

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

JANUARY 1, 2009 - DECEMBER 31, 2009

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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

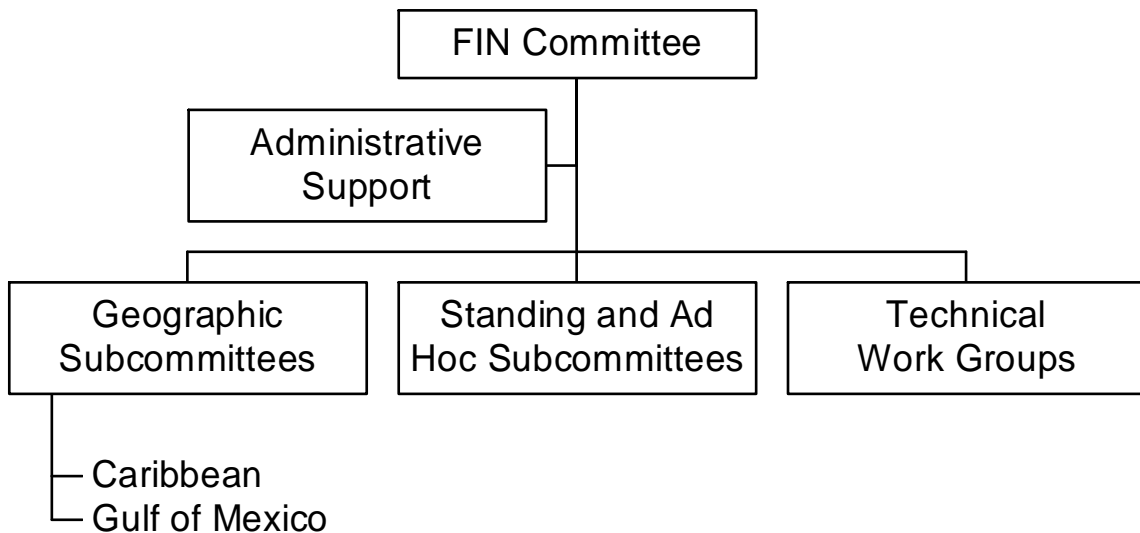
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<sup>1</sup> The Southeast Region (the Region) includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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 2009 were associated with addressing issues and problems regarding data collection and management and developing strategies for dealing with these topics. In addition to committee activities, FIN was involved in various operational activities concerning the collection and management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data. These activities were conducted by the various state and federal agencies involved in FIN. Each type of activity is discussed below. Future activities of the FIN Committee are outlined in Table 1.

## **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

### **FIN Committee**

The major FIN meeting was held in June 2009. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- Identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 2009 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 2010 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 2009;
- 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 2010;
- 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 2009 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. Subcommittee and work group members are listed in Table 3. Their activities included:

- The Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey data review meetings were held in February, July and October 2009 to discuss the RDD and Intercept Surveys for the East coast and Gulf Region, sampler performance activities, discussion of angler registry information, outreach materials and economic surveys, angler info brochures, 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 2009 to convene a workshop regarding the collection of data in the Gulf of Mexico for-hire industry. The meeting was proposed to bring all interested parties together to attempt to coordinate efforts to revise data collection methods for the recreational for-hire fishery;
- The ComFIN Data Collection Work Group met (via conference call) in April 2009 to determine if the existing commercial data collection methods in the Gulf of Mexico are collecting bait and marine life landings sufficiently;
- The FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group met (via conference call) in April 2009 to review 2008 and 2009 otolith and length data collection and processing activities and develop recommendations for necessary lengths and otoliths for FIN priority species;
- FIN Administrative Subcommittee met (via conference call) in April 2009 to review FIN goals and objectives and develop results-oriented tables for the FIN Annual Report;
- The annual FIN otolith processor training workshop was held in May 2009 to discuss the various reference sets, development of reference sets for additional species, status of Otolith Manual Revision as well as conduct otolith reading and review of FIN priority

species;

- The FIN Committee met in June 2009 for their annual meeting. There were a variety of important issues addressed including status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP); FIN Data Management System (DMS) issues, review of *Monitoring the Gulf of Mexico Commercial Reef Fish Fishery* document, registration tracking module regarding vessel information, presentation of status of national registry, update of license frame pilot survey, overview and update of current economic projects and initiatives, future economic data portal and state involvement in fishing-related business survey, update on Marine Recreational Information Program, update on electronic trip ticket/IFQ compatibility issues, review and approval of 2008 FIN Annual Report, various subcommittee and work group reports, status of 2009 activities, review and approval of 2010 Operations Plan and discussion of 2010 FIN funding priorities;
- The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee met in August 2009 to determine the activities for inclusion in the 2010 FIN cooperative agreement;
- The Gulf of Mexico port samplers meeting was held in September 2009 to discuss various issues including addressing recruitment and population connectivity questions with otolith chemistry; shark bottom longline observer program; TIP/FIN sampling targets; update on Red Snapper IFQ; shark identification presentation; status of state trip ticket programs and reconciliation of trip ticket data; exploring use of electronic logbooks for various fisheries; species identification conflicts/differences between port agents and dealers as well as a staging of gonad condition training session;
- The Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee met in October 2009 to discuss the logbook/trip ticket reconciliation process; status of trip ticket/IFQ compatibility reconciliation; update on MRIP Gulf of Mexico For-Hire Logbook project; review and approval of FIN at-sea sampling protocols; discussion of FIN process to access to confidential data; status of metadata data entry as well as a QA/QC workshop regarding the 2007-2008 commercial data;
- 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 RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN 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, Florida and Puerto Rico 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 Texas (using TPWD methodology), Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (east and west coast). The states also conducted weekly telephone calls to a 10% random sample of the Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (east and west coast) charter boat captains to obtain estimates of charter boat fishing effort. And the states conduct an economic add-on survey to collect data regarding trip expenditures concerning recreational fishing. 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 2009, four menhaden factories were active in the northern Gulf of Mexico at Moss Point, MS, and Empire, Abbeville, and Cameron, LA. About 40 purse-seine vessels fished for gulf menhaden in 2009. 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 2009 were 457,457 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 2009 fishing season. And Table 7 presents the age composition of the gulf menhaden biostatistical samples by port in 2009.
- 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.

