

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

JANUARY 1, 2010 - DECEMBER 31, 2010

JUNE 2011

Number 203

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

The mission of the FIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial, anadromous and recreational fishery data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Region and to support the development of a national program. The four goals of the FIN include 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).

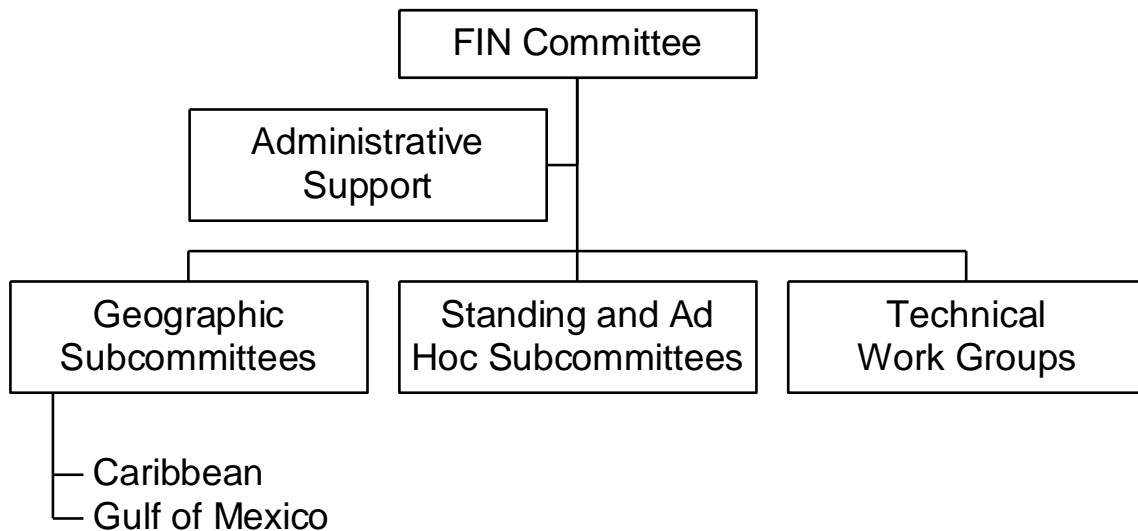


Figure 1. Organizational structure of the FIN.

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 and the 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 2010 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 2010. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- Identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 2010 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 2011 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 2010;

- 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 2011;
- 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 2010 FIN Operations Plan is included in Appendix A and minutes for the FIN Committee meeting are included in Appendix B. The FIN goals and objectives are included in Appendix C.

Subcommittees and Work Groups

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

- The Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey data review meetings were held in February, July and October 2010 to discuss the RDD and Intercept Surveys for the East coast and Gulf Region, discussion of 2011 Expenditure Survey, oil spill impacts, update on MRIP, site register issues, review of wave report fish tables and estimate tables and review of Gulf States For-Hire Telephone Survey;
- The Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee met in March and October 2010 to discuss status of biological sampling activities, status of Commercial Vessel Information project, presentation of Gulf Fisheries One-stop Shop (GFOSS) project, updates on MRIP, Louisiana and Florida Gulf of Mexico for-hire logbook projects, discussion of highly migratory species sampling, discussion of the Gulf Council motion regarding recreational data collection and monitoring programs, review and approval of at-sea sampling protocols, status of metadata data entry, discussion of quota monitoring/trip ticket issues, discussion of economic activities and discussion of fish tags related to recreational data collection activities;
- The Commercial and Recreational Technical Work Groups met (via conference call) in April 2010 to review and update the FIN QA/QC documentation;
- The FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group met (via conference call) in May 2010 to review 2009 and 2010 otolith and length data collection and processing activities and develop recommendations for necessary lengths and otoliths for FIN priority species;

- The annual Otolith Processor Training Workshop was held in May 2010 to discuss gray triggerfish processing and ageing techniques, margin codes for gray triggerfish, vermilion snapper ageing issues, conduct otolith readings and a review of FIN priority species, discuss the various reference sets and storage of otolith issues;
- The FIN Committee met in June 2010 for their annual meeting. On the first day, a facilitated session was conducted to plan for future activities of FIN. On the second day, the Committee met to address a variety of important issues including status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP); FIN Data Management System (DMS) issues, preliminary results from facilitated session, preliminary results from economic inshore shrimp project, review and discussion of SEDAR recommendations document, discussion of MRIP HMS reports, integration of commercial and recreational databases not in FIN DMS, update on recreational data collection motion and Ad Hoc Data Collection AP meeting from the Gulf Council, impacts of Magnuson-Stevens Act on biological sampling, update on Commercial Vessel Project, update on MRIP Gulf Logbook Pilot Project, review and approval of 2009 FIN Annual Report, impacts of recent oil spill in Northern Gulf of Mexico, presentation of Commercial IFQ System for grouper/tilefish, various subcommittee and work group reports, status of 2010 activities, review and approval of 2011 Operations Plan and discussion of 2011 FIN funding priorities;
- A Greater Amberjack sectioning and ageing workshop was held in August 2010 to discuss an overview of ageing techniques, preparing and embedding otoliths, sectioning and mounting otoliths and conduct a reading exercise and calculate an average percent error (APE);
- The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee met in August 2010 to determine the activities for inclusion in the 2011 FIN cooperative agreement;
- The Gulf of Mexico port samplers meeting was held in September 2010 to discuss various issues including the role of port agents in electronic dealer reporting, presentation of turtle strandings and rehabilitation, QA/QC protocols for TIP/FIN biological sampling activities, presentation of pelagic, reef fish and shrimp observer programs, update on grouper/tilefish IFQ program, proposed changes to TIP, presentation of processed products survey results, discussion of buoy drop and other fishing gear, presentation of landings to estimate Texas brown shrimp season, discussion of NOAA grant opportunities for fishing industry and the effects of BP oil disaster on fishing activities;
- 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, and Florida for shore, for-hire, and private modes, an activity under the RecFIN(SE). This task provided for coordination of the survey, a field-intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. These data were combined with the NMFS effort estimate telephone survey. In addition, the states conducted supplemental sampling of the intercept portion for the MRFSS for charter boats in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (east and west coast). The states also conducted weekly telephone calls to a 10% random sample of the Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (east and west coast) charter boat captains to obtain estimates of charter boat fishing effort. In 2000, NMFS adopted this method as the official methodology for estimation of charter boat effort. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. Table 4 shows the number of interviews the state samplers conducted for each mode as well as the amount over (or under) the base quota for each state and mode.
- Head Boat Sampling Activities – The port sampling portion of this task provided for the sampling of catches, collection of catch reports from head boat personnel, and gathering effort data on head boats which operate primarily in the Exclusive Economic Zone from ports along the coasts of Texas and Florida. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. Table 5 shows the number of interviews, fish measured and hard parts collected by port samplers from the head boat fishery.
- Menhaden Data Collection Activities - This task provided for sampling of gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels that operate in Louisiana. The samples were processed for size and age composition for use in coast-wide stock assessments. In turn, gulf menhaden stock assessments are incorporated into the Fisheries Management Plan for the species, and are also utilized by the Gulf Coast states, the GSMFC, the menhaden industry, and the NMFS. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. In 2010, four menhaden factories were active in the northern Gulf of Mexico at Moss Point, MS, and Empire, Abbeville, and Cameron, LA. A total of 41 purse-seine vessels fished for gulf menhaden in 2010. 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 2010 were 379,727 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 2010 fishing

