

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

JANUARY 1, 2006 - DECEMBER 31, 2006

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

The mission of the FIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial, anadromous and recreational fishery data and information for the conservation and management

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

of fishery resources in the Region and to support the development of a national program. The four goals of the FIN include planning, managing, and evaluating commercial and recreational fishery data collection activities; to implement a marine commercial and recreational fishery data collection program; to establish and maintain a commercial and recreational fishery data management system; and to support the establishment of a national program.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The organizational structure consists of the FIN Committee, two geographic subcommittees (Caribbean and Gulf), standing and ad hoc subcommittees, technical work groups, and administrative support (Figure 1).

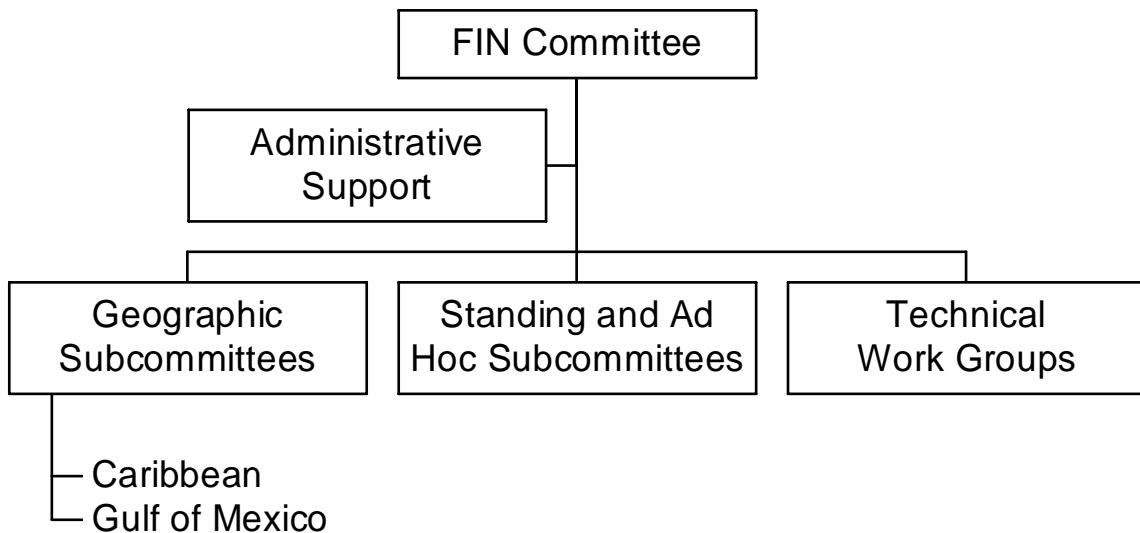


Figure 1. Organizational structure of the FIN.

The FIN Committee consists of the signatories to the MOU or their designees, and is responsible for planning, managing, and evaluating the program. Agencies represented by signatories to the MOU are the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Puerto Rico Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Caribbean Fishery Management Council, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

As of October 1998, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission no longer actively participated on the FIN Committee. Although there is no representation of the South Atlantic on FIN, the South Atlantic continues to participate at the

work group level and there is continued participation by staff member from both programs to ensure compatibility and comparability.

The FIN Committee is divided into two 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 FIN Committee to address administrative issues and technical work groups are established as needed by the Committee to carry out tasks on specific technical issues. Coordination and administrative support of the FIN is accomplished through the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The FIN is a comprehensive program comprised of coordinated data collection activities, an integrated data management and retrieval system, and procedures for information dissemination. Activities during 2005 were associated with addressing issues and problems regarding data collection and management and developing strategies for dealing with these topics. In addition to committee activities, FIN was involved in various operational activities concerning the collection and management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data. These activities were conducted by the various state and federal agencies involved in FIN. Each type of activity is discussed below. Future activities of the FIN Committee are outlined in Table 1.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

FIN Committee

The major FIN meeting was held in June 2006. The major issues discussed during these meetings included:

- Identification and continuation of tasks to be addressed in 2006 and instruction to Administrative and Geographic Subcommittees and the Biological/Environmental, Data Collection Plan and ad hoc work groups to either begin or continue work on these tasks;
- Development of the 2007 FIN Operations Plan which presented the year's activities in data collection, data management, and information dissemination;
- Discussion of data management issues;
- Review of activities and accomplishments of 2006;
- Continued evaluation of adequacy of current marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs for FIN and development of recommendations regarding these programs;
- Review findings of and receive recommendations from technical work groups for activities to be carried out during 2007;

- Preparation and submission of a proposal for financial assistance to support activities of the FIN; and
- Continued internal evaluation of the program.

The FIN Committee members are listed in Table 2. The approved 2006 FIN Operations Plan is included in Appendix A and minutes for the FIN Committee meeting are included in Appendix B. The FIN goals and objectives are included in Appendix C.

Subcommittees and Work Groups

The FIN subcommittees and work groups met during the year to provide recommendations to the Committee to formulate administrative policies, address specific technical issues for accomplishing many of the FIN goals and objectives, and examine other issues as decided by the Committee. Subcommittee and work group members are listed in Table 3. Their activities included:

- The RecFIN (SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group met (via conference call) in February and March 2006 to develop sampling protocols for highly migratory species in the Gulf of Mexico;
- The Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey data review meetings were held in March, June and October to discuss the RDD and Intercept Surveys for the Gulf Region, sampler performance activities, scanning technologies for data entry, presentation of at-sea head boat sampling activities, conducting economic add-on expenditure survey, adding questions regarding protected species interactions, review and comparison of at-sea and logbook head boat data, collecting of latitude and longitude data for recreational fishing sites, issues regarding red groupers estimates, review of wave report fish tables and estimate tables and review of Gulf States For-Hire Telephone Survey;
- The Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee meeting in March and October 2006 to discuss various issues including status of biological sampling activities, review of compilation of issues regarding vessel information, status of compilation of recreational fishing licenses and license frame pilot survey, review of white paper regarding changes in TIP, discussion of price/pound issue, development of multi-year cooperative agreement for FIN, review of FIN confidential user ID request form, red snapper IFQ/trip ticket issues, InPort metadata project, monitoring of non-native species and various State/Federal Reports;
- The Otolith Processors Training Workshop was held in May 2006 to conduct an otolith readings and comparison exercise for red snapper, greater amberjack, king mackerel and flounders as well as discuss the red snapper, flounder and king mackerel reference sets, developing reference sets for other species, overview of FIN biological sampling activities, presentation of greater amberjack processing and analysis issues, coordination of ageing centers, status of Otolith Manual Revision, processing status of otoliths

collected in 2002 – 2005;

- A meeting to discuss the Texas trip ticket program was held in May 2006 to discuss full implementation of the program, data loading schedules and other issues;
- The FIN Data Collection Plan Work Group met in May 2006 to review of 2005 and 2006 otolith and length data collection activities, development of targets for biological sampling, recommendations for necessary lengths and otoliths for FIN priority species, discussion of adding new species, development of 2006 FIN Data Collection Plan document;
- The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee met in August 2006 to discuss the finalization of activities for funding for the 2007 FIN cooperative agreement;
- The FIN Administrative Subcommittee met (via conference call) in August 2006 to finalize plans for the upcoming FIN external program review;
- The FIN external program review was conducted in November 2006 to evaluate the FIN's success in meeting the data collection and management needs in the Southeast Region and determine the effectiveness of the FIN program in meeting its stated goals, objectives and mission.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Coordination and Administration of RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN Activities - This task provides for the coordination, planning, and administration of FIN activities throughout the year as well as provides recreational and commercial information to the FIN participants and other interested personnel. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data - This task provided for the conduct of the MRFSS survey in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida for shore, for-hire, and private modes, an activity under the RecFIN(SE). This task provided for coordination of the survey, a field-intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. These data were combined with the NMFS effort estimate telephone survey. In addition, the states conducted supplemental sampling of the intercept portion for the MRFSS for charter boats in Texas (using TPWD methodology), Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (east and west coast). The states also conducted weekly telephone calls to a 10% random sample of the Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida (east and west coast) charter boat captains to obtain estimates of charter boat fishing effort. And the states conduct an economic add-on survey to collect data regarding trip expenditures concerning recreational fishing. In 2000, NMFS adopted this method as the official methodology for estimation of charter boat effort. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year.