- Trip Ticket Program Implementation and Operation – This task provided for operations and further implementation of commercial trip ticket systems to census the commercial fisheries landings in the Gulf of Mexico. It provided funding to Texas, Louisiana and Alabama for the operations of trip ticket programs for all commercial species. In Mississippi, it provided for the operations of a commercial trip ticket program for oysters and finfish and continued implementation of a system for the other commercial species in that state. In addition, it provided funding to contract for implementation and operation of electronic reporting for the trip ticket systems as well as reporting of data for the quota monitoring and IFQ programs. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. Table 9 illustrates the number of commercial seafood dealers who are reporting their landings using the electronic reporting option. It also shows the percentage of landings that captured electronically.
- 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 10 and Table 11 present the number of otoliths (or spines for gray triggerfish) 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 2009 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. 2009. *2010 Operations Plan for Fisheries Information Network (FIN)*. No. 171 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 26 pp + appendix.
- FIN Committee. 2009. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 2008 - December 31, 2008*. No. 170 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 22 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](http://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](http://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 2006 – 2010** [Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
<b>Planning, Management, and Evaluation</b>					
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
Identify funding needs for MRF programs	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination					
Explore methods to involve SeaGrant in outreach process	X				
Establish system for notifying dealers about electronic reporting option		X			
Conduct survey of dealers for input on best methods to facilitate reporting		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 program review					X
<b>Data Collection</b>					
Data components					
Review of components of fisheries					X
Needed data elements					
Assess need for trip-level commercial data in USVI	X				
Determine appropriate level of sampling for otoliths and lengths	X				
Establish feedback mechanism SEDAR process regarding biological sampling		X			
Evaluate need to develop eco-system data module					X
Standard data collection protocols					
Develop sampling protocols for stomach, tissue and gonads					X
Quality control/assurance					
Identify species conversion factors and compile	X				
Develop methods for validating factors (2006)	X				
Implement methods for validation of conversion factors		X			
Develop methods for validating recreational discards information		X			
Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards					X
Coordination of data collection					
Development of data collection plan	X	X	X	X	X
Establish metadata workgroup	X				
Collection of metadata	X	X	X	X	X
Full implementation of trip ticket systems for TX and MS	X	X			
Evaluate suitability of new data sources and integrate FIN data system			X		
Continue to develop protocol for private access and non-hook and line fisheries	X	X			
Implement for-hire telephone survey and at-sea sampling protocols for head boats	X	X			
Identify species that should be targets for specific surveys			X		
Implement surveys for identified species			X		
Investigate methods for improving sampling coverage of inshore tidal areas			X		
Implement pilot survey for detailed effort module		X			
Implement detailed effort module Gulf-wide			X		
Explore development of more detailed area fished codes			X		

<b>Data Collection (continued)</b>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Identify various state structures for recreational fishing licenses	X				
Ensure Gulf States are collecting critical license frame data elements		X			
Continue recreational sampling in Puerto Rico	X				
Implement recreational sampling in U.S. Virgin Islands		X			
Determine live market activities in Gulf				X	
Implement pilot survey to collect data on live market activities				X	
Identify geographic regions of interest for recreational sampling		X			
Investigate feasibility of sampling these regions			X		
Implement FIN Social and Economic module	X	X	X	X	X
Prioritize species for additional biological sampling	X	X	X	X	X
Determine if increased otolith processing capacity is needed		X			
Evaluate bycatch module against current needs			X		
Implement the bycatch data collection module				X	
Increase recreational sampling levels Gulf-wide		X			
Optimize sampling allocations to improve precision for key species			X		
Innovative collection technology					
Discuss strategy for implementation of in-season quota monitoring				X	
Review opportunity to improve timeliness of data to support quota monitoring					X
Evaluate innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Management</b>					
Data management system					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
Hardware/software capabilities					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard data management protocols					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			
Fully implement registration-tracking module	X				
Explore methods for post-stratification of recreational data		X			
Implement appropriate post-stratification methods			X		
Evaluate variance estimation methods for recreational data				X	
Integration of databases					
Identify recreational databases for integration in DMS	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative data management technology					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Explore possibility of digital archiving of data forms	X				
Test electronic field data entry			X		
Integrate use of GIS for standardized reports			X		
Data confidentiality					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Development of National Program</b>					
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 2009**

Kevin Anson Alabama Marine Resources Division	Craig Lilyestrom Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources
Steven Atran Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council	Daniel Matos Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources
Ken Brennan National Marine Fisheries Service Beaufort Laboratory	Christine Murrell Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Page Campbell Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Tom Schmidt National Park Service
Richard Cody Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute	Tom Sinclair U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Kerwin Cuevas Mississippi Department of Marine Resources	Tom Sminkey National Marine Fisheries Service Headquarters Office
Representative National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Fisheries Science Center	Andy Strelcheck National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office
Chris Denson Alabama Marine Resources Division	Vicki Swann Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Dave Donaldson Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission	Toby Tobias Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife
Graciela Garcia-Moliner Caribbean Fishery Management Council	
Michelle Kasprzak Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	

**TABLE 3. FIN SUBCOMMITTEE AND WORK GROUP MEMBERS FOR 2009**

**FIN Administrative Subcommittee**

Kevin Anson  
Alabama Marine Resources Division

Dave Donaldson  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Ken Brennan  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Beaufort Laboratory

Tom Sinclair  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Guy Davenport  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Tom Sminkey  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Headquarters Office

**FIN Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee**

Kevin Anson  
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### **FIN Commercial Technical Work Group**

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Toby Tobias  
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### **FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group**

Harry Blanchet  
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Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

Britt Bumgardner  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Bob Muller  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

Kerwin Cuevas  
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Resources

Aida Rosario  
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Toby Tobias  
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Behzad Mahmoudi  
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John Mareska  
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**FIN Data Management Work Group**

