Chairman Justin Esslinger called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The following members and others were present:

Members
Nicole Beckham, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Chris Bradshaw (proxy for Steve Brown), FLFWC, Saint Petersburg, FL
Beverly Sauls, FLFWC, Saint Petersburg, FL
Cindy Bohannon, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Justin Esslinger, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Vince Cefalu, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Darrin Stewart, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Carly Somerset, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Ava Lasseter, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Dave Gloeckner, NOAA SEFSC, Miami, FL

Staff
David Donaldson, GSMFC - Executive Director, Ocean Springs, MS
Gregg Bray, GSMFC - FIN Program Manager, Ocean Springs, MS
Donna Bellais, GSMFC - ComFIN Programmer, Ocean Springs, MS
Joe Ferrer, GSMFC - Systems Administrator, Ocean Springs, MS

Others
Andrew Petersen, Bluefin Data, Prairieville, LA
Richard Cody, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD
Les Casterline, TPWD, Corpus Christi, TX
Jarret Barker, TPWD, Austin, TX

Adoption of Agenda
G. Bray requested to provide an update on the FIS Commercial Conversion Factor proposal under Other Business. D. Gloeckner requested to present some commercial vessel issues provided by Mike Travis. V. Cefalu made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Seconded by C. Bradshaw.

Approval of Minutes
The minutes of the Data Management Subcommittee (DMS) meeting held on October 17, 2017 in Mobile, AL were approved as written.
Impact of FES Calibrations on Important Species in the Gulf of Mexico

R. Cody gave a presentation on the results of the transition to the Fishing Effort Survey (FES). This mail survey replaces the old Random Digit Dial (RDD) telephone survey for estimating effort in shore and private boat modes. This new mail survey produces higher effort estimates but estimates are more accurate than the old RDD estimates. The mail survey does a better job of reaching actual anglers in fishing households and has a higher response rate than the RDD. Generally the FES produces estimates that are two times larger for private boat mode and almost 4 times higher for shore mode. Cody presented detailed results for several important management species in the Gulf of Mexico. Cobia, Gag, gray snapper, gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, Spanish mackerel, red snapper, spotted seatrout estimated catch and harvest were approximately two to three times larger after the FES and APAIS calibrations. D. Gloeckner stated for red snapper the SEFSC is going to pause from doing any updates with calibrated MRIP estimates since red snapper is being managed with the state specific survey estimates under the 2 year exempted fishing permit program. They plan to develop some calibrations using the state survey data and work toward including them in benchmark red snapper assessment in 2020. Gloeckner stated it is possible that the large changes in estimated harvest might force the fishery management councils to revisit appropriate allocations for several managed species.

MRIP Update

R. Cody discussed MRIP is running a push-to-web study with the FES. An additional sample will be added and provide some respondents with a web survey option that will also have some additional survey questions. MRIP staff will be able to evaluate survey instruments and the opportunity to ask additional questions. Cody also stated MRIP commissioned Mike Brick from WESTAT to develop a summary white paper on use of angler apps for collecting data for recreational fisheries. That report should be available from the MRIP website soon. G. Bray discussed adding questions to the APAIS form for 2019. If MRIP staff can confirm the ability to remove the question regarding the method anglers receive postal mail then the Gulf MRIP states would be willing to add the gender and age questions. Bray stated that we also needed to agree on the wording for adding a question about fishing near or adjacent to artificial reefs. GSMFC staff will be printing forms for 2019 next month so a decision needs to be made soon. Bray would follow-up with MRIP staff on removing the mail question and provide a mock form for state and MRIP partners to review prior to printing.

Discussion of Future Data Collection Efforts for State Permitted For-hire Vessels

G. Bray noted with the federal for-hire vessels being mandated to report via electronic logbooks, we need to continue to monitor landings and effort from state permitted vessels. Currently, MRIP samples all for-hire vessels for effort with the For-hire Telephone Survey (FHTS) and catch with APAIS. B. Sauls stated due to the state EFP’s, there is also a present need for properly sampling state vessels. C. Somerset stated Mississippi had an issue with state for-hire vessels taking private charters during snapper season and agreed that sampling the state permitted for-hire fleet is important. Bray asked if any of the states envisioned switching to a different sampling method if the SEFHIER process becomes implemented. No states expressed a current desire to change from the existing methods. R. Cody suggested a presentation from the SEFHIER group at the March FIN meeting for a status update and possibly help with this reporting issue. Bray will coordinate with J. Stephen to determine if a SEFHIER presentation would be possible in March 2019.
Discussion of Recreational Landings Availability in the GulfFIN Data Management System

G. Bray stated the GulfFIN Data Management System (DMS) has typically been a repository for marine recreational catch, harvest and effort estimates. Bray asked if the states would be willing to share state survey estimates with GulfFIN so interested scientists could obtain them from one place for use in science and management. The committee agreed that to be successful the commission would need to compile information from each state as to what is collected and how the results should be used properly. Bray agreed that a large amount of coordination with state program managers would be necessary to present the estimates with the proper metadata. B. Sauls suggested that the GulfFIN Recreational Technical Workgroup (RecTech) would be useful for developing these products. Bray will convene the RecTech in the coming weeks to confirm willingness and discuss short term needs.

