



# IMPLEMENTING FOR-HIRE ELECTRONIC LOGBOOKS: THE MRIP PROCESS

## BACK STORY

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), is the state-regional-federal partnership that improves the way we measure how many trips saltwater anglers take, and how many fish they catch. This vital information—combined with other data, such as commercial catch and biological research—allows scientists and managers to assess and maintain sustainable U.S. fish stocks.

MRIP is working to meet regional partner for-hire fishing estimate needs—including charter boats and headboats—by adding approved data collection methods that will allow us to replace random charter vessel sampling with a complete census of all for-hire trips as reported by the captains and guides. Creating effective electronic reporting systems to be used instead of paper logbooks is a key element of this transition. Information on all MRIP projects related to this effort is located at: [www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/pims/#view=public\\_projects](http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/pims/#view=public_projects).

NOAA teams have worked together with for-hire operators, state partners, fisheries managers, independent statisticians, and others to develop this road map. It details the requirements, process, and timeline for designing and certifying census-based electronic trip reporting systems that can be implemented by regional data collection partners as outlined in the MRIP Regional Implementation Plans.

Learn more at [countmyfish.noaa.gov](http://countmyfish.noaa.gov).

## History of Key For-Hire Research and Pilot Studies

- 2006** National Research Council recommends transitioning to mandatory logbook reporting in the for-hire sector.
- 2008** MRIP creates an interdisciplinary For-Hire Working Group, which identifies and recommends best practices.
- 2010** Gulf of Mexico pilot study launches to determine the feasibility of a charter boat catch census using electronic reporting combined with dockside validation.
- 2012** Southeast pilot study expands electronic reporting to all participants in the Southeast Region Headboat Survey, and supports creation of an online input system with mobile apps.
- 2014** Technical Subcommittee of the South Atlantic (SA) and Gulf of Mexico (GoM) Fisheries Management Councils (FMCs) recommends building upon previous work to institute a census-based for-hire electronic reporting system.
- 2015** Together with state and regional partners, as well as for-hire operators, MRIP creates a comprehensive road map for developing and certifying survey designs for validated, census-based for-hire electronic reporting for charter boats.
- 2015-2018** GoM and SA FMCs adopt fishery management plan amendments requiring electronic logbooks for federal charter boat permit holders in GoM reef fish and SA snapper-grouper fisheries, and initiate the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting plan for implementation. Mid-Atlantic FMC adopts omnibus amendment requiring Northeast Vessel Trip Reports to be submitted electronically.
- 2017** Results of South Carolina For-Hire Electronic Reporting Validation pilot study indicate that the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey can be used to validate logbook entries.
- 2018** NOAA Fisheries certifies Alabama's Snapper Check and Mississippi's Tails n' Scales surveys, both of which include a for-hire electronic logbook component.

## Minimum Requirements for Creating an Effective Program

One critical outcome of the extensive collaborative process of research, literature reviews, pilot studies, and analysis has been a consensus among managers, scientