

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

JANUARY 1, 1996 - DECEMBER 31, 1996

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Number 44

INTRODUCTION

The Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)] are programs to establish 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 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) which 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 a 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 ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) 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 which accrue to management of fisheries will benefit not only commercial and recreational fishermen and the associated fishing industries, but the

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

resources, the states, and the nation.

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 Region and to support the development of an inter-regional program. The four goals of the ComFIN include to plan, manage, and evaluate commercial fishery data collection activities; to implement a marine commercial fishery data collection program; to establish and maintain a commercial fishery data management system; and to support the establishment of a national program.

The mission of the RecFIN(SE) is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine recreational fisheries statistical data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Region; and to support the development and operation of a national program. The four goals of the RecFIN(SE) are to plan, manage, and evaluate recreational fishery data collection activities; to implement a marine recreational fishery data collection program; to establish and maintain a recreational fishery data management system; and to support the establishment of a national program.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The organizational structure consists of the FIN Committee, the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees, three geographic subcommittees (Caribbean, Gulf, and South Atlantic), standing and ad hoc subcommittees, technical work groups, and administrative support. (Figure 1).

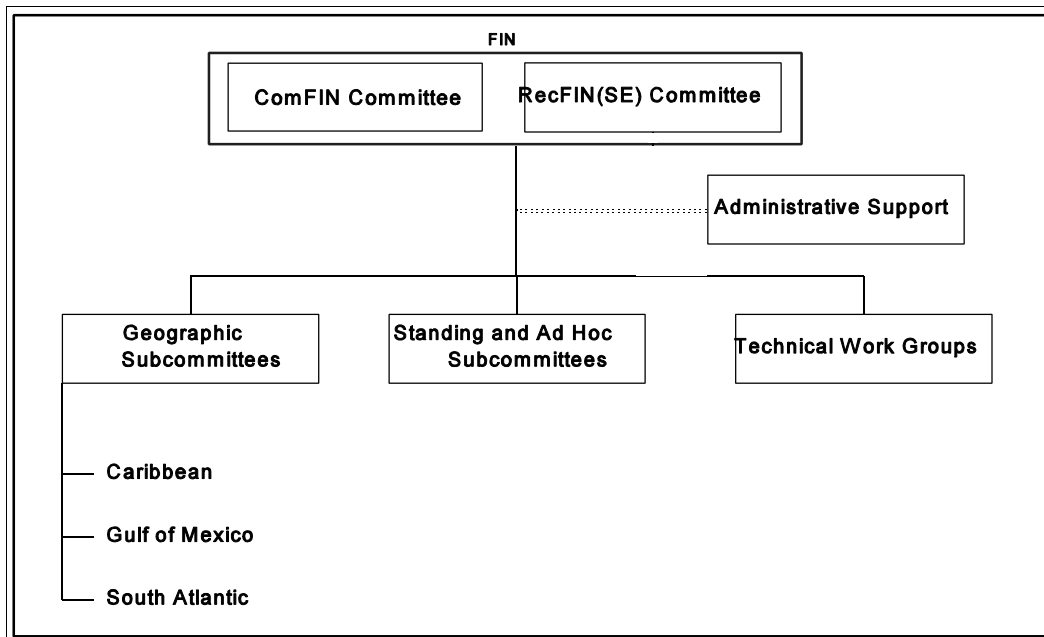


Figure 1. ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) organizational structure.

The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees consist 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, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources, Puerto Rico Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, South Carolina Department of 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, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees are divided into three standing subcommittees representing the major geographical areas of the Region: Caribbean, Gulf, and South Atlantic. These subcommittees are responsible for making recommendations to the Committee on the needs of these areas. Standing and ad hoc subcommittees are established as needed by the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees to address administrative issues and technical work groups are established as needed by the Committees to carry out tasks on specific technical issues. Coordination and administrative support of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) is accomplished through the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) are comprehensive programs comprised of coordinated data collection activities, an integrated data management and retrieval system, and procedures for information dissemination. Activities during 1996 were associated with addressing issues and problems regarding data collection and management and developing strategies for dealing with these topics. In addition to ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) activities, ongoing marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys were conducted by various state and federal agencies. The ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees reviewed and evaluated progress towards the integration of these surveys into the respective programs. Future activities of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees are outlined in Table 1.

ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees

Major ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) meetings were held in February and September 1996. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- @ identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 1996 and instruction to Committees, Administrative Subcommittee and the Data Collection, Future Needs, Biological/Environmental, Social/Economic, and ad hoc work groups to either begin or continue work on these tasks;

- @ development and completion of the 1996 ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Operations Plans which presented the year's activities in data collection, data management, and information dissemination as well as development of a 5-year time table;
- @ development of the 1997 ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Operations Plans;
- @ review of activities and accomplishments of 1996;
- @ continued evaluation of adequacy of current marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs for ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) and development of recommendations regarding these programs;
- @ review findings of and receive recommendations from technical work groups for activities to be carried out during 1997;
- @ preparation and submission of a proposal for financial assistance to support activities of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE); and
- @ continued internal evaluation of the program.

ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committee members are listed in Table 2. The approved 1996 Operations Plans are included in Appendix A and minutes for all meetings are included in Appendix B. ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) goals and objectives are included in Appendix C.

Subcommittee and Work Groups

ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) subcommittees and work groups met this year to provide recommendations to the Committees to formulate administrative policies, address specific technical issues for accomplishing many of the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) goals and objectives, and examine other issues as decided by the Committees. Subcommittee and work group members are listed in Table 3. Their activities included:

- @ The Administrative Subcommittee met in February 1996 (via a conference call) to address several tasks. The first task was to modify the RecFIN(SE) goals and objectives to reflect changes since the program is no longer in its pilot phase. The next task was to examine the existing Framework Plans for the RecFIN and ComFIN and develop a plan which encompasses both programs. Since both programs will be covered under one Memorandum of Understanding, the Committee believed that a single Fisheries Information Network (FIN) framework plan should also be developed. Although the programs will be included in one plan, they will still be two distinct programs. Another task was to compile a list of action items from the Program Review document and provide recommendations concerning the actions to the Committee for their consideration. The last issue concerned filling the vacancy of the Vice-Chairmanship.

- @ The ComFIN Data Collection Work Group met in August 1996 (via a conference call) to develop a data collection planning and tracking processes. The group created a process which develops a list of priority species and the associated data needs and established a data tracking process. These processes were presented and approved by the ComFIN Committee at the 1996 fall meeting.

- @ The RecFIN(SE) Social/Economic Work Group met in June 1996 to discuss a variety of issues including the assessment of the status of the Work Group, determination of what tasks need to be addressed, and development of a process for accomplishing the identified tasks. It was noted that one of the overall goals of the group is to develop a process for integrating social and economic issues into fisheries management. The group discussed the membership of the Work Group. Since the issue of the membership was to be discussed by the RecFIN(SE) Committee in September, the group developed a list of potential participants on the Work Group to assist the Committee. The group also developed a mission statement for the Social/Economic Work Group. The group discussed an upcoming workshop regarding recreational utility demand models. The workshop addressed a variety of issues concerning the collection of social and economic data and will develop recommendations regarding these issues. It was suggested that it might be helpful if the RecFIN(SE) endorse this workshop. The appropriate information concerning the workshop was distributed to the Committee for their action. And the group examined the specific task identified in the 1996 RecFIN(SE) Operations Plan regarding social and economic issues including the identification of necessary socioeconomic data elements and the identification and determination of standards for sociological and economic data collection.

- @ The ad hoc RecFIN(SE) Recommendations Work Group met in June 1996 to modify the *Recommendations* document developed from the RecFIN(SE) facilitated session report. The revised document was presented to the RecFIN(SE) Committee at the 1996 fall meeting.

- @ The RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group met in August 1996 (via conference call) and December 1996 to discuss the RecFIN(SE) Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) document. In August, the group was charged with comparing the RecFIN(SE) QA/QC document with other QA/QC documents and, where applicable, integrate the standards. During the call, the group decided there needed to be a face-to-face meeting to address this issue. In addition, the group developed a data collection process similar to the one developed for ComFIN. This process was presented and approved by the RecFIN(SE) Committee at the 1996 fall meeting. In December, the group revised the QA/QC document and the revised document will be presented to the RecFIN(SE) Committee at the 1997 spring meeting.

Coordination and Administrative Support

Working closely with the Committee in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation was a major function of ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) 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 Committees, subcommittees, and work groups; serving as liaison between the Committees, other program participants, and other interested organizations; preparing annual operations plans under the direction of the Committees; preparing and/or supervising and coordinating preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings; and distributing approved ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures.

