

MRIP HMS Work Group Conference Call
January 15, 2009

Participants: Ron Salz (Chair, NOAA Fisheries Statistics), Dave McGowan (FFWRI), Grisel Rodriguez (PRDNR), Dave Donaldson (GSMFC), Stephen Stohs (NOAA Fisheries SWFSC), Greg Skomal (Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries), Joe Desfosse (NOAA Fisheries HMS), Guillermo Diaz (NOAA Fisheries ST4), Craig Brown (NOAA Fisheries SEFSC), Corey Niles (Washington DF&W), Sabrina Lovell (NOAA Fisheries ST5)

Action Items Bolded

1) Update on current HMSWG projects

Non-tournament HMS Landings Reporting for Private Boats in the Caribbean
Project Team Lead: Grisel Rodriguez

- Data collection had been delayed due to several internal and external factors.
- To date they have attempted to call 320 out of nearly 1,100 HMS Angling category permit holders and have completed 120 interviews.
- There appear to be a fair number of bad phone numbers and addresses in the permit database.
- **Revised milestones: complete data collection by end of March; final report by April 15th.**
- Dave Donaldson said the subaward goes through end April. Grisel said that should be enough time to finish (i.e., no need for no-cost extension).
- Considering the delays, Grisel and Ron proposed postponing phase II of this project (implement new HMS data collection program) until 2010. This would allow sufficient time to get a program in place and conduct educational outreach with fishing industry. The work group agreed to this change.

HMS Florida Pilots, Project Team Lead: Dave McGowan

- HMS private boat angler telephone survey (PATS) data for wave 6 should be key-entered by end of next week (waves 3-5 already entered).
- Rich Cody has developed an error-check program for PATS dataset
- **Florida will send clean PATS data waves 3-5 to NMFS by end of next week.**
- Characterization surveys complete for nearly 1800 HMS angling category permit holders (represents a little less than ½). **Will send to NMFS next week.**
- HMS fishing activity if picking up in FL. To date a total of 1,156 dockside for-hire interviews have been conducted of which 429 were HMS trips.
- Dockside data entry program is complete. **Goal is to enter all dockside forms by end of January. Once entered data will be cleaned and reformatted to match LPIS data structure for generating estimates.**
- **Dave McGowan will send out monthly tallies to project team members.**

- Dave and Ron proposed that we not produce a mid-year report but rather wait until data collection is complete (end of April). The work group agreed to this change.
- Sabrina asked about getting a list of S. FL charter boat anglers for a focus group. Dave McGowan said this maybe tough since most of them are tourists.

HMS Characterization for S. Atlantic & Gulf, Project Lead: Ron Salz

- Ron has cleaned and reformatted the SAS dataset and begun preliminary data analyses.
- Ron sent a copy of the dataset to GSMFC (Greg Bray) who will assist with the analysis and report generation.
- Milestones for this project have been further pushed back and the new anticipated finish date (final report) is March 1, 2009.

HMS Tournament Sampling Project, Project Lead: Ron Salz

- All data received have been key-entered. We are still waiting for reporting forms from several tournament operators.
- Analysis comparing tournament sampling rates between LPS dockside and phone surveys has been completed. Other data analyses are underway.
- **Milestones for this project have been further pushed back and the new anticipated finish date (final report) is March 1, 2009.**

2) Discussion of PSFMC proposals

North Pacific Albacore

- Corey Niles gave a brief overview of the proposal. He said they hope to have something in place by early July when the albacore season gets going.
- Ron asked if they considered using a “dual-frame” approach to estimation that incorporates the proposed survey data with an existing logbook program. **Ron will send Corey a copy of the “dual-frame” methodology paper produced by NMFS ST1.**
- Ron clarified what is meant by “charters” in the proposal. Stephen and Corey confirmed that most are larger boats where passengers pay as individuals (i.e., not 6-packs).
- Ron asked what would be gained by having observers on-board these trips versus conducting interviews dockside. Observers are likely to be more costly. Corey said the focus was not on discards for this project. He said he will try to find out the logic behind observer sampling on 25% of for-hire albacore trips.

HMS Sharks

- Stephen Stohs gave a brief overview. Thresher shark management has become more contentious recently and the accuracy of the data is a big issue.

- Ron said if this project is funded we will want to work closely with the DAWG work group since they are also looking into under-coverage issues (i.e., night and private access).
- Dave McGowan suggested installing (or using existing) cameras to capture night fishing activity on piers.
- Ron asked if any validation would be done, particularly since much of this proposal relies on voluntary angler reporting. Stephen said this be part of the plan. Ron also expressed concern about the long recall period if anglers are only asked to submit their catch data at the end of the season.
- Ron asked if there was any discussion of a mandatory tournament registration program on the west coast, similar to the HMS program in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Corey and Stephen believed that mandatory reporting was considered but not ultimately recommended as a management measure by the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

The HMS work group approved moving forward with both of these proposals. **Corey and Stephen will take the lead on developing draft MRIP project plans (with budgets and timelines) by February 15. Ron will send Corey an example MRIP project plan to use as a template.**

3) Other proposal ideas for MRIP HMSWG 2009

- Greg Skomal is working on a pilot study for electronic real-time data capture for HMS tournament sampling. He has been working with a company to start development of Blackberry/iphone/PC-compatible catch reporting software. Dave McGowan said this could be useful for swordfish reporting in Florida. The work group agreed that this is something we should consider for future MRIP funding rounds.
- Dave McGowan proposed requesting a 2 to 4 month additional cost extension for the Florida HMS For-hire pilot data collection (scheduled to end April 30). He said that because of delays in start-up in 2008 we do not have a complete fishing season captured (May 1-April 30th). There were no objections to forwarding this request to the OT. **Ron will ask Pres Pate if the OT would be willing to review a proposal for extending the current project.**