season. And Table 7 presents the age composition of the gulf menhaden biostatistical samples by port in 2010.

- 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 age structures that were collected by state samplers for the FIN priority species for the commercial and recreational fisheries, respectively.

Coordination and Administrative Support

Working closely with the Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation was a major function of FIN coordination and administrative support. Other important coordination and administrative activities included but were not limited to providing coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the Committee, subcommittees, and work groups; serving as liaison between the Committee, other program participants, and other interested organizations; preparing annual operations plans under the direction of the Committee; preparing and/or supervising and coordinating preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings; and distributing approved FIN information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures.

Information Dissemination

Committee members and staff provided program information in 2010 via a variety of different methods such as distribution of program documents, presentation to various groups interested in the FIN, and via the Internet:

- FIN Committee. 2010. *2011 Operations Plan for Fisheries Information Network (FIN)*. No. 185 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 25 pp + appendix.
- FIN Committee. 2010. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 2009 - December 31, 2009*. No. 182 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 24 pp + appendices.
- Variety of informal discussions occurred throughout the year during ASMFC, GSMFC, NMFS, and other participating agencies meetings and workshops.
- The FIN has developed a data management system that provides access to commercial and recreational data for the Gulf States. There are two levels of access: confidential and non-confidential and users can request access via the FIN DMS web site (www.gsmfc.org/data.html)
- NMFS provides a user-friendly data management system (DMS) for the MRFSS that is accessible via the web (www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/recreational/index.html)
- GSMFC has developed a home page that provides programmatic and operational information regarding FIN.

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

TABLE 1. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR FIN IN 2006 – 2010 [Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Planning, Management, and Evaluation					
FIN Committee					
Maintenance of FIN Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Development of annual operations plans	X	X	X	X	X
Support establishment of recreational licenses in PR & VI	X	X	X	X	X
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
Data Collection					
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		

Data Collection (continued)	<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
Data Management					
Data management system					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
Hardware/software capabilities					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard data management protocols					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			
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
Development of National Program					
Long-term planning					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

TABLE 2. FIN COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2010

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TABLE 3. FIN SUBCOMMITTEE AND WORK GROUP MEMBERS FOR 2010

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

STATE	WAVE	SH	CH	PR	Total	x of Base Quota		
						SH	CH	PR
FLORIDA - EAST	1	671	195	1,147	2,013	1.36	3.75	1.22
	2	688	285	1,674	2,647	1.34	4.38	1.40
	3	741	261	1,943	2,945	1.33	4.02	1.42
	4	812	185	1,952	2,949	1.50	3.14	1.53
	5	837	157	1,617	2,611	1.63	3.83	1.47
	6	518	159	1,201	1,878	1.09	3.53	1.10
	Total	4,267	1,242	9,534	15,043	1.38	3.80	1.37
FLORIDA - WEST	1	522	586	1,203	2,311	1.07	6.81	0.98
	2	889	1,283	2,328	4,500	1.47	8.17	1.46
	3	1,139	1,455	2,933	5,527	1.63	7.70	1.46
	4	1,239	1,024	2,579	4,842	1.87	7.26	1.32
	5	1,380	663	2,771	4,814	2.38	8.19	1.90
	6	924	750	1,802	3,476	1.80	8.93	1.39
	Total	6,093	5,761	13,616	25,470	1.72	7.81	1.43
ALABAMA	1	102	23	124	249	1.36	0.88	0.93
	2	136	83	199	418	1.35	2.44	1.22
	3	161	71	314	546	1.01	1.54	1.17
	4	129	28	179	336	1.21	0.57	0.79
	5	162	107	219	488	1.41	3.24	1.20
	6	79	87	145	311	1.10	3.22	1.09
	Total	769	399	1,180	2,348	1.22	1.86	1.06
LOUISIANA	1	97	61	404	562	1.20	1.79	1.03
	2	202	150	647	999	1.55	3.41	1.49
	3	106	112	997	1,215	0.74	1.38	1.23
	4	67	56	690	813	0.49	0.81	0.93
	5	96	85	772	953	0.94	1.93	1.55
	6	143	94	562	799	1.25	2.47	1.08
	Total	711	558	4,072	5,341	1.01	1.80	1.20
MISSISSIPPI	1	78	37	157	272	1.59	1.48	1.73
	2	104	54	181	339	1.89	2.00	1.60
	3	114	57	241	412	1.34	1.97	1.15
	4	89	4	161	254	1.25	0.14	0.95
	5	115	23	230	368	1.77	0.85	1.28
	6	71	10	135	216	1.54	0.38	1.13
	Total	571	185	1,105	1,861	1.54	1.13	1.25

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	245	8,323	688
TX	55	1,102	438
TOTAL	300	9,425	1,126

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

PORT	NUMBER OF SAMPLES
MOSS POINT, MS	32
EMPIRE, LA	87
ABBEVILLE, LA	161
CAMERON, LA	181

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	80	30	256	41	449	37	1,159	74	1,944	53
2	147	55	256	41	634	52	342	22	1,379	37
3+	39	15	108	18	145	11	63	4	355	10
ALL	266		620		1,228		1,564		3,678	

