

1997 Operations Plan  
for the  
Commercial Fisheries Information Network  
(ComFIN)

by: ComFIN Committee

November 1996

**1997 Operations Plan for the  
Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN)**

January 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The ComFIN is a cooperative state-federal marine commercial fisheries data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future marine commercial 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 1997. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

**II. MISSION AND GOALS**

The mission of the ComFIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial and anadromous fishery data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Southeast Region<sup>1</sup> and to support the development of a inter-regional program.

The four goals of the ComFIN are:

- To plan, manage and evaluate a marine commercial fishery data collection program;
- To implement and maintain a marine commercial fishery data collection program;
- To establish and maintain a marine commercial fishery data management system; and
- To support the development and operation of an inter-regional program.

The goals and objectives of the ComFIN are found in Appendix A.

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

Approach: Collect information through the established data collection planning process which determines the species that will be targeted for size frequency and bioprofile sampling for the upcoming year. Also, utilize the data tracking process to determine whether the size frequency and bioprofile data identified by the ComFIN has been provided. Accomplished by telephone and mail.

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

Product: A report which lists the current and future data needs necessary for fisheries management and recommendations.

Schedule: A preliminary report will be presented at the fall 1996 meeting. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 4: Development of a Generic Trip Ticket Program (Goal 2, Objective 1)

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

Team Members: Future Needs Work Group

Approach: Using the data element matrix which identifies data gaps in the Southeast Region, the licensing document, and the non-reported landings schematics, the Work Group will design a modular trip ticket program that can be used by agencies interested in implementing a trip ticket program in their jurisdiction. The program will generically outline the necessary elements for a successful trip ticket program. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Outline for a trip ticket program

Schedule: The Work Group will begin addressing this issue in 1997 and will present a draft program to the Committee at the fall 1997 meeting.

Task 5 Development of Data Collection Procedures Document (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop a document which outlines the procedures for the collection of data under the ComFIN.

Team Members: Ad hoc work group

Approach: The work group will develop a document which describes the various techniques and methods for collection of marine commercial data. The group will utilize existing procedures for the Trip Interview Program and other related information.

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

### **C. Administrative Activities**

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

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

### **ComFIN Committee (continued)**

Julie Califf  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Tom Schmidt  
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Miguel Rolón  
Caribbean Fishery Management Council

Joe Shepard  
Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries

Steven Meyers  
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Tom Van Devender  
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### **Data Collection Work Group**

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### **Data Management Work Group**

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and Natural Resources

**APPENDIX A**

**ComFIN Goals and Objectives**

GOAL 1: To plan, manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial fishery data collection program for the Region.

Objective 1 To establish and maintain a ComFIN 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 a 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 fishery data collection program for the Region.

Objective 1 To characterize and periodically review the commercial 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 ComFIN requirements.

Objective 5 To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet ComFIN requirements.

Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection methodologies and technologies.





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The four goals of the ComFIN are:

- To plan, manage and evaluate a marine commercial fishery data collection program;
- To implement and maintain a marine commercial fishery data collection program;
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- To support the development and operation of an inter-regional program.

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### III. OPERATIONS

#### A. Data Collection and Management

Ongoing marine commercial fisheries surveys will be conducted by various state and federal agencies. The ComFIN Committee will review and evaluate ongoing activities and provide recommendations for continued operations.

#### B. Committee and Work Group Activities (see Section D for membership)

The tasks below cover all 1997 objectives.

##### Task 1: Annual Operations Plan, 1998 (Goal 1, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop 1998 Annual Operations Plan, including identification of available resources, that implements the Framework Plan.

Team Members: ComFIN Committee

Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 1998.

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

Product: 1998 Annual Operations Plan

Schedule: The Plan will be drafted by mid/late summer 1997 and submitted for approval by the Committee at the fall 1997 meeting.

##### Task 2: Information Dissemination (Goal 1, Objective 5)

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Team Members: ComFIN Committee and staff

Approach: The Committee will distribute information concerning the structure, mission, goals and objectives, etc., to cooperators and interested parties documented by a request log. Each committee member is responsible for maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the ComFIN staff.

Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and inkind (time) and staff time.

Product: A report which compiles a record of information distributed and presentations given by the Committee and staff.

Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

##### Task 3: Current and Future Data Needs (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Annually compile a listing of current and future data needs for fisheries management and track the collection of these data.

Team Members: ComFIN Committee

Approach: Collect information through the established data collection planning process which determines the species that will be targeted for size frequency and bioprofile sampling for the upcoming year. Also, utilize the data tracking process to determine whether the size frequency and bioprofile data identified by the ComFIN has been provided. Accomplished by telephone and mail.