Information Dissemination

Committee members and staff provided program information in 1996 via a variety of different methods such as distribution of program documents, presentation to various groups interested in the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE), and via the Internet:

- @ FIN Committee. 1996. *Framework Plan. Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN)*. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 35 pp + appendix.
- @ Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee. 1996. *1996 Operations Plan for Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP)*. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 8 pp + appendix.
- @ ComFIN Committee. 1996. *1997 Operations Plan for Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN)*. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 8 pp + appendix.
- @ Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee. 1996. *Annual Report of the Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP) January 1, 1995 - December 31, 1995*. CSP-1 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 7 pp + appendices.
- @ RecFIN(SE) Committee. 1996. *Annual Report of the Recreational Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States [RecFIN(SE)] January 1, 1995 - December 31, 1995*. REC-1 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 10 pp + appendices.
- @ RecFIN(SE) Committee. 1996. *Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network Fact Finding Workshop on Charterboat Effort and Harvest*. REC-2. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 19 pp + attachments.

- @ RecFIN(SE) Committee. 1996. *1996 Operations Plan for Recreational Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States [RecFIN(SE)]*. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 14 pp + appendix.
- @ ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) articles in the ASMFC and GSMFC newsletters.
- @ Variety of informal discussions occurred throughout the year during ASMFC, GSMFC, NMFS, and other participating agencies meetings and workshops.
- @ NPS personnel periodically provided information concerning the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) (meeting notices, available documents, etc.) to the EPA's Gulf of Mexico Program computer Bulletin Board System.
- @ NMFS has begun the development of an user-friendly data management system for the MRFSS.
- @ GSMFC has developed a homepage for the world wide web which provides programmatic information regarding ComFIN and RecFIN(SE).

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 ComFIN 1995 - 1999

[ComFIN Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

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

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR RecFIN(SE) 1996 - 2000

[RecFIN(SE) Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Planning, Management, and Evaluation					
RecFIN(SE) Committee					
Maintenance of RecFIN(SE) Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					
Review of Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans					
Support establishment of MRF surveys in PR & VI					X
Identify funding needs for MRF programs	X	X	X	X	X
Identify funding sources	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination					
Establish educational work group					X
Establish MRF user advisory panel					X
Use Internet communications	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					
Conduct Program review					X

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Data Collection					
Data components					
Review components of fisheries					X
Needed data elements					
Develop process for metadata		X			
Collect metadata			X	X	X
Identify social/economic data elements		X			
Use existing social/economic panels for RecFIN(SE)			X		
Identify other social scientists to participate in RecFIN(SE)			X		
Standard data collection protocols					
Adopt QA/QC standards		X			
Review QA/QC standards					X
Calculate precision estimate for Headboat Survey		X			
Determine precision levels for priority species		X			
Evaluate methods for achieving desired precision levels			X		
Quality control/assurance					
Develop recommendations regarding duplicative collection and management	X				
Evaluate compatibility of Texas Survey data			X		
Coordination of data collection					
Compile marine recreational licensing report		X			
Develop license sampling frame criteria		X			
Establish/modify licenses to meet criteria			X		
Conduct comparison survey of license frame and MRFSS				X	
Implement the appropriate methodology				X	
Evaluate methods for surveying the for-hire fishery		X			
Test methods for surveying the for-hire fishery			X	X	X
Determine methods for collecting catch data for private access points			X		
Determine methods for collecting catch data for night fishing			X		
Develop process for collecting needed data on priority species			X		
Develop method for collecting data on fishing tournaments			X		
Develop methods for collecting data on non hook-and-line fisheries			X		
Evaluate the potential for stratifying at finer geographic levels				X	
Evaluate potential improvements to intercept site selection process				X	
Select preferred method for site selection process				X	
Evaluate methods to improve enforceability of reporting requirements				X	
Conduct comparison study between preferred and MRFSS methods					X
Determine the extent of non-consumptive activities					X
Innovative collection technology					
Evaluate innovated 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
Data maintenance					
Provide finalized data in electronic form		X			
Standard data management protocols					
Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data		X			

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Integration of data bases					
Identify databases for integration in MRF DMS	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative data management technology					
Evaluate innovative data management technologies	X	X	X	X	X
Data confidentiality					
Protect confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
Development of National Program					
Long-term planning					
Coordinate with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs					
Coordinate with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability					
Coordinate with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN	X	X	X	X	X

TABLE 2.

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TABLE 3.
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APPENDIX A
1996 Operations Plans

**1996 Operations Plan for the
Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP)**

January 1, 1996 to December 31, 1996

I. INTRODUCTION

The Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP) is a cooperative effort among agencies that manage commercial fisheries resources. These agencies have an interest in and the need to collect, manage, and disseminate statistical data and information on the Southeast Region's commercial fisheries. The CSP is designed to provide sound scientific information on catch, effort, and participation that managers need to prudently conserve and manage commercial fisheries resources in the Southeast Region.² This operations plan implements the CSP Framework Plan for 1996.

II. MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of the CSP is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate landings (including finfish and shellfish) and bioprofile information for marine commercial fisheries in the Region.

The three goals of the CSP are:

- @ To manage and evaluate a coordinated State/Federal marine commercial fishery statistics program for the Region;
- @ To collect State/Federal marine commercial fishery information for the Region; and
- @ To operate an integrated marine commercial fishery data management system for the Region.

III. OPERATIONS

A. Data Collection and Management

Ongoing CSP surveys will be conducted by various state and federal agencies. The Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee (SCSC) will review and evaluate ongoing activities and provide recommendations for continued operations.

²The Southeast Region (the Region) includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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

The tasks below cover all 1996 objectives.

Task 1: Annual Operations Plan, 1997 (Goal 1, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop 1997 Annual Operations Plan, including identification of available resources, that implements the Framework Plan.

Team Members: Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee.

Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 1997.

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

Product: 1997 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: The Plan will be drafted by mid/late summer 1996 and submitted for approval by the Committee at the fall 1996 meeting.

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

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Team Members: Southeast Cooperative Statistics 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 CSP administrative 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.

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group

Approach: Begin collecting information concerning data needs through telephone contact and existing documentation including stock assessment reports. 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: List of Minimum Data Elements Needed for Fisheries Management (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Compare the list of minimum data elements with state commercial data collection programs.

Team Members: Data Collection Work Group

Approach: Develop a matrix which compares the information collected during state commercial data collection programs and the minimum set of data elements developed by the Southeast Cooperative Statistics Program. Accomplished by telephone and mail.

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

Product: A matrix which compares the list of data elements.

Schedule: A matrix will be presented at the spring 1996 meeting and will be discussed by the Committee.

Task 5: TIP Sampling Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 2)

Objective: Conduct a workshop to address issues regarding the TIP.
Team Members: Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee.
Approach: At the workshop, the Committee will review current protocols, procedures and other activities concerning the TIP. From these discussions, the Committee will develop recommendations and forward them to the appropriate personnel.
Resources: Mail costs, workshop costs, report costs, and in-kind (time) and staff time.
Product: Report.
Schedule: The workshop is scheduled for spring 1996.

Task 6: Non-reported Sources of Landings (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Identification of non-reported sources of landings in the Region.
Team Members: Geographic Subcommittees.
Approach: This will be an independent activity conducted by the geographic subcommittees. As sources are identified, each subcommittee will compile a listing and periodically mail the listings to CSP staff members. Accomplished by mail, conference calls, and meetings, if necessary.
Resources: Mail costs, conference calls costs, report costs, and in-kind (time) and staff time.
Product: Report which lists sources of non-reported landings.
Schedule: This is an ongoing task. An update of the report will be presented to the Committee in fall 1996.

Task 7: Compilation of Licensing Information in the Southeast Region (Goal 2, Objective 1)

Objective: Develop a complete listing of all commercial licenses for the states in the Southeast Region.
Team Members: Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee.
Approach: Utilizing the results of the NMFS licensing survey conducted for the shrimp permitting activity as a starting point, the Committee will compile a list of all commercial licensing required by each state in the Region. This information will be used to investigate utilizing existing frameworks for improving shrimp effort estimations and examining the possibilities of developing an universal trip ticket system in the Region.
Resources: Mail costs, conference calls costs, report costs, possible meeting costs, and in-kind (time) and staff time.
Product: A document that lists all commercial licenses required by each state in the Region.
Schedule: This issue will be addressed by the Committee at the fall 1996 meeting.

C. Administrative Activities

Coordination and administrative support of CSP will be accomplished through administrative structures established in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic areas. Major tasks involved in the coordination and administration of the various levels of CSP include but are not limited to the following:

- @ Work closely with the SCSC in all aspects of program coordination, administration, and operation;
- @ Implement plans and program directives approved by the SCSC;
- @ Provide coordination and logistical support, including communications and organization of meetings for the SCSC, subcommittees, and work groups;
- @ Develop and/or administer cooperative agreements, grants, and contracts;

- @ Serve as liaison between the SCSC, other program participants, and other interested organizations;
- @ Assist the SCSC in preparation or review of annual spending plans;
- @ Prepare annual operations plans under the direction of the SCSC;
- @ Prepare and/or supervise and coordinate preparation of selected documents, including written records of all meetings;
- @ Distribute approved CSP information and data in accordance with accepted policies and procedures as set forth by the SCSC;
- @ Assist in the identification of regional and geographic needs that can be satisfied through CSP activities;
- @ Seek funding for CSP activities as the need develops; and
- @ Conduct or participate in other activities as identified.

