

MRIP OVERVIEW



YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR FISHING DATA

HIGH QUALITY, MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY

The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is a new data collection and analysis initiative being implemented by NOAA Fisheries to help ensure the long-term sustainability of the nation's fisheries. It is being designed to ensure high quality data while also maximizing local control and flexibility.

1. MRIP avoids a one-size-fits-all approach to gathering data by creating an interlocking system of seven regional surveys that can best take into account local factors.
2. To ensure consistency and comparability, each regional survey included under the MRIP umbrella will adhere to a set of national standards that define minimum data elements, survey coverage, and best practices for data collection and analysis. Ongoing research projects will help refine these national standards and identify other potential information sources.
3. Regional data partners may decide on their own to extend coverage beyond the standard minimums for geographic scope and species included, use supplemental surveys to improve estimates for infrequently caught species, or include other add-ons to meet regional data needs.

TOWARDS MORE TRUSTED DATA

While it is impossible to ask each and every one of America's approximately 15 million recreational anglers about their fishing habits, MRIP's modern survey methods and other data collection systems will provide more timely and detailed estimates than ever before available of the number of fishing trips anglers take and how many fish they are catching.

MRIP is designed to address two critical needs. The first is to provide the level of detailed, timely data that fisheries managers require to keep pace with emerging management requirements like annual catch limits, appropriately balance the increasing needs we place on our oceans, and fairly allocate access to limited shared resources.

The second is to address head-on stakeholder concerns about the reliability and credibility of recreational fishing data. We are doing so not only through improved survey and data collection methodology. We are also changing the way we interact with managers, fishermen, charter boat captains, coastal residents, and other ocean advocates and enthusiasts.

MRIP begins and ends with the realization that numbers do not exist in vacuum. The data we gather and report, and the way in which we go about collecting and sharing that data, have real impacts on people's lives and livelihoods, and on the oceans we are all jointly committed to preserving for generations to come.

SIMILAR LOOK, DIFFERENT APPROACH

This basic survey approach to estimating recreational catch and effort, which includes in-person field sampling and telephone interviews, will continue under MRIP. But many specific survey elements related to both data collection, estimation and reporting will be refined to address issues such as data gaps, bias, consistency, accuracy, and timeliness.

Specific technical improvements to MRIP include:

- Future angler telephone, mail, and internet surveys will be based on a registry of known fishermen as opposed to random calls to coastal households. This will simultaneously increase efficiency and reach anglers who would not otherwise have been contacted.



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- For some fisheries, like the for-hire sector, we would be able to move from a survey to a census-based approach – if decided upon by the regional data partners and if self-reported data can be validated – thereby enabling every fish caught to get counted.
 - The mathematical methods used to estimate catch will be revised to reduce the effect of known sources of bias and improve accuracy.
 - The typical two-month sampling wave will be shortened to one month in some regions as management needs require.
 - If necessary to fill critical information gaps, sampling will be expanded in certain regions. For example, Wave 1 sampling may be added in the Northeast or sampling extended upriver for anadromous species like striped bass and shad.
 - Catch estimates will be generated more quickly in order to meet managers' need to effectively track quotas and annual catch limits.
 - In some states, like Florida, sampling areas will be broken down into smaller geographic areas to better capture rare event species and provide improved spatial resolution.

Improvements to address credibility include:

- We will explore the relationship between MRIP estimates and various weather, social, or economic variables (e.g. fuel prices, tackle sales) that may be correlated with patterns of fishing behavior.
- Telephone surveys in Hawaii will be conducted by local interviewers in order to better meet cultural norms.
- Transparent, comprehensive quality assurance and quality control procedures for the intercept survey will address angler concerns with the data collection process.
- Each MRIP work group is made up of a diverse array of experts from a broad range of disciplines and include members from government agencies and the private sector.
- We have incorporated greater engagement of fishermen, data partners, managers and other stakeholders in every step of the process. This includes everything from how we design the surveys to how we interpret their findings to how we provide the information with everyone who uses it in their role as stewards of our marine resources.

HOW WE GET FROM HERE TO THERE

Over the next several years, MRIP will be phased in across the nation in three overlapping stages. The evaluation phase looks at how we've done things in the past and what opportunities might exist for improvement. The innovation phase is where we experiment with new methods of collecting and analyzing fishing data. During the activation phase we will be implementing improvements from the innovation phase in order to enhance the level of specificity in our reporting, in terms of both timespan and geographic area.

Data programs directly managed by NOAA Fisheries will implement improvements as they are identified, documented, and approved by the Executive Steering Committee. For those programs not administered and/or funded by NOAA Fisheries, MRIP will provide technical assistance and support for improvements.

For more information about MRIP, visit www.countrymyfish.noaa.gov or contact us at st1help@noaa.gov.