

1996 Operations Plan
for the
Recreational Fisheries Information Network
in the Southeastern United States
RecFIN(SE)

by: RecFIN(SE) Committee

February 1996

**1996 Operations Plan for the
Recreational Fisheries Information Network in the
Southeastern United States [RecFIN(SE)]**

January 1, 1996 to December 31, 1996

I. INTRODUCTION

The RecFIN(SE) is a cooperative state-federal marine recreational fisheries (MRF) data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future MRF data collection and data management activities through cooperative planning, innovative uses of statistical theory and design, and consolidation of appropriate data into a useful data base system. This operations plan implements the RecFIN(SE) Strategic Plan for 1996. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

II. MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of the RecFIN(SE) program is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate MRF statistical data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Southeast Region¹ and to support the development and operation of a national program.

The four goals of the RecFIN(SE) are:

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

The goals and objectives of RecFIN(SE) are found in Appendix A.

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

III. OPERATIONS

A. Data Collection and Management

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

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

The tasks below cover all 1996 objectives (see Section D).

Task 1: Annual Operations Plan, 1997 (Goal 1, Objective 3)

Objective:	Develop 1997 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources, that implements the Strategic Plan.
Team Members:	RecFIN(SE) Committee.
Approach:	Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 1997.
Resources:	Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product:	1997 Annual Operations Plan.
Schedule:	Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by late summer 1996 and completed by the fall 1996.

Task 2: Information Dissemination (Goal 1, Objective 4)

Objective:	Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.
Team Members:	RecFIN(SE) Committee and staff.
Approach:	The Committee will distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties documented by a request log. Each committee member is responsible for maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the RecFIN(SE) staff. In addition, the GSMFC is in the process of developing an home page for the Internet and plans to include information concerning the RecFIN(SE).
Resources:	Copy and mailing expenses and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product:	Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning RecFIN(SE) and a report which compiles a record of information distributed and presentations given by the Committee and staff.
Schedule:	This task will be an ongoing activity.

Task 3: Identification of Socioeconomic Data Collection (Goal 2, Objective 2)

Objective: Identify necessary socioeconomic data elements and encourage the collection of these elements.

Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group

Approach: Identify social and economic data needs and establishing a minimum annual data collection level by reviewing existing documents including the ASMFC social/economic publications which outline the necessary data elements and contact the NMFS to encourage them to implement basic socioeconomic data collection and management on a routine basis.

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

Product: Report which outlines the necessary social and economic data elements for fisheries management.

Schedule: Social/Economic Work Group will begin address this issue in early 1996 and should be complete by the end of the year.

Task 4: Comparison of RecFIN(SE) Quality Assurances /Quality Control Documents (Goal 2 , Objective 3)

Objective: Compare the QA/QC documents for RecFIN(SE) and the NMFS.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The group will review the RecFIN QA/QC document to the NMFS Panama City and Beaufort documents, and where applicable, integrate the standards. In addition, the group will develop a list of outside users of the data. This document will be compared with other state/federal MRF programs.

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

Product: Comprehensive RecFIN(SE) Quality Assurances /Quality Control Document

Schedule: Work on this task will begin in 1996 and continue into subsequent years.

Task 5: Development of a RecFIN(SE) Policy regarding Evaluation of Methodological Changes (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Develop a policy statement regarding the evaluation of changes to existing survey methodologies.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee

Approach: Staff will develop a draft policy position that states if changes are to be implemented into any MRF surveys, existing methods should be continued in parallel for evaluation purposes. This policy will be disseminated to the appropriate personnel and forum(s).

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Development of policy statement
Schedule: A draft policy statement will be discussed at the spring 1996 meeting and a final statement will be completed by the end of 1996.

Task 6: Establishment of Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Establish an annual review process, through the RecFIN(SE), to evaluate MRFSS data.
Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group
Approach: The NMFS will send MRFSS preliminary data to RecFIN(SE) Committee members for their review and comments.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: All participants involved in collection of the data will have an opportunity to comment about the data.
Schedule: This will be discussed at the fall 1996 meeting to establish some protocols concerning the review process. However, this will be an ongoing activity.