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

STATE	COUNT	YEARS	LAST UPDATED
COMMERCIAL LANDINGS			
FLORIDA	19,468,630	1985 - 2011	17-May-11
ALABAMA	514,566	1985 - 2011	16-May-11
MISSISSIPPI	150,782	1985 - 2011	30-Mar-11
LOUISIANA	5,557,369	1985 - 2011	5-May-11
TEXAS	212,931	1985 - 2011	24-Sep-09
PUERTO RICO	1,769,959	1985 - 2009	2009
RECREATIONAL CATCH ESTIMATES			
FLORIDA		1981 - 2009	21-May-10
ALABAMA		1981 - 2009	21-May-10
MISSISSIPPI		1981 - 2009	21-May-10
LOUISIANA		1981 - 2009	21-May-10
TEXAS		-	-
PUERTO RICO		2000 - 2009	21-May-10
RECREATIONAL EFFORT ESTIMATES			
FLORIDA		1982 - 2009	21-May-10
ALABAMA		1982 - 2009	21-May-10
MISSISSIPPI		1982 - 2009	21-May-10
LOUISIANA		1982 - 2009	21-May-10
TEXAS		-	-
PUERTO RICO		-	-
BIOLOGICAL DATA			
FLORIDA	27,425	2003 - 2010	22-Feb-11
ALABAMA	29,812	2002 - 2010	18-May-11
MISSISSIPPI	6,695	2002 - 2010	3-Mar-11
LOUISIANA	82,233	2002 - 2010	28-Mar-11
TEXAS	33,069	2002 - 2010	10-Nov-10

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

STATE	DEALERS	% OF LANDINGS
FLORIDA	333	55%
ALABAMA	31	74%
MISSISSIPPI	5	0%
LOUISIANA	107	36%
TEXAS	155	78%
GULF-WIDE	631	52%

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

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

*dorsal spines collected

TABLE 11. NUMBER OF AGE STRUCTURES COLLECTED FROM THE RECREATIONAL FISHERY BY FIN PRIORITY SPECIES, BY STATE

PRIMARY SPECIES	FL	AL	MS	LA	TX	TOT
AMBERJACK, GREATER	252	12	-	48	-	312
DRUM, BLACK	11	13	15	364	49	452
DRUM, RED	282	108	80	994	660	2,124
FLOUNDER, GULF	33	21	-	-	-	54
FLOUNDER, SOUTHERN	1	42	229	316	17	605
GAG	498	2	-	-	-	500
GROUPEL, RED	303	7	-	-	-	310
GROUPEL, YELLOWEDGE	-	1	-	-	-	1
MACKEREL, KING	282	15	4	-	172	473
MULLET, STRIPED	-	1	-	-	-	1
SEATROUT, SPOTTED	916	134	17	1,293	1,100	3,460
SHEEPSHEAD	169	158	22	386	10	745
SNAPPER, GRAY	596	5	-	74	68	743
SNAPPER, RED	447	152	16	346	140	1,101
SNAPPER, VERMILION	365	68	-	-	218	651
TRIGGERFISH, GRAY	46	30	-	3	1	80
TOTAL	4,201	769	383	3,824	2,435	11,612

*dorsal spines collected

APPENDIX A
2010 Operations Plan

**2010 Operations Plan for the
Fisheries Information Network in the
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010

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 2010. 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 2010 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a commercial activity; an 'R' denotes a recreational activity; and an 'F' denotes a commercial/recreational activity.

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

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

Team Members: Gulf States and Data Collection Work Group

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

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

Product: Gulf-wide trip ticket program

Schedule: Implementation of trip tickets began in 1999 and will continue during 2010 for Mississippi. Operations of trip ticket will continue in 2010 for Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida.

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

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

Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC, NOAA Fisheries

Approach: This task will provide for the conduct of the MRFSS survey in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida for shore, for-hire,

and private modes. This task will provide for coordination of the survey, an intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. The states will also conduct weekly telephone calls to a 10% random sample of the Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida charter boat captains to obtain estimates of charter boat fishing effort. The NOAA Fisheries and GSMFC will produce expanded estimates of catch and effort by wave using the existing MRFSS methodology. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: Collection of recreational fisheries data for the Gulf of Mexico.
Schedule: This is an on-going task.

Task A3: Continue the Collection of 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 NOAA Fisheries
Approach: The purpose of this task is to sample gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels that operate at the ports of Moss Point, Mississippi and Empire, 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 NOAA Fisheries.

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

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

Task 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 NOAA Fisheries

Approach: The purpose of this task is to conduct biological sampling interviews of recreational and commercial fishermen using the modified MRFSS and Trip Interview Program protocols. Samplers will collect length frequencies, identifications of species, trip and gear characteristics, weights of catches, hard parts (otoliths) and make comparisons of interview data to trip ticket data for quality assurance purposes. The GSMFC will provide coordination and tracking of targets and provide feedback to the states. The Data Collection Plan Work Group and FIN will determine the priority species for 2010.

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 and biological data into the DMS will be accomplished. FIN will continue to

work in conjunction with the ACCSP to ensure compatibility and comparability between the programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: FIN data management system
Schedule: Further development registration tracking system (vessel data) and routine delivery of data will continue in 2010.

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 2010 to address any issues.

B. Committee Activities

The tasks below cover all 2010 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a commercial activity; an 'R' denotes a recreational activity; and an 'F' denotes a commercial/recreational activity.

Task B1: Development of Annual Operations Plan, 2010 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2010 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 2010.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: 2010 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by spring 2010 and addressed by the Committee at the 2010 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/NOAA Fisheries/GSMFC

Approach: The Work Group has been working on this issue for several years. In 2000, the MRFSS was re-established in the U.S. Caribbean, although there were severe problems with attracting and retaining reliable intercept interviewers in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Sampling in Puerto Rico began in 2001 and is continuing to date; however, sampling was dropped in the U.S. Virgin Islands during 2001. In 2009, the GSMFC began the coordination and administration of the recreational data collection activities and in Puerto Rico and will continue providing that service in 2010. Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, NOAA Fisheries and GSMFC personnel are exploring ways to ensure long-term collection of recreational data in the Caribbean.

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

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

Schedule: The Work Group and FIN will continue monitoring this task in 2010.