D. Time Table for CSP

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

Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee

Steven Atran
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Mgmt. Council

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Page Campbell
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Dee Lupton
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**1996 Operations Plan for the
Recreational Fisheries Information Network in the
Southeastern United States [RecFIN(SE)]**

January 1, 1996 to December 31, 1996

I. INTRODUCTION

The RecFIN(SE) is a cooperative state-federal marine recreational fisheries (MRF) data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future MRF 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 RecFIN(SE) Strategic Plan for 1996. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

II. MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of the RecFIN(SE) program is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate MRF statistical data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Southeast Region³ and to support the development and operation of a national program.

The four goals of the RecFIN(SE) are:

- @ planning, management, and evaluation of data collection and management activities;
- @ implementation of data collection activities;
- @ establishment and maintenance of a data management system; and
- @ support for establishment of a national program.

III. OPERATIONS

A. Data Collection and Management

Ongoing MRF surveys will be conducted by various state and federal agencies (RecFIN(SE) Committee 1993). The RecFIN(SE) Committee will review and evaluate progress towards integration of the surveys into the RecFIN(SE).

³The Southeast Region (the Region) includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas and the U.S. Virgin Islands

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

The tasks below cover all 1996 objectives (see Section D).

Task 1: Annual Operations Plan, 1997 (Goal 1, Objective 3)

Objective: Develop 1997 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources, that implements the Strategic Plan.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.
Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 1997.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: 1997 Annual Operations Plan.
Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by late summer 1996 and completed by the fall 1996.

Task 2: Information Dissemination (Goal 1, Objective 4)

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee and staff.
Approach: The Committee will distribute program information 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 RecFIN(SE) staff. In addition, the GSMFC is in the process of developing an home page for the Internet and plans to include information concerning the RecFIN(SE).
Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning RecFIN(SE) and a report which compiles a record of information distributed and presentations given by the Committee and staff.
Schedule: This task will be an ongoing activity.

Task 3: Identification of Socioeconomic Data Collection (Goal 2, Objective 2)

Objective: Identify necessary socioeconomic data elements and encourage the collection of these elements.
Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group
Approach: Identify social and economic data needs and establishing a minimum annual data collection level by reviewing existing documents including the ASMFC social/economic publications which outline the necessary data elements and contact the NMFS to encourage them to implement basic socioeconomic data collection and management on a routine basis.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Report which outlines the necessary social and economic data elements for fisheries management.
Schedule: Social/Economic Work Group will begin address this issue in early 1996 and should be complete by the end of the year.

Task 4: Comparison of RecFIN(SE) Quality Assurances /Quality Control Documents (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Compare the QA/QC documents for RecFIN(SE) and the NMFS.
Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group
Approach: The group will review the RecFIN QA/QC document to the NMFS Panama City and Beaufort documents, and where applicable, integrate the standards. In addition, the group will develop a list of outside users of the data. This document will be compared with other state/federal MRF programs.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Comprehensive RecFIN(SE) Quality Assurances /Quality Control Document
Schedule: Work on this task will begin in 1996 and continue into subsequent years.

Task 5: Development of a RecFIN(SE) Policy regarding Evaluation of Methodological Changes (G2, O3)

Objective: Develop a policy statement regarding the evaluation of changes to existing survey methodologies.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee
Approach: Staff will develop a draft policy position that states if changes are to be implemented into any MRF surveys, existing methods should be continued in parallel for evaluation purposes. This policy will be disseminated to the appropriate personnel and forum(s).
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Development of policy statement
Schedule: A draft policy statement will be discussed at the spring 1996 meeting and a final statement will be completed by the end of 1996.

Task 6: Establishment of Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Establish an annual review process, through the RecFIN(SE), to evaluate MRFSS data.
Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group
Approach: The NMFS will send MRFSS preliminary data to RecFIN(SE) Committee members for their review and comments.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: All participants involved in collection of the data will have an opportunity to comment about the data.
Schedule: This will be discussed at the fall 1996 meeting to establish some protocols concerning the review process. However, this will be an ongoing activity.

Task 7: Social/Economic Quality Assurance and Quality Control (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Identify and determine standards for sociological and economic data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.
Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group.
Approach: Determine standards for collection and management of social and economic data. Review and expand the quality assurance and quality control document developed by the Biological/Environmental Work Group. This expanded document will encompass all quality assurance and quality control standards for the RecFIN(SE). Accomplished by conference calls, mail and possible meetings.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: RecFIN(SE) Quality assurance and quality control report.
Schedule: This task will be completed by the 1996 fall meeting.

Task 8: Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting RecFIN(SE) requirements.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.
Approach: Evaluate reports from Biological/Environmental and Social/Economic Work Groups in relation to existing programs.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Report containing recommendations for MRF surveys as well as an evaluation and report on recommendations.
Schedule: Continue reviewing MRF surveys. This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 9: Evaluation of Integration of NMFS charterboat data (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Evaluate the integration of MRFSS and Panama City charterboat data.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee
Approach: The NMFS is planning a meeting to determine the feasibility of integrating the charterboat data collected by the NMFS. The RecFIN(SE) Committee members will be involved in the workshop and provide input into the possible integration of the data.

Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Recommendations for the integration of data.
Schedule: The NMFS is scheduling the workshop for 1996 and the RecFIN(SE) participants will be informed of the time and location of the workshop.

Task 10: Evaluation of the Results of the ASMFC Saltwater Participation Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Evaluate the results of the ASMFC workshop on salt water participation.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee
Approach: Once the proceedings of the workshop have been published, the Committee will review the document and evaluate the relative participation between fresh and salt water.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail cost, inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Report
Schedule: This task will be completed by the end of 1996.

Task 11: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Identify and combine duplicative data collection and management effort.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee
Approach: Identify, using existing RecFIN(SE) documents, any redundancies in MRF data collection and management in the Southeast Region. Also, the group will provide recommendations to the RecFIN(SE) Committee concerning the reduction of these activities. From these activities, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail cost, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Recommendations for reducing duplicative data collection and management efforts.
Schedule: This task will be split into two parts. The group will address non-headboat and charterboat survey in 1996. The headboat/charterboat surveys are planned for 1997.

Task 12: Evaluation of Licensing System as Sampling Framework (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Evaluate the licensing systems for the Southeast Region.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee
Approach: Contact the ASMFC and American Sportfishing Association (ASA) and use their data to compile a report which outlines the licensing structure in each participant. It might be necessary to conduct a survey if the data from ASMFC and ASA cannot be adapted.
Resources: Mail costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Report which outlines the licensing structure of all the agencies in the Southeast Region.
Schedule: The survey and report will be complete by December 1996. The evaluation of the licensing system as the sampling framework will be examined in subsequent years.

Task 13: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Develop a process for integrating the RecFIN(SE) into the stock assessment process to accommodate the stock assessment data needs.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee
Approach: Staff will develop an options paper which outlines possible methods for integrating in the process. This document will be reviewed and discussed by the Committee
Resources: Mail cost, telephone costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Options paper
Schedule: The paper will be developed in early to 1996 and be discussed by the Committee at the fall 1996 meeting.

Task 14: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Encourage coordination, integration, and augmentation, as appropriate, of data collection efforts to meet the RecFIN(SE) requirements.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.

Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding MRF surveys to the appropriate personnel.

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

Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.

Schedule: This will be an ongoing activity.

Task 15: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.

Approach: RecFIN(SE) members report to the Committee any new technologies which will aid in the collection of MRF data. Also, have appropriate personnel report to the Committee concerning such advancements.

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

Product: Progress reports concerning pen-based and other data collection technologies.

Schedule: This will be an ongoing activity.

Task 16: Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Objective 3)

Objective: To design, implement, and maintain an MRF data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).

Team Members: MRFSS staff and other State and Federal Data Base Managers.

Approach: The MRFSS staff completed design of Oracle Data Bases for catch and trip estimates, and summarized intercept data bases for bag limits and size distributions. The MRFSS staff designed and implemented a user-friendly data query system for these data bases that is accessible through Internet and the World Wide Web. The Oracle data bases and SAS intercept and telephone interview data bases were placed on the NMFS IT-95 computer system which allows distributed processing and availability to the NMFS Southeast Regional Office, Science Center and laboratories. Although original plans were to incorporate non-MRFSS data bases identified as high priority for inclusion in the MRF data management system, in most cases it will be more efficient and appropriate to link to other home pages. State and Federal Data Base managers of MRF data bases other than the MRFSS should develop similar home page accessible data base queries. The MRFSS Home Page will include a link to these other data bases as they are developed and the other home pages should add links to the MRFSS Home Page.