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

Objective: Identify and determine standards for sociological and economic data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.
Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group.
Approach: Determine standards for collection and management of social and economic data. Review and expand the quality assurance and quality control document developed by the Biological/Environmental Work Group. This expanded document will encompass all quality assurance and quality control standards for the RecFIN(SE). Accomplished by conference calls, mail and possible meetings.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: RecFIN(SE) Quality assurance and quality control report.
Schedule: This task will be completed by the 1996 fall meeting.

Task 8: Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting RecFIN(SE) requirements.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.

Approach: Evaluate reports from Biological/Environmental and Social/Economic Work Groups in relation to existing programs.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Report containing recommendations for MRF surveys as well as an evaluation and report on recommendations.
Schedule: Continue reviewing MRF surveys. This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 9: Evaluation of Integration of NMFS charterboat data (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Evaluate the integration of MRFSS and Panama City charterboat data.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee
Approach: The NMFS is planning a meeting to determine the feasibility of integrating the charterboat data collected by the NMFS. The RecFIN(SE) Committee members will be involved in the workshop and provide input into the possible integration of the data.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Recommendations for the integration of data.
Schedule: The NMFS is scheduling the workshop for 1996 and the RecFIN(SE) participants will be informed of the time and location of the workshop.

Task 10: Evaluation of the Results of the ASMFC Saltwater Participation Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Evaluate the results of the ASMFC workshop on salt water participation.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee
Approach: Once the proceedings of the workshop have been published, the Committee will review the document and evaluate the relative participation between fresh and salt water.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Report
Schedule: This task will be completed by the end of 1996.

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

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

Approach: Identify, using existing RecFIN(SE) documents, any redundancies in MRF data collection and management in the Southeast Region. Also, the group will provide recommendations to the RecFIN(SE) Committee concerning the reduction of these activities. From these activities, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts.

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

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

Schedule: This task will be split into two parts. The group will address non-headboat and charterboat survey in 1996. The headboat/charterboat surveys are planned for 1997.

Task 12: Evaluation of Licensing System as Sampling Framework (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Evaluate the licensing systems for the Southeast Region.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee

Approach: Contact the ASMFC and American Sportfishing Association (ASA) and use their data to compile a report which outlines the licensing structure in each participant. It might be necessary to conduct a survey if the data from ASMFC and ASA cannot be adapted.

Resources: Mail costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Report which outlines the licensing structure of all the agencies in the Southeast Region.

Schedule: The survey and report will be complete by December 1996. The evaluation of the licensing system as the sampling framework will be examined in subsequent years.

Task 13: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Develop a process for integrating the RecFIN(SE) into the stock assessment process to accommodate the stock assessment data needs.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee

Approach: Staff will develop an options paper which outlines possible methods for integrating in the process. This document will be reviewed and discussed by the Committee

Resources: Mail cost, telephone costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: Options paper

Schedule: The paper will be developed in early to 1996 and be discussed by the Committee at the fall 1996 meeting.

Task 14: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Encourage coordination, integration, and augmentation, as appropriate, of data collection efforts to meet the RecFIN(SE) requirements.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.

Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding MRF surveys to the appropriate personnel.

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

Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.

Schedule: This will be an ongoing activity.

Task 15: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.

Approach: RecFIN(SE) members report to the Committee any new technologies which will aid in the collection of MRF data. Also, have appropriate personnel report to the Committee concerning such advancements.

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

Product: Progress reports concerning pen-based and other data collection technologies.

Schedule: This will be an ongoing activity.

Task 16: Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Objective 3)

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

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

Approach: The MRFSS staff completed design of Oracle Data Bases for catch and trip estimates, and summarized intercept data bases for bag limits and size distributions. The MRFSS staff designed and implemented a user-friendly data query system for these data bases that is accessible through Internet and the World Wide Web. The Oracle data bases and SAS intercept and telephone interview data bases were placed on the NMFS IT-95 computer system which allows distributed processing and availability to the NMFS Southeast Regional Office, Science Center and laboratories.

