



NOAA FISHERIES

Marine Recreational Information Program

NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Information Program is the state-regional-federal partnership responsible for developing, improving, and implementing surveys that measure how many fish recreational anglers catch and how many trips they take.

Our partnership is built on a collaborative approach to collecting data and producing estimates that meet regional science and management needs, while providing open and transparent access to our work.

Measuring Recreational Catch For-Hire Data Collection in the Greater Atlantic Region

For-hire captains, crew, and anglers play key roles in recreational fishing data collection

For-hire captains report important information through state and federal data collection programs. Crew can help encourage clients to participate in shoreside interviews, which—along with mail surveys—gather data about recreational fishing activity.

NOAA Fisheries uses different approaches to collect information from for-hire captains and clients

For-Hire Survey

This survey is used to estimate for-hire fishing effort from Maine to Mississippi through phone calls with a representative sample of all state- and federally permitted charter and headboat captains. Captains are asked to report their fishing activity during the previous week and provide details from each trip, including the number of anglers who fished, hours and area fished, and target species. The For-Hire Survey is administered by NOAA Fisheries and conducted by state partners.

Electronic vessel trip reports

These reports collect data used to support the stock assessment process and produce estimates of for-hire fishing effort. All vessels with a New England or Mid-Atlantic permit are required to submit a report for every fishing trip, regardless of area fished or species targeted. While we eliminate duplicate reporting to the extent possible, vessels holding certain other federal permits, such as highly migratory species, may be required to submit an eVTR and asked to respond to the For-Hire Survey. This ensures we are capturing catch and effort data on all species. Electronic vessel trip reports are administered by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office.

Large Pelagics Survey

This survey is used to estimate catch and effort of tuna, sharks, billfish, swordfish, and other offshore recreational species from Maine to Virginia. The survey has three parts: catch, effort, and biological. We use dockside interviews of recreational anglers and charter boat captains to produce estimates of catch rates, and telephone surveys of highly migratory species permit holders to produce effort estimates. These are combined to develop estimates of total catch for each large pelagic species of interest.

The biological component of the survey is used to collect information on Atlantic bluefin tuna and other high-priority large pelagics, which helps NOAA Fisheries assess the stocks' age, structure, population genetics, and growth and reproductive rates. The Large Pelagics Survey is administered by NOAA Fisheries and conducted by state partners and NOAA contractors.

Access Point Angler Intercept Survey

This survey is used to estimate shore, private boat, and for-hire catch rates along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Specially



Top Photo: Tom Migdalski
Bottom Photo: Frances Fleet

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How we estimate total for-hire catch:



NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Information Program combines data from the For-Hire Survey, electronic vessel trip reports, Large Pelagics Survey, and Access Point Angler Intercept Survey to generate estimates of for-hire catch and effort.

trained field interviewers working for state fish and wildlife agencies collect information through shoreside interviews to calculate catch rates, or average catch per angler trip, by species and different catch types. These are observed harvest: fish brought back to the dock in a condition that allows field interviewers to identify them; unobserved harvest: fish released dead, used for bait, or filleted, as reported by anglers; and fish released alive, as reported by anglers.

In 2022, as part of the intercept survey, anglers will also be asked a few questions about their fishing expenses. This important information can benefit for-hire operators by helping to show how recreational fishing supports jobs, sales, and income; evaluate how management actions could affect for-hire and other businesses that support recreational fishing; and assess and allocate recovery funds when disasters or major economic disruptions like COVID-19 strike. Importantly, confidential business information remains private. Field interviewers do not ask for the names of any businesses where anglers spent their money, and expenditure estimates, reports, and datasets do not include any marina or vessel names.

All of the information for-hire clients provide through shoreside interviews is just as important as information for-hire captains share through other reporting programs. The Access Point Angler Intercept Survey is administered by NOAA Fisheries and conducted by state partners.

NOAA Fisheries is working with partners to streamline reporting

In addition to our federal data collection programs, many states conduct their own programs. NOAA Fisheries

is collaborating with our partners at the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program to develop tools that will allow the submission of a single electronic report to satisfy the requirements of multiple jurisdictions. When implemented, for-hire owners and captains would no longer need to report the same fishing trip to different agencies or offices. The tools we are developing will not replace the angler intercept interviews.

Accurate data help ensure sustainable fishing

Catch data collected through shoreside interviews, effort data collected through telephone surveys, and information collected through electronic vessel trip reports are used to produce estimates of total for-hire catch.

When these estimates are combined with information about shore and private boat fishing activity, they allow us to evaluate the impact of recreational fishing on fish populations and the effectiveness of management measures. Information you share helps ensure sustainable fishing today, and for generations to come.

You can help

We encourage all for-hire captains to participate in our data collection programs. We also encourage captains and crew to recommend their clients participate in our shoreside interviews.

The conservation and management of U.S. fish stocks rely on accurate estimates of total recreational catch, which can only be produced with the support and cooperation of for-hire captains, crew, and their clients.

For-hire fishing in the Greater Atlantic supports the regional economy



Sales/income/jobs: NOAA Fisheries 2017 estimates

Trips/fish caught: NOAA Fisheries 2019 estimates