Resources: The design, data query system development, html query pages, and query codes developed by the MRFSS staff are available to other data base managers to use as a basis for their own systems.

Product: MRFSS Home Page with user-friendly data query system. Home pages and data query systems for non-MRFSS data bases.

Schedule: The MRFSS system was implemented in the spring of 1996. The schedule for creation of systems for other data bases has not been decided.

Task 17: Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4)

Objective: Develop standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.

Team Members: MRFSS staff and other State and Federal Data Base Managers.

Approach: Access to the MRF system by state personnel and other researchers is now available through the Internet or through requests to the MRFSS staff. Dial-up protocols are now necessary only on an

individual state basis for states without Internet access and are the responsibility of the state. Menu-driven access to MRF Oracle/SAS data bases through the MRFSS Home Page now provides quality control through standardized queries and summarization procedures. The MRFSS Home Page provides quality control through standardization, with proper use of MRFSS data (weighting for unequal sample size, etc.). The MRFSS staff will continue development of MRFSS documentation and standardization of formats and codes of historical intercept, telephone and estimate data bases and incorporate them on-line in the MRFSS Home Page. State and Federal data base managers should develop documentation of non-MRFSS data bases as they are put onto Home Page systems or incorporated into the MRFSS system. Develop MRF Metadata Data Base to help users properly interpret their results. Error-checking software is available on the NMFS data management system.

Resources: MRFSS staff time and RecFIN(SE) Committees, and staff time as needed.
Product: Standard protocols and documentation on-line on the MRFSS Home Page and other non-MRFSS home pages.
Schedule: Documentation and standardization of MRFSS intercept and telephone historical data bases was begun in 1993. The final intercept format was adopted by MRFSS staff by March 1995 and is available for distribution as well as similar documentation for the telephone data base. Basic documentation of the catch and trip estimate data bases exists and will be added to the MRFSS Home Page. Standardization of variables was achieved by the MRFSS staff during the clean-up effort during 1994 and 1995 prior to re-estimation.

Task 18: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee
Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies which will aid in the management of MRF data. Also, industry personnel will report to the Committee concerning such advancements.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Progress reports.
Schedule: This will be an ongoing activity.

Task 19: Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1)

Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.
Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.
Approach: The RecFIN(SE) Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will attend Pacific RecFIN and ASMFC Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics meetings and coordinate activities as appropriate. Accomplished by mail and meetings.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and inkind (time) and staff time.
Product: Record of coordination activities.
Schedule: The planning aspect of this task will be an ongoing activity.

Task 20: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative MRF Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3)

Objective: Coordinate RecFIN(SE) with other regional cooperative MRF programs and encourage consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.

Team Members: RecFIN(SE) Committee.

Approach: The RecFIN(SE) Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and Pacific RecFIN on the West Coast. The MRFSS staff is revising data files and will get input from the RecFIN(SE) Committee. Distribute appropriate program results and recommendations to other RecFIN programs. Accomplished by mail and meetings.

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

Product: Ensure adequate information exchange, consistency and comparability between all regional RecFIN programs and compilation of a record of information exchange.

Schedule: This task will be an ongoing activity.

C. Administrative Activities

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

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

D. Time Table for RecFIN(SE)

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Planning, Management, and Evaluation					
RecFIN(SE) Committee	X	X	X	X	X
Framework Plan					X
Operations Plans	X	X	X	X	X
Information dissemination	X	X	X	X	X
Program Review					X
Data Collection					
Data components			X		
Needed data elements	X	X	X		
Standard collection protocol	X	X	X		
Quality control/assurance	X	X	X		
Coordinate data collection	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative collection technology	X	X	X	X	X
Data Management					
Data management system	X	X	X	X	X
Hardware/software capabilities		X			
Data maintenance	X	X	X	X	X
Standard management protocols		X	X	X	X
Integration of data bases	X	X	X	X	X
Innovative management technology	X	X	X	X	X
Data confidentiality	X	X	X	X	X
Develop of National Program					
Long-term planning	X	X	X	X	X
Coordination with other programs	X	X	X	X	X
Consistency and comparability	X	X	X	X	X

E. References

RecFIN(SE) Committee. 1993. Marine recreational fisheries data collection project summaries. REC93-2. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 78 pp.

F. Committee, Subcommittee, and Work Group Membership

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Bob Mahood
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Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
Council

Steven Meyers
Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife

Theo Brainerd
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Steve Holiman/Ron Schmied
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office

Lisa Kline
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

APPENDIX B

Minutes

SOUTHEAST COOPERATIVE STATISTICS
COMMITTEE MINUTES
Tuesday, February 27, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana

Chairman Joe Shepard called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. The following people were present:

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Mary Anne Camp, NMFS, Miami, FL
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, D.C.
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Walter Gibson, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, D.C.
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
John Merriner, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Joseph Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Dawn Whitehead, USFWS, Vero Beach, FL

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved with the following changes:

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP) meeting held on September 27-28, 1995 in Miami, Florida were approved as written.

Follow-up on the Trip Interview Program Workshop

J. Shepard stated that the Trip Interview Program (TIP) workshop was very productive. A variety of recommendations were developed as a result of the workshop. A detailed proceedings from the workshop will be developed and distributed to the Committee for their comment and review. It was suggested that J. Poffenberger, J. Shepard and R. Lukens develop a draft procedures document that outlines the procedure for collection of TIP data. The Committee agreed that the development of such a document was a good idea and asked the group to proceed. J. Shepard provided some highlights of the workshop such as focusing sampling effort on the species level, collection of commercial data only, identification of problems and groups them as either data management, data collection, or administrative, and others.

Review of List of Personnel with Access to Confidential Data

M. Camp distributed the list of personnel, by agency, who have access to confidential data. All participants reviewed the list and notified M. Camp if there were additions, deletions, or changes. In addition, D. Donaldson stated that he would send the list to Joe O'Hop, who was not present at the meeting, and have him send his changes to M. Camp.

Discussion of Comparison of Data Elements Matrix

D. Donaldson stated that this matrix was developed by the Data Collection Work Group and is one of the tasks identified in the Operations Plan. The purpose of the matrix is to identify gaps in commercial data collection. J. Shepard asked each participant to review the matrix and ensure that the information is complete and accurate. The group decided that the data collection activity (TIP, general canvass, state program, etc.) should be associated with each data element identified in the matrix. After some deliberations, each member provided D. Donaldson with any additions/deletions to the matrix. D. Donaldson stated that he would compile this information and distribute it to the Committee. The revised matrix is attached.

Final Approval of 1996 Operations Plan

* D. Donaldson stated that a draft copy of the 1996 Operations Plan was distributed to the Committee. The Committee completed a thorough review of each task. After some discussion, **J. Moran moved to accept the 1996 Operations Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised 1996 Operations Plan represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

Possible Development of 1995 Annual Report

* D. Donaldson asked if the Committee was interested in developing an annual report which would summarize the goals and objectives and the activities of the program for the previous year. The RecFIN(SE) produces a similar document and it is a useful tool in providing a quick overview of the year's activities. The Committee agreed that such a report would be beneficial. D. Donaldson stated that a draft 1995 Annual Report has been distributed. The Committee reviewed the document and make several editorial changes. After some discussion, **J. Moran moved to accept the 1995 Annual Report as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The document will be revised by staff and distributed to the Committee and other interested personnel.

Other Business

S. Lazauski asked for an update on the status of the CSP funding. J. Poffenberger stated that NMFS has been given 50% funding for the CSP under the current continuing resolution. That translates to receiving 100% funding for 6 months (April - August). Hopefully before August, the budget situation will have been resolved and the rest of the funding will be available for the remainder of the year. In addition, there will be no need to resubmit the cooperative agreements.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK

MINUTES

Wednesday, February 28, 1996

New Orleans, Louisiana

Chairman Steve Meyers called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. The following people were present:

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Walter Gibson, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Lee Green, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Albert Jones, NMFS, Miami, FL
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
John Merriner, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Steve Meyers, VIDFW, St. Thomas, USVI
Joe Moran, SCWMRD, Charleston, SC
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Washington, D.C.
Nancie Parrack, NMFS, Miami, FL
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Joseph Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
James Timber, PRDNER, Puerta Tierra, PR
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Dawn Whitehead, USFWS, Vero Beach, FL

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved with the addition of Discussion of NMFS Home Page and Query System under Other Business.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on September 27, 1995 in Miami, Florida were approved with minor editorial changes.

