitated session as a topic that FIN needed to reexamine. In the past, FIN has recommended that in-season quota monitoring for recreational fisheries not be implemented; however, it appears the in-season quota monitoring may become a reality so FIN needs to address this subject. The FIN will work in conjunction with the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) to explore this issue.

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

Product: Potential strategies for implementing in-season quota monitoring.

Schedule: The MRIP will provide periodical reports to the FIN Committee to keep them abreast of the progress on this issue.

Task B23: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: 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 B24: Implementation of Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1) (F)

Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will attend Pacific RecFIN, PacFIN, ACCSP Operations Committee, and other pertinent meetings and coordinate activities as appropriate. This task will be 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 B25: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative Marine Commercial and Recreational Fisheries Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Coordinate FIN with other regional cooperative marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs and encourages consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ACCSP staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission as well as attend the national Fisheries Information System (FIS) meetings. The FIN and ACCSP staffs periodically meet jointly to discuss the activities that each program is involved in and where the two programs can work together. This task will be accomplished by mail and meetings.

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

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

Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

C. Administrative Activities

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

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

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 22, 2011

San Juan, PR

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

Members

Chris Denson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL
John Froeschke, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR
Dave Gloeckner, NOAA Fisheries, Miami, FL
Christine Murrell, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Michael Harden, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Vicki Swann, TPWD, Austin, TX
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Thomas Sminkey, NOAA/ NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Andy Strelcheck, NOAA/NMFS, Saint Petersburg, FL
Richard Cody, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR

Staff

David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Gregg Bray, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Donna Bellais, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Alex Miller, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Todd Phillips, Ocean Conservancy, Austin, TX
Nicole Shaffer, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL
David McCarron, IA-Team, ME

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with minor adjustments.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on June 9, 2010 in San Antonio, TX were approved as presented.

Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)

D. Donaldson reported that due to funding restrictions no ACCSP representative was able to attend the FIN meeting. GSMFC will be provided with an ACCSP presentation in the near future and it will be distributed to the FIN committee members at that time.

FIN Data Management System (DMS) Issues

Review of list of personnel with access to confidential data - **D. Donaldson** distributed a list of personnel with access to the FIN Data Management System (DMS) and requested that members make corrections or additions. **D. Gloeckner** noted that a list for the SEFSC was also provided to the group and any corrections or additions should be sent to him.

Status of the FIN DMS - **D. Bellais** reported on the status of the FIN DMS noting that the tracking of Oracle Discoverer public access has been completed. The current access counts are provided for commercial and recreational business areas. State partners continue to update and enter metadata into the InPort system. The states that have not entered data into the system were encouraged to do so and publish their information too. **D. Donaldson** stated FIN is trying to fund a part-time employee to maintain metadata for the States pending budget. **Bellais** gave an update on record counts in the FIN DMS for commercial landings. **Bellais** reported that Texas 2008 and 2009 trip ticket data has been loaded into FIN and QA/QC reports were sent back for approval. **P. Campbell** stated Texas is migrating to a central database and should be sending timely commercial data soon. Louisiana's recreational fishing license data continues to be loaded by wave. NMFS has access to the data and they continue to publish their findings. FIN continues to support the Information Architecture Team (IA-Team) in the development of Gulf Fishery One Stop Shop (FOSS) as needed. The FIN database equipment and software upgrades have been put on hold due to funding issues. Oracle Discoverer and Forms will be phased out by the end of 2011 and replaced by Oracle APEX. **Bellais** gave a review on biological sampling data, marine recreational fishery catch estimates, marine recreational fishery effort estimates, and menhaden data. Recreational fishery catch and effort estimates for 2010 were not loaded due to NOAA's re-estimation project. The 2010 data should be available by summer of 2011.

Presentation of Commercial Vessel Information Project

D. McCarron presented the vessel registry demo that was shown at the GSMFC meeting in Houston, TX. **McCarron** highlighted the upgrades and changes since the last demo focusing mainly on the license portion. The reporting tools were explained and demonstrated. **McCarron** expressed a need for a state to test the template and upload process with real data. Texas volunteered to send a set of data for the testing of the registry module. There were discussions on developing a registry module for dealers and fishermen. **D. Donaldson** stated that there is a lot of interest in the vessel registry and the information it can provide so FIN needs to make this tool operational as soon as possible.