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**FIN For-Hire Work Group**

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### **FIN Outreach Work Group**

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Fisheries

Graciela Garcia-Moliner  
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Marcia Taylor  
Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service  
University of Virgin Islands

Charlene Ponce  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
Council

### **FIN Recreational Technical Work Group**

Rob Andrews  
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Environmental Resources

Ken Brennan  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Beaufort Laboratory

Beverly Sauls  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

Kerwin Cuevas  
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Toby Tobias  
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Michael Harden  
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### **FIN Social/Economic Work Group**

Rita Curtis  
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Assane Diagne  
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
Council

Steve Holiman  
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Walter Keithly  
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David Lavergne  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and  
Fisheries

Jeremy Leitz  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Larry Perruso  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

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

STATE	WAVE	SH	CH	PR	Total	x of Base Quota		
						SH	CH	PR
FLORIDA - EAST	1	857	163	1,482	2,502	1.79	2.91	1.60
	2	890	181	1,618	2,689	1.60	2.51	1.33
	3	805	171	1,670	2,646	1.47	2.34	1.20
	4	585	232	1,634	2,451	1.10	3.52	1.27
	5	895	156	1,467	2,518	1.66	3.71	1.55
	6	572	127	1,156	1,855	1.22	2.31	1.15
	Total	4,604	1,030	9,027	14,661	1.47	2.83	1.33
FLORIDA - WEST	1	738	526	1,931	3,195	1.55	5.78	1.58
	2	997	921	2,616	4,534	1.65	5.62	1.54
	3	1,203	1,318	2,708	5,229	1.63	6.72	1.40
	4	868	831	2,723	4,422	1.42	3.77	1.40
	5	1,009	760	2,641	4,410	1.74	5.69	1.86
	6	826	693	1,542	3,061	1.57	5.08	1.18
	Total	5,641	5,049	14,161	24,851	1.59	5.36	1.48
ALABAMA	1	117	33	156	306	1.50	1.27	1.03
	2	199	78	178	455	1.97	2.17	1.07
	3	210	133	288	631	1.17	2.66	1.10
	4	156	117	257	530	1.37	2.34	1.13
	5	178	77	186	441	1.58	2.26	1.20
	6	119	100	164	383	1.55	3.70	1.23
	Total	979	538	1,229	2,746	1.48	2.41	1.12
LOUISIANA	1	104	70	486	660	1.27	2.00	1.37
	2	188	158	625	971	1.34	3.43	1.37
	3	216	213	1,227	1,656	1.49	2.73	1.51
	4	192	139	1,178	1,509	1.32	2.17	1.56
	5	132	157	578	867	1.16	3.49	1.15
	6	104	101	615	820	0.85	2.66	1.15
	Total	936	838	4,709	6,483	1.25	2.74	1.38
MISSISSIPPI	1	63	22	170	255	1.29	0.88	2.13
	2	78	63	126	267	1.37	2.42	1.10
	3	144	88	379	611	1.57	2.93	1.75
	4	136	86	266	488	1.84	2.87	1.61
	5	97	55	252	404	1.52	2.04	1.41
	6	78	19	137	234	1.56	0.73	1.26
	Total	596	333	1,330	2,259	1.54	2.03	1.54
PUERTO RICO	1	303	65	218	586	2.30	1.51	1.16
	2	223	105	254	582	1.16	3.89	0.90
	3	207	36	258	501	1.06	1.29	0.88
	4	63	50	168	281	0.35	1.79	0.78
	5	135	17	100	252	1.17	0.68	0.77
	6	122	81	211	414	1.01	1.76	1.09
	Total	1,053	354	1,209	2,616	1.12	1.80	0.93

**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	264	7759	724
TX	52	1059	286

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

PORT	NUMBER OF SAMPLES
MOSS POINT, MS	142
EMPIRE, LA	109
ABBEVILLE, LA	258
CAMERON, LA	241

**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	%
1	210	17	133	15	110	5	292	14	745	12
2	835	69	616	69	1,601	79	1,692	82	4,744	77
3+	172	12	155	16	316	16	71	3	704	12
ALL	1,217		894		2,027		2,055		6,193	

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

STATE	COUNT	YEARS	LAST UPDATED
<b>COMMERCIAL LANDINGS</b>			
FLORIDA	15,990,208	1985 - 2008	26-FEB-09
ALABAMA	452,010	1985 - 2009	30-JAN-09
MISSISSIPPI	118,256	1985 - 2008	18-FEB-09
LOUISIANA	4,623,632	1985 - 2009	23-MAR-09
TEXAS	194,560	1985 - 2008	17-MAR-09
PUERTO RICO	1,662,378	1985 - 2007	2007
<b>RECREATIONAL CATCH ESTIMATES</b>			
FLORIDA		1981 - 2007	30-MAY-07
ALABAMA		1981 - 2007	30-MAY-07
MISSISSIPPI		1981 - 2007	30-MAY-07
LOUISIANA		1981 - 2007	30-MAY-07
TEXAS		1983 - 2006	30MAY07
PUERTO RICO		2000 - 2007	30-MAY-07
<b>RECREATIONAL EFFORT ESTIMATES</b>			
FLORIDA		1982 - 2007	10-JAN-08
ALABAMA		1982 - 2007	10-JAN-08
MISSISSIPPI		1982 - 2007	10-JAN-08
LOUISIANA		1982 - 2007	10-JAN-08
TEXAS		-	-
PUERTO RICO		-	-
<b>BIOLOGICAL DATA</b>			
FLORIDA	794	2003 - 2005	11-OCT-07
ALABAMA	23,812	2002 - 2007	15-MAY-08
MISSISSIPPI	3,604	2002 - 2007	04-NOV-08
LOUISIANA	50,557	2002 - 2007	10-DEC-08
TEXAS	23,260	2002 - 2007	07-OCT-08