Status of Memorandum of Understanding for RecFIN/ComFIN

D. Donaldson stated that the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed by almost all the participants. The MOU was recently sent to the NMFS personnel for their signature and the National Park Service and U.S. Virgin Islands are in the process of signing it. The South Atlantic Board requested that language concerning the cooperation between the RecFIN(SE)/ComFIN and the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), be added but this language does not change the intent of the MOU.

Discussion of Framework Plan for RecFIN/ComFIN

* D. Donaldson stated that at the last RecFIN(SE) meeting, the Committee decided that a joint RecFIN/ComFIN Framework Plan should be developed. The staff has developed a draft Framework Plan which essentially combined the two existing framework plans for the programs. The Administrative Subcommittee has reviewed the document and the FIN Committee needs to take action on the plan. It was noted that there are certain sections in the document that have been bolded which signify there was some discussion by the Administrative Subcommittee and need to be addressed by the FIN Committee. One of these issues related to the goals and objectives for ComFIN and RecFIN(SE). The objectives were modified to reflect the long-term nature of these programs to avoid having to revise them every year. The other issue referred to the establishment of a quorum. M. Osborn stated that the Administrative Subcommittee discussed the issue of using a simple majority versus a 2/3 majority, for determining the preferred action. The rationale for a 2/3 majority is that if an important issue is being voted on, there may need to be more than a simple majority to decide the issue. This issue was thoroughly addressed by the Committee and after a lengthy discussion, **R. Lukens moved if consensus cannot be reached, the will of the Committees will be expressed by majority vote of a quorum (2/3 of all the members) to determine the preferred action. The motion was seconded and passed with NMFS abstaining and GMFMC against. S. Atran made a substitute motion that stated if consensus cannot be reached, the will of the Committees will be expressed by simple majority of those present with the "ayes" and "nays" recorded. The motion was seconded but was not passed..** It was noted that the voting procedures for subcommittees and work groups will be established by those groups. In addition to these issues, there were various editorial changes made to the document. The staff will make the revisions and distribute the revised plan to the Committee for their comment. The revised Framework Plan represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

The issue of publishing the Framework Plan was discussed. The Committee agreed that two documents should be produced. The first will be the formal Framework Plan which outlines the goals, objectives, procedures, etc. for the program. The other report will be an executive summary which provides a brief overview of the program and will be distributed to Congress and other personnel.

Update and Status of Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)

L. Kline stated that the MOU for the program was presented in November 1995 for agency signatures. All states have signed or are in the process of signing. There are 23 signatory agencies. The MOU establishes a Fisheries Statistics Coordinating Council with each agency having one voting member. In addition, the NMFS will also have three non-voting members which will allow for the regional directors to be involved in the process. The Council is scheduled to meet in March and there are a lot of organizational issues that need to be addressed. Under the MOU, there is a Operations Committee which will be appointed by the Council. This group will deal with the daily activities of the program, similar to the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees. The ASMFC is compiling an inventory of the fisheries activities that the Atlantic states are conducting as well as an options paper which outlines many of the technical issues regarding marine fisheries topics. There has been two ad hoc groups established to address specific issues. The Marketing Strategy Work Group is charged with marketing the program to industry, the public and eventually to Congress. The group developed an industry workshop where the program was presented to industry members (both commercial and recreational) and allowed them to provide feedback regarding the program. The other group is the Computer Technical Group which is charged with developing a strategy to designing the data management system.

Time Schedule for Next Meeting

The week of September 23, 1996 was selected as the next meeting time. The locations of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Charleston, South Carolina were suggested as possible meeting sites. The Committee directed the staff to determine the best location for the meeting and contact the members with the selection.

Other Business

M. Osborn stated that the NMFS-Fisheries Statistics Division has developed a home page. There is a link on this page to recreational fisheries data where users can access MRFSS data. The user can specify the type of data (length, catch, effort, etc.) for various regions and species. She asked everyone to access the page and send comments about the page to NMFS. The address of the page is: <http://remora.ssp.nmfs.gov>. To access the MRFSS data, you need the user id and password. They are as follows: user id: DESK; password: CHAIR. There were various questions regarding the development and use of this page and the group was excited about the home page. M. Osborn stated that work is continuing on providing access to more data sets. She said that developing and modifying HTML files is extremely easy and very portable. The portability will allow other NMFS offices and other agencies to utilize the scripts developed for this page for their own web pages.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

RECFIN(SE) COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 28 - 29, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana

Chairman Stephen Meyers called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. The following people were present:

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Lee Green, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Albert Jones, NMFS, Miami, FL
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, D.C.
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMR, Morehead City, NC
John Merriner, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Stephen Meyers, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Washington, DC
Nancie Parrack, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
James Timber, PRDNER, Puerta Tierra, PR
Tom Van Devender, BMR, Biloxi, MS
Dawn Whitehead, USFWS, Vero Beach, FL

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with the removal of Review of Goals and Objectives since this item was discussed at the FIN meeting earlier in the day.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on September 26, 1995 in Miami, Florida were approved as written with GMFMC abstaining because no representative from the Council was present at the September 1995 meeting.

Final Approval of 1996 Operations Plan

a. Discussion of Recommendations Developed at Facilitated Session

S. Meyers noted a document was developed from the facilitated session report that outlines the recommendations from that session. The Committee began reviewing the document to ensure that the recommendations accurately capture the ideas discussed at the session. It was noted that since the facilitators were not intimately involved in the fisheries arena, some of the recommendations do not capture the meaning of the discussions. M. Osborn stated that the document should be examined and revised by a smaller group and their findings presented to the Committee at the next meeting. The ad hoc Recommendations Work Group, consisting of M. Osborn, R. Lukens, L. Kline, and S. Meyers, was charged with revising the recommendations document to accurately reflect the discussions. The Committee discussed the issue of publication of the recommendation document. After some discussion, the consensus of the Committee was that the document should be published and distributed to interested personnel.

b. Finalization of 1996 Operations Plan

A draft copy of the 1996 Operations Plan was distributed to the Committee. The Committee completed a thorough review of each task. During the discussion, it was noted that since much of the work regarding the development of the data management system was being conducted by the MRFSS staff, the Data Base Work Group has not been very active recently. Therefore, **M. Osborn moved to temporarily disband the Data Base Work Group until such a time when their input is needed.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. After the review was complete, **J. Moran moved to accept the 1996 Operations Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised 1996 Operations Plan represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

Status of Social/Economic Work Group

R. Lukens stated that there are two approaches to address this issue. The first is to have a works group consisting of members of Committee and charged them with making sure the identified tasks are accomplished. The other approach is to have actual economists and sociologists on the work group and have them periodically meet to address the identified tasks. It was suggested that there could be a combination of both approaches, having both RecFIN(SE) Committee members and economists and sociologists. When an issue required more expertise, the work group ask various social scientists to participate. The Committee agreed that a combination of both approaches was the best method to use. The Committee decided that the Social/Economic Work Group will consist of Theo Brainerd, Steven Atran/Tony Lamberte, Lisa Kline, Steve Meyers, and Ron Schmied. It was noted that Steve Holiman would be a good addition to the Committee. The staff will contact S. Holiman to see if he would be willing to participate. The Committee also agreed that there needs to be a meeting of newly formed work group to discuss the identified tasks and develop an approach for addressing these issues.

The meeting recessed at 4:45 p.m.

February 29, 1996

The meeting reconvened at 8:40 a.m.

Development of 5-year Time Table for the RecFIN(SE)

R. Lukens stated that the Committee needs to develop a new time table for the program. The original time table covered three years due to the pilot phase of the RecFIN(SE). It was suggested that the new time table should cover five years. The time table allows the program to see where activities have occurred and where they will be occurring in the future. J Shepard suggested that the recommendations identified at the facilitated session could be prioritized into a time table. M. Osborn noted that each recommendation was given a "grade" by the group during the session and the group can utilize these "grades" for prioritizing the recommendations. From these "grades", a time table can be developed.

Administrative Subcommittee Report

R. Lukens stated that the Administrative Subcommittee met via a conference call on February 1, 1996. The first issue discussed by the group was an examination of the program review report. Although the report had been discussed by the Committee, it was suggested that the Subcommittee review the text of the report and determine if there were additional actions that needed to be addressed. The Subcommittee reviewed the report and there were no additional actions that need to be addressed. The Subcommittee believed that the RecFIN(SE) is addressing all the issues identified by the program review report. One of the recommendations in the program review report was to utilize other potential funding sources, such as MARFIN and S/K to accomplish some work for the RecFIN(SE). Regarding that issue, the Subcommittee discussed the work that Buck Sutter has been doing regarding computerizing all the MARFIN projects which enables users to search and find information concerning past projects. The Subcommittee discussed the potential of this resources and the possibility of doing the same activity with the S/K projects. In addition, it was noted that the FWS has a similar program where users can access information regarding FWS projects. The Subcommittee then discussed the current vacancy of the Vice Chairmanship due to the replacement of Wayne Waltz. Therefore, the Committee needs to elect a new Vice Chairman for the RecFIN(SE). The floor was opened for nominations. L. Kline nominated Nick Nicholson. The nominations were closed and N. Nicholson was elected Vice Chairman of the RecFIN(SE) Committee by acclamation.