- Head Boat Sampling Activities – The port sampling portion of this task provided for the sampling of catches, collection of catch reports from head boat personnel, and gathering effort data on head boats which operate primarily in the Exclusive Economic Zone from ports along the coasts of Texas and Florida. The at-sea portion of this task provided for the collection of catch and effort data for head boats operating in Alabama and east and west Florida. The effort data was collected via the Telephone For-Hire Survey where the states conducted weekly telephone calls to a 25% random sample of the Alabama and Florida head boat captains to obtain estimates of head boat fishing effort. The catch and bycatch data was collected via at-sea sampling, where the states will conduct an at-sea sampling survey of approximately 10% of the trips made by for-hire vessels, using the protocols established by FIN and tested by Alabama. The port sampling portion is a continuation of an activity from the previous year. The at-sea sampling is a continuation in Alabama and Florida.
- Menhaden Data Collection Activities - This task provided for sampling of gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels that operate in Louisiana. The samples were processed for size and age composition for use in coast-wide stock assessments. In turn, gulf menhaden stock assessments are incorporated into the Fisheries Management Plan for the species, and are also utilized by the Gulf Coast states, the GSMFC, the menhaden industry, and the NMFS. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Development and Implementation of FIN Data Management System - This task provided for further implementation of a fishery information system for the FIN based on the ACCSP model. This task will provide funding for the FIN Data Base Manager and ComFIN Survey Coordinator who will, in conjunction with the ACCSP, work on developing more data modules for the FIN and ACCSP data management systems. Responsibilities include further development of data modules structures; routine loading of Louisiana, Mississippi (oyster and finfish only) Alabama, and Florida commercial catch effort data, Gulf biological data, Gulf recreational data; and maintenance of DMS. It is the next step for implementing a regional system for FIN.
- Trip Ticket Program Development, Implementation and Operation- This task provided for the development and implementation of a commercial trip ticket system for Texas and Mississippi, an activity under the ComFIN. This task provided for development of components for a commercial trip ticket system to census the commercial fisheries landings in Texas and Mississippi using the data elements and standards developed by the ComFIN. It will ultimately be combined with other commercial fisheries data collected from around the Gulf of Mexico. Full operation of Louisiana, Alabama and Florida trip ticket programs continue and Texas became fully implemented in September 2006. GSMFC enter into a contract with Southwest Computer Bureau (SCBI) to provide installation and maintenance of electronic trip ticket programs for Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. In Mississippi, the state is currently implementing a trip ticket program. Unfortunately, Mississippi was still unable to get legislation passed that would make it easier to collect data from dealers, but is continuing to implement a program for oyster, bait shrimp and finfish.

- Biological Sampling of Commercial and Recreational Catches - This task provided for the collection of biological data from the recreational and commercial fisheries. These data are essential to accurately assessing the status of commercial and recreational species such as red snapper, king mackerel, gulf and southern flounder, and greater amberjack. For the commercial aspects, port sampling will be collecting this information based on established guidelines. For the recreational side, samplers will go to sites and collect the necessary biological data using a modified MRFSS method. This task provides funding for collection, processing and analysis of these data. The GSMFC provided coordination as well as tracking of the collection and analysis portions of this activity. This is a continuation of an activity from the previous year.
- Collection of Detailed Effort Data for the Louisiana Blue Crab Fishery - This task will provide funding for collection of detailed effort (multiply gears/areas fished) from the commercial blue crab fishery in Louisiana. This activity will be used to test the methodology (developed by FIN) for collecting detailed effort from commercial fisheries. Detailed effort is not collected via the trip ticket programs so alternate methods need to be developed to compile this information. As additional funds become available, this activity will be expanded to cover other fisheries and other states. This is a new activity.

Coordination and Administrative Support

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

Information Dissemination

Committee members and staff provided program information in 2006 via a variety of different methods such as distribution of program documents, presentation to various groups interested in the FIN, and via the Internet:

- FIN Committee. 2006. *2007 Operations Plan for Fisheries Information Network (FIN)*. No. 139 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 26 pp + appendix.
- FIN Committee. 2006. *Annual Report of the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States (FIN) January 1, 2005 - December 31, 2005*. No. 138 Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs. 17 pp + appendices.
- FIN articles in the GSMFC newsletters.

- Variety of informal discussions occurred throughout the year during ASMFC, GSMFC, NMFS, and other participating agencies meetings and workshops.
- The FIN has developed a data management system that provides access to commercial and recreational data for the Gulf States. There are two levels of access: confidential and non-confidential and users can request access via the FIN DMS web site (www.gsmfc.org/data.html)
- NMFS provides a user-friendly data management system (DMS) for the MRFSS that is accessible via the web (www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/recreational/data.html)
- GSMFC has developed a home page that provides programmatic and operational information regarding FIN.

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

TABLE 1.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR FIN 2006 - 2010

[Goals and Objectives are in Appendix C]

| | <u>2006</u> | <u>2007</u> | <u>2008</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2010</u> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Planning, Management, and Evaluation | | | | | |
| FIN Committee | | | | | |
| Maintenance of FIN Committee | X | X | X | X | X |
| Framework Plan | | | | | |
| Review of Framework Plan | | | | | X |
| Operations Plans | | | | | |
| Development of annual operations plans | X | X | X | X | X |
| Support establishment of recreational licenses in PR & VI | X | X | X | X | X |
| Identify funding needs for MRF programs | X | X | X | X | X |
| Information dissemination | | | | | |
| Explore methods to involve SeaGrant in outreach process | X | | | | |
| Establish system for notifying dealers about electronic reporting option | | X | | | |
| Conduct survey of dealers for input on best methods to facilitate reporting | | X | | | |
| Coordinate with ACCSP and NMFS to develop outreach/education materials | X | X | X | X | X |
| Use Internet communications | X | X | X | X | X |
| Program Review | | | | | |
| Conduct program review | | | | | X |
| Data Collection | | | | | |
| Data components | | | | | |
| Review of components of fisheries | | | | | X |
| Needed data elements | | | | | |
| Assess need for trip-level commercial data in USVI | X | | | | |
| Determine appropriate level of sampling for otoliths and lengths | X | | | | |
| Establish feedback mechanism SEDAR process regarding biological sampling | | X | | | |
| Evaluate need to develop eco-system data module | | | | | X |
| Standard data collection protocols | | | | | |
| Develop sampling protocols for stomach, tissue and gonads | | | | | X |
| Quality control/assurance | | | | | |
| Identify species conversion factors and compile | X | | | | |
| Develop methods for validating factors (2006) | X | | | | |
| Implement methods for validation of conversion factors | | X | | | |
| Develop methods for validating recreational discards information | | X | | | |
| Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards | | | | | X |
| Coordination of data collection | | | | | |
| Development of data collection plan | X | X | X | X | X |
| Establish metadata workgroup | X | | | | |
| Collection of metadata | X | X | X | X | X |
| Full implementation of trip ticket systems for TX and MS | X | X | | | |
| Evaluate suitability of new data sources and integrate FIN data system | | | X | | |
| Continue to develop protocol for private access and non-hook and line fisheries | X | X | | | |
| Implement for-hire telephone survey and at-sea sampling protocols for head boats | X | X | | | |
| Identify species that should be targets for specific surveys | | | X | | |
| Implement surveys for identified species | | | X | | |
| Investigate methods for improving sampling coverage of inshore tidal areas | | | X | | |
| Implement pilot survey for detailed effort module | | X | | | |

| Data Collection (continued) | <u>2006</u> | <u>2007</u> | <u>2008</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2010</u> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Implement detailed effort module Gulf-wide | | | X | | |
| Explore development of more detailed area fished codes | | | X | | |
| Identify various state structures for recreational fishing licenses | X | | | | |
| Ensure Gulf States are collecting critical license frame data elements | | X | | | |
| Continue recreational sampling in Puerto Rico | X | | | | |
| Implement recreational sampling in U.S. Virgin Islands | | X | | | |
| Determine live market activities in Gulf | | | | X | |
| Implement pilot survey to collect data on live market activities | | | | X | |
| Identify geographic regions of interest for recreational sampling | | X | | | |
| Investigate feasibility of sampling these regions | | | X | | |
| Implement FIN Social and Economic module | X | X | X | X | X |
| Prioritize species for additional biological sampling | X | X | X | X | X |
| Determine if increased otolith processing capacity is needed | | X | | | |
| Evaluate bycatch module against current needs | | | X | | |
| Implement the bycatch data collection module | | | | X | |
| Increase recreational sampling levels Gulf-wide | | X | | | |
| Optimize sampling allocations to improve precision for key species | | | | | X |
| Innovative collection technology | | | | | |
| Discuss strategy for implementation of in-season quota monitoring | | | | X | |
| Review opportunity to improve timeliness of data to support quota monitoring | | | | | X |
| Evaluate innovative data collection technologies | X | X | X | X | X |
| Data Management | | | | | |
| Data management system | | | | | |
| Review location and responsibility of DMS | | | | | X |
| Hardware/software capabilities | | | | | |
| Review hardware/software capabilities | | | | | X |
| Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form | | X | X | X | X |
| Data maintenance | X | X | X | X | X |
| Standard data management protocols | | | | | |
| Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data | | X | | | |
| Fully implement registration-tracking module | X | | | | |
| Explore methods for post-stratification of recreational data | | X | | | |
| Implement appropriate post-stratification methods | | | X | | |
| Evaluate variance estimation methods for recreational data | | | | X | |
| Integration of databases | | | | | |
| Identify recreational databases for integration in DMS | X | X | X | X | X |
| Innovative data management technology | | | | | |
| Evaluate innovative data management technologies | X | X | X | X | X |
| Explore possibility of digital archiving of data forms | X | | | | |
| Test electronic field data entry | | | X | | |
| Integrate use of GIS for standardized reports | | | X | | |
| Data confidentiality | | | | | |
| Protect confidentiality | X | X | X | X | X |
| Development of National Program | | | | | |
| Long-term planning | | | | | |
| Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN | X | X | X | X | X |
| Coordination with other programs | | | | | |
| Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN | X | X | X | X | X |
| Consistency and comparability | | | | | |
| Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN | X | X | X | X | X |

TABLE 2.

FIN COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2006

| | |
|--|--|
| Kevin Anson Alabama Marine Resources Division | Representative Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife |
| Steven Atran Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council | Craig Lilyestrom Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources |
| Ken Brennan National Marine Fisheries Service Beaufort Laboratory | Ron Lukens Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission |
| Page Campbell Texas Parks and Wildlife Department | Daniel Matos Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources |
| Kerwin Cuevas Mississippi Department of Marine Resources | Christine Murrell Mississippi Department of Marine Resources |
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| Chris Denson Alabama Marine Resources Division | John Reed National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office |
| Doug Frugé U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | Tom Schmidt National Park Service |
| Graciela Garcia-Moliner Caribbean Fishery Management Council | Tom Sminkey National Marine Fisheries Service Headquarters Office |
| Michelle Kasprzak Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries | Vicki Swann Texas Parks and Wildlife Department |

TABLE 3.

FIN SUBCOMMITTEE AND WORK GROUP MEMBERS FOR 2006

FIN Administrative Subcommittee

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Beaufort Laboratory

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APPENDIX A
2006 Operations Plan

**2006 Operations Plan for the
Fisheries Information Network in the
Southeastern United States (FIN)**

January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006

I. INTRODUCTION

The Fisheries Information Network (FIN) establishes a state-federal cooperative program to collect, manage, and disseminate statistical data and information on the commercial and recreational fisheries of the Southeast Region. There are two separate programs under the FIN: the Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)].

The FIN is a cooperative state-federal marine commercial and recreational fisheries data collection program. It is intended to coordinate present and future marine commercial and recreational fisheries data collection and data management activities through cooperative planning, innovative uses of statistical theory and design, and consolidation of appropriate data into a useful data base system. This operations plan implements the FIN Framework Plan for 2006. All tasks will be completed dependent upon availability of funds.

II. MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of the FIN is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate marine commercial and recreational fisheries statistical data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources in the Southeast Region and to support the development and operation of a national program.

The goals of the FIN are:

- To plan, manage, and evaluate data collection and management activities;
- To implement data collection activities;
- To establish and maintain a data management system; and
- To support the establishment of a national program.

The goals and objectives of FIN are found in Appendix A.

III. OPERATIONS

A. Operational Activities

The tasks below cover all 2006 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a commercial activity; a 'R' denotes a recreational activity; and a 'F' denotes a commercial/recreational activity.

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

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

Team Members: Gulf States and Data Collection Work Group

Approach: The states of Texas and Mississippi will continue the implementation of trip ticket programs in their states. This task will provide for development of components for a commercial trip ticket system to census the commercial fisheries landings in Texas and Mississippi using the data elements and standards developed by the FIN. Mississippi is currently collecting trip-level data for oyster, bait shrimp and finfish landings. They are attempting to pass legislation that would allow for the expansion of collection of trip-level data for all commercial species. Texas has currently implemented trip tickets for a limited number of dealers (approximately 60) to ensure the feasibility of this data collection method. In 2006, full implementation of a Texas trip ticket program is the objective. For Louisiana and Alabama, funding will be provided for the majority of operation of their trip ticket programs. In addition, GSMFC will contract with Southwest Computer Bureau (SCBI) to implement and maintain electronic trip ticket reporting for Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Ultimately, all states will have operating trip tickets program and all commercial landings will be captured via these systems. Accomplished by meeting, telephone, mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.

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

Product: Gulf-wide trip ticket program

Schedule: Implementation of trip tickets began in 1999 and will continue during 2005 for Mississippi and Texas. Operations of trip ticket will continue in 2005 for Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida.

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

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

Team Members: Gulf states, GSMFC, NMFS

Approach: The states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida will continue to conduct the MRFSS survey for shore, for-hire, and private modes. This task will provide for coordination of the

survey, a field-intercept survey of shore, for-hire and private boat anglers to estimate angler catch using the existing MRFSS methodology, and entry of the data. It will be combined with the NMFS effort estimate telephone survey. The NMFS and GSMFC will produce expanded estimates of catch and effort by wave using the existing MRFSS methodology. In addition, the states will conduct supplemental sampling of the intercept portion for the MRFSS for charter boats in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida as well as in Texas (using TPWD methodologies). Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

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

Task A3: Implementation of Methods to Monitor the For-Hire Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Identify evaluate, and test methodologies to survey charter and head boat fisheries.

Team Members: For-Hire Work Group, Gulf States, GSMFC, and NMFS

Approach: For charter boats, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida have implemented the For-Hire Boat Telephone Survey that collects effort data from charter boat captains. Regarding head boats, the FIN For-Hire Work Group has met and developed data collection methods for this fishery. Effort data will be collected via the For-Hire Telephone Survey and catch data will be collected via at-sea sampling and dockside sampling. Implementation of these methods will require additional funding. Alabama and Florida will continue the at-sea sampling survey for head boats in their state. There will be a period of time where duplicative data collection methods are being conducted for benchmarking purposes.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: For-hire survey methodology
Schedule: The at-sea methodology is developed and tested and additional funds are needed to fully implement in 2006.

Task A4: Continue the Collection of Menhaden Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (C)

Objective: Continue the support of menhaden sampling in the Gulf of Mexico.

Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC, and NMFS

Approach: The purpose of this task is to sample gulf menhaden catches from menhaden purse-seine vessels that operate at the ports of Empire, Morgan City, Abbeville, and Cameron, Louisiana. Samples will

be processed for size and age composition for use in coast-wide stock assessments. In turn, gulf menhaden stock assessments are incorporated into the Fisheries Management Plan for the species, and are also utilized by the Gulf coast states, the GSMFC, the menhaden industry, and the NMFS.

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

Task A5: Continue the Collection of Head Boat Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

Objective: Continue the support of head boat sampling in the Gulf of Mexico.
Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC, and NMFS
Approach: The purpose of this task is to sample catches, collect catch reports from head boat personnel, and gather effort data on head boats which operate primarily in the Exclusive Economic Zone from ports along the coasts of Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. This task will be conducted in accordance with existing NMFS head boat methodology.

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

Task A6: Collection of Biological (otoliths and lengths) Data (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Implement the collection of recreational and commercial sampling of biological data in the Gulf of Mexico.
Team Members: Gulf States, GSMFC, and NMFS
Approach: The purpose of this task is to conduct biological sampling interviews of recreational and commercial fishermen using the modified MRFSS and Trip Interview Program protocols. Samplers will collect length frequencies, identifications of species, trip and gear characteristics, weights of catches, hard parts (otoliths) and make comparisons of interview data to trip ticket data for quality assurance purposes. The GSMFC will provide coordination and tracking of targets and provide feedback to the states. The Data Collection Plan Work Group and FIN will determine the priority species for 2006.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: Collection of necessary biological data
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task A6: Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System

(Goal 3, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: To design, implement, and maintain a marine commercial and recreational fisheries data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).