**TABLE 9. NUMBER OF DEALERS UTILIZING THE ELECTRONIC REPORTING OPTION FOR TRIP TICKETS, BY STATE**

STATE	DEALERS	% OF LANDINGS
FLORIDA	223	53%
ALABAMA	28	30%
MISSISSIPPI	4	0%
LOUISIANA	80	62%
TEXAS	116	75%
TOTAL	451	55%

**TABLE 10. NUMBER OF HARD PARTS COLLECTED FROM THE COMMERCIAL FISHERY BY FIN PRIORITY SPECIES, BY STATE**

PRIMARY SPECIES	FL	AL	MS	LA	TX	TOT
BLACK DRUM	-	-	-	737	83	820
FLOUNDERS	104	65	264	183	257	873
GRAY SNAPPER	834	-	6	39	-	879
GRAY TRIGGERFISH	73	7	-	36	-	116
GREATER AMBERJACK	9	-	2	2	-	13
KING MACKEREL	23	4	-	97	-	124
RED SNAPPER	435	123	50	156	370	1,134
SHEEPSHEAD	0	41	186	742	-	969
STRIPED MULLET	1,205	432	26	725	-	2,388
VERMILION SNAPPER	173	49	-	80	77	379
TOTAL	2,856	721	534	2,797	787	7,695

**TABLE 11. NUMBER OF HARD PARTS COLLECTED FROM THE RECREATIONAL FISHERY BY FIN PRIORITY SPECIES, BY STATE**

<b>PRIMARY SPECIES</b>	<b>FL</b>	<b>AL</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>LA</b>	<b>TX</b>	<b>TOT</b>
BLACK DRUM	12	-	23	459	72	566
FLOUNDERS	86	49	153	701	110	1,099
GAG	446	-	-	-	-	446
GRAY SNAPPER	868	-	-	513	88	1,469
GRAY TRIGGERFISH	218	20	-	161	37	436
GREATER AMBERJACK	29	6	-	211	-	246
KING MACKEREL	167	14	-	39	304	524
RED DRUM	417	37	21	-	540	1,015
RED GROUPER	184	-	-	-	-	184
RED SNAPPER	385	215	2	614	212	1,428
SHEEPSHEAD	110	36	29	570	25	770
SPOTTED SEATROUT	619	127	58	-	914	1,718
VERMILION SNAPPER	542	57	-	50	454	1,103
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,083</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>3,318</b>	<b>2,756</b>	<b>11,004</b>





**APPENDIX A**

**2009 Operations Plan**



**2009 Operations Plan for the  
Fisheries Information Network in the  
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009

**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 2009. 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 2009 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. 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 2009 for Mississippi. Operations of trip ticket will continue in 2009 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, NMFS

Approach: This task will provide for the conduct of the MRFSS survey in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida for shore, for-hire, and private modes and for-hire field intercepts in Texas. 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 Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida charter boat captains to obtain estimates of charter boat fishing effort. The NMFS 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 Menhaden Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (C)

Objective: Continue the support of menhaden sampling in the Gulf of Mexico.  
Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC, and NMFS  
Approach: The purpose of this task is to sample gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels that operate at the ports of Empire, Morgan City, Abbeville, and Cameron, Louisiana. Samples will be processed for size and age composition for use in coast-wide stock assessments. In turn, gulf menhaden stock assessments are incorporated into the Fisheries Management Plan for the species, and are also utilized by the Gulf coast states, the GSMFC, the menhaden industry, and the NMFS.

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

Task A4: 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 NMFS  
Approach: The purpose of this task is to sample catches, collect catch reports from head boat personnel, and gather effort data on head boats which operate primarily in the Exclusive Economic Zone from ports along the coasts of Texas and Florida. This task will be conducted in accordance with existing NMFS head boat methodology.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.  
Product: Collection of necessary head boat data

Schedule: This task is an on-going activity.

Task A5: 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 NMFS

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 2009.

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 A6: 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). Development of the registration tracking system will be address by the FIN Data Base Manager and ComFIN Survey Coordinator. This module will be used by both FIN and ACCSP. In addition, staff 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 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 2009.

Task A7: 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 2009 to address any issues.

## **B. Committee Activities**

The tasks below cover all 2009 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: Annual Operations Plan, 2009 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2009 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 2009.

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

Product: 2009 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by spring 2009 and addressed by the Committee at the 2009 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: Biological/Environmental Work Group/NMFS/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. Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, NMFS 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 2009.

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

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Team Members: FIN Committee and staff

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

Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and staff time.

Product: Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning FIN and a report which compiles a record of information distributed and presentations given by the Committee and staff. This information is included in the FIN Annual Report.

Schedule: This task will be an ongoing activity.

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

Objective: Implementation 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. An update of outreach activities will be compiled each year and presented in the FIN Annual Report.

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

Objective: Develop the social/economic module for the ComFIN.  
Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group  
Approach: Working in conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group 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 NMFS 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: This is an ongoing activity.

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

Objective: Compile metadata for inclusion into a metadata database for the Southeast Region.  
Team Members: FIN and ACCSP staff and FIS personnel

Approach: The Biological/Environmental 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. This issue is a standing item on the Gulf Geographic Subcommittee of FIN.

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.

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

Objective: Implementation of a registration tracking system for FIN.

Team Members: Registration Tracking Work Group

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. 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 Geographic Subcommittee of FIN. Once those data have been collected, data on dealers and fishermen will be compiled.

Task B8: 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 NMFS

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. There will only be a Gulf of Mexico workshop this year due to funding cuts. The workshop will be attended by the state (it will be limited to one (1) person per state due to funding shortfalls) and federal port agents from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, appropriate NMFS staff and other interested personnel. For the Gulf of Mexico meeting, 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, overview of ComFIN program, 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. A list of recommendations regarding commercial data collection activities.  
Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for late summer 2009.

Task B9: Otolith Processors Training Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

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 NMFS

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, GSMFC, NMFS and other interested personnel 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-2009.

Task B10: Develop Methods for Validating Recreational Discards Data (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

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

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Biological/Environmental 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 status of the work will be presented to the FIN Committee at the June 2009 meeting.