Presentation of Results from Economic Inshore Shrimp Project

A. Miller presented the economic status, performance, and impacts of the Gulf Shrimp Fishery in 2008. The results were described for both the inshore fleet as well as the offshore fleet. The results were preempted by an explanation that the number of pounds landed in the Gulf has remained relatively the same for the last 35 years, while the nominal revenue (non-inflation

adjusted) has marginally increased, and the real revenue (inflation adjusted) has decreased by 40%. **Miller** gave a background to the mail survey data collection efforts, noting that previous efforts have been few and far between and that the response rates have been poor. **Miller** explained that according to the Gulf Shrimp System (GSS), the offshore fleet accounts for 70% of the landings and 80% of the revenue. **Miller** also explained the population, the sampling frame, and the response rates. The mandatory offshore survey received a response rate of 84%, while the voluntary inshore survey received a response rate of 32%. In reference to the vessel characteristics, the offshore vessels were two times the length of the inshore vessels, older than the inshore vessels, largely made of steel as compared to the inshore vessels being made of fiberglass, and used freezers as compared to the inshore fleet, which used ice. **Miller** also described the results from the balance sheet, which were based on vessel averages, and showed that the offshore fleet had more loans and more insurance, as they are more expensive. The vessel operation results, also based on vessel averages, showed that the inshore vessels are largely owner-operators. Inshore vessels reported 32% more revenue than reported in the GSS. Offshore vessels reported 1% more revenue than reported in the GSS. Offshore vessels are very specialized to harvest shrimp. Inshore vessels harvest a small amount of other species besides shrimp. The inshore fleet pays more per gallon of fuel, and the inshore fleet is more efficient since these boats take shorter trips. In terms of the income statement, **Miller** noted that both industries, on a per vessel average, are destroying economic value. Of the supply costs reported, fuel accounted for 49% of the costs for the offshore fleet and 27% of the costs for the inshore fleet. The inshore vessels had higher overhead than the offshore fleet and also higher repairs than the offshore fleet. **Miller** further explained that the results were subsequently extrapolated to the total offshore and inshore shrimp-harvesting sector in the Gulf. The balance sheet indicated that all vessels were valued at \$363 million, of which banks owned about \$101 million in 2008, indicating a not very leveraged industry. The entire industry reported using about 59 million gallons of fuel in 2008. **Miller** went on to explain that the cash flow statement for all vessels indicated that they received \$12 million in government payments and that the total expenditures were \$173 million for fuel and \$76 million paid to labor. Net cash flow for the total fishery showed that the industry is only marginally making money. **Miller** also explained that an economic impact analysis was conducted to determine the economic contribution of the shrimp-harvesting sector to the economy. The results indicated that Texas had the largest total economic impact in 2008 with Louisiana having the second largest impact. **Miller** discussed the impact results and noted that Texas has larger vessels, harvested more shrimp in 2008, and had more direct revenues from shrimp landings than Louisiana. Louisiana, however, supports the largest number of shrimp harvesting related jobs in the region, with more than twice as many jobs as Texas. **Miller** finished the presentation by explaining that a final report will soon be released that will focus on the inshore survey, while a joint offshore and inshore report will also be released that will describe the economics of the total shrimp fishery in the Gulf region.

Status of Federal Quota Monitoring/Electronic Reporting Activities

D. Gloeckner reported there are 794 federal dealers reporting electronically in the Southeast and the Gulf. About 500 of those are Gulf dealers. It was noted there is about a two week lag time between landings and reported landings. Amberjack and Triggerfish quota usages for the Gulf were presented. **Gloeckner** mentioned changes to trip tickets have been requested.

NMFS has asked states to remove unclassified sharks and make vessel id mandatory. **C. Denson** asked if it is mandatory for all federal dealers to report electronically. **Gloekner** stated this is true as of April 2011. Since the Traceability program is in the early stages of development and the data to be fed into this system from the Bluefin program is also much of the same data needed for Quota Monitoring, **Bellais** suggested a conference call with the Trace Register folks to see if the reports developed in the traceability program could suffice for what is needed from GulfFIN for Quota Monitoring in the Gulf of Mexico.