Team Members: FIN and ACCSP program partners, FIN Data Base Manager, and ComFIN Survey Coordinator

Approach: The FIN will continue to develop the Data Management System (DMS). Development of the registration tracking system will be address by the FIN Data Base Manager. This module will be used by both FIN and ACCSP. In addition, the FIN Data Base Manager will continue to receive routine delivery of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi (oyster, bait shrimp and finfish data only), Alabama, and Florida trip ticket data into the FIN DMS. The Data Base Manager will also maintain the historical data in the system and provide support of outside users of the system. In addition to the commercial data, regular loads of recreational data into the DMS will be accomplished. FIN will continue to work in conjunction with the ACCSP to ensure compatibility and comparability between the programs.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.

Product: FIN data management system

Schedule: Further development registration tracking system (vessel data) and routine delivery of data will continue in 2006.

Task A7: Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN/ACCSP program partners/FIN Data Management Work Group

Approach: The FIN and ACCSP are currently operating data management systems for their respective coasts. As part of the implementation and operation, standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application have been developed. The FIN Data Management Work Group and ACCSP Computer Technical Committee will continue to develop this information and there will be coordination between the programs to insure comparability and compatibility.

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

Product: Standard protocols and documentation for the FIN data management system.

Schedule: The appropriate FIN and ACCSP groups will meet (if necessary) in 2006 to address any issues.

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

The tasks below cover all 2006 objectives (see Section D). A 'C' denotes a commercial activity; an 'R' denotes a recreational activity; and an 'F' denotes a commercial/recreational activity.

Task B1: Annual Operations Plan, 2007 (Goal 1, Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Develop 2007 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources that implements the Framework Plan.

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: Through meetings and mail, the Committee will develop and complete an Annual Operations Plan for 2007.

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

Product: 2007 Annual Operations Plan.

Schedule: Annual Operations Plan will be drafted by spring 2007 and addressed by the Committee at the 2007 meeting.

Task B2: Development of Funding Initiatives to Establish Marine Recreational Fisheries (MRF) Surveys (Goal 1, Objective 3) (R)

Objective: Support the establishment of long-term, comprehensive MRF surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Team Members: Biological/Environmental Work Group/NMFS/GSMFC

Approach: The Work Group has been working on this issue for several years. In 2000, the MRFSS was re-established in the U.S. Caribbean, although there were severe problems with attracting and retaining reliable intercept interviewers in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Sampling in Puerto Rico was conducted in 2001- 2004, however, sampling was dropped in the U.S. Virgin Islands during 2001. Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, NMFS and GSMFC personnel are exploring ways to ensure long-term collection of recreational data in the Caribbean.

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

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

Schedule: The Work Group and FIN will continue monitoring this task in 2006.

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

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Team Members: FIN Committee and staff
Approach: The Committee will distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties. Each committee member is responsible for maintaining a list of information distributed and providing that list to the staff. In addition, the MRFSS staff has developed a home page where users are able to access the MRFSS data for their use. The user is able to specify the area, species, gear, etc. that he/she is interested in obtaining. Also, the GSMFC has developed a home page that includes information concerning the FIN.
Resources: Copy and mailing expenses and staff time.
Product: Development and distribution of a fact sheet concerning FIN and a report which compiles a record of information distributed and presentations given by the Committee and staff. This information is included in the FIN Annual Report.
Schedule: This task will be an ongoing activity.

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

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

Task B5: Conduct FIN Program Review (Goal 1, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Conduct a formal external program review of the FIN to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in achieving the goals and objectives.
Team Members: FIN Committee/Administrative Subcommittee
Approach: The FIN Committee will conduct an external program review. A written report will be prepared by an external review team and presented to all the FIN signatory agencies, with a recommendation on the continuation of the FIN. FIN will use a facilitator to conduct this review to ensure a quality outcome.
Resources: Meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and staff time.

Product: Program review report.
Schedule: This task will be conducted in 2006 and the FIN Committee will address the external review report at the 2007 FIN meeting.

Task B6: Implementation of the Bycatch Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Implement the bycatch module of the FIN.
Team Members: FIN Committee/ComFIN Data Collection Work Group/RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group
Approach: The FIN Committee designed and approved the bycatch module, however, additional funding is needed to implement the data collection activities. In order to implement, FIN tasked several work groups with developing a prioritized fisheries list. This list was presented to FIN in 2005 and approved. Funding needs to be secured to implement bycatch activities for the high priority fisheries. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
Product: Bycatch data collection program
Schedule: Funding needs to be secured to implement bycatch activities for the high priority fisheries.

Task B7: Implementation of the Social/Economic Module (Goal 2, Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Develop the social/economic module for the ComFIN.
Team Members: Social/Economic Work Group
Approach: Working in conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group has designed a data collection module for the compilation of social/economic information for all commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region. The program outlines the data elements required for each fishery component that need to be collected for compilation of social/economic data. Since the module has been developed, this module will provide guidance to interested agencies and organizations that wish to collect social/economic data. Accomplished by meeting, telephone and mail and in conjunction with the ACCSP, where applicable.
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
Product: Social/Economic data collection module for guidance on social/economic data collection.
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B8: Development of Metadata Database (Goal 2, Objective 2) (F)

Objective: Compile metadata for inclusion into a metadata database for the Southeast Region.

Team Members: FIN and ACCSP staff and FIS personnel
Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group has worked on this issue in the past and has developed criteria for creating a metadata database. ACCSP and FIN has submitted a proposal to the Fishery Information Service (FIS) to populate the InPort metadata application developed and hosted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) with documentation of fisheries-dependent statistics data collection programs of their respective programs.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail costs, staff time.
Product: Development of metadata module
Schedule: The initial development of the data base structure began in 2000. The proposal was submitted in 2005 and work will begin in 2006. The compilation of these data will be an ongoing activity.

Task B9: Implementation of Registration Tracking System (Goal 2, Objective 2) (C)

Objective: Implementation of a registration tracking system for FIN.
Team Members: Registration Tracking Work Group
Approach: In conjunction with the ACCSP, the Work Group will continue the development of the registration tracking system for both programs. This system will provide a unique identifier for fishermen, dealers, and vessel involved in commercial fisheries that is trackable through geographic location and time. The basic data elements have been approved. The next step is for program partners to modify their existing licensing systems to collect all the needed elements. Accomplished by meetings, conference calls, and mail.
Resources: Meeting/travel costs, telephone costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: Registration tracking system for FIN and ACCSP
Schedule: The Work Group addressed this issue in 2000 and will continue to meet as needed for the implementation of this system. The states need to implement the strategy for modifying their licensing systems to collect the needed data. As a first step, FIN is focusing on compiling vessel information. Once those data have been collected, data on dealers and fishermen will be compiled.

Task B10: Port Samplers Workshops (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

Objective: Convene workshops of state and federal port samplers to discuss commercial data collection activities
Team Members: State and federal commercial port samplers and staff
Approach: In an effort to provide a forum for discussing various issues concerning commercial data collection activities, the FIN Committee decided to convene workshops of state and federal port agents. There will be several workshops:

Texas/Louisiana/Mississippi/Alabama/ Florida; and the Caribbean. These workshops will be attended by the state and federal port agents from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands, the FIN chairman, appropriate NMFS staff and other interested personnel. Some of the suggested topics for these meetings include species identification workshop, overview of ComFIN program, trip ticket information, sampling and sub-sampling techniques and other pertinent topics.

Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
Product: Provide a forum for field personnel to discuss problems and issues related to commercial data collection activities. A list of recommendations regarding commercial data collection activities.
Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for mid- to late-2006.

Task B11: Otolith Processors Training Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 3) (C)

Objective: Convene an annual workshop of state and federal otolith processors to discuss issues related to analyzing hard parts (otoliths, spines, etc.)
Team Members: State and federal processors and staff
Approach: In an effort to provide a forum to ensure quality control and quality assurance for otolith processing, the FIN Committee decided to convene workshops of state and federal processors. Processing personnel from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, GSMFC, NMFS staff and other interested personnel will attend the workshop.
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time.
Product: Provide a forum for processing personnel to discuss problems and issues related to analysis of age structures.
Schedule: The meeting will be scheduled for early - to mid- 2006.

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

Objective: Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current and future programs for meeting FIN standards.
Team Members: FIN Committee
Approach: Periodically evaluate surveys based on their adequacy for meeting FIN standards and make appropriate recommendations.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time
Product: Recommendations for commercial and recreational surveys.
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task B13: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities

(Goal 2, Objective 4) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group has identified redundancies in MRF data collection and management in the Southeast Region and provided recommendations to the FIN Committee concerning these activities. From this information, the Committee will develop strategies for reducing duplicative efforts in the Southeast Region.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.

Product: Recommendations for reducing duplicative data collection and management efforts

Schedule: This is an ongoing task.

Task B14: Determination of Methods for Collecting Recreational Data from Private Access Sites Goal 2, Objective 5) (R)

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

Team Members: FIN/Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group met to determine the best method of collected data from private access sites. The group recommended that the first step is to determine the magnitude of the activity. Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.

Resources: Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.

Product: Determination of the best method of the collected the needed data.

Schedule: The Work Group met 2003 and will meet in 2006 to continue addressing this task.

Task B15: Determination of Methods for Collecting Recreational Data from Non Hook-and-Line Fisheries (Goal 2, Objective 5) (R))

Objective: Determine most appropriate methods for collecting recreational data from non hook-and-line fisheries.

Team Members: FIN/Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Biological/Environmental Work Group will need to meet in order to determine that FIN should develop a pilot study for sampling the recreational shrimp fishery. The Work Group has developed some basic protocols but they need to be refined. The group needs to review the protocols for sampling this fishery.

Resources: Where possible, the Committee will work with the ACCSP to ensure comparability and compatibility between the two programs.
Operational costs, travel/meeting costs, mail costs, and staff time.
Product: Pilot study for sampling the recreational shrimp fishery.
Schedule: The Work Group will meet 2006 to continue to address this task.

Task B16: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Develop a plan that outlines the needs for stock assessment for the upcoming year as well as tracking the collection of these data.
Team Members: FIN Committee/Data Collection Plan Work Group
Approach: The Committee has developed a data collection plan that identifies the priority species (and associated data needed to be collected) for the state, interstate and federal entities as well as establishes sampling target levels for biological data. The plan provides guidance to the states. As trip ticket systems are implemented Gulf-wide, the data from these systems will allow for better allocation of samples. In addition, the Work Group will begin compiling a list of biological data sets and prioritize these databases for inclusion into the FIN DMS. Accomplished by meetings, telephone and mail.
Resources: Meeting costs, mail costs, telephone costs, and staff time
Product: Data collection plan
Schedule: The group will meet in 2006 to review activities and develop a biological sampling annual plan.

Task B17: Establish/modify recreational licenses (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Establish/modify recreational licenses to meet criteria for use as sampling frame
Team Members: FIN Committee
Approach: The FIN has developed criteria that allow state marine recreational fishing licenses to be used as a regional sampling frame. Based on these criteria, each state needs to either adopt a recreational fishing license or modify existing licenses to meet the criteria. The Committee will periodically review the status of each states' licenses. Once a region has adopted a standardized license, implementation of license sampling frame can be accomplished. As an initial step, the GSMFC, with the assistance from the states, will begin compiling recreational fishing license databases. This will identify gaps in the data sets and allow for a smoother transition once all states have met the criteria.
Resources: Telephone costs, report costs, travel/meeting costs, and staff time
Product: Recreational fishing licenses suitable for use as sampling directory

Schedule: The FIN Committee will periodically address this issue to determine the status of each states' licenses.

Task B18: Develop Methodologies for Sampling Highly Migratory Species (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

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

Team Members: FIN Committee/Biological/Environmental Work Group

Approach: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council asked the FIN to examine the best methods for collecting catch and effort data for HMS species, specifically yellowfin tuna. While there is currently a survey for collecting these types of data on the Atlantic coast, no such survey exists in the Gulf. This lack of data makes it very difficult to accurately assess this fishery. The Work Group developed draft protocols for sampling HMS in the Gulf. FIN asked the group to continue developing these protocols.

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

Product: Sampling methods for HMS species in Gulf of Mexico

Schedule: The Work Group will meet in 2006 to continue addressing this issue.

Task B19: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5) (F)

Objective: Encourage coordination, integration, and augmentation, as appropriate, of data collection efforts to meet the FIN requirements.

Team Members: FIN Committee

Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys to the appropriate personnel.

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

Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.

Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B20: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Obj 6) (F)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies

Team Members: FIN Committee and other appropriate personnel

Approach: Communicate results of evaluation and recommendations regarding marine commercial and recreational fisheries surveys to the appropriate personnel.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time
Product: Communication and presentation of recommendations to ongoing programs.
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B21: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6) (F)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
Team Members: FIN Committee and industry personnel
Approach: Committee members will report any new technologies, which will aid in the management of marine commercial and recreational fisheries data.
Resources: Travel/meeting costs, conference call costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Progress reports.
Schedule: This is an ongoing activity.

Task B22: Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1) (F)

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

Task B23: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative Marine Commercial and Recreational Fisheries Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3) (F)

Objective: Coordinate FIN with other regional cooperative marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs and encourages consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.
Team Members: FIN Committee
Approach: The FIN Committee members, GSMFC staff and ASMFC staff will coordinate activities with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Pacific RecFIN, and PacFIN on the West Coast. The topic of a joint meeting among FIN, ACCSP and Pacific has been discussed and staff will examine the possibility of conducting these types of meetings. Accomplished by mail and meetings.

Resources: Travel/meeting costs, report costs, and staff time.
Product: Ensure adequate information exchange, consistency and comparability between all regional fisheries programs and compilation of a record of information exchange.
Schedule: This task is an ongoing activity.

C. Administrative Activities

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

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

D. Time Table

| | <u>2006</u> | <u>2007</u> | <u>2008</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2010</u> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Planning, Management, and Evaluation | | | | | |
| FIN Committee | | | | | |
| Maintenance of FIN Committee | X | X | X | X | X |
| Framework Plan | | | | | |
| Review of Framework Plan | | | | | X |
| Operations Plans | | | | | |
| Development of annual operations plans | X | X | X | X | X |
| Support establishment of recreational licenses in PR & VI | X | X | X | X | X |
| Identify funding needs for MRF programs | X | X | X | X | X |
| Information dissemination | | | | | |
| Explore methods to involve SeaGrant in outreach process | X | | | | |
| Establish system for notifying dealers about electronic reporting option | | X | | | |
| Conduct survey of dealers for input on best methods to facilitate reporting | | X | | | |
| Coordinate with ACCSP and NMFS to develop outreach/education materials | X | X | X | X | X |
| Use Internet communications | X | X | X | X | X |
| Program Review | | | | | |
| Conduct program review | | | | | X |
| Data Collection | | | | | |
| Data components | | | | | |
| Review of components of fisheries | | | | | X |
| Needed data elements | | | | | |
| Assess need for trip-level commercial data in USVI | X | | | | |
| Determine appropriate level of sampling for otoliths and lengths | X | | | | |
| Establish feedback mechanism SEDAR process regarding biological sampling | | X | | | |
| Evaluate need to develop eco-system data module | | | | | X |
| Standard data collection protocols | | | | | |
| Develop sampling protocols for stomach, tissue and gonads | | | | | X |
| Quality control/assurance | | | | | |
| Identify species conversion factors and compile | X | | | | |
| Develop methods for validating factors (2006) | X | | | | |
| Implement methods for validation of conversion factors | | X | | | |
| Develop methods for validating recreational discards information | | X | | | |
| Review of commercial and recreational QA/QC standards | | | | | X |
| Coordination of data collection | | | | | |
| Development of data collection plan | X | X | X | X | X |
| Establish metadata workgroup | X | | | | |
| Collection of metadata | X | X | X | X | X |
| Full implementation of trip ticket systems for TX and MS | X | X | | | |
| Evaluate suitability of new data sources and integrate FIN data system | | | X | | |
| Continue to develop protocol for private access and non-hook and line fisheries | X | X | | | |
| Implement for-hire telephone survey and at-sea sampling protocols for head boats | X | X | | | |

| Data Collection (continued) | <u>2006</u> | <u>2007</u> | <u>2008</u> | <u>2009</u> | <u>2010</u> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Identify species that should be targets for specific surveys | | | X | | |
| Implement surveys for identified species | | | X | | |
| Investigate methods for improving sampling coverage of inshore tidal areas | | | X | | |
| Implement pilot survey for detailed effort module | | X | | | |
| Implement detailed effort module Gulf-wide | | | X | | |
| Explore development of more detailed area fished codes | | | X | | |
| Identify various state structures for recreational fishing licenses | X | | | | |
| Ensure Gulf States are collecting critical license frame data elements | | X | | | |
| Continue recreational sampling in Puerto Rico | X | | | | |
| Implement recreational sampling in U.S. Virgin Islands | | X | | | |
| Determine live market activities in Gulf | | | | X | |
| Implement pilot survey to collect data on live market activities | | | | X | |
| Identify geographic regions of interest for recreational sampling | | X | | | |
| Investigate feasibility of sampling these regions | | | X | | |
| Implement FIN Social and Economic module | X | X | X | X | X |
| Prioritize species for additional biological sampling | X | X | X | X | X |
| Determine if increased otolith processing capacity is needed | | X | | | |
| Evaluate bycatch module against current needs | | | X | | |
| Implement the bycatch data collection module | | | | X | |
| Increase recreational sampling levels Gulf-wide | | X | | | |
| Optimize sampling allocations to improve precision for key species | | | | | X |
| Innovative collection technology | | | | | |
| Discuss strategy for implementation of in-season quota monitoring | | | | X | |
| Review opportunity to improve timeliness of data to support quota monitoring | | | | | X |
| Evaluate innovative data collection technologies | X | X | X | X | X |
| Data Management | | | | | |
| Data management system | | | | | |
| Review location and responsibility of DMS | | | | | X |
| Hardware/software capabilities | | | | | |
| Review hardware/software capabilities | | | | | X |
| Provide finalized recreational data in electronic form | | X | X | X | X |
| Data maintenance | X | X | X | X | X |
| Standard data management protocols | | | | | |
| Develop review process for finalization of MRFSS data | | X | | | |
| Fully implement registration-tracking module | X | | | | |
| Explore methods for post-stratification of recreational data | | X | | | |
| Implement appropriate post-stratification methods | | | X | | |
| Evaluate variance estimation methods for recreational data | | | | X | |
| Integration of databases | | | | | |
| Identify recreational databases for integration in DMS | X | X | X | X | X |
| Innovative data management technology | | | | | |
| Evaluate innovative data management technologies | X | X | X | X | X |
| Explore possibility of digital archiving of data forms | X | | | | |
| Test electronic field data entry | | | X | | |
| Integrate use of GIS for standardized reports | | | X | | |
| Data confidentiality | | | | | |
| Protect confidentiality | X | X | X | X | X |

Development of National Program

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Long-term planning | | | | | |
| Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN | X | X | X | X | X |
| Coordination with other programs | | | | | |
| Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN | X | X | X | X | X |
| Consistency and comparability | | | | | |
| Coordination with ACCSP and Pacific RecFIN | X | X | X | X | X |

APPENDIX B

Minutes

PLEASE NOTE: Attachments to Minutes are not included in this document. They are available at the GSMFC office

**FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK (FIN)
MINUTES**

June 14 and 15, 2006

St. Petersburg Beach, Florida

Chairman Page Campbell called the meeting to order on June 14, 2006 at 9:20 a.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

Members

Kevin Anson, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Kerwin Cuevas, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Guy Davenport, NOAA Fisheries, Miami, FL
Bob Dixon, NOAA Fisheries, Beaufort, NC
John Galvez, USFWS, Vero Beach, FL (*proxy – D.Fruge*)
Stephen Holiman, NOAA Fisheries, St. Petersburg, FL
Christine Johnson, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Michelle Kasprzak, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Jim Long, NPS, Georgia (*proxy – T. Schmidt*)
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Joe O’Hop, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL
Maury Osborn, ACCSP, Washington, DC
Tom Sminkey, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD
Vicki Swann, TPWD, Austin, TX
Roger Uwate, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI

Staff

Donna Bellais, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Gregg Bray, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Bob Harris, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Ben Baron-Taltre, ACCSP, Washington, DC
Ken Brennan, NOAA Fisheries, Beaufort, NC
Elaine Harrell, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Jan Pappas, NMFS, Honolulu, HI
John Reed, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Beverly Sauls, FFWCC, St. Petersburg, FL
Montina Williams, ACCSP, Washington, DC

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on June 7 and 8, 2005 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana were approved as presented.

Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

M. Osborn gave a presentation on the status of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). Osborn reported that they are experiencing some turnover recently, including outreach coordinator, program coordinator, assistant program coordinator, and director since M. Osborn will be retiring soon.

Osborn then reported on the status of Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS). SAFIS is a web-based integrated state/federal system for collecting real time catch and effort data. SAFIS has been deployed for dealers and is in development for vessels and fishermen. SAFIS has flexible data input and is a collaborative effort among partners. SAFIS meets ACCSP, state, and federal data standards and agency interfaces can be customized. SAFIS also tracks multi-agency permits and licenses and has automatic post-entry auditing. At this time dealers from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Maryland are utilizing SAFIS to varying degrees. In the future SAFIS will collaborate with the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) group.

Osborn reported that the data warehouse is ready for routine uploads of data from Florida to Maryland. The plan is to populate the data warehouse with catch and effort data from 1981 to the present as well as biological data for lobster from the 1980's to 2003. Osborn also updated the Committee on the FIS metadata project for ACCSP and FIN, the change from Business Objects to Oracle Discoverer, external peer review, and funding for FY2007.

FIN Data Management System (DMS) Issues

Review of list of personnel with access to confidential data - The FIN Committee reviewed the list of personnel with access to confidential data in the FIN DMS. G. Davenport also presented a list of those with access to NMFS confidential data. D. Donaldson requested that any deletions, additions, or corrections be reported.

Status of the FIN data management system - B. Harris of GSMFC reported on the status of the FIN DMS noting that he is currently upgrading to the latest version of Oracle Discoverer. Several new monthly reports are being created which will include, total landings by gear, total landings by area and total landings by grade. Harris reported that the recreational fishing license module, as well as the detailed vessel module is awaiting data from the states. Harris also noted that hardware and software are currently being reviewed for conversion to Oracle Clusters and then to Oracle GRID. This should be accomplished by spring of 2007. Harris reported that several years of biological data have been loaded for Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. Harris also reported on MRFSS estimates, Menhaden data, and SEAMAP data.

Discussion of confidentiality user form portal - D. Donaldson stated the importance of confidential users filling out both the FIN confidentiality form as well as the NOAA form. G. Davenport reported that the forms are available on the NOAA website, however NOAA General Counsel did not approve of having the two systems mesh.

Davenport will follow-up and ask General Counsel to give a written explanation for clarification.

Review and approval of confidentiality user form - Because of a confidentiality breach, it was decided to strengthen the confidentiality user form. The Committee was provided with copies of a new form for their approval. D. Donaldson explained the changes made to the form and Committee members made other suggestions for change.

K. Cuevas moved to approve the form with changes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Discussion of National Park Service Usage Issues

J. Long of the National Park Service Southeast Regional Office gave a presentation on National Park Service involvement in marine fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. Long gave an overview of the National Parks in the Southeast Region, including Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve in Louisiana, Gulf Islands National Seashore in Mississippi and Florida, DeSoto National Memorial in Florida, Everglades National Park in Florida, Dry Tortugas National Park in Florida, and V.I National Park, V.I Coral Reef National Monument, Buck Island National Monument in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Long reported on the number of marine fish species harvested, number of anglers per day and per year at each of the parks, however he noted that the National Park Service does not have many biologists to assess fishing activity.

Discussion of NRC Report regarding Marine Recreational Data Collection

D. Donaldson stated that since one of the major tasks of FIN is recreational data collection, it would be appropriate to review the recommendations from National Research Council (NRC) report to evaluate the effectiveness of recreational data collection in the United States. The Committee was provided with a letter to W. Hogarth of NOAA Fisheries drafted by R. Lukens. Donaldson requested that Committee members review the draft letter and make suggestions. Committee discussion followed and several suggestions were put forth. M. Osborn will present a similar letter to the ACCSP Coordinating Council for their approval as well. After further discussion, **R. Lukens made a motion to send the letter as amended to Dr. Hogarth. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Lukens will also work on sending a similar letter from the GSMFC.