Task B11: 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 B12: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities (Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Identify and combine duplicative data collection and management efforts.  
Team Members: FIN Committee  
Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group has identified redundancies in MRF data collection and management in the Southeast Region and provided recommendations to the 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 B13: Review 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 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 2009 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 B14: 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 2009 to review activities, develop a biological sampling annual plan, and develop a feedback mechanism for the SEDAR process

Task B15: 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/Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Biological/Environmental 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 status of the work will be presented to the FIN Committee at the June 2009 meeting.

Task B16: Establish/modify Recreational Licenses (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The FIN has developed criteria that 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 NMFS conducted a pilot survey utilizing recreational fishing licenses as a sampling frame for the collection of effort in the private boat and shore modes.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time  
Product: Recreational fishing licenses suitable for use as sampling directory  
Schedule: A presentation regarding the pilot survey will be given at the 2009 FIN Committee meeting. Based on the results, the FIN Committee will take the appropriate actions.

Task B17: Develop Methodologies for Sampling Highly Migratory Species (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee/Biological/Environmental 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. 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 status of the work will be presented to the FIN Committee at the June 2009 meeting.

Task B18: 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/Biological/Environmental 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 Work Group will meet in 2009 to continue addressing this issue.

Task B19: Determination of Ornamental Marine Life and Live Bait Activities (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Determine the extent of commercial ornamental marine life and live bait activities in the Gulf of Mexico

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group

Approach: The Data Collection Work Group will meet to compile the magnitude of ornamental marine live and live bait activities in the Gulf. The group will also characterize these fisheries and present these findings to the FIN Committee. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Report that contains magnitude and characterization of these fisheries.

Schedule: The Work Group will meet in 2009 to address 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, Obj 6) (F)

Objective: To 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, Obj 6) (F)

Objective: To 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: This issue will be address by the FIN Committee at the June 2009 meeting.

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

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.  
Team Members: FIN Committee and industry personnel  
Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies, which will aid in the management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data.



Resources: Travel/meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and staff time.  
Product: Progress reports.  
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B24: 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. 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 NMFS 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.

## D. Time Table

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
<b>Planning, Management, and Evaluation</b>					
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
Identify funding needs for MRF programs	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination					
Explore methods to involve Sea Grant in outreach process	X	X			
Establish system for notifying dealers about electronic reporting option		X			
Conduct survey of dealers for input on best methods to facilitate reporting		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 program review					X
<b>Data Collection</b>					
Data components					
Review of components of fisheries					X
Needed data elements					
Assess need for trip-level commercial data in USVI	X	X			
Determine appropriate level of sampling for otoliths and lengths	X				
Establish feedback mechanism for SEDAR process regarding biological sampling		X			
Evaluate need to develop eco-system data module					X
Standard data collection protocols					
Develop sampling protocols for stomach, tissue and gonads					X
Quality control/assurance					
Identify species conversion factors and compile	X	X			
Develop methods for validating factors			X		
Implement methods for validation of conversion factors				X	
Develop methods for validating recreational discards information				X	
Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards					X
Coordination of data collection					
Development of data collection plan	X	X	X	X	X
Establish metadata workgroup	X				
Collection of metadata	X	X	X	X	X
Full implementation of trip ticket systems for TX and MS	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluate suitability of new data sources and integrate FIN data system			X		
Continue to develop protocol for private access and non-hook and line fisheries	X	X			
Implement for-hire telephone survey and at-sea sampling protocols for head boats	X	X			

<b>Data Collection (continued)</b>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Identify species that should be targets for specific surveys			X		
Implement surveys for identified species				X	
Investigate methods for improving sampling coverage of inshore tidal areas			X		
Implement pilot survey for detailed effort module		X			
Implement detailed effort module Gulf-wide			X		
Explore development of more detailed area fished codes			X		
Identify various state structures of recreational fishing licenses	X				
Ensure Gulf States are collecting critical license frame data elements		X			
Continue recreational sampling in Puerto Rico	X		X	X	X
Implement recreational sampling in U.S. Virgin Islands		X	X	X	X
Determine live market activities in Gulf				X	
Implement pilot survey to collect data on live market activities					X
Identify geographic regions of interest for recreational sampling		X			
Investigate feasibility of sampling these regions			X		
Implement FIN Social and Economic module	X	X	X	X	X
Prioritize species for additional biological sampling	X	X	X	X	X
Determine if increased otolith processing capacity is needed		X			
Evaluate bycatch module against current needs			X		
Implement the bycatch data collection module				X	
Increase recreational sampling levels Gulf-wide		X			
Optimize sampling allocations to improve precision for key species	X				
<b>Innovative collection technology</b>					
Discuss strategy for implementation of in-season quota monitoring				X	
Review opportunity to improve timeliness of data to support quota monitoring					X
Evaluate innovative data collection technologies	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Management</b>					
<b>Data management system</b>					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
<b>Hardware/software capabilities</b>					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form		X	X	X	X
<b>Data maintenance</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Standard data management protocols</b>					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			
Fully implement registration-tracking module	X	X			
Explore methods for post-stratification of recreational data		X			
Implement appropriate post-stratification methods			X		
Evaluate variance estimation methods for recreational data				X	
<b>Integration of databases</b>					
Identify recreational databases for integration in DMS	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Innovative data management technology</b>					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Explore possibility of digital archiving of data forms	X				
Test electronic field data entry			X		
Integrate use of GIS for standardized reports			X		

<b>Data Management (continued)</b>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Data confidentiality					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Development of National Program</b>					
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



## **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 10, 2009**

**Savannah, Georgia**

Vice Chairman V. Swann called the meeting to order on June 10, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

**Members**

Kevin Anson, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL  
Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL  
Ken Brennan, NOAA Fisheries, Beaufort Lab, NC  
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX  
Richard Cody, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL  
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Chris Denson, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL  
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Michelle Kasprzak, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Daniel Matos-Caraballo, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR  
Christine Murrell, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Tom Sminkey, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD  
Vicki Swann, TPWD, Austin, TX  
Steve Turner, (proxy for G. Davenport), NOAA Fisheries, SEFSC, Miami, FL

**Staff**

Donna Bellais, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Gregg Bray, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Alex Miller, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

**Others**

Rob Andrews, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD  
Zulena Cortes, PRDNER, San Juan, PR  
Chris Robbins, Ocean Conservancy, Austin, TX  
Geoff White, ACCSP, Washington, DC

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved as presented.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on June 11 and 12, 2008 in St. Thomas, USVI were approved as presented.

