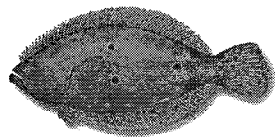


than one surveyor. You may be contacted by telephone to report the same trip information that you already recorded in a log. MRFSS interviewers may intercept and interview anglers who fished on a trip which you will later describe in a telephone interview or on a log form. The overlap in data collection methods is intentional and necessary to ensure a fair scientific comparison of the methods.

Why Should You Cooperate?

Your cooperation ensures that we obtain accurate and precise accounting of marine recreational angler fishing effort and catch from charter and guide boats. To avoid unnecessary regulations and to sustain the charter boat fishery for generations to come, it is in the long term interest of your industry to furnish accurate data on the catches and fishing effort. The planned pilot surveys are a cooperative state/federal/industry approach to furnish better information. We ask for your support and cooperation to make these surveys successful and to keep the charter boat fishing industry successful for years to come!



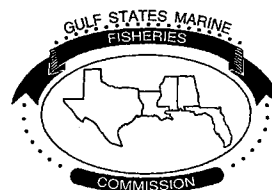
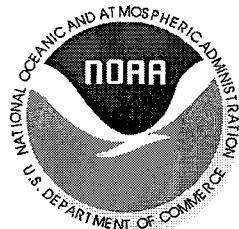
Coordinating Agencies:

- ◆ National Marine Fisheries Service
- ◆ Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
- ◆ Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
- ◆ Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- ◆ Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- ◆ Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

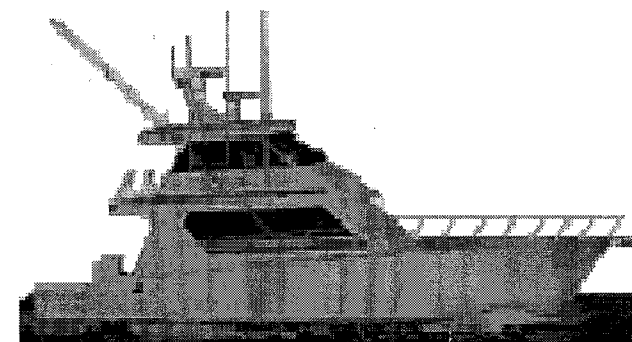
Do You Have Any Questions?

Please contact one of the agency representatives listed below:

David Van Voorhees	NMFS	(301) 713-2328
David Donaldson	GSMFC	(228) 875-5912
Joe Shepard	LDWF	(504) 765-2371
Joe O'Hop	FDEP	(813) 896-8626
Skip Lazauski	ADCNR	(334) 968-7577
Tom Van Devender	MDMR	(228) 374-5000

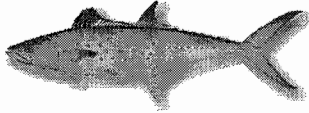


1997-1998 Gulf of Mexico Charter Boat Survey Research Program



Purpose

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provided \$450,000 to develop and test two new survey methods for tracking marine recreational angler fishing effort and catch from charter boats. At the conclusion of the pilot surveys, an independent panel will compare the new methods with the current survey method for charter boats used by the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS).

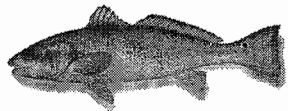


Objectives

- ◆ More efficient data collection methods
- ◆ More reliable fishing effort and catch statistics
- ◆ Better public understanding of survey methods
- ◆ More accurate statistics for fisheries management
- ◆ Closer association between government agencies and the user-groups.

Charter Boat Directory Telephone Survey

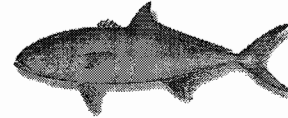
We select a 10% random sample in each state in any given week from boats listed in the respective state's charter boat directory. We then notify designated representatives of the selected boats by mail at least one week prior to the week for which they are asked to report. Subsequently, we contact representatives by phone to obtain the number of trips and number of anglers who fished on each trip during the prior week.



Throughout the study, we will compare the summed weekly fishing effort estimates with the bimonthly MRFSS estimates. To obtain pilot survey catch estimates, we will combine pilot survey fishing-effort estimates with catch-per-trip estimates from the MRFSS dockside intercept survey. The same state personnel conduct the pilot telephone survey interviews and MRFSS dockside angler interviews.

Charter Boat Directory Logbook Survey

We randomly assigned individual boats to different four-month reporting panels to ensure representative sampling of the charter fleet throughout the year. At the start of each wave, we mail log forms for recording fishing catch and/or effort data to owners and operators of charter and guide boats in the Florida Panhandle region. Representatives are asked to complete and submit weekly logs of each boat's activity for four months of the year. Representatives of half of the vessels on each panel are asked to record both catch and effort data.



We will compare the summed weekly fishing effort estimates with both the pilot telephone survey estimates and the bimonthly MRFSS estimates. We will combine pilot logbook survey fishing effort estimates with catch-per-trip estimates from either the pilot logbook data or the MRFSS dockside data to obtain alternative catch estimates for comparison.

Charter Boat Directories

We developed comprehensive directories of charter and guide boats for each state using a variety of information sources including state or federal registration lists, federal permit lists, charter and guide boat association lists, and dockside surveys. We are continuously verifying telephone numbers and addresses of vessel representatives through your responses to our mailings and telephone contacts.

Validation Surveys

To validate the effort data reported by the two pilot studies, state samplers will periodically survey charter boat docks to directly observe vessel fishing effort. The direct observations of effort will be compared with the reported data from the telephone and logbook panel surveys to confirm accuracy.

Planned Evaluations

- ◆ We are conducting the Pilot Telephone Survey side-by-side with the MRFSS in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida to allow an effective comparison of the methods.
- ◆ We are conducting both Pilot Survey methods in the Florida Panhandle region to allow a three-way comparison of the alternative methods.

Evaluation Criteria:

- ◆ Accuracy of catch & effort estimates
- ◆ Reliability of catch & effort estimates
- ◆ Respondent burden
- ◆ Costs of implementation

We Need Your Help!

The success of these pilot surveys will depend greatly on the level of cooperation given by charter boat owners and operators. We are asking you to tolerate this temporary increase in reporting burden to allow effective side-by-side testing of the alternative survey methods. In the Florida Panhandle area some of you will be asked to report information on the same fishing trip more than once to more

