

COASTAL RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSE
SEMI-ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Recipient: NC Division of Marine Fisheries

Grant Award #: 2009-F-002

Grant Title: Developing a Comprehensive Recreational Fishing Data Collection Program in North Carolina

Grant Award Period: January 01, 2009 through December 31, 2013

Performance Reporting Period: October 1, 2009 through March 30, 2010

Project Costs:

Expenditures for the Period:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
Personnel	\$70,141
Fringe	\$20,303
Travel	\$6,882
Equipment	\$294
Supplies	
Construction	
Contractual	\$811
Other	
Total Direct	\$98,431
Indirect	N/A
TOTAL	\$98,431
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Total Cumulative Expenditures:	\$98,431
Total Remaining Balance:	\$ 398,096

Description of Work:

Many of North Carolina's current management strategies rely heavily on the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) for providing estimates of recreational catch and participation. MRIP is structured and funded to provide reliable estimates at the regional level. The dependence on a coast-wide sampling scheme has prevented DMF from meeting certain state-level management and FMP development needs. Even after the MRIP projects and improvements have been implemented, DMF must consider that NOAA's management responsibility ends at the regional level. Recreational data collection improvements that satisfy regional requirements may not provide DMF with the level of precision and detail that has been identified through the state's FMP

development process. DMF has relied on provisional approaches to obtain data to address shortcomings of MRFSS. Since 1987, DMF has improved MRFSS by increasing sampling to produce more precise estimates of catch for most species at the state level. To meet the demands of progressive and future fishery management in North Carolina, it is necessary for DMF to conduct surveys outside the scope of MRIP with the following objectives.

- Establish a comprehensive recreational fishing data collection program that allows DMF the flexibility and capacity to provide data needed to meet the challenges of advanced fishery management in North Carolina and support the FMP process.
- Restore confidence in DMF's recreational fishery data collection programs.

NCDMF will collectively refer to all projects that provide recreational fishing catch and effort statistics as the Coastal Angling Program (CAP).

Project Status/Work Accomplished:

Staffing

- Six new creel clerks hired and trained since October 1, 2009.
- Biologist I hired October 12, 2009
- Statistician hired February 10, 2010

Increase Dockside Sampling

January/February 2010 offered anglers some of the worst weather seen in many years. This bad weather resulted in fewer intercepts than anticipated. The newly hired samplers were able to familiarize themselves with their assigned work areas and sampling protocols. In an effort to increase visibility of NCDMF's presence in the field, all samplers have been provided with uniforms that display the agency logo. During this period samplers conducted approximately 800 angler intercepts. All sampling forms have been submitted for data entry. Data will be available for additional analysis in April 2010.

Use of CRFL Database (Angler License Directory)

A pilot survey was initiated in early 2009 to compare the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) Random Digit Dialing (RDD) telephone survey with the new Angler License Directory Survey (ALDS). NCDMF delivered a list of anglers to NOAA every two months. Survey results have been used to evaluate methods to consider exemptions of the CRFL. The results from this pilot project will be used to provide adjustment factors for the National Angler Registry (NAR). During this period, NCDMF has been focused on issues pertaining to sampling frame efficiency. The initial examination of the frame revealed that only 50% of anglers were providing phone numbers. NCWRC was informed of the deficiency in obtaining phone numbers who promptly issued a letter to all license agents describing the need for collection of phone numbers. Those efforts resulted in a 20% increase in the number of phone numbers obtained.

Staff members are currently involved in examining the impact of exemptions to CRFL and how to make appropriate adjustments. Updated sampling frames are delivered bi-monthly to NOAA for use in the Angler License Directory Survey.

Night Sampling

An alternative sampling methodology was initiated in North Carolina on January 1, 2010 to evaluate catch rates over a 24 hour period. This pilot project will be conducted throughout 2011. During this reporting period 206 assignments resulting in 192 completed angler interviews. Assignments were completed in four six-hour time blocks (2am-8am, 8am-2pm, 2pm-8pm, and 8pm-2am). All forms have been scanned and await data-entry.

Flounder Gigging

Staff began analysis of CRFL database to determine the appropriate sample frame. Development of a survey questionnaire for conducting flounder gigging survey is nearing completion and will be distributed for review and pre-testing during April 2010. Surveys will begin in May 2010 and the first estimates from the survey will be available in July 2010.

Private Access

A meeting was held with NOAA and survey statisticians from academia and industry in September 2009 to discuss the framework for conducting private access surveys. Development will continue with anticipation of a September 2010 survey start date. Pilot projects will be conducted in North Carolina and Florida.

Electronic Reporting System

A web application was developed to serve as an alternative platform for anglers participating in recreational surveys. An angler journal was also developed to provide anglers a place to record and store records of their catch and effort. The system was demonstrated during the March 2010 Marine Fisheries Commission Business Meeting. The system received a favorable response; pilot testing of the system will begin immediately in April 2009. The electronic reporting system that is being tested is located at www.ncrecfish.com.

Deviations:

This project was initially scheduled to begin in January 1, 2009. Due to unforeseen economic crisis, staffing for this project was delayed until October 2009. As of February 2010, the project has now become fully staffed and work toward all objectives has begun.