## **Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program**

**G. White** of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) gave an overview of activities for the past year. **White** distributed copies of the Status of Available Data in the ACCSP Data Warehouse. The ACCSP Data Warehouse includes historical commercial catch and effort data from as far back as 1950. Other data modules will include: permit and vessel registration, biological, bycatch and socio-economic data.

**White** reported that several partners implemented improvements to their data collection programs. Maine has mandatory trip level reporting, New York began entering trip level reports, Delaware began laying the foundation for state dealer reporting. The remaining partners maintained trip level dealer reporting programs with improvements in participant and permit tracking. **White** noted that recreational fisheries continue to be monitored by the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) and the ACCSP will be involved in the transition of MRFSS to the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP).

The following is a list of ACCSP partner projects: Implementation of Mandatory Dealer Reporting System for Maine Commercial Landings, Portside Bycatch Sampling and Commercial Catch Sampling of the Atlantic Herring, Conversion Factor Update Sampling in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, Maintenance and Coordination of Fisheries-Dependent Data Feeds from Rhode Island, Trip Level Reporting for Lobster Harvesters in Massachusetts, Continuation and Expansion of the New York Fishery-Dependent Data Collection and Biological Sampling, New Jersey Implementation of Commercial Fisheries Data Collection, Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting, Electronic Dealer Reporting, and Biological Characterization, Continuation of Initiating State Dealer Reporting in Delaware, Information Technology Support for Maryland Data Collection, Conduct of MRFSS Random Digit Dialing, For-Hire Telephone Calls , and Dockside Sampling in North Carolina, Estuarine Bycatch Assessment in North Carolina Commercial Fisheries, Sampling for Hard Part/Aging from Commercial Fishery for Snapper/Grouper Complex in South Carolina, Conversion of American Lobster from Business Objects to Oracle Discoverer, Reducing Catch and Effort Variances for Recreational Fisheries from Maine to Georgia, and Increase Intercept Sampling Levels for the MRFSS, For-Hire Methodology of Charter Boat and Headboat Fishery on the Atlantic Coast.

**White** reported that in 2008 approximately \$2 million was awarded to thirteen projects, in addition to funds provided for the administration of the program.

## **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 and return them to D. Bellais. **S. Turner** provided a similar list for the SEFSC.

Status of the FIN DMS – **D. Bellais** reported on the status of the FIN DMS noting that Oracle Discoverer public access tracking continues to be a work in progress. State partners continue to update and enter metadata into the InPort system. **Bellais** gave an update on record counts in the FIN DMS for commercial landings. **Bellais** reported that the pilot survey using the recreational fishing licenses ended in December 2008 for the entire Gulf of Mexico. Since Louisiana license data was the most complete it was chosen to represent the Gulf region. Louisiana's recreational fishing license data continues to be loaded by wave. Also of note is that after vessel data is received from all state partners it will be loaded into the FIN system and will

then be linked to the Coast Guard vessel data via hull identification number or Coast Guard registration number. **Bellais** then gave a re-cap on biological sampling data, marine recreational fishery catch estimates, marine recreational fishery effort estimates, and menhaden data.

### **Discussion and Review of *Monitoring the Gulf of Mexico Commercial Reef Fish Document***

**C. Robbins** of the Ocean Conservancy gave a presentation to the FIN Committee on the document entitled, *Monitoring the Gulf of Mexico Commercial Reef Fish Fishery*.

The Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council (GMFMC) requested that the FIN Committee review this document and provide feedback and comments to them prior to their next meeting. The following are comments and suggestions from the FIN Committee:

#### General Comments by FIN

- There needs to be adequate enforcement (with concrete consequences for not complying) for all of the proposed reporting requirements for these requirements to be successful. Without sufficient enforcement, the proposed rules and regulations will not provide improvement in the available data.
- FIN believed it was important to state that adequate funding needs to be available to ensure the success of the proposed requirements. While this may be stating the obvious, the group believed it was essential to document.
- Another key to success is sufficient outreach to the fishermen and dealers about the proposed rules and regulations. Without the support and input from industry, the proposed requirements are destined to fail.

#### *Fishing Logbooks Recommendations (from Reef Fish document)*

- *Require and include the recording of all fish caught at sea, including an estimate of the weight of fish caught and released by species by area and gear type, in fishing logbooks.*
- *Require and include the recording of lost gear, including the amount of gear (length of groundline and number of hooks) and location of disappearance, in fishing logbooks.*
- *Record fishing events on a daily basis (If possible, data should be collected for set location and soak time) in fishing logbooks.*
- *Complete all daily Fishing Logbook trip report forms by 12:00 p.m. (noon) of the day following a fishing day.*
- *Develop and implement an electronic standardized template as soon as practicable.*

FIN Comments - it is essential to have validation of the logbook data. This can be accomplished via at-sea sampling as well as utilizing evolving technologies (electronic monitoring with cameras, etc). Also, it was recognized that daily recording of the information was important and key; there may not be a need for daily reporting of these data at this point in time.

#### *Dealer Reports Recommendations (from Reef Fish document)*

- *Require dealers who receive Reef Fish to submit to the SEFSC complete and accurate Dealer Reports which include aggregated landed weights by species for all species landed.*
- *Require submission of Dealer Reports on a weekly basis and receipt of Dealer Reports by the SEFSC no later than 5 days following the week during which data were received.*

- *Expedite and expand a mandatory electronic Dealer Report system to all reef species managed under ACLs.*

FIN Comments - while having quicker reporting periods would assist in managing species under ACLs, it needs to be realized that changing the reporting period for the state trip ticket programs (dealer reporting) might be problematic and difficult to accomplish in a short timeframe.