Discussion of Marine Recreational Fishing License Sampling Frame Pilot Survey

D. Donaldson reported that the Gulf is moving forward with using recreational fishing licenses as a sampling frame in order to get a better estimate of fishing effort. A conference call was held to refine some of the details. Donaldson noted that no action is required at this time however, he wanted to keep the Committee informed. This pilot survey will begin in January 2007 for one year and about \$200,000 is available for this project.

Discussion of Vessel Information for Registration Tracking Module

D. Donaldson reported that the issue of compiling vessel information for registration tracking has been discussed for a number of years. The object is to create a unique identifier in order to identify and track all commercial vessels that operate within a fishery. Donaldson reported that in attempting to collect vessel information from the states, there are several problems to be resolved. Donaldson asked the Committee for suggestions to get this module started.

J. O'Hop reported that every year he receives a CD from the Dept. of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. This year O'Hop received the CD as well as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stating that the contents of the CD were confidential. M. Kasprzak reported that there is a similar situation in Louisiana because of confidentiality issues. Louisiana also has an MOU with the Dept. of Motor Vehicles but it should not be a problem. K. Anson also reported that Alabama is having some problems collecting registration information. **Anson suggested that this issue be presented to the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S/FFMC). R. Lukens stated that specific information on problems collecting this information should be requested of the State Directors.**

After Committee discussion, it was agreed that D. Donaldson will contact each state for detailed information on roadblocks. He will then present his findings to the S/FFMC at their October 2006 meeting.

Presentation of InPort Metadata Tool

J. Pappas of NMFS in Honolulu gave a presentation on the Information Portal (InPort) Metadata tool which was developed using National Fisheries Information System (FIS) funds. Pappas noted that metadata is required to use data effectively. Metadata can include time period, geographic area, contact person, etc. InPort will allow fisheries partners to go to one place to find metadata.

Pappas explained that the metadata is not stored on InPort, but only information on how and where to access the data. InPort has a web-based searchable catalog of fisheries data which lists what data, where is it, who has it, why it was collected, etc. InPort also supports critical FIS activities. Pappas stated that at each organization there will be someone designated as librarian/steward of the metadata. InPort has a training site for those wanting to try the search feature: <http://iastrn.nmfs.hawaii.edu/inport>

M. Osborn stated that M. Williams conducted a training session at ACCSP on InPort in March. ACCSP decided that they and each of their state agencies will have their own libraries and publisher. FIN is also interested in utilizing the InPort Metadata tool and will begin training with one state partner. After Committee discussion, it was decided that M. Williams will work initially with Louisiana. D. Donaldson will coordinate with M. Williams and M. Cahall of ACCSP to coordinate schedules for training.

Presentation of Red Snapper IFQ

J. Reed of NMFS in St. Petersburg gave a presentation on the red snapper Individual Fishery Quota (IFQ). Reed stated that this is the first attempt by the Southeast Regional Office to introduce this type of management. Beginning January 1 Class I and Class II license holders will become IFQ shareholders and there will be approximately 600 vessels in the IFQ. Based on fishing history, fishermen will share in the red snapper quota. Reed

noted that for the first five years of the program a fisherman has to have a reef fish vessel permit. This permit, or any portion of it, can be sold with a notarized statement and application for transfer.

Reed then demonstrated the website that fishermen will use. This is real time data and since there will be no paper with this system, fishermen will need to have online access. Fishermen will be required to call law enforcement three hours prior to landing to report where he will be landing and which seafood company he will be doing business with. Vessels must land red snapper between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Reed then demonstrated dealer reporting requirements and noted that everyone that currently holds a commercial reef fish dealer permit will be given the opportunity to participate.

R. Lukens noted that fishermen will have a reporting burden as well as a potential for redundancy with the trip ticket system. The object of FIN is to have fisherman report only once in order to get all landings through the trip ticket system. Reed responded that the two systems can be integrated in the collection of data and he will be cooperative in order to find a solution. After discussion on this issue, the Committee agreed to form an Ad Hoc Work Group which would include the following members: J. Reed, M. Kasprzak, K. Anson, C. Denson, J. O'Hop, and C. Petersen of SCBI. D. Donaldson will arrange a meeting of this Work Group in the near future.

Discussion of Conducting Separate Recreational Fishing Participation Survey

D. Donaldson reported that the issue of conducting a separate survey for recreational participation was discussed at the recent Wave meeting. A separate survey would allow for more precise participation estimates to be calculated. T. Sminkey noted that there has been interest in getting the number of people who target a particular species, and also being able to get a regional number of people fishing. Sociologists, economists, and politicians are interested in these numbers but at this time the MRFSS is unable to compile these data.

M. Osborn noted that Georgia had done a study on participation, and D. Donaldson stated that Alabama had done one as well. Osborn requested that the ACCSP be kept apprised on this situation. D. Donaldson suggested tasking the Biological/Environmental Work Group (B/EWG) with examining this issue. **T. Sminkey made a motion to task the B/EWG to look into different methodologies for conducting a recreational fishing participation survey. The motion was seconded and passed with the GMFMC opposed.**

Discussion of Head Boat Fishing Effort Collection Methods

D. Donaldson reported that recently he and R. Lukens met with personnel at the Southeast Science Center to discuss a comparison of the at-sea sampling program in Alabama and Florida with the NMFS headboat logbook program. M. Osborn reported that the ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee is planning an evaluation of the new for-hire survey for head boats and she suggested combining efforts. Several members of the Committee suggested that this may not be the ideal time to begin this effort since the recreational data collection program is under evaluation at this time. Other members believed that this would be an opportune time to make suggestions in order to improve the survey. After lengthy discussion the Committee agreed to continue looking at the two programs. **M. Osborn will add D. Donaldson to the Recreational Technical Committee mailing list in order that he is kept informed of ACCSP for-hire/head boat activities.**

Review and Approval of the 2005 FIN Annual Report

Committee members were provided with a draft copy of the 2005 FIN Annual Report. D. Donaldson asked Committee members to review the Report and let him know of any editorial changes or comments by June 30, 2006. **S. Holiman moved to accept the 2005 FIN Annual Report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Subcommittee and Work Group Reports

Gulf of Mexico Port Samplers Meeting (Attachment A) - D. Donaldson noted that these meetings are held annually for state and federal commercial port samplers working in the Gulf of Mexico. A new component has been added to these meetings, a training session on biological sampling collection activities. M. Osborn requested that B. Baron-Taltre be added to the mailing list for this group. After reviewing the Work Group Report, **K. Anson moved to accept the Gulf of Mexico Port Samplers Meeting Report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Administrative Subcommittee (Attachment B) – D. Donaldson reported that the Subcommittee met via conference call concerning an external program review which has to be completed in 2006. The Subcommittee identified various state natural resource agencies in order to select from a pool of reviewers. Donaldson reported that a contractor will help facilitate the review process. Donaldson, Chairman Campbell, the contractor, and others as determined by the FIN Committee will attend the review meeting. The Subcommittee agreed to have K. Anson and D. Matos attend the meeting with the program review team.

The Subcommittee also recommended that the FIN Committee develop a survey to poll its users and stakeholders regarding how well the program is meeting their needs. Donaldson noted that this survey would be done before the external review. **K. Cuevas moved to accept the Administrative Subcommittee Report. The motion was seconded and passed with GMFMC opposed.**

The meeting recessed at 5:00 p.m. and reconvened at 8:30 a.m. on June 15, 2006.

Gulf of Mexico Geographic Subcommittee (Attachment C) – The Committee reviewed the Subcommittee report which included the draft Policy for Unauthorized Release of Confidential Data. The Subcommittee tasked staff to develop administrative recommendations for violating FIN confidentiality policies and present to the FIN Committee. After discussion and review of the Policy, **T. Sminkey moved to accept the Policy with editorial changes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Otolith Processors Training Workshop (Attachment D) – D. Donaldson explained that this training workshop is a QA/QC exercise for the otolith readers from various states and labs to assure they are reading otoliths in the same way. Donaldson reported that D. Murie from the University of Florida gave a presentation on greater amberjack and the problems of determining ages. She asked about the possibility of samplers collecting fin rays for greater amberjack. Donaldson asked FIN members if there would be any problems in collecting these. Murie also asked if any samplers encounter a spawning female that she be notified of location, time, date, etc. Donaldson will e-mail members regarding this request and include appropriate information for collection.