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

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Team Members: FIN Committee and staff

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

Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and staff time.

Product: Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning FIN has been developed. Results-oriented tables were included in the FIN Annual Report in 2009 and will continue in 2010.

Schedule: This task will be an ongoing activity.

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

Objective: Implement an outreach program for FIN.
Team Members: FIN Outreach Work Group/FIN Committee
Approach: The Work Group has developed a strategy for outreach. The group developed a draft strategy document that has been reviewed and approved by the FIN Committee. As outlined in the document, it is incumbent on the program partners to conduct outreach within their jurisdiction. The FIN staff will attend a variety of meetings to promote the program as well. FIN Committee will continue to work with the ACCSP in developing outreach activities.
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
Product: FIN outreach program
Schedule: The FIN Committee approved the strategy in June 2002. The Committee will periodically review outreach activities and institute the necessary actions.

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

Objective: Develop and implement the social/economic module for FIN.
Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group
Approach: Working in conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group has designed a data collection module for the compilation of social/economic information for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program outlines the data elements required for each fishery component that need to be collected for compilation of social/economic data. Since the module has been developed, this module will provide guidance to interested agencies and organizations that wish to collect social/economic data. The GSMFC in conjunction with NOAA Fisheries has hired a term economist to work on various economic projects including coordination of Gulf of Mexico state and federal commercial and recreational fishing economic activities; development and implementation of information collection on public attitudes, knowledge and use patterns of coastal and marine ecosystems; development and implementation of a marine angler expenditure survey for the Gulf of Mexico; development and implementation of an economic survey of the Gulf of Mexico inshore shrimp fleet; and development and implementation of an economic survey of fishing-related businesses in the Gulf of Mexico. This task will be accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
Product: Social/Economic data collection module for guidance on social/economic data collection.
Schedule: The GSMFC economist will provide an overview of the economic activities to the FIN Committee at the June 2010 meeting. This is an ongoing activity.

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

Objective: Compile metadata from the FIN partners for inclusion into a metadata database.
Team Members: FIN and ACCSP staff and FIS personnel
Approach: The 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 of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail costs, staff time.
Product: Development of metadata module
Schedule: The compilation of these data will be an ongoing activity and is routinely discussed by the Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee. The subcommittee will provide a report to FIN at the June 2010 meeting.

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

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

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

Objective: Review the existing FIN commercial and recreational quality assurances/quality control (QA/QC) standards.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental and Data Collection Work Groups

Approach: The work groups will meet to review the existing FIN QA/QC standards and determine the adequacy of the standards and make recommendations for improvements, where applicable. This task will be accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.

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

Product: Updated FIN QA/QC standards

Schedule: The work groups will meet in 2010 to address this issue. Their recommendations will be presented to the FIN Committee at the June 2010 meeting.

Task B9: Port Samplers Workshops (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

Objective: Convene workshops of state and federal port samplers to discuss commercial data collection activities

Team Members: State and federal commercial port samplers and GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries

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

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

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

Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for late summer 2010. The recommendations from this meeting will be presented to FIN at the June 2011 meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for early to mid-2010.

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

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

Team Members: 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 2010 meeting.

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

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

Team Members: FIN Committee

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

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

Product: Recommendations for commercial and recreational surveys.

Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task B13: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities
(Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

Objective: Identify and combine duplicative data collection and management efforts.

Team Members: FIN Committee

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

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

Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries

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

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

Product: Periodic review of recreational fisheries data.

Schedule: The group will meet in February/March, June/July, and October/November 2010 to review the recreational data collected during the year. Topics that need to be address include:

- Identification of geographic regions of interest for sampling;
- Examination of methods for post-stratification;
- Identify species that should be targeted by for specific surveys and implement these surveys;
- Investigate methods for improving sampling coverage of inshore tidal areas;

- Identify geographic regions of interest for recreational sampling;
- Increase recreational sampling levels Gulf-wide;
- Optimize sampling allocations to improve precision for key species;

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

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

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

Team Members: FIN Committee/Data Collection Plan Work Group

Approach: The Committee has developed a data collection plan that identifies the priority species (and associated data needed to be collected) for the state, interstate and federal entities as well as establishes sampling target levels for biological data. The plan provides guidance to the states. And the Work Group will develop a feedback mechanism to the SEDAR process regarding the adequacy of the level of biological sampling. This task will be accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Data collection plan

Schedule: The group will meet in 2010 to review activities, develop a biological sampling annual plan, and provide recommendations to FIN regarding sampling targets.

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

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

Team Members: FIN/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 2010 meeting.

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

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

Team Members: FIN Committee

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

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 2010 FIN Committee meeting. Based on the results, the FIN Committee will take the appropriate actions.

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

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

Team Members: FIN Committee/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 2010 meeting.

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

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

Team Members: FIN Committee/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 status of the work will be presented to the FIN Committee at the June 2010 meeting.

Task B20: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Encourage coordination, integration, and augmentation, as appropriate, of data collection efforts to meet the FIN requirements.
Team Members: FIN Committee
Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys to the appropriate personnel.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time
Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

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

Objective: Evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies
Team Members: FIN Committee and other appropriate personnel.
Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys to the appropriate personnel.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time
Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

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

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

Team Members: FIN Committee and other appropriate personnel

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

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

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

Schedule: This issue will be address by the FIN Committee at the June 2010 meeting.

Task B23: Identification of Databases for DMS Integration (Goal 3, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Identify the commercial and recreational databases that should be integrated into the FIN DMS.

Team Members: FIN Committee or appropriate work group

Approach: The FIN Committee/work group needs to identify existing recreational data that is not currently housed in the FIN DMS and determine if it would be appropriate for inclusion in the system.

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

Product: Compilation of recreational databases.

Schedule: This issue will be addressed by the FIN Committee/work group and the results will be discussed at the June 2010 meeting.

Task B24: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee and industry personnel

Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies, which will aid in the management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data.

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

Product: Progress reports.

Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B25: Implementation of Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1) (F)

Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.
Team Members: FIN Committee
Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will attend Pacific RecFIN, PacFIN, ACCSP Operations Committee, and other pertinent meetings and coordinate activities as appropriate. This task will be accomplished by mail and meetings.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Record of coordination activities.
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task B26: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative Marine Commercial and Recreational Fisheries Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Coordinate FIN with other regional cooperative marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs and encourages consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.
Team Members: FIN Committee
Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ACCSP staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission as well as attend the national Fisheries Information System (FIS) meetings. The FIN and ACCSP staffs periodically meet jointly to discuss the activities that each program is involved in and where the two programs can work together. This task will be accomplished by mail and meetings.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Ensure adequate information exchange, consistency and comparability between all regional fisheries programs and compilation of a record of information exchange.
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

C. Administrative Activities

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

- Work closely with the FIN Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation;

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

D. Time Table

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Planning, Management, and Evaluation					
FIN Committee					
Maintenance of FIN Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Development of annual operations plans	X	X	X	X	X
Support establishment of recreational licenses in PR & VI	X	X	X	X	X
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 NOAA Fisheries to develop outreach/education materials	X	X	X	X	X

Planning, Management, and Evaluation (continued)	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Use Internet communications	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					
Conduct program review					X
Data Collection					
Data components					
Review of components of fisheries					X
Needed data elements					
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			
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		

Data Collection (continued)	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
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
Data Management					
Data management system					
Review location and responsibility of DMS					X
Hardware/software capabilities					
Review hardware/software capabilities					X
Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard data management protocols					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			
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	
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
Development of National Program					
Long-term planning					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability					
Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

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 9, 2010

San Antonio, TX

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

Members

Chris Denson, AMRD, Gulf Shores, AL
John Froeschke, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Craig Lilyestrom, PRDNER, San Juan, PR
Dave Gloeckner (proxy for G. Davenport), NOAA Fisheries, Beaufort Lab, NC
Christine Murrell, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Michelle Kasprzak, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Vicki Swann, TPWD, Austin, TX
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Tom Sminkey, NOAA/ NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Richard Cody, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL
Ken Brennan, NOAA Fisheries, Beaufort Lab, NC

Staff

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

Others

Chris Robbins, Ocean Conservancy, Austin, TX
David McCarron, IA-Team,
Cindy Bohannon, TPWD, Dickinson, TX
Justin Esslinger, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Geoff White, ACCSP, Washington, DC
Tom Fazio, REI, Herndon, VA
Shell Sanders, REI, Herndon, VA

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on June 10, 2009 in Savannah, GA 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** noted a budget cut by ACCSP allocation by \$140,000 which caused change in salaries and delayed equipment and network upgrades. In-person meetings are also being affected by the budget cuts, which resulted in conducting web-x meetings. **White** is hoping to maintain funding for next year.

White reported The ACCSP Data Warehouse includes historical commercial catch and effort data from as far back as 1950. Several partners implemented improvements to their data collection programs. They have a goal to update the history of the data and to validate the date of verification. For a more up to date and flexible system, **White** stated there are Discoverer queries for partners to log in and check information and that confidentiality management is improving by only showing users data records they are allowed to view.

White noted upgrades to the SAFIS electronic dealer and fisherman reporting tool. The interface is now using application express, and includes integration with eTrips and management interface (SMS). ACCSP is working with South Carolina and Georgia to deploy electronic dealer reporting. eTrips is being rolled out to Maryland for their charter and head boats to evaluate and utilize. There has been positive feedback. Also of note, ACCSP is upgrading to Oracle 10.2.0.4 and Oracle Discoverer 10.1.2.3 and have increased bandwidths from a T1 line to a 10M Ethernet which reduced complaints from users.

White stated there is an annual report posted on ACCSP's website. They instituted a quarterly news flash to push information on the happenings within ACCSP to partners, users, dealers, and fishermen. ACCSP TV can be found on the website and includes a series of interviews with fisheries people. Electronic reporting in the Southeast and the Gulf of Mexico are up-and-coming activities. The MRIP logbook pilot is looking at using the SAFIS electronic vessel trip reporting for charter and head boats.

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.

Status of the FIN DMS – **D. Bellais** reported on the status of the FIN DMS noting that the standing item of the Oracle Discoverer public access tracking continues to be proceeding quickly. State partners continue to update and enter metadata into the InPort system. Louisiana has recently published their information and other states were encouraged to publish their information too. **Bellais** gave an update on record counts in the FIN DMS for commercial landings. **Bellais** reported of one change: Texas sent 2008 trip ticket data, error reports were sent back for correction, and they are close to having records in the FIN system. Louisiana's recreational fishing license data continues to be loaded by wave. NMFS has access to the data and they continue to publish their findings. FIN has contracted Information Architecture Team (IA-Team) to gather and format commercial vessel data from the States. IA-Team is still awaiting vessel data from Alabama. Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida have provided

data and IA is proceeding with this data for now. FIN has provided IA with a test server for the regional Gulf FOSS. IA-Team continues to test the loading procedures for the Operating System, Oracle Database and FOSS software. The FIN databases will soon be upgraded to Oracle 11G and moved to new servers with more CPU, disk space, and memory. Oracle Discoverer and forms will also be upgraded to 11G. **Bellais** gave a review on biological sampling data, marine recreational fishery catch estimates, marine recreational fishery effort estimates, and menhaden data.

Discussion of Preliminary Results from Facilitated Session

T. Fazio provided a brief summary of the facilitated session that took place on June 8, 2010. The day was taken to examine the progress over the last few years of FIN strategic initiatives. The committee started with a review of the initiatives that were compiled in the 2004 session in Puerto Rico. The group reviewed the progress made by FIN over the past 5 years and identified areas of work that required further research.

Fazio then led the group through the process of identifying new areas of research that would help guide FIN over the next 5 years. At the end of the facilitated session, a scoring exercise was completed by all participants. Each person was provided 10 votes that could be allocated to any one or combination of the new research initiatives. The purpose was to get a sense of relative priorities from the group. **Fazio** presented the results of the findings to the FIN committee. The highest ranked research priorities were full implementation of a trip ticket system in Mississippi and the US Virgin Islands, refine area fished by providing more detail about where fishing is occurring, and refine protocols for recreational sampling using smaller geographic regions. The full report from the facilitated session will be provided to the FIN Administrative Subcommittee for review.