*Integrated Data Systems Recommendations (from Reef Fish document)*

- *Require entry of Fishing Logbook, Dealer Report and VMS data into a single Fisheries Operating System (FOS) that allows for data merging, checking, and reporting.*

FIN Comments - the Committee believed this was a great concept and stressed the importance of involving all partners in this process. FIN should be integrally involved in the development of such as system.

### **Discussion of Registration Tracking Module regarding Vessel Information**

Since the Registration Tracking Module has been very difficult to launch due to a variety of reasons, it was suggested hiring a contractor to compile this information from all the states. The FIN Committee discussed the possible costs involved and **D. Donaldson** will check on the costs for the various contracts to get an idea of the necessary funds. After some discussion, the states believed this was a good approach and asked that staff move forward with implementing this task.

### **National Recreational Fishermen Registry Issues**

**R. Andrews** of NOAA Fisheries gave an update on the License Frame Pilot Survey noting that the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act was signed into law in January 2007. This Act requires the implementation of a federal angler registry and an improved data collection program. The Angler License Directory Survey (ALDS) was implemented in March 2007 and utilizes state databases of saltwater license holders as sampling frames. This survey is conducted independently from the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) and utilizes similar procedures as CHTS. **Andrews** discussed the benefits and limitations of the ALDS as well as explaining the dual-frame approach. The benefits of the ALDS includes improved efficiency of contacting fishing households, a wider geographic coverage of fishing households, and will allow for stratification of data based on residency or types of fishing license. Some of the limitations have been lower than expected data quality from the license databases, low response rates (15-30%) and under-coverage due to license exemptions in some states. Methods are being tested to help improve response rates such as improving sample frame quality, sending out pre-notification letters, retaining cell phone numbers in the sample frame, and using multiple vendors for telephone matching. The dual-frame approach, using the RDD and the ALDS is providing even higher coverage than the ALDS alone. The dual-frame approach also provides the benefit of improved efficiency and the ability to stratify the results but is limited by the complexity and cost of running the survey and possible increases in measurement error. **Andrews** provided some preliminary results for shore and private boat mode in Louisiana for wave 2 2008 through wave 1 2009. Effort estimates for the coastal household telephone survey (CHTS), ALDS, and dual-frame approach were not significantly different but in most cases dual-frame estimates were similar or lower than the CHTS estimates. The dual frame study will continue through 2009 but

will be limited to Louisiana in the Gulf of Mexico because they have the most complete angler license database.

### **Economic Data Program**

**Miller** of GSMFC gave an update on the activities of the FIN Economic Data Program by first listing the components which include economic data collection, economic analysis and research, and economic outreach. Current projects are an economic survey of the inshore shrimp fleet, economic survey of fishing-related business, marine angler expenditure survey and marine recreational use survey. **Miller** also noted that economic research is being conducted to determine the influence of fuel prices on marine recreational angler effort and a two day economic workshop was conducted in March 2009 with 22 fisheries economists attending. Discussion was held concerning the participation of the states within the fishing-related businesses project. After discussion it was determined that the states are currently unavailable to collect data for this project. **Miller** noted that data collection activities throughout the Gulf for this project will therefore likely enter into a competitive request for proposals (RFP).

The early development of a Gulf fisheries economics portal was also presented by **Miller**. He explained that the portal will allow individuals to log on to the web in order to access fisheries economic literature and data/impacts for the Gulf.

### **Update on Electronic Trip Ticket/IFQ Compatibility Issues**

**D. Donaldson** reported that the issue of electronic trip ticket/IFQ compatibility is being worked out between **Claude Peterson** of Bluefin Data and programmers from NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office (SERO). The final product will allow dealers to report all fish through the current electronic trip ticket process except for red snapper. Dealers will be provided a link for entering their red snapper data through the existing federal IFQ web system. After entering their red snapper on the IFQ system the red snapper data will automatically be transferred back to the state trip ticket to fulfill the state data requirements. **C. Denson** asked if this system has been implemented currently in the Gulf of Mexico. **Donaldson** stated that he was not sure if the final product was completed and in use by dealers. **M. Kasprzak** asked if **Peterson** could attend the upcoming GSMFC meeting in October to demonstrate the software at the Data Management Subcommittee meeting. **Donaldson** said that he would talk to **Peterson** and arrange for a demonstration.

### **Status of Marine Recreational Information Program**

**R. Andrews** gave a presentation that updated the group on the ongoing projects for MRIP. NOAA recently announced funding support for 12 new projects. The latest work will build upon existing work and expanding on existing initiatives. The Design and Analysis workgroup is working to develop an estimation program that integrates telephone fishing effort surveys in a dual-frame approach, developing a sample design for a dual-frame mail survey that will be tested as an alternative to telephone surveys for fishing effort, and developing a methodology to test for differences in catch rate, angler characteristics, and behavior between trips sampled by field interviewers and trips that are not sampled due to factors like property restrictions or remoteness of locations. The for-hire workgroup received funding to design pilot studies to test the feasibility of a regional logbook reporting program for the for-hire fishery in the Gulf of Mexico. The Angler Registry Database Workgroup continues to work with states on data transmission issues. Implementation of state angler license data is ongoing as Memoranda

of Agreements with states are being established. The Highly Migratory Species Workgroup completed data collection for their pilot survey in Southeast Florida. A final report will be generated in the summer of 2009 to help develop future surveys for the HMS fishery that provide more precise and accurate data.

### **Review and Approval of 2008 Annual Report**

FIN Committee members were provided with copies of the draft 2008 FIN Annual Report. It was noted that result oriented tables have been added to the Annual Report for 2008. **G. Bray** requested that members of the Committee review the Annual Report and provide comments, revisions, or corrections to staff by June 29, 2009. **M. Kasprzak moved to accept the FIN 2008 Annual Report with pending 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.