Update on Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Gulf Logbook Pilot Project

D. Donaldson presented a status report of the MRIP Gulf logbook pilot project. This data collection project is focusing on federally permitted for-hire vessels in the Panhandle of Florida and Corpus Christi area in Texas. Sampling began in September 2010 and will end in August 2011. There are two validation components including at-sea and dockside surveys. The program is currently averaging 60 non-reporting vessels per week in Florida and 1 non-reporting vessel per week in Texas. All of the vessel representatives in Texas report electronically while approximately 50 Florida captains report via a paper option. A large number of dockside and at-sea validations have been completed by both Florida and Texas samplers. Florida and Texas are both key entering these data and the validation data will be used to test for over or under reporting and to compare harvest reports with at-sea observations. **Donaldson** stated that the amount of labor that has gone into improving compliance has been extensive for these two small study regions. **A. Strelcheck** asked if we knew any reasons for improved compliance over time. **Donaldson** stated that adding non-compliant boats to the NOAA Permits hold list has changed some attitudes along with increased communication with the captains helped them understand the mandatory reporting requirement. **Donaldson** also stated that if the project was expanded Gulf-wide we still do not have a reporting requirement for state licensed vessels. That would be a large data gap to consider if implementing a gulf-wide logbook program. The project team leaders hope to have some preliminary analysis run in the next few months. They hope to work with some consultants on further data analysis and project review. **Donaldson** stated that money is available to expand the logbook gulf-wide for 2012 but there is only enough money for one year. **Donaldson** is hesitant to commit to hiring staff necessary to expand this project with only one year of funding available. **T. Sminkey** stated a potentially bigger issue will be to determine if a gulf-wide logbook program provides data of the quality and timeliness necessary to be able to replace current sampling methodologies. **J. Froeschke** asked how the decision will be made on the future of possible logbook expansion. **Donaldson** mentioned the decision making process would work through MRIP. **Sminkey** stated the executive steering committee of MRIP would have the final say as to what projects get recommended to NMFS.

Status of States' National Registry Projects

D. Donaldson gave an introduction to the national registry project and explained that NMFS provided funding to all states throughout the country to improve the completeness and the quality of recreational fishing license databases. All of the GOM states (except Florida), and the territories of the southeast, have entered into agreements with GSMFC to improve the license

frames. **Donaldson** further noted that the states are trying to figure out how to deal with exemptions such as being over 65 years old and having a lifetime license.

V. Swann gave an update on the state of Texas and explained that Texas is trying to determine the number of saltwater fishers that are included in the combination license (hunting and fishing) and non-combination license. They have a combination and a super combination license that are divided into senior and non-senior categories. Since 2006, they have been surveying only the super combination license holders. A survey of the super combination license holders determined that 50% fish in saltwater. **Swann** further explained that they are currently planning to survey the non-super combination license holders starting in September 2011 to see if they get similar results.

M. Harden gave an update on the state of Louisiana's efforts and noted that they are somewhat behind as a result of a number of issues going on in the Gulf. **Harden** noted that they have been working on a number of outreach efforts, such as mailings to anglers, in order to encourage them to update their registry information. **Harden** explained that they are working to bring radio and TV outreach efforts onboard. He noted that they have purchased a kiosk to have on hand at outreach events in order to get in contact with anglers. **Harden** also noted that they are working to allow anglers to update their information on their website.

K. Cuevas gave an update on the activities in Mississippi and noted that they are online in real-time with their license. They have submitted the license database and are in compliance except for one combination license. **Cuevas** noted that the combination license out of compliance is a lifetime license. **Cuevas** explained that they are currently in the process of doing a study to determine how many lifetime anglers fish and that they will submit this information once they receive the results. **Donaldson** asked if the survey has been sent out and who is conducting the survey. **Cuevas** noted that they are conducting the survey in-house, have sent everything out, and are now waiting for the results.

C. Denson of Alabama explained that they do not have any issues with the combination licenses as they removed their combination licenses in 2008. Data collection is mainly an outreach effort in order to register anglers for this mandatory regulation. All exempted individuals will be registered at no cost. Everything can be done online. This includes lifetime licenses, over 65, etc. The only license they are not focusing on is the under age 16 license. This has been passed and is in place. He also noted that there is a fine for non-compliance. Anglers need to have a license or be registered in the case of an exempted angler. **Denson** noted that they are waiting on the funding. **Donaldson** noted that they have received the funding. **Denson** asked where they should send the data. **D. Bellais** and **Donaldson** noted that data can be sent to either the Commission or the NMFS. **Donaldson** noted that it was up to the states as to what they wanted to do and that the NMFS would probably prefer to deal with one entity in the Gulf. **Donaldson** asked if NMFS is receiving the data at this point. **T. Sminkey** noted that they are set up to take data feeds and that the NMFS has developed a unique process to get access to the data because it includes personal information. **Denson** asked how long it takes NMFS to return a request. **Sminkey** noted that it should not take very long and that he would check into how they are receiving data at the NMFS. **R. Cody** asked what was Alabama's intention to retrieve the data they submit. **Denson** noted that if Alabama, as well as the other states, had their data at the Commission, they would be able to use it immediately. **Cody** noted that he thought **Denson** was implying that once Macro receives the data from the telephone survey that they would feed the