Review of Policy Statement regarding Survey Methodologies Changes

D. Donaldson stated that one of the tasks in the 1996 Operations Plan was to develop a policy statement regarding survey methodologies changes. This issue was developed during the facilitated session. Staff has developed a draft policy statement

which has been distributed to the Committee. The Committee reviewed the statement and after some discussion, the following policy statement was adopted:

Realizing that it is not always possible, the RecFIN(SE) Committee has agreed that there is a need for policy concerning MRF survey methodology changes. The policy is that new methods should be benchmarked before changing methods of surveys to ensure that the methodologies will remain consistent over the years of the survey. The time period and spatial coverage will be determined on a case by case basis.

Discussion of MRFSS/Gulf States Proposal

R. Lukens stated that Gulf States, through the GSMFC, have submitted a proposal to conduct the intercept portion of the NMFS Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey in the Gulf of Mexico region. The proposal was submitted in late 1995 and activities are proposed to begin in January 1997. The proposal is currently at NMFS-Headquarters and staff should begin addressing the proposal in March 1996. M. Osborn stated that NMFS cannot commit to doing the intercept survey through the Gulf States without budget numbers for those states. Although the NMFS cannot commit, they are willing to work with the Gulf States on this proposal. She mention there is an alternative proposal which would involve the Gulf States in implementing the testing of charterboat methodologies in the Gulf of Mexico. If the Gulf States started with that part, it would allow all involved to gain some experience in collecting MRFSS data. R. Lukens stated that it was an interesting proposal and will be added to the agenda of the upcoming Data Management Subcommittee meeting.

Reporting of Inkind Support

D. Donaldson stated that at the last meeting, the Committee decided to continue the collection of inkind support and that each member would provide that information to staff during this meeting. For those member who did not provided their inkind information, a deadline of March 18, 1996 was established for getting the information to staff.

Review of 1995 Annual Report

D. Donaldson stated that a draft copy of the Annual Report was distributed to the Committee for their comment and review. The Committee reviewed the document and made several minor changes. **J. Moran moved that the 1995 Annual Report for the RecFIN(SE) be approved as amended. The motion was seconded and passed with GMFMC abstaining.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

COMFIN COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, September 25, 1996

St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

Vice Chairman, Joe Moran, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

Members:

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Steve Meyers, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

Others:

Aaron Adams, USVIDFW, Frederiksted, VI
Mary Ann Camp, NMFS, Miami, FL
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Ginny Fay, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
William Tobias, USVIDFW, Frederiksted, VI

Staff:

David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on February 27, 1996 in New Orleans, Louisiana were approved as written.

TIP Workshop Proceedings

A Trip Interview Program workshop was held in New Orleans, Louisiana on February 26, 1996 and the draft minutes of that workshop were reviewed in detail by the ComFIN Committee. After a lengthy discussion and correction process, **R. Lukens moved to have the minutes of the Trip Interview Program (TIP) workshop approved as amended. Amended minutes will be sent to committee members for comment, with a two-week deadline for response. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised minutes of the workshop represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

During the discussion, the topic of data error correction was dealt with by the Committee. It was suggested that this topic should be addressed via a symposium or workshop. The Committee decided that a work session on developing a data error identification and correction process should be conducted during the 1997 spring ComFIN meeting. Staff, Chairman, and Vice-Chairman will develop an agenda for this workshop.

Review of List of Personnel with Access to Confidential Data

M. Camp distributed lists of personnel with access to confidential data for each state. Committee members checked the lists for accuracy, and notified M. Camp if there were corrections. D. Donaldson stated that he would forward lists to J. O'Hop, S. Lazauski, and J. Shepard, who were not present at the meeting, and request that they contact M. Camp with any changes.

Discussion of CSP Cooperative Agreements

G. Fay reported that all states in the southeast have cooperative statistics projects, and are in the third year of a three-year cycle. During fiscal year 1997 all agreements must be renegotiated with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Current agreements should be reviewed and the negotiation process should be completed by December. Applications must be returned to the NMFS by January 1997. G. Fay, B. Sutter, and J. Poffenberger will be available to assist in this process.

Discussion of Data Elements Matrix

D. Donaldson explained the Data Elements Matrix and asked committee members to review for accuracy, additions, and deletions. The purpose of the matrix is to identify gaps in data elements and complete matrix for each state. L. Kline stated that the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is currently identifying a list of data elements, which is similar to the ComFIN matrix. There was general discussion on having this information based on trips. R. Lukens stated that the ComFIN committee has indicated in the past that it recommends a trip-based ticket system. J. Poffenberger suggested adding a trip ticket data category to the matrix. J. Moran polled state representatives and found that most states have, are planning, or are considering a trip ticket program. The committee discussed the necessary elements for a trip ticket system. It was suggested that a generic system be developed and used as a framework for setting up a trip ticket system. As a result of this discussion, **R. Lukens moved that the Future Needs Work Group be assigned the task of constructing a trip ticket program that is modular in design and incorporates the identified gaps in the matrix. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Discussion of Non-reported Sources of Landings

D. Donaldson reported on the *Legal Flow of Product in the Southeast Region*, and explained the need to identify potential sources of legally unreported catch. This information was reviewed by the Committee, and it was decided that this information should be used by the Future Needs Work Group in the development of the above mentioned trip ticket program. D. Donaldson requested that members review the document in an attempt to identify these sources and contact him by October 31, 1996 with any changes.

Discussion of Compilation Report of all Commercial Licenses in the Southeast Region

D. Donaldson requested that committee members carefully review *Licensing Information for the Commercial Fisheries Information Network Participants*. The Committee decided that this information will also be used by the Future Needs Work Group for the development of the trip ticket system. The Committee decided that any corrections should be forwarded to D. Donaldson by the October 31, 1996.

Data Collection Work Group Report

J. Poffenberger reported that the Data Collection Work Group met, via a conference call, to discuss the development of data collection planning and tracking processes. . The Data Collection Work Group developed these processes and presented them to the ComFIN Committee for their review and approval. The Committee reviewed the processes and made several changes in format and content. To help facilitate the data collection planning process, staff developed a matrix to determine type and amount of data needed for stock assessments for the priority species. After some discussion, the Committee approved the revised processes which are attached.

Operations Plan

a. Status of 1996 Activities

D. Donaldson presented the identified tasks for 1996 and their status (attached) which was reviewed by the Committee. All tasks to be completed or started in 1996 have been addressed by the Committee, subcommittees, work groups, and/or staff.

b. Development of 1997 Operations Plan

A draft copy of the 1997 Operations Plan was distributed to the Committee. The Committee completed a thorough review of each task. After some discussion, **S. Meyers moved to adopt the 1997 Operations Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised 1997 Operations Plan represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

Other Business

M. Camp distributed copies of *Data Currently Available in SEFIN*. The table presented various types of commercial data that are available on the SEF Host for the agencies in the Southeast Region. The Committee reviewed that data and J. Moran suggested reviewing and updating the table annually in the fall. The Committee decided that this issue should become a standing agenda item during the fall ComFIN meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK

MINUTES

Thursday, September 26, 1996

St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

Vice-Chairman Joe Moran called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

Members

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Steve Meyers, VI DFW, St. Thomas, USVI
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Springs, MD
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

Others

Aaron Adams, VIDFW, Frederiksted, USVI
Mary Anne Camp, NMFS, Miami, FL
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Ginny Fay, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Barbara Kojis, VIDFW, St. Croix, USVI
Tom Serota, USFWS, Corpus Christi, TX

Staff

David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on February 28, 1996 in New Orleans, Louisiana were approved as written.

Status of Memorandum of Understanding for RecFIN/ComFIN

D. Donaldson reported that the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed by all participants with the exception of the U.S. Virgin Islands, which is in the process of signing it.

Final review of Framework Plan for RecFIN/ComFIN

D. Donaldson stated that as a result of the editing completed at the last FIN meeting, the FIN Framework Plan has been modified and corrected. The committee reviewed the document and **S. Meyers moved to accept the Fisheries Information**

Network (FIN) Framework Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The committee discussed the publication of the Plan, and decided to have 500 copies of the Framework Plan printed.

Update and Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)

L. Kline reported on the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). The Coordinating Council is responsible for making decisions on recreational and commercial fisheries, data, bycatch, social/economic policy and trip-based data. The ACCSP Operations Plan provides the basis of the design of the program. The Operations Committee prioritizes the tasks, and provides liaison between the Coordinating Council and the Technical and Advisory Committees. The work completed in the Southeast Region by RecFIN and ComFIN has been used as the basis for the design of the ACCSP technical committees. A workshop will be held in November focusing on evaluating existing programs. A survey is being conducted to evaluate computer hardware/software being used by participating agencies, with the goal of having all participants operating at the same level, as in RecFIN and ComFIN. The program partners, which includes member states, federal agencies, fishery management councils, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) have contributed to the budget. Outreach and public input is to be a major part of the program.