#### **Administrative Subcommittee – (Attachment A)**

The Administrative Subcommittee met via conference call in April 2009. This group was tasked with reviewing the goals and objectives of the FIN program as they relate to the external program review. Since external reviews in the past have been of limited value, the FIN Committee agreed to discontinue this practice and conduct an internal review. The Subcommittee also discussed adding result-oriented tables for the Annual Report and these tables will be incorporated. A meeting summary/report for the call is attached. The FIN Committee reviewed this summary and **M. Kasprzak moved to accept the report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee – (Attachment B)**

The Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee/TCC Data Management Subcommittee (DMS) met in October of 2008 and March 2009.

At the October 2008 meeting biological sampling activities were discussed including, otolith and lengths collected, otolith analysis from 2002 to 2007, the status of web-based data entry program, and a discussion on duplicate records in FIN and TIP databases. Since it has been difficult to collect information for commercial fishermen, dealers and vessels, **D. Donaldson** suggested that FIN identify this as high priority in 2009 and hire a contractor in 2010 to collect these data. Discussions were also held on trip ticket requirements for E- reporting, MRIP, economic data collection, and trip tickets for the for-hire fishery.

At the March 2009 meeting a group of interested parties was brought together in an attempt to coordinate efforts to revise data collection methods for the recreational for-hire fishery. **B. Zales, M. Kasprzak, P. Pate, J. Barger and H. Henniger** gave presentations on various data collection programs.

Minutes of these meetings are attached. **K. Cuevas moved to accept these reports. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **Commercial Port Sampler Meetings – (Attachment C)**

The Gulf Port Samplers met in September 2008 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The following issues were discussed: golden tilefish sampling, TIP issues, hurricane relief efforts for the fishing industry, law enforcement in the Gulf of Mexico, and data confidentiality. **P. Fuller** of USGS gave presentation on non-native species. The following morning, the port samplers took a field trip to crab processors in the New Orleans area.

The Caribbean Port Samplers also met in September 2008 in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. **D. Matos** gave a presentation on Puerto Rico's commercial fisheries statistics program, and personnel from the USVI gave presentations on commercial catch records, trip interview program, and biostatistical summaries. Later port samplers took a field trip to various fishing locations and markets in Rincon and Aquadilla.

Meeting summaries are attached. **P. Campbell moved to accept the Commercial Port Sampler reports. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### Otolith Processors Training Workshop – (Attachment D)

The Otolith Processors Training Workshop was held in May of 2009 in St. Petersburg, Florida. Otolith reading exercises were conducted for black drum, red drum, spotted seatrout, gray triggerfish, king mackerel, flounders, sheepshead, striped mullet, gray snapper, red snapper, and vermilion snapper. The following day there were discussions of reference sets for the above species, the revision of the otolith manual, and greater amberjack ageing techniques. D. Parkyn of the University of Florida will conduct a training session for greater amberjack next May.

The meeting summary of the otolith processors training workshop is attached. **M. Kasprzak moved to accept this report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### Data Collection Work Group – (Attachment E)

The Data Collection Work Group met via conference call in April of 2009. This work group was tasked with determining if the commercial data collection methods in the Gulf of Mexico are collecting bait and marine life landings. After discussion the work group determined that live market activities are sufficiently covered through the commercial trip ticket program in the Gulf of Mexico.

A summary of the conference call is attached. **M. Kasprzak moved to accept this report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### Data Collection Plan Work Group – (Attachment F)

The Data Collection Plan Work Group met via conference call in April of 2009. The purpose of this meeting was to review otolith collection reports for 2008. Several items were recommended by the work group:

- ask D. Murie of the University of Florida to help determine if there are differences in the age structure of the harvest,
- ask D. Murie what percentage of collected greater amberjack otoliths were readable to determine if collection efforts are worthwhile, and
- FIN continue to use current targets for biological sampling in 2010.

A summary of the conference call is attached. **P. Campbell moved to accept this report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### Operations Plan

### Status of 2009 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.

### Review and Approval of 2010 Operations Plan

The FIN Committee reviewed the 2010 Operations Plan. It was noted 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 2009 to give final approval to the Plan. FIN Committee members were asked to forward any comments or corrections to staff by June 29, 2009. **C. Lilyestrom moved to give tentative approval to the 2010 Operations Plan. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

### Discussion of 2010 FIN Priorities

Committee members were provided with a list of items for funding consideration in 2010. **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 2009. At that time they will decide which items will be included in the 2010 FIN cooperative agreement. All items listed as high priority will require budgets and statements of work by July 13, 2009. **The Committee agreed to list as high priority all ongoing activities.** The prioritized list of activities for 2010 is as follows:

#### High Priority

Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities (ongoing)  
Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data (ongoing)  
Head Boat Port Sampling in Texas and Florida (ongoing)  
Gulf Menhaden Port Sampling (ongoing)  
Operation of FIN Data Management System (ongoing)  
Full Implementation of Trip Ticket Program and Operations in Mississippi (ongoing/new)  
Trip Ticket Program Operations in Alabama (ongoing)  
Trip Ticket Program Operations in Louisiana (ongoing)  
Trip Ticket Program Operations in Texas (ongoing)  
Recreational/Commercial Biological Sampling (ongoing)  
At-sea Sampling (catch) for Head Boats in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida (new/ongoing)  
Collection of Detailed Effort for Blue Crab Fishery in Louisiana with electronic monitoring component (ongoing/new)

#### Low Priority

Biological Sampling for Additional Species (new)

### Time Schedule and Location for Next Meeting



The Committee agreed to schedule the next FIN meeting for the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in June of 2010. Possible locations for the meeting are Austin, San Antonio, New Orleans, or Orlando.

Planning for future activities – The timeline outlines the activities of FIN until 2010. Therefore, the Committee needs to consider conducting another facilitated session to map out activities for 2011-2015. The group agreed that it was time for another session and staff should plan on holding such a meeting. Since a facilitated session is planned for the FIN 2010 meeting, the Committee agreed that 1 ½ days would be necessary.

### **Election of Officers**

K. Cuevas of Mississippi Department of Marine Resources was elected Chairman and T. Sminkey of NOAA Fisheries was elected Vice Chairman.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 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.





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