Preliminary Results from Economic Inshore Shrimp Project

A. Miller gave a presentation on the economic status, performance, and impacts of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery in 2008. **Miller** gave the background on how and why the collection of economic data from the shrimp industry started. Two surveys were conducted in 2008, the inshore and offshore surveys. **Miller** described the survey population, sampling frame, and implementation. The survey results are reported per vessel and extrapolated to the entire fleet. Results for the fleet were subsequently used to determine the impact that the industry has on the regional economy. **Miller** pointed out that the shrimping industry in the Gulf of Mexico is one of the biggest in the Southeast yet the economic data collected has historically been very low. There has been no organized and uniform effort to collect economic data in the past from this industry throughout the Region. The amount of landed pounds in the industry has remained the same for the past 35 years but the nominal (non-inflation adjusted) revenue is only slightly moving up. The real price (inflation adjusted revenue) is 40% lower than in the 1970's. More economic data and analysis could have helped with mitigating the great decline which is likely a result from imported shrimp.

Review and Discussion of SEDAR Recommendations Document

The FIN committee reviewed the findings from SEDAR's 13- 16. **Donaldson** explained that FIN has routinely provided a response letter back to SEDAR explaining the ways FIN is addressing specific areas of concern from the SEDAR review process. The FIN

committee identified a few areas where current and future research is addressing some concerns and needs outlined by the SEDAR reviews. FIN will produce another response letter later in 2010 to John Carmichael explaining how FIN is working towards addressing these specific issues.

Discussion of MRIP HMS

G. Bray informed the committee of the two reports: “Characterization of Rod and Reel Highly Migratory Species Fisheries in the U.S. South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico” and “Florida Highly Migratory Species Private Angler Telephone Survey Final Report.” The general goal is that FIN has been tasked with taking the findings from these documents and trying to come up with a decision of what to do, if anything, with future HMS sampling in the Gulf of Mexico.

R. Cody gave some background on the research done in Florida to collect catch and effort information from the private boat HMS fleet. Their research included 6,000 HMS permits and 244 vessel permits for the general category. It was conducted for over a year and **Cody** discussed their major findings and recommendations. **Cody** noted that **MRFSS** does an adequate job for some species and for some locations as well. Missing data includes private trips that are not covered by the **MRFSS** and trips that come back after **MRFSS** sampling hours. There is some opportunity to access private access trips in the field classifying vessels as public or private access doing field intercepts at fuel docks. There are recommendations for better tournament coverage because they account for a sizeable portion of the overall HMS catch. It is believed that the best option would be to do a specialized survey to monitor the catch for marlin, swordfish, and yellowfin tuna. Utilization of the HMS permit list as a sample frame along with a dual-frame approach was also suggested. A cost analysis was recommended to be necessary because of the HMS fishery is concentrated in small geographic locations and the cost associated with developing a specialized survey to target certain species might be cost prohibited. **Donaldson** noted that the methodology studied seems to get a better handle on catch and effort and is an improvement. **Cody** agreed on the improvement for most species.

Personnel issues were discussed and the question of control of the research done by the states or independent contractors came up. Under current circumstances, the committee agreed that they could not take on any additional work. The states agreed that they would rather handle the survey as opposed to hiring contractors. Head count issues arose in Louisiana and contract workers would be needed. This was the case for the majority of the committee. After much discussion, **Donaldson** recommended FIN should focus HMS research throughout the Gulf of Mexico for both private as well as for-hire, identifying those areas of concern, coming up with a general cost, and waiting to see what happens with the private access project and regionalization of the different states. **M. Kasprzak** moved to forward the research question to the **FIN Recreational Technical work group**. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Integration of Commercial and Recreational Databases not in FIN DMS

D. Donaldson stated this topic is related to the regional FOSS (Fisheries One Stop Shop) project and using regional programs to support the national FIS (Fisheries Information System.) We are trying to make the FIN DMS the “go-to” data spot for the Gulf of Mexico and the Committee needs to identify pertinent databases that are currently not included in the FIN DMS.

P. Campbell suggested looking to see what other datasets are available that can be shared with FIN DMS and see if it can be included. **M. Kasprzak** noted that it is easier for the

managers in the state to have one place to go for data requests. She suggested tasking a workgroup with identifying the databases and finding out the procedures and including them. **Donaldson** said the problem is, after identifying the databases, how to determine which database to use. Conversion to standard coding schemes was also brought up as an issue by **R. Cody**. **Donaldson** said that the purpose of the DMS was to put everything into a standard FIN format. **G. Bray** brought up the issue of housing data that is not collected with similar QA/QC standards as FIN. He believes that there is a quality associated with the product that is being shared and there should be a level of QC there. **Kasprzak** brought up tasking the committee with determining QA/QC standards along with the databases. **Bray** agreed and thinks that if the data is to be housed in FIN, it needs to meet some QA/QC standards. **Donaldson** suggested making sure enough information is there for a workgroup so a useful product can be provided and evaluating the databases for inclusion. **D. Donaldson moved to have the FIN Committee charge the Gulf Geographic Subcommittee to evaluate data that is used in the assessments for inclusion in the FIN DMS and evaluate those data on its completeness, level of QA/QC, and its importance in assessments.**

Gulf Council Issues

J. Froeschke gave a brief summary of the AP meeting and updated the FIN Committee on the Council motions.

Update on AD Hoc Data Collection AP meeting - The Ad Hoc Data Collection committee met March 29-30, 2010 at the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council office to discuss methods for improvement of timeliness and accuracy of catch data for the commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishery sectors in the Gulf of Mexico. They discussed software and database problems and data collection capabilities. The consensus was that there is adequate technology to get the system going if they choose to go that route. At the end of the two day meeting, they passed around 15 motions to the council.

Update on recreational data collection motion - The most pertinent motion at the AP meeting was recommending the development and implementation of electronic based data collection systems for the federally permitted fishers by 1/1/11. Several presentations prompted vigorous discussion and prompted several motions. These motions and materials were taken to the council meetings held in April; they were discussed at the committee and council levels and voted on. Most of the discussion centered on the existing (Marine Recreational Information Program) MRIP pilot program. At the committee level, their motion was to request that NMFS implement using existing authority to develop a mandatory enforceable and validated electronic reporting system for the federally permitted Gulf of Mexico for-hire sector by January 2012. Subsequently, when brought to full council, this date was changed to 2011.