data to the states in order to improve the data. **Donaldson** noted that the NMFS is still trying to figure out how the data loads will work and that he plans to talk with them about data loading issues. **Bellais** noted that if the states send the data to the Commission, and the states access that data, it will not have been cleaned. **Donaldson** noted that it is up to the NMFS as to where the data should be submitted and also noted that he saw a role for the Commission. **Sminkey** suggested that the Commission's role might be data cleaning. **Donaldson** noted that when a sample is pulled and updated, the updates would go back to the initial database. **Donaldson** noted that the group is talking about issues that have not been developed yet and that the group should inform NMFS of the issues discussed.

R. Cody of Florida noted that they have been discussing different options as to how to improve the registry. These options included looking at the data as it is now. They determined that these are things that the NMFS planned to do as quality control so there was not a need to do this. The challenging part for **Cody** is that the licensing and permitting is controlled in their Tallahassee, FL office, and he does not have a lot of involvement with that office and is not sure where they are with improving the registry information. **Cody** noted that the free license in Florida might impact the quality of the license frame. **Donaldson** asked if the free license was for shore mode only and how long it was good for. **C. Lilyestrom** asked what percentage was free. **Cody** noted that it was free, for shore only, good for a year, and that it was hard to know what percentage of anglers had this license but might be able to look at the percentage of trips from shore. **Donaldson** also noted that there is an exemption in the Florida license requirements that residents do not have to get a license. **Lilyestrom** noted that he was concerned because things that happened in Florida often happen in Puerto Rico. **Donaldson** noted that Puerto Rico does not have an exemption of that kind at this time. **Cody** also noted that it will be challenging to overcome the free fishing day issues and that they will need to account for that effort. **Donaldson** asked who was concerned about it and **Cody** explained that he was concerned that the data mining that the NMFS does will not get back to the state of Florida. **Cody** noted that they are trying to get a part time in-house person to work on this issue. **Donaldson** asked how many free fishing days they plan to have and if a large number of anglers would fish because it is free. **Cody** indicated that it would be four days and he didn't know how many anglers would be fishing. **Sminkey** suggested to try to figure out how to account for it, such as sampling under the NMFS standard effort sampling frame or use the intercept, in order to lead to some type of adjustment and noted that this approach could potentially be biased. **Sminkey** also noted that there may be economic issues associated with the free fishing opportunities. **Donaldson** noted that he didn't think that there was a large population that would go fishing because it's free, but that it might be interesting to quantify. **Cody** noted that it might be good to have some involvement with the NMFS concerning this. **Denson** asked if the free fishing day was for residents and non-residents. **Cody** noted that it was for residents and non-residents. **Bray** asked if the dockside intercept form should continue to ask if an angler has a license, and for the no responses, what exemption category it fell into in order to quantify the no responses in the field and if that information has value. **Cody** noted that they need a way to quantify this information. **Bray** noted that there have not been a lot of individuals asking for this information and that they could potentially expand the number of exemptions on the form. **Cody** noted that individuals haven't started using the information yet but may in the future. **D. Gloeckner** noted that anglers fishing for free may not be very skilled and that the catch may be insignificant.