Discussion ensued regarding the most efficient and effective way to relay information from ACCSP technical and operations committees to FIN. L. Kline stated that until the ACCSP Coordinating Council adopts the recommendations of the committees, the design of the program is not finalized. J. Moran noted that there are many similarities between the RecFIN/ComFIN and the ACCSP.

Discussion of Potential Development of FIN Brochure

The committee discussed publication of a FIN color brochure with style, size, and format being considered. The target group for this brochure would be members of congress, stock assessment personnel, and the general public. This will be discussed further at the Spring meeting. Emphasis will be on the organizational makeup of FIN. J. Moran suggested the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) staff create a draft brochure/booklet for committee members' consideration at the next FIN meeting.

Schedule and Location for Next Meeting

After some discussion, the committee decided that the next FIN meeting will be held during the week of March 3, 1997 in Washington, DC. If hotel accommodations cannot be obtained, Charleston, South Carolina was selected as a secondary site. Staff will advise committee members of specifics as the meeting time nears.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

RECFIN(SE) COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 26 - 27, 1996
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

Chairman Stephen Meyers called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.. The following members and others were present:

Members:

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMR, Morehead City, NC
Stephen Meyers, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
Nick Nicholson, GADNR, Brunswick, GA
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

Others:

Aaron Adams, USVIDFW, Frederiksted, VI
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Ginny Fay, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Barbara Kojis, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI
Tom Serota, USFWS, Corpus Christi, TX
William Tobias, USVIDFW, Frederiksted, VI

Staff:

David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on February 28 - 29, 1996 in New Orleans, Louisiana were approved with the following clarifications:

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) abstained from approving the minutes of the September 26, 1995 meeting held in Miami, Florida because S. Atran was not present for that meeting.

Discussion of Recommendations Document Developed from the Facilitated Session

D. Donaldson stated that the ad hoc Recommendations Work Group met in June 1996 to discuss the review and revision of the *Recommendations document* developed from the RecFIN(SE) facilitated session. The Work Group modified the format of the document by identifying an overall recommendation and assigning specific tasks for accomplishing the recommendation. The Committee went through a thorough review of the document. The Committee focused on the content of the recommendations and tasks as well as assigning a time frame for beginning each item. During the discussion, it was noted that these recommendations were already prioritized during the facilitated session. The Committee decided to let staff assign a time frame for addressing the items, based on the priorities developed at the facilitated session, and focus on the content of the recommendations and tasks. D. Donaldson stated he would develop a 5-year time table from this information and include it in

the document and the 1997 Operations Plan. The *Recommendations document* will provide the Committee with tasks and activities for the next five years. After the discussion, **R. Lukens moved to accept the list of recommendations and tasks as work objectives for the next five years. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised *Recommendations document* represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

Discussion of Definitions for Recreational For-Hire Vessels

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) has asked the RecFIN(SE) Committee to develop definitions for recreational for-hire vessels for use in collecting landings data. S. Atran stated that the issue of the way a boat fishes rather than how many people are on board was raised during the Charterboat Evaluation Workshop held in February. L. Kline stated that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) had approved charterboat and headboat definitions developed as a result of a workshop conducted in 1994. T. Brainerd stated that the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (SAFMC) definitions distinguish between the types of fishing activities. J. Moran stated that the method of payment is the determining factor in defining charterboats vs. headboats. M. Osborn stated that for Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) stock assessment purposes, the method of fishing (how the boat is hired) is more important than the number of people on board. R. Lukens commented on the necessity of differentiating between data collection and application purposes and that the definitions offered by the GMFMC Reef Fish Advisory Panel do not clarify the issue. R. Lukens suggested that the committee wait until the pilot charterboat survey is completed before attempting to devise specific definitions for charter, head, and guide boats, since alternate methodologies are being utilized. After lengthy discussion by the committee, **R. Lukens made the following motion: In response to the GMFMC letter, we recommend that the Reef Fish Advisory Panel definitions be rejected, believing that there is considerable overlap among them, and they do not clarify the issue. We do however, support the requirement that U.S. Coast Guard licenses for all for-hire vessels are included in any accepted definitions. There is currently an initiative underway to conduct a pilot charterboat study that will likely provide data to assist in clarifying the desired definitions. That study should be completed by the end of 1998. We recommend that changes to the current definitions be postponed until the completion of that study, at which time these definitions will be reconsidered by the RecFIN(SE) Committee.** After further discussion, **M. Osborn made the following amendment to the above motion: Language should be included regarding the alternate method that we are testing and include a recommendation on variables that can be used to post-stratify catches and catch rates and will aid in a more workable definition in the future.** The amended motion was seconded and passed with J. Moran abstaining. S. Atran stated that the GMFMC would only like guidance on the definitions, not necessarily acceptance, rejection, or modification. **W. Laney proposed a friendly amendment to change the language from saying, we recommend they reject these definitions, to say in response to their letter, that the RecFIN(SE) Committee has considered the issue of these definitions and in our opinion there is too much overlap between them for us to employ these definitions. R. Lukens withdrew the original motion and offered the following substitute motion: We have considered the definitions offered by the Reef Fish Advisory Panel and conclude there is too much overlap among them for the RecFIN(SE) Committee to concur. There is currently an initiative underway to conduct a pilot Charterboat study that will likely provide assistance in clarifying definitions for the for-hire fisheries. That study should be completed by the end of 1998. We recommend that changes to the current definitions be postponed until the completion of that study at which time the definitions will be reconsidered by the RecFIN(SE) Committee. In addition we will have enough data to allow us to look at post-stratification.** J. Moran suggested that the committee adopt the definition of a charterboat as six passengers or less and a headboat as seven passengers or more and after the pilot study is completed, if it needs to be changed then change it. After further lengthy deliberation, **R. Lukens moved that the following will be in the form of a letter to the GMFMC:**

During the 1996 Fall meeting of the RecFIN(SE), the RecFIN Committee conducted an in depth discussion regarding your request for definitions of guideboats, charterboats, and headboats. As you know, this is a very complicated issue made more so by the variability of operating methods throughout the fishery. Over the past five or six years there have been a number of efforts in the Southeast to resolve this issue with little or no concurrence. There is currently an initiative underway to conduct a pilot study of the for-hire fishery that will likely provide ways to assist in developing standard definitions. The study is scheduled to be completed by 1998. In addition, sufficient data will be collected to allow post-stratification to get data and catch rates for the guide, charter and headboat components.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has adopted standard definitions for Atlantic Coast charter and headboats based on these criteria. The major components of that definition states that, "for-hire vessels that carry six or less passengers are charterboats, and those that carry seven or more passengers are headboats." If the Council feels that adopting standard definitions is time-critical, the definitions adopted by the ASMFC do not conflict with current plans to conduct the for-hire study. It should be noted however, that upon completion of the study, the issue of these definitions will be reconsidered. These definitions may be refined.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue and provide the Council with the committee's input. While we realize that 1998 is a considerable distance in time, we ask your forbearance while we make every effort to gather the required data and information needed to provide definitions that accurately reflect the fishery component that they are defining. If we can be of further service, please feel free to contact us.

The motion was seconded. J. Moran made a substitute motion: Amend the letter to say that the RecFIN(SE) does accept the six and seven rule. We will use the six passengers or less for a charterboat and seven passengers or more for a headboat, and at the time that the study is completed, we will revisit the definitions. The substitute motion was seconded and failed to pass. S. Atran made a substitute motion: Remove from the letter the sentence describing the ASMFC provision, and in the following sentence delete the phrase, "... if it is time-critical". The substitute motion was seconded. R. Lukens restated the letter as follows: The definitions adopted by the ASMFC do not conflict with the current plan to conduct a for-hire study and are consistent with your Reef Fish FMP definitions for charter and headboat. **The substitute motion was seconded and failed to pass with M. Osborn abstaining. The original motion by R. Lukens passed.**

Update on the Integration of Charterboat Data

M. Osborn reported on the MRFSS Charterboat estimates, explaining some of the difficulties in the past and the reasons for conducting a Charterboat pilot project. An alternate method has been proposed using a weekly schedule for calling charterboat captains. This method is being used for the second year in Maine, with a fleet of 35 boats, and for the first time in North Carolina with a fleet of 230 boats. West Florida was chosen for this project because of the complex conditions in this area. There are approximately 2,500 boats involved in the inshore and offshore fleets and only about 20% of those have a telephone listed. B. Dixon has prepared a list of boats operating as headboats which he will continue to monitor. All other charterboats, guideboats and headboats operating inshore will be covered in the alternative study. The base MRFSS will be compared to the alternate weekly telephoning of captains. The National Marine Fisheries Panama City Laboratory staff will design a statistically-valid logbook survey so there will be a three-way comparison. Accuracy of the estimates, response rates, costs, and other factors will be compared. Budget figures are being prepared for a start up in 1997. GSMFC has been asked to participate and is currently contacting member states for input. Florida is working on the sampling frame of captains and will assist with a quarterly update. It is hoped that a cooperative agreement for the telephone calling can be developed with either Florida or GSMFC. The intercept sampling will probably be done through the contractor. Verification and cross-checking will be required. A summary of the last meeting should be completed by next week and will be sent to RecFIN(SE) participants.