At the conclusion, a series of letters were written addressing all motions and sent to NMFS. An additional AP meeting is to be held in August 2010 in Tampa, FL and will focus on private, recreational anglers and potential development of electronic data collection systems. **Froeschke** has expectations of participation from the law enforcement and recreational anglers to solicit their ideas.

Impacts of Magnuson-Stevens Act on Biologic Sampling

D. Donaldson discussed that with the introduction of annual catch limits (ACLs) and stricter management regulations that have come out of the latest Magnuson-Stevens Act it is

getting more difficult to representatively collect biological samples with fishery dependent sampling. **R. Cody** mentioned Florida is targeting more at-sea trips to get biological samples because the opportunity of getting dockside samples is not as good as it used to be. Outside of that, they go into directive sampling and getting on boats that are not normally fishing at that time of year, so it's really fishery independent sampling. **Donaldson** mentioned that SEAMAP has recently talked about collecting biological samples so that would be a good resource for fishery independent samples. FIN likely would not want to get involved with a coordinated fishery independent collection program. **Cody** also mentioned SEDAR's need for better biological sampling and it's probably going to heavily impact some of the age data used in the SEDAR process. **Donaldson** believes that it's good to be aware of the situation and try to sample and get the otoliths when you can. The stock assessment biologists may say that the fishery dependent sampling is not worthwhile and we need to rely on the fishery independent sampling. It is important though that the states continue to work to collect fishery dependent samples. **Donaldson** said that this topic will be brought up at the 2011 data collection workgroup conference call. Most state representatives agreed that 2010 collections will be severely impacted by the oil disaster. **G. Bray** believes that the best approach is to try to get as much metadata information during the year and document the reasons of the shortfall of the sampling targets whether its season closures, oil spill, area closures, or changes in fishing behavior.

Update on Commercial Vessel Project

D. Donaldson gave a brief overview of the registration tracking module which includes issues with staffing, states, and other problems. A contractor was hired to help facilitate, compile, and identify the issues.

D. McCarron, IA-Team stated that the primary work product will likely be recommendations to each of the state partners as to how to help FIN and improving the vessel frame. IA-Team is hoping to take an existing model that was developed through ACCSP and share it with FIN, populate it, and make the best use of it; however, the entire model is based on a unique ID number (Hull Identification Number). Regrettably, only two of the five states are collecting HIN and they don't use it to link licenses with vessel owner and characteristics. There is really no effective way to do this but to use the state licensing number or coast guard number. Some issues have occurred with separation between the marine fisheries licensing and DMV's vessel registration and owner registration. Some data requests from DMV's contain duplicates and other discrepancies in the records that make it challenging to work into the model.

Update on MRIP Gulf Logbook Pilot Project

D. Donaldson gave an overview of the project and provided the project plan to the FIN Committee members. The logbook testing for the for-hire fishery focuses on federally permitted vessels since there is a mandatory reporting statute. The focus is 50 federally permitted vessels in the Corpus Christi area and about 300 vessels in the panhandle of Florida. Part of the proposal was developing an electronic reporting tool which included sending out an RFP, receiving responses to the RFP, and evaluating those proposals and making decisions on which contractor to use. Outreach meetings will be arranged in Corpus Christi and in the Florida Panhandle in mid July. These meetings will allow discussions with captains to obtain feedback on the project. The data collection is scheduled to start August 1, 2010. The electronic reporting is the preferred

option however a paper logbook will also be provided. The efficiency of mandatory reporting will be tested to see what kind of response is given and how much work is needed to get 100% compliance. Data collection will continue for a year, through July 2011.

Review and Approval of 2009 FIN Annual Report

FIN Committee members were provided with copies of the draft 2009 FIN Annual Report. It was noted that result oriented tables have been updated to the Annual Report with 2009 information. **D. Donaldson** requested that members of the Committee review the Annual Report and provide comments, revisions, or corrections to staff by June 30, 2010. **D. Donaldson moved to accept the FIN 2009 Annual Report with pending changes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Impacts of Recent Oil Spill in Northern Gulf of Mexico

D. Donaldson asked the States to discuss what they are currently doing in response to the oil spill. **P. Campbell** reported that no oil was currently impacting Texas waters. **Campbell** mentioned a new committee was formed in Austin that would formulate a plan of attack if oil was pushed into Texas waters.

M. Kasprzak reported that LDWF's website provided information concerning the opening and closing of state waters. Eastern parts of Louisiana waters were closed at the time of the meeting. Commercial shrimping season was opened early to provide shrimpers a short season to land and sell shrimp. Biologists were out on the water daily checking for oil in addition to doing their routine samples. The field staff for Louisiana completed the HAZWOPER training. The Fishery team was trying to maintain regular sampling including MRFSS, visiting sites, calling captains, documenting cancelled trips, and documenting use of boats for cleanup. **Kasprzak** reported that there were LDWF biologists at the command center in Houma, LA at all times.

K. Cuevas reported the waters from the middle of Horn Island to the Alabama state line were currently closed to fishing. MSDEQ, with the assistance of MSDMR are taking water and fish tissue samples from the around the barrier islands. MSDMR fishery staff has completed HAZWOPER training. **C. Murrell** noted that shrimp season opened early on June 3, 2010. The legal count of 68 shrimp per lb was not reached but MSDMR still wanted to allow shrimpers fairly decent catches before oil possibly reached inshore areas. Many of the Mississippi fishing boats were working for BP. The MSDMR enforcement division was patrolling closed areas for fishing and/or shrimping. Oil was found on Petit Bois Island and was cleaned up.

C. Denson reported oil had washed up on the beaches of Baldwin County and was found on all Gulf Alabama beaches. All Alabama state waters were closed to fishing including the mouth of the Mobile Bay. All Federal waters bordering Alabama state waters were also closed. Oil was spotted in the Mississippi Sound at the lower end of the Perdido system. **Denson** noted one of the largest problems was following NOAA protocols because they were time consuming, costly, and private labs were unequipped. The FDA had been occupied running baselines with tissue samples. The reopening processes are very lengthy and FDA guidelines called for a sensory analysis followed by a chemical analysis. **Denson** noted that his small staff had been very busy. There have been frequent large fish kills. The wildlife stations handled the deceased birds and those coated in oil and the US Fish and Wildlife Service worked with the turtles and marine mammals. The "Vessel of Opportunity" program produced major problems with out-of-

state contractors not employing Alabama fisherman. Bob Riley, the governor of Alabama, got involved and has talked with BP concerning these issues.