C. Lilyestrom from Puerto Rico explained that they have never had a recreational fishing license and are now authorized to have a license. **Lilyestrom** noted that the licensing system has been named FLIPPER. **Lilyestrom** also noted that they have had a number of challenges to overcome in order to allow for the sale of licenses. These included such things as needing a regulation to allow for the sale of licenses and developing a contract to work with local businesses. **Lilyestrom** noted that they have hired a consulting firm which has experience with computer systems and working with the Treasury and the Department of Transportation in Puerto Rico. They are also working to select the sales points such as tackle shops, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, and West Marine stores. **Lilyestrom** is trying to get things up and running in a number of months. **Lilyestrom** explained that the exemptions included the following: children under 13 do not need a license; licenses for children 13-14 are free; anglers over 60 need a license, but will be free; and clients of charter boats do not need a license. **Lilyestrom** explained that there will be a 1 day, 7 day, and 1 year license and that they are still considering a lifetime license. **Lilyestrom** noted that they will be selling permits for lobsters, conch, crabs, billfish and a few other species. They are also making sure that the system is compliant with the National Angler Registry. **Donaldson** asked if they have a freshwater license requirement and **Lilyestrom** noted that an angler needs to have two separate licenses. **A. Strelcheck** asked if the lobster and conch licenses would be an endorsement to the permit and **Lilyestrom** noted that that was correct. **Sminkey** asked if the Wal-Mart and K-Mart sales were point of sale, and **Lilyestrom** noted that that was also correct. He further explained that the public would use touch screens, the internet, and telephones without the need for paper.

D. Donaldson commented on the efforts made by the USVI. **Donaldson** noted that they have a sub-award with the Commission and that they are hiring a consultant and a lawyer to look at the feasibility of implementing recreational fishing licenses. **Lilyestrom** noted that they have been surprised that both recreational and commercial fishery stakeholders have looked at the recreational fishing licenses favorably in Puerto Rico. **Cuevas** asked if the USVI has a commercial fishing license, and **Donaldson** noted that they do but that it is rather ad-hoc. **Donaldson** also noted that Puerto Rico is much further along with a recreational and commercial licensing program than the USVI. **Donaldson** also noted that the Commission has funding to continue to do projects related to the registry for all states. **Donaldson** plans to go through the RFP process so that the states can submit project proposals for review.

Presentation of New MRIP Estimation Process and Intercept Survey Design

T. Sminkey gave a presentation on the re-estimation project that MRIP is currently working on. The new estimation method correctly weights the distribution of intercept data across waves, modes, and sites. The goal is to produce an unbiased estimate of catch rates by species. The new method utilizes site register, assignment summary draw files, and assignment summary form data which are completely different from previous estimation. NMFS has been working to clean much of these new datasets as they previously received very little quality control prior to delivery. Once completed NMFS will have a new set of estimates to compare with the previously generated estimates. Their goal is to produce revised estimates of effort and harvest for 2004-2009. NMFS hopes to assess the impacts of the new estimation design using a web tool to create easy to read comparisons. After an internal review by NMFS staff, NMFS is also creating an external review group consisting of council, commission, and state partners to

assist with the review process. **Sminkey** mentioned NMFS hoped for new estimate review by July but August might be more likely.

Sminkey also gave a presentation about the proposed intercept survey design that will improve the sample selection so that modeling and weighting is not necessary for future estimation of harvest and effort. This model is likely going to be implemented for the Atlantic Coast in 2012. Much of the control of selecting alternate sites, sampling times, rescheduling assignment, determining sampling times, and selecting anglers needs to be taken away from the samplers and controlled by the sampling design. A pilot study was run in North Carolina to test this new field methodology. Alternate sites will be completely pre-determined using site clusters. Clusters are determined by mode, pressure, and geographic proximity. A Google Maps application is used to generate appropriate clusters. The sampling day will be divided into 4 time intervals and the sample selection will choose the time interval for the sampler to be at their site cluster. The sampler will arrive at the start of the time block at the predetermined first site and will stay at the cluster for the entire period. All anglers should be sampled during the selected time block. Samplers will be required to count anglers leaving site during 1 sampling hour and during the next hour they are instructed to interview anglers that have completed fishing. Assignments will no longer be allowed to be rescheduled and must be completed on the day selected. This design should address the previous estimation biases brought up by the NRC review. The first step necessary will be to redesign the site register to create pressures for each time block at each site and day type. Currently NMFS does not have a design for the new site register. **Sminkey** encouraged the states to review their current register to ensure there are no duplicate sites, the GPS coordinates are accurate, and the site status is accurate (open, closed, hostile, etc).

Status of Fisheries One-Stop Shop (FOSS)

D. Bellais reported the testing of the Fisheries One Stop Shop (FOSS) Non-Confidential data for spiral 1(ACCSP), spiral 2 (GulfFIN) and part of spiral 3(AkFIN) have been completed by the Professional Specialty Group (PSG) and has been requested from Advisory Team (AT) for this to be released to the public for use. The request was put on hold due to a few questions/issues the AT have. The requirements for the rest of spiral 3 (PacFIN, SW HMS) and spiral 4 (WPacFIN) are currently being completed. The current set of years used (2006-2009) has been expanded to have each FIN provide data as far back as they can to the present. **Bellais** noted the U S Coast Guard sent a request to regional fisheries for some type of vessel registry with spatial capabilities that can be used to schedule patrol areas based on who fishes and where they fish. A demo is under development for drill down GIS mapping using the Gulf Registry Module. The AT asked the PSG for a list of possible usages for this type of registry. The Gulf Registry Module has been suggested by the AT to the PSG for use in FOSS and is now available for testing by the PSG.