Although original plans were to incorporate non-MRFSS data bases identified as high priority for inclusion in the MRF data management system, in most cases it will be more efficient and appropriate to link to other home pages. State and Federal Data Base managers of MRF data bases other than the MRFSS should develop similar home page accessible data base queries. The MRFSS Home Page will include a link to these other data bases as they are developed and the other home pages should add links to the MRFSS Home Page.

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

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

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

Task 17: **Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4)**

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

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

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

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

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

Schedule: Documentation and standardization of MRFSS intercept and telephone historical data bases was begun in 1993. The final intercept format was adopted by MRFSS staff by March 1995 and is available for distribution as well as similar documentation for the telephone data base. Basic documentation of the catch and trip estimate data bases exists and will be added to the MRFSS Home Page. Standardization of variables was achieved by the MRFSS staff during the clean-up effort during 1994 and 1995 prior to re-estimation.

Task 18: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6)

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

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee

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

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

Product: Progress reports.

Schedule: This will be an ongoing activity.

Task 19: Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1)

Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.

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

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

Product: Record of coordination activities.

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

Task 20: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative MRF Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3)

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

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.

Approach: The RecFIN(SE) Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and Pacific RecFIN on the West Coast. The MRFSS staff is revising data files and will get input from the RecFIN(SE) Committee. Distribute appropriate program results and recommendations to other RecFIN programs. Accomplished by mail and meetings.

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

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

Schedule: This task will be an ongoing activity.

C. Administrative Activities

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

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

- Assist in the identification of regional and geographic needs that can be satisfied through RecFIN(SE) activities;
- Seek funding for RecFIN(SE) activities as the need develops; and
- Conduct or participate in other activities as identified.

D. Time Table for RecFIN(SE)

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Planning, Management, and Evaluation					
RecFIN(SE) Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					X
Data Collection					
Data components			X		
Needed data elements	X	X	X		
Standard collection protocol	X	X	X		
Quality control/assurance	X	X	X		
Coordinate data collection	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative collection technology	X	X	X	X	X
Data Management					
Data management system	X	X	X	X	X
Hardware/software capabilities		X			
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard management protocols		X	X	X	X
Integration of data bases	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative management technology	X	X	X	X	X
Data confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
Develop of National Program					
Long-term planning	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability	X	X	X	X	X

E. References

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

F. Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group Membership

RecFIN(SE) Committee

Steven Atran
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
Council

Graciela Garcia-Moliner
Caribbean Fishery Management Council

Lee Green
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

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Southeast Fisheries Science Center

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APPENDIX A

RecFIN(SE) Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: To plan, manage, and evaluate a coordinated state-federal MRF data collection program for the Southeast Region.

Objective 1: To maintain a RecFIN(SE) Committee consisting of MOU signatories or their designees to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate the program.

Objective 2: To develop and periodically review a Framework Plan that outlines policies and protocols of the program.

Objective 3: To develop annual operations plans, including identification of available resources, that implement the Framework Plan.

Objective 4: To distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Objective 5: To conduct a program review at least every five years of operation to evaluate the program's success in meeting needs in the Southeast Region.

Goal 2: To implement and maintain a coordinated state-federal MRF data collection program for the Southeast Region.

Objective 1: To periodically review the components of the fishery (modes, areas, etc.) and the required data priorities for each component.

Objective 2: To periodically review data elements (environmental, biological, sociological, economic) required for each fishery component.

Objective 3: To determine, maintain, and periodically review standards for data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.

Objective 4: To periodically review and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting the RecFIN(SE) requirements.

Objective 5: To coordinate, integrate, and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet the RecFIN(SE) requirements.

Objective 6: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.

Goal 3: To establish and maintain an integrated, centralized MRF data management system for the Southeast Region.

- Objective 1:** To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for a centralized the RecFIN(SE) data management system.
- Objective 2:** To periodically evaluate the hardware, software, and communication capabilities of program partners and make recommendations for support and upgrades.
- Objective 3:** To implement, maintain, and periodically review an MRF data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).
- Objective 4:** To develop, maintain, and periodically review standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.
- Objective 5:** To identify and prioritize data bases for integration into a MRF data management system.
- Objective 6:** To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
- Objective 7:** Protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

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

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