Donaldson reported that the workshop also included a discussion on coordination of ageing centers. Both state and federal ageing labs have various methods of work and the group is looking for a way to make things more consistent. Since FIN has developed minimum data elements, a comparison of similarities and contrasts in each lab will be prepared by staff. **K. Cuevas made a motion to accept the Otolith Processors Training Workshop report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Biological/Environmental Work Group (Attachment E) – Donaldson reported that the B/EWG met to discuss Highly Migratory Species (HMS) sampling prompted by a request by the GMFMC. The B/EWG recommended that two separate surveys be used to collect the data. The B/EWG recommended that a survey be conducted to characterize the private boat HMS fishery to allow the group to determine the best method for data collection of this sector. The B/EWG agreed that effort data could be collected by modifying the existing for-hire telephone survey however there was no consensus on how to survey private boat anglers. The FIN Committee discussed various methods of developing a sampling frame including using HMS permit holders. T. Sminkey suggested developing several options to present to the GMFMC. The Committee agreed to have the B/EWG begin working on various options for collection of HMS data. R. Lukens suggested communicating with the GMFMC to keep them informed of progress on their request. **K. Anson moved to accept the Biological/Environmental Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Data Collection Plan Work Group (Attachment F) – D. Donaldson reported that the Data Collection Plan Work Group has been looking at alternative methods for determining targets. Initially, .05% of total landings were used to come up with targets. The Work Group identified 17 primary and 10 secondary species, then identified gears and regions for each of these species. The FIN Committee reviewed the list of species, number of otoliths for each species, and whether it was for FIN or NMFS.

Donaldson reviewed the FIN otolith targets for 2007. **R. Lukens made a motion to forward the 2007 proposed targets to the S/FFMC for their consideration. Since there is not enough funding to cover sampling of all species a decision must be made by the S/FFMC regarding which species to include. The motion was seconded and passed with Alabama opposed.**

M. Kasprzak moved to accept the Data Collection Plan Work Group report. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Operations Plan

The FIN Committee reviewed the status of 2006 activities under the Operations Plan. D. Donaldson reported that several tasks need to be discussed. Task B6 - Development of Bycatch Module - the Work Group has developed this module, the FIN Committee has approved it and identified fisheries. Donaldson asked the Committee how they wanted to proceed. The Committee discussed various options and R. Lukens suggested removing Task B6 from the Operations Plan and instruct the Work Group to continue to monitor developments with the NMFS and ACCSP and take appropriate action when necessary. The Committee agreed and this will be reflected in the 2007 Operations Plan.

Task B7 - Implementation of the Social/Economic Module and Task B14 - Methods for Collecting Recreational Data from Private Access Sites are addressed in the NRC report and workshops are being held to address these issues. A suggestion was made to develop a detailed paper on what is currently being done and if additional resources are needed to improve or complete work.

The Committee reviewed the draft 2007 FIN Operations Plan. Several modifications and editorial changes were made. The Committee agreed to submit any other changes to D. Donaldson by June 30, 2006. **K. Cuevas made a motion to accept the 2007 FIN Operations Plan. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Discussion of 2007 FIN Priorities

Committee members were provided with guidelines on the decision process for FIN priorities and a list of items for funding consideration in 2007. D. Donaldson reported that the list was generated from activities conducted last year as well as discussions in work group meetings.

The final prioritized list will be forwarded to the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S/FFMC) in August 2006 and they will decide which items will be included in the 2007 FIN cooperative agreement. Donaldson noted that all items listed as High or Medium priority will require budgets and statements-of-work by July 10, 2006.

The Committee agreed to list as high priority all ongoing activities. The prioritized list of activities in 2007 is as follows:

High Priority

Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities (ongoing)

Survey to characterize private boat HMS fishery utilizing HMS permit frame

Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data (including TX) (ongoing)

Head Boat Port Sampling in Texas and Florida (ongoing)

Gulf Menhaden Port Sampling (ongoing)

Operation of FIN Data Management System (ongoing)

Trip Ticket Program Implementation and Operations in Mississippi (ongoing)

Trip Ticket Program Operations in Alabama (ongoing)

Trip Ticket Program Operations in Louisiana (ongoing)

Trip Ticket Program Implementation and Operations in Texas (ongoing)

Recreational/Commercial Biological Sampling (ongoing)

For-Hire Telephone Survey (effort) and At-sea Sampling (catch) for Head Boats in Alabama and Florida (ongoing)

Collection of Detailed Effort for Blue Crab Fishery in Louisiana (new)

Medium Priority

Pilot Study for Collection of Catch (catch cards/dock-side) and Effort (telephone survey) Data for Highly Migratory Species (new)

Low Priority

For-Hire Telephone Survey (effort) and At-sea Sampling (catch) for Head Boats in Louisiana (new)

For-Hire Telephone Survey (effort) and At-sea Sampling (catch) for Head Boats in Texas (new)
Biological Sampling for Additional (secondary) Species (new)

K. Cuevas made a motion to accept the 2007 FIN priority list. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. D. Donaldson asked FIN members to send budgets and draft statements of work by July 10, 2006.

Time and Location of Next Meeting

D. Donaldson noted that the FIN Committee meets every third year in the Caribbean. Therefore, the next FIN meeting will be held the first week or second week in June in St. Croix, USVI.

Other Business

S. Holiman stated that in the Southeast Regional Office there were many requests for “before” and “after” hurricane data. The Regional Office is trying to prepare and assemble “before” hurricane data. Holiman asked if partner agencies are attempting to do the same. D. Donaldson suggested Holiman could query the FIN database and several members made other suggestions.

D. Donaldson distributed a letter which had been sent to John Carmichael in response to the SEDAR recommendations document. The Ad Hoc Work Group identified several recommendations developed by SEDAR that the FIN is also addressing; bycatch program, at-sea sampling, biological sampling, private access sites, fishing licenses as sampling frame, etc. When other SEDAR recommendations documents are released in the future, the Work Group will review them. R. Lukens noted that this is part of the FIN effort to integrate FIN in the stock assessment process.

The Committee reviewed the FIN Committee List and will report to Donaldson any additions, deletions, or changes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

APPENDIX C

Goals and Objectives

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

- Objective 1 To establish and maintain FIN Committee consisting of MOU signatories or their designees to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the program.
- Objective 2 To develop and periodically review a Framework Plan that outlines policies and protocol of the program
- Objective 3 To develop annual operation plans, including identification of available resources that implement the Framework Plan.
- Objective 4 To distribute program information to the cooperators and interested parties.
- Objective 5 To conduct 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 and recreational fishery data collection program for the Region.

- Objective 1 To characterize and periodically review the commercial and recreational fisheries and identify the required data priorities for each.
- Objective 2 To identify and periodically review environmental, biological, social and economic data elements required for each fishery.
- Objective 3 To identify, determine, and periodically review standards for data collection, including statistical, training and quality assurance.
- Objective 4 To identify and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting FIN requirements.
- Objective 5 To coordinate, integrate and augment, as appropriate, data collection efforts to meet FIN requirements.
- Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection methodologies and technologies.

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

- Objective 1 To periodically review and make recommendations regarding the location and administrative responsibility for the FIN data management system.
- Objective 2 To periodically evaluate the hardware, software and communication capabilities of program partners and make recommendations for support and upgrades.
- Objective 3 To implement, maintain, and periodically review a marine commercial and recreational fishery data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs.
- Objective 4 To develop, maintain, and periodically review standard protocols and documentation for data formats, inputs, editing, storage, access, transfer dissemination, and application.
- Objective 5 To identify and prioritize historical databases for integration into the marine commercial and recreational fisheries database.
- Objective 6 To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.
- Objective 7 To protect the confidentiality of personal and business information, as required by state and/or federal law.

Goal 4: To support the development and operation of a national program to collect, manage and disseminate marine commercial fisheries information for use by states, territories, councils, interstate commissions and federal marine fishery management agencies.

- Objective 1 To provide for long-term national program planning.
- Objective 2 To coordinate FIN with other regional and national marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs.
- Objective 3 To encourage consistency and comparability among regional and national marine commercial and recreational fisheries programs over time.