

NEWSCAST

MARINE
RECREATIONAL
INFORMATION
PROGRAM



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An update for members and partners of the new Marine Recreational Information Program

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From the Chairman's Desk

We're pleased to release the MRIP Implementation Plan today, a major milestone in the development of our new data collection program. At times like these, I find it important to take a moment to remind ourselves why we're here. Whether you're a stock assessment scientist, fishery advocate, or state director, we all share a common goal – to ensure the sustainability of our marine fisheries.

Doing so successfully relies on continually improving our base of understanding and using that information to make informed decisions about the resource's long term health. Right now, we're focused in on one important piece of that larger effort – saltwater recreational fishing. More specifically, we're talking about the development of the Marine Recreational Information Program, a program we believe will become the gold standard and a trusted source for recreational fishing data.

MRIP will accomplish this by providing the most timely, accurate and comprehensive data possible on the catch and effort of saltwater recreational anglers. When fully implemented, MRIP will replace the current array of state and federal data collection programs with a series of regional systems adhering to a national standard. It will increase our accountability, our timeliness, and our decision-making abilities. While it's easy to get excited at the possibilities, it's also important to be realistic about what MRIP won't do. MRIP will not be the silver-bullet that solves all our fishery management problems.

Although NOAA Fisheries is responsible for making MRIP work, the program's design has been built extensively on input and commitment from you – our partner agencies, organizations, and the fishing community. I think you'll agree that a cooperative approach to building MRIP, with your needs in mind, will result in a better program.

Recognizing that our collective success moving forward will rely on our continued collaboration and engagement, it's important that we pause at critical junctures to ensure we're all aligned and moving down the same path. That's why we're sharing the Implementation Plan with you now. We hope you will take a moment to review our plan and let us know how we're doing.

Dr. John Boreman
Chair, Executive Steering Committee

Implementation Plan Released

The Implementation Plan provides an update on our progress to date in developing the many components of MRIP, as well as our blueprint for putting it into action. As a joint product of the Operations, Communication and Education, and Angler Registry Teams prepared with guidance from the Executive Steering Committee, the plan incorporates input from our entire range of stakeholders.

As outlined in the plan, MRIP is envisioned as a set of coordinated data collection programs designed to address specific regional needs for recreational fishing information. These improvements will be incrementally implemented beginning in January 2009.

MRIP will be phased in by addressing the highest-priority issues – such as enhancing the quality of the tools already used to gather data – first. Concurrently, the MRIP teams and work groups will be exploring new ways to collect data and evaluating whether previously untapped information sources have promise in corroborating other findings.

Finally, as we learn which combination of tools yields the most useful information, we will begin applying those tools more broadly to bring ever more granularity to the scope and frequency of our reporting.

A dynamic document, the Implementation Plan will continue to evolve in response to the latest science and the emerging needs of fisheries managers, regulators, policy makers and stakeholders.

The full plan may be downloaded at: www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov.

Angler Registry Final Rule Due Out in November

NOAA has received comments from about 500 individuals and organizations on the proposed rule to create a National Saltwater Angler Registry, a major NOAA initiative to promote and protect our oceans and to ensure their sustainability for generations to come.

NOAA was pleased to get such a strong public response on this important initiative to help ensure the sustainability of our shared fisheries. Sound science and complete data, applied in partnership with concerned stakeholders, are the keys to effective marine stewardship.

All of the comments can be read by going to www.regulations.gov and searching for 'Angler Registry.' In November, after fully reviewing and evaluating the public comments, NOAA plans to publish the final rule on the angler registry in the Federal Register and to let you know through the Newscast.

Two International Conferences Highlight MRIP

Last month, the 2008 ICES Annual Science Conference, held in Halifax, Canada, included several papers on MRIP delivered by work group members and NOAA Fisheries scientists. The presentations centered on the ongoing efforts to improve the current estimation methods. To view the Conference agenda, visit: <http://www.ices.dk/iceswork/asc/2008/welcome.asp>

In November, MRIP will again be prominently featured with a session at the 5th Annual World Recreational Fishing Conference hosted by the International Game Fish Association in Florida. To learn more about the Conference, go to www.igfa.org.

Click www.CountMyFish.noaa.gov for a complete schedule of upcoming briefings. If you're interested in inviting a representative of the initiative to provide a briefing to your organization, please contact Forbes Darby.

Newscast updates are e-mailed monthly to NOAA Fisheries, state natural resource agencies, marine fisheries commissions, fishery management councils and members of the sportfishing community with an interest in the initiative to improve saltwater recreational fishing information. For more information, contact Forbes Darby at forbes.darby@noaa.gov or by phone at (301) 713-9501.