Presentation of New Recreational Data Capture Technology

G. Bray gave a brief presentation about a pilot study using digital pens for data capture in the recreational data program. The current process uses scanning and manual data entry and is hampered by the time and cost of mailing paper forms along with potential for errors with recopying data forms. The pilot study will partner with Florida Wildlife Commission and Rover INK to test the Inovo digital pen in the dockside survey and the for-hire telephone survey. The

pen basically captures the written letters and numbers via a camera mounted under the roller ball and transmits the data and image to a centralized server. Once on the server the electronic data will run through an electronic quality control process. Data will be exported for import into SAS and the form images are exported for long term storage. The pilot study will test two pens and should start in August. The study will run for 30 days in the Tampa region of West Florida. If successful, this technology would eliminate the need for mailing forms, would also reduce data entry costs, and improve the time with which data are available in electronic format. **Sminkey** stated that there is a big interest in improving the timeliness of recreational data. Many entities have expressed an interest in monthly estimates which would require more timely data delivery.

Review and Approval of 2010 FIN Annual Report

FIN Committee members were provided with copies of the draft 2010 FIN Annual Report. It was noted that result oriented tables have been updated to the Annual Report with 2010 information. **D. Donaldson** requested that members of the Committee review the Annual Report and provide comments, revisions, or corrections to staff by July 18, 2011. **C. Denson moved to accept the FIN 2010 Annual Report with pending editorial changes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Subcommittee and Work Group Reports

FIN members were provided with copies of all Subcommittee and Work Group Reports. The Reports are part of these minutes and are attached.

Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee – (Attachment A)

The Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee/TCC Data Management Subcommittee (DMS) met in October 2010 and March 2011. **Bray** stated that both meetings had several interesting presentations but no action items needed to be addressed at the FIN meeting. **P. Campbell moved to accept these reports. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Administrative Subcommittee – (Attachment B)

The Administrative Subcommittee held a conference call in April. The Administrative Subcommittee forwarded a recommendations document to the FIN committee for review. This document was the result of the most recent facilitated session that was held in San Antonio, TX in 2010. The FIN Committee reviewed each recommendation in the document and made several changes. These changes were incorporated into the Administrative Subcommittee report and will also be included in the 2011 Operations Plan timeline. **C. Denson moved to accept the Administrative Subcommittee report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Commercial Port Sampler Meetings – (Attachment C)

The Gulf Port Samplers met in September 2010 in Galveston, TX. The meeting included several presentations. **G. Bray** reported that there were no action items to bring to the FIN committee. **Donaldson** asked the FIN committee to discuss the usefulness of having annual port sampler meetings. In recent years the meetings have been more difficult to develop as the number of important agenda topics has diminished. **C. Lilyestrom** asked how frequently states

hire new port samplers. Most states agreed there is very little turnover. After much discussion the FIN committee agreed that canceling the annual port sampler meeting for 2011 would be appropriate and FIN would assess the need for meetings on a yearly basis. **A. Strelcheck** also pointed out an editorial change that will be reflected in the final 2010 Commercial Port Sampler Meeting minutes. **C. Murrell moved to accept the Commercial Port Sampler report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Otolith Processors Training Workshop – (Attachment D)

The Otolith Processors Training Workshop was held in May of 2011 in St. Petersburg, Florida. **Bray** mentioned as a direct result of two reference sets being lost in 2010 stricter policies have been instituted for the distribution of reference sets. Each state is required to notify the state they are sending the reference to along with notifying GSMFC. States are also required to use a shipping company that offers a tracking number to assist with tracking shipments. A sampler from Florida mentioned that ocean acidification appears to be becoming an issue and asked that the FIN committee consider the possible ramifications on the usefulness of otoliths as an ageing structure in the future. At the end of the workshop, there was a review and comparison of the reading exercises done by the groups. The goal of a 5% A.P.E. is not realistic for gray triggerfish and greater amberjack so currently the group has set a target of 10% A.P.E. for those species. The meeting summary of the otolith processors training workshop is attached. There were no action items to bring to the FIN Committee. **D. Donaldson moved to accept this report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Data Collection Plan Work Group – (Attachment E)