R. Cody reported there were no Florida state waters closed at that time and Federal waters were closed to the south of Choctawhatchee Bay, east of Destin. The lead agencies are The Department of Environmental Protection and The Department of Emergency Management Services. A central command location was set up with US Coast Guard, US Fish & Wildlife, and state agencies present. Several personnel completed the HAZWOPER training and chain of command sampling training mostly being conducted by fishery independent samplers. Sampling fish kill data continued as usual but sampling seafood dealers and dockside had been put on hold. **Cody** noted a large increase in requests for the number of landings. Initially, these requests for landings had to be delivered by mail or by hand though faxing was permissible with a notary stamp included.

Presentation of Commercial IFQ System for Grouper/Tilefish

Janet Miller presented about the Grouper/Tilefish IFQ (Individual Fishing Quota) program. She discussed what an IFQ program is and the importance of the program. Currently, there are 1,100 IFQ shareholder accounts and 112 IFQ dealer accounts. The total allocation is split among species categories distributed amongst individual shareholders. Shares can be allocated to multiple vessel accounts and can be transferred to different shareholders. Fishermen are required to report their landings through an online system. Fishermen are required to provide a 3-12 hour advanced landing notification at an approved landing site. Dealers are required to report pounds landed, price per pound, dealer name, and vessel account.

Subcommittee and Work Group Reports

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

Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee – (Attachment A)

The Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee/TCC Data Management Subcommittee (DMS) met in October of 2009 and March 2010. At the October 2009 meeting biological sampling activities were discussed including the review of otolith and lengths collected for the thirteen FIN target species for 2009, analysis activities, otolith analysis from 2005 to 2008, and the status of web-based data entry program. Other topics of discussion included the status of commercial vessel information project, the logbook/trip ticket reconciliation process, trip ticket/IFQ compatibility reconciliation, an update on MRIP Gulf of Mexico for-hire logbook project, the review and approval of at-sea sampling protocols, the FIN process to access to confidential data, status of metadata data entry, and an update on data confidentiality M.O.A. The election of officers took place with Kerwin Cuevas elected as chairman and Chris Denson as vice chairman. The review of 2007-2008 commercial data took place in the afternoon. There were no action items to bring to the FIN committee. **M. Kasprzak moved to accept these reports. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Commercial Port Sampler Meetings – (Attachment B)

The Gulf Port Samplers met in September 2009 in Panama City, FL. The meeting included several presentations. All port samplers that attended went to the Panama City lab to

attend a fish reproductive workshop. **G. Bray** reported that there were no action items to bring to the FIN committee. **M. Kasprzak moved to accept the Commercial Port Sampler reports. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Otolith Processors Training Workshop – (Attachment C)

The Otolith Processors Training Workshop was held in May of 2010 in St. Petersburg, Florida. A presentation was given by **C. Fioramonti** on triggerfish processing and ageing techniques which established some guidelines to the samplers in their efforts. More work is being done on gray triggerfish ageing. There were discussions about the various reference sets. 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. Some States have concerns with long term storage of their samples, otolith slides. GSMFC is in the process of developing a surge strategy for these samples housed in Ocean Springs, MS. They are working on coming up with a system for cataloging the samples and storing them. It is hopeful that by the fall 2010 there will be a test design to run by each of the states and get their feedback.

At the end of the workshop there was a review and comparison of the reading exercises done by the groups. The meeting summary of the otolith processors training workshop is attached. There were no action items to bring to the FIN Committee. **P. Campbell moved to accept this report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Commercial and Recreational Technical Work Groups – (Attachment D)

G. Bray explained that two work groups met via conference call with the purpose of reviewing and updating the FIN QA/QC (Quality Assurance/Quality Control) documentation. The recreational document was fairly detailed whereas the commercial document was lacking many details currently utilized by the Gulf States. Some input was provided by Louisiana, Florida, and Texas with regards to their commercial QA/QC procedures and were incorporated into the commercial document. Some detail was removed from the recreational document because of too much focus on procedures. A section was added on biological sampling as well as plans to add a section on at-sea sampling. **Bray** noted that once these sections were added, the workgroups further reviewed the document. **D. Donaldson** commented that it is one of the objectives of the committee to review the QA/QC document to ensure that details are incorporated. **D. Donaldson moved to accept this report (Acceptance of this report denotes approval of the QA/QC document.) The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Data Collection Plan Work Group – (Attachment E)

The Data Collection Plan Work Group met via conference call in May 2010. The purpose of this meeting was to review otolith collection reports for 2009 for the FIN priority species. There was useful input from all of the States as to reasons for shortfalls for specific species and modes of sampling. **The work group recommended to the FIN committee that FIN continue to use the current targets for biological sampling in 2011. This recommendation was accepted by the Fin Committee. P. Campbell moved to accept this report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Operations Plan

Status of 2010 Activities - (Attachment F) 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 2011 Operations Plan - The FIN Committee reviewed the 2011 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 2010 to give final approval to the Plan. FIN Committee members were asked to forward any comments or corrections to staff by June 30, 2010. **V. Swann moved to give tentative approval to the 2011 Operations Plan. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Discussion of 2011 FIN Priorities

Committee members were provided with a list of items for funding consideration in 2011. **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 2010. 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 12, 2010. The Committee agreed to list as high priority on all ongoing activities. The prioritized list of activities for 2011 is as follows:

Ongoing

- H - Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities
- H- Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data
- H - Head Boat Port Sampling in Texas and Florida
- H - Operation of FIN Data Management System
- H - Trip Ticket Program Operations for Oysters and Finfish in Mississippi
- H - Trip Ticket Program Operations in Alabama
- H - Trip Ticket Program Operations in Louisiana
- H - Trip Ticket Program Operations in Texas
- H - Biological Sampling of Commercial and Recreational Catches

Reinstating

- H – Administer Marine Recreational Fishery Survey in Puerto Rico
- L - Gulf Menhaden Port Sampling
- L – Detailed Effort Sampling of Shrimp Fishery in Louisiana

New

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

Time Schedule and Location for Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to schedule the next FIN meeting for one of the first two weeks in June 2011. Possible location for the next FIN Meeting is La Parguera, Puerto Rico.

Other Business

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 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.