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

Product: A report which lists the current and future data needs necessary for fisheries management and recommendations.

Schedule: A preliminary report will be presented at the fall 1996 meeting. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 4: Development of a Generic Trip Ticket Program (Goal 2, Objective 1)

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

Team Members: Future Needs Work Group

Approach: Using the data element matrix which identifies data gaps in the Southeast Region, the licensing document, and the non-reported landings schematics, the Work Group will design a modular trip ticket program that can be used by agencies interested in implementing a trip ticket program in their jurisdiction. The program will generically outline the necessary elements for a successful trip ticket program. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail.

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

Product: Outline for a trip ticket program

Schedule: The Work Group will begin addressing this issue in 1997 and will present a draft program to the Committee at the fall 1997 meeting.

Task 5 Development of Data Collection Procedures Document (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop a document which outlines the procedures for the collection of data under the ComFIN.

Team Members: Ad hoc work group

Approach: The work group will develop a document which describes the various techniques and methods for collection of marine commercial data. The group will utilize existing procedures for the Trip Interview Program and other related information.

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

Product: Procedures document  
Schedule: The work group will meet in early 1997 to address this issue and present their results to the Committee at the spring 1997 meeting.

Task 6: Review of TIP data elements (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Examination of the data elements that are collected by the Trip Interview Program (TIP)  
Team Members: Data Collection Work Group  
Approach: The Work Group will review all of the data elements that are currently being collected by the TIP in terms of their necessity. It was decided that if data being collected is not utilized, there is no reason to collect that particular element. Each element collected under the TIP will be examined and the group will determine if that element is necessary and is being used by fishery managers. The group will develop recommendations concerning the necessary TIP data elements. Accomplished by mail, conference calls, and meetings, if necessary.  
Resources: Mail costs, conference calls/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: List of necessary data elements that need to be collected by the TIP.  
Schedule: The Work Group will address this issue in 1997 and present its findings to the Committee at the spring 1997 meeting.

Task 7: TIP Data Error Corrections Work Session (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Conduct TIP data error corrections work session.  
Team Members: ComFIN Committee  
Approach: The Committee will conduct a data error correction work session. This session will address the procedures for identifying and rectifying errors in the data collected during the TIP and establish procedures for handling these errors. Accomplished by mail, conference calls, and meetings, if necessary.  
Resources: Mail costs, conference calls/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.  
Product: List of recommendations regarding error corrections.  
Schedule: The work session will be conducted at the spring 1997 meeting.

### **C. Administrative Activities**

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- Seek funding for ComFIN activities as the need develops; and
- Conduct or participate in other activities as identified.

**D. Time Table for ComFIN**

	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>
<b>Management and Evaluation</b>					
Operations Plans	X	X	X	X	X
Funding priorities		X	X	X	X
Information dissemination	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					X
<b>Data Collection</b>					
Data needs	X	X	X		
Standard collection protocol	X	X			
Quality control/assurance		X	X		
Data confidentiality	X	X			
<b>Data Management</b>					
Standard coding system			X	X	
Data management system		X	X	X	X
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard management protocols		X	X		
Data confidentiality	X	X			

**E. Committee and Work Group Membership**

**ComFIN Committee**

Steven Atran Gulf of Mexico Fishery Mgmt. Council	Daniel Matos Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources
Page Campbell Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Joe Moran South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources
Jack Dunnigan Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	Bob Mahood South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Wilson Laney U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Joe O'Hop Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection
Skip Lazauski Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Marine Resources Division	Dee Lupton North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
Ron Lukens Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission	John Poffenberger National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Fisheries Science Center

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## **Future Needs**

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Southeast Fisheries Science Center

## **APPENDIX A**

### **ComFIN Goals and Objectives**



GOAL 1: To plan, manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial fishery data collection program for the Region.

- Objective 1 To establish and maintain a ComFIN 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 a 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 fishery data collection program for the Region.

- Objective 1 To characterize and periodically review the commercial 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 ComFIN requirements.
- Objective 5 To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet ComFIN requirements.
- Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection methodologies and technologies.

GOAL 3: To establish and maintain an integrated, marine commercial fishery data management system for the Region.

- Objective 1 To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the ComFIN 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 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 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 an inter-regional 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 inter-regional program planning.
- Objective 2 To coordinate ComFIN with other regional and national marine commercial fisheries programs.
- Objective 3 To encourage consistency and comparability among regional and national marine commercial fisheries programs over time.