Update on Status of GulfFIN Data Management System Query Page

D. Bellais stated the public query tool for the GulfFIN Data Management System has been active on Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission’s (GSMFC) website since April 2018. This tool provides public access to non-confidential commercial data and recreational catch and effort data with biological sampling data to be added in the near future. The confidential part of the query tool is still in the testing phase and some additional programming changes are needed to fix minor issues. The expectation is to have the confidential side active by the end of 2018 pending any programming modifications and state approval.

Status of Certification of State Surveys and Findings from Red Snapper Workshop #4

R. Cody stated that the only survey in the Gulf region in the certification process is the Florida Gulf Reef Fish Survey. The review is in process and a decision and roll-out plan is planned for the near future. Cody discussed that the recent red snapper workshop #4 was held to discuss ways for integrating state survey data with the MRIP general survey. The states are working to provide a matrix of landings and discard data to the consultants for analysis purposes. The goal is to reconvene the workshop participants in 2019 to discuss their findings and discuss appropriate methods for producing combined estimates.

Update on Future Funding Opportunities

D. Donaldson informed the committee on several funding opportunities. BIO and HB funded through 2020. Possible additional money for IJF in 2019 and beyond. IJF might have additional funds above what their program requires and may allow us to spend some additional money on monitoring activities. FY2019 has an increase in the FIN line items for the Senate budget. This would cover all multiple FIN regions but it’s possible the GulfFIN allocation might increase by a small amount. NRDA is interested in doing a barotrauma study that has several components. Monitoring would be a large component of that research. It would be essential to develop the study to quantify how the resource is recovering from the oil disaster.

Status of Biological Sampling Analysis and Activities

G. Bray provided an update on processing and data entry of biological sampling activities for 2017 and 2018. Funding for sampling ran out in March 2017 but a new agreement is in place to support sampling and processing that will run through February 2020. GulfFIN is working with a contractor to develop a new data entry program that is utilized by Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas. Development is progressing fairly quickly and GulfFIN is hoping to have a program available
before the end of 2018. GulfFIN continues to provide biological data to support federal and state stock assessments. Red grouper and gray triggerfish were recently provided in 2018. The next species will be determined by future SEDAR and Gulf Council discussions and Bray will let everyone know when the next species and data deadline is announced.

**Other Business**

**G. Bray** stated the FIS Commercial Conversion Factor proposal submitted by GSMFC and state partners was approved and funding will be awarded with the 2019 GulfFIN Cooperative Agreement. Funding should be available in summer of 2019 and GSMFC will develop subawards with each state to allow sampling and analyses to begin. **J. Esslinger** suggested the states start thinking about which species should be used next for the conversion factor study.

**D. Gloeckner** stated that M. Travis from NOAA Fisheries stated it would be a large benefit to be able to accurately count unique commercial vessels in the Gulf region. **Travis** is specifically interested in shrimp vessels. **D. Donaldson** stated that GulfFIN has worked extensively on this issue in the past. A database has been created but getting data from the states to populate it has met many difficulties. **Donaldson** mentioned that the states have requested a white paper from **Travis** that would explain why these data are important and what specific analyses it would be used for.

**J. Esslinger** discussed they have seen individuals trying to sell shrimp landings on Facebook marketplace. He was asking if the other states have seen similar activities on social media. Several other states have discussed using social media to detect potential violations and most are being handled by state law enforcement personnel.

**Review of 2017 Commercial Data**

Each state provided feedback based on a review of the spreadsheets **D. Bellais** sent out prior to the meeting. The States mentioned that the GulfFIN DMS numbers were close to their state totals and the slight differences likely indicated they collected some additional data or made updates to the data that has yet to be delivered to GSMFC. State representatives also mentioned there were a few coding errors on their part. All necessary corrections to the 2017 data will be made at the state level and submitted to GSMFC for loading into the GulfFIN DMS. The states requested the spreadsheets be sent quarterly to correct the majority of errors before the yearly review of data.

*There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.*