The Data Collection Plan Work Group met via conference call in May 2011. The purpose of this meeting was to review otolith collection reports for 2010 for the FIN priority species. There was useful input from all of the States as to reasons for shortfalls for specific species and modes of sampling. **Bray** mentioned the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster had a significant impact on 2010 otolith collection shortfalls. **The work group recommended to the FIN committee that FIN continue to use the current targets for biological sampling in 2012. This recommendation was accepted by the Fin Committee. P. Campbell moved to accept this report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Operations Plan

Status of 2011 Activities - The FIN Committee was provided with a list of activities currently being conducted. The Committee reviewed the various activities and noted that all activities were either completed or being addressed as outlined in the Operations Plan. **Strelcheck** asked if Gulf FIN could be involved with protected resources studies. **Donaldson** stated that the Gulf States usually addresses those topics only after a request is sent down from NMFS first. **Sminkey** stated that NMFS scientists are working on developing protected resources surveys independent of current recreational harvest surveys.

Review and Approval of 2012 Operations Plan - The FIN Committee reviewed the 2012 Operations Plan. It was noted that the activities in the plan were developed from committee, subcommittee, and work group activities. The FIN Committee needs to ensure that all proposed activities are necessary and will move the program forward. The State/Federal Fisheries

Management Committee (S/FFMC) will meet in August 2011 to give final approval to the Plan. **C. Denson moved to give approval to the 2012 Operations Plan contingent on the S/FFMC funding decisions. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Discussion of 2012 FIN Priorities

Committee members were provided with a list of items for funding consideration in 2012. **G. Bray** reported that the list was generated from activities conducted last year as well as discussions in various subcommittee and work group meetings. The final prioritized list will be forwarded to the S/FFMC for their meeting in August 2011. At that time, they will decide which items will be included in the 2011 FIN cooperative agreement. All items listed as high priority will require budgets and statements of work by July 25, 2011. The Committee agreed to list as high priority on all ongoing activities. The prioritized list of activities for 2012 is as follows:

Ongoing

- H - Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities – Include IA Team dealer and fishermen module
- H - Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data
- H - Head Boat Port Sampling in Texas and Florida
- H - Operation of FIN Data Management System
- H - Biological Sampling of Commercial and Recreational Catches

Reinstating

- H - Gulf Menhaden Port Sampling
- H - Trip Ticket Program Operations for Oysters and Finfish in Mississippi
- H - Trip Ticket Program Operations in Alabama
- H - Trip Ticket Program Operations in Louisiana
- H - Trip Ticket Program Operations in Texas
- L - Detailed Effort Sampling of Shrimp Fishery in Louisiana

New

- H - At-sea Sampling for Catch and Discards Data from Large-capacity For-Hire Boats in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida
- H - Trip Ticket Program Implementation for all Commercial Fisheries in Mississippi
- L - Highly Migratory Species Sampling in the Gulf of Mexico
- L - Biological Sampling for FIN Secondary Priority Species

Time Schedule and Location for Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to target the third week in June 2012 for next FIN meeting. Possible locations suggested for the next FIN Meeting are Charleston, SC, Miami, FL, and Wilmington, NC.

Election of Officers

Currently the vice chairman is **Tom Sminkey**. Based on the FIN SOPs, he will become the chairman in 2012. **Richard Cody** was nominated as vice chairman by **D. Donaldson** and seconded by **C. Murrell**. The nominations were closed and the chairman and vice chairman selections were approved by the Committee. .

Other Business

D. Donaldson distributed the history of chairmanship and committee listings to the group and asked members to review them and provide any comments or changes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

APPENDIX C

Goals and Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

- Objective 1 To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the FIN data management system.
- Objective 2 To periodically evaluate the hardware, software and communication capabilities of program partners and make recommendations for support and upgrades.
- Objective 3 To implement, maintain, and periodically review a marine commercial and recreational fishery data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs.
- Objective 4 To develop, maintain, and periodically review standard protocols and documentation for data formats, inputs, editing, storage, access, transfer dissemination, and application.
- Objective 5 To identify and prioritize historical databases for integration into the marine commercial and recreational fisheries database.
- Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
- Objective 7 To protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

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

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