Discussion of Duplicative Data Collection and Management Efforts

D. Donaldson reported that the "Evaluation of Current MRF Sampling Programs" matrix was created over the past two years. The goal was to identify individual programs and eliminate duplicative efforts. This matrix included only the surveys that were identified as high priority by the Committee and it was noted that it needs to include all current data collection surveys. Therefore, the Committee members will review the matrix and have any additions or changes to D. Donaldson by October 31, 1996 and matrices for the other surveys will be mailed to the appropriate agencies. This information will be compiled by staff and presented at the next RecFIN(SE) meeting.

Discussion of Licensing Structure Report for RecFIN(SE) Participants

D. Donaldson reported on the status of the evaluation of licensing systems as a sampling frame. This information was culled from the American Sportfish Association (ASA) licensing document. This document requires review for accuracy before continuing and should cover each of the major modes of fishing. Once the information is completed, staff will develop a matrix which outlines the information. This matrix will be used to determine the utility of using licensing as a sampling framework. The Committee will discuss this issue at the 1997 spring RecFIN(SE) meeting. Committee members will determine if the information is complete and accurate and provide corrections to D. Donaldson by October 31, 1996.

Discussion of Establishment of Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data

M. Osborn explained the review process whereby the data are sent out to the participating states at the frequency requested. Data are examined by the states, and wave meetings are held every two months at which time the regional representatives review the estimates and original data. In March the program staff makes corrections and develops final estimates. There was general discussion on the method to use for the states to review this data before it becomes finalized. The possibility of forming an ad hoc committee for this purpose was discussed and R. Lukens suggested having an annual review as a standing agenda item for the spring RecFIN(SE) meeting. An ad hoc committee was formed with the following members: L. Kline, R. Lukens, P. Phares, D. Mumford, and J. Shepherd. This work group was charged with developing a process to review the MRFSS

data before they become final. The group will meet in early 1997 and present its findings to the Committee at the 1997 spring meeting.

Reporting of Inkind Support

D. Donaldson reported that staff is not getting the inkind support information required for it to be effective. Since this information is not being provided, it is apparently not a good use of members' time and D. Donaldson asked the Committee if this activity should be discontinued. After some discussion, **R. Lukens moved to discontinue the reporting of inkind support. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Evaluation of Results from the ASMFC Saltwater Participation Workshop

J. Desfosse reported that in November 1995, the ASMFC sponsored a workshop concerning the estimation of saltwater fishing participation rates. There were presentations on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Survey, the NMFS MRFSS, and a Georgia independent survey. Workshop participants evaluated each of these surveys and developed a set of recommendations to assist the states in determining how to estimate the split between saltwater and freshwater participation rates for Wallop-Breaux funding. The three methods were evaluated on a state by state basis.

The meeting recessed at 4:35 p.m.

September 27, 1996

The meeting reconvened at 8:05 a.m.

Work Group Reports

a. Biological/Environmental

S. Meyers reported that the Biological/Environmental Work Group met, via conference call, to discuss the development of a data collection planning process. It was noted that there was a similar process developed by ComFIN, and it was suggested that the RecFIN(SE) document could be modified to use the same format. There was general discussion on the importance of stock assessment workshops, having a process in place, and a proposal developed. **M. Osborn moved to instruct staff to modify the document as needed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** S. Meyers reported that the Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) document will be the subject of a Biological/Environmental Work Group meeting to be held on December 3, 1996 in Charleston, South Carolina and the findings from that meeting will be presented at the spring RecFIN(SE) meeting. The minutes from the Biological/Environmental Work Group meeting are attached.

b. Social/Economic

R. Lukens reported that the Social/Economic Work Group met in Washington, DC on June 27, 1996. As a result of that meeting, there are several action items that require the attention of the RecFIN(SE) Committee. The first issue dealt with the membership of the Work Group. The group decided there needed to be more than RecFIN(SE) members on the Work Group. Therefore, **R. Lukens moved that the recommendation for a change in membership that should include two economists, one sociologist, one anthropologist, and representatives from the Atlantic, Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico regions. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Related to the issue of membership, the group discussed utilizing the Social/Economic Work Group for both recreational and commercial issues since the social and economics topics are usually similar for the recreational and commercial arenas. Therefore, **R. Lukens moved that the RecFIN(SE) Committee recommend to the ComFIN Committee that the Social/Economic Work Group be adopted to function for both Committees. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The last issue dealt with the development of a mission statement. The group established a mission statement and **R. Lukens moved that the following statement be adopted: The mission of the Social and Economic Work Group of the Southeast Fisheries Information Network is to facilitate the collection and management of social and economic data as necessary for use in the fisheries management process in the Southeast Region. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The minutes from the Social/Economic Work Group meeting are attached.

Operations Plan

a. Status of 1995 Activities

D. Donaldson provided a list of tasks from the 1996 Operations Plan. Their status handout was distributed, and the Committee reviewed the tasks individually. After reviewing the list, the Committee agreed that all the activities identified in the 1996 Operations Plan have been completed, or work is currently being conducted to complete them in the allotted time frame. The list of tasks and their revised status is attached.

b. Development of the 1997 Operations Plan

D. Donaldson reported on the development of 1997 Operations Plan. As a result of the current meeting and tasks identified in the Recommendations document, there is a basis for 1997 Operations Plan. The Committee directed the staff to develop a draft plan and distribute it for changes and comments. Once a final document has been developed, it would be discussed at the 1997 spring RecFIN(SE) meeting for final approval.

Election of Officers

The Committee discussed the election of officers. The procedure for the election of chairman is that the vice-chairman becomes the chairman. Therefore, **W. Laney moved to elect N. Nicholson as Chairman by acclamation. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The Committee has rotated the vice-chairmanship among the three areas in the Southeast. It was noted that someone from the Gulf of Mexico area should be nominated for vice chairman. Therefore,

R. Lukens moved to elect J. Shepard as Vice Chairman. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Other Business

M. Osborn reported that Macro, Inc. of Burlington, Vermont is the new MRFSS telephone contractor beginning with wave three. With this contractor it is possible to again have five optional questions on the telephone survey. Some of these questions can be customized to suit a particular area. Social and economic questions may also be addressed, however, there are some problems with questions regarding annual household income. This refusal rate has not affected the base, and the survey continues to be evaluated. M. Osborn suggested utilizing the wealth of biological, social and economic data becoming available in the southeast through RecFIN(SE).

During the similar work being conducted by the ComFIN/RecFIN(SE) and the ACCSP, S. Holiman suggested developing a six-month calendar of ASMFC and GSMFC meetings.

D. Donaldson stated that the schedule of GSMFC meetings is currently on the GSMFC homepage on the Internet. L. Kline stated that ASMFC is currently scheduling meetings in a three-month block and that information is readily available.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

APPENDIX C

Goals and Objectives

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.

RecFIN(SE) GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- GOAL 1:** To plan, manage, and evaluate a coordinated state-federal MRF data collection program for the Region.
- Objective 1: To maintain a RecFIN(SE) 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 protocols of the program.
 - Objective 3: To develop annual operations plans, including identification of available resources, that implement the Framework Plan.
 - Objective 4: To distribute program information to 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 MRF data collection program for the Region.
- Objective 1: To periodically review the components of the fishery (modes, areas, etc.) and the required data priorities for each component.
 - Objective 2: To periodically review data elements (environmental, biological, sociological, economic) required for each fishery component.
 - Objective 3: To determine, maintain and periodically review standards for data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.
 - Objective 4: To periodically review and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting the RecFIN(SE) requirements.
 - Objective 5: To coordinate, integrate, and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet the RecFIN(SE) requirements.
 - Objective 6: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.
- GOAL 3:** To establish and maintain an integrated, MRF data management system for the Region.
- Objective 1: To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the RecFIN(SE) 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 an MRF data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).
 - Objective 4: To develop, maintain, and periodically review standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.

Objective 5: To identify and prioritize data bases for integration into the MRF data management system.

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 MRF 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 the RecFIN(SE) with other regional and national MRF programs.

Objective 3: To encourage consistency and comparability among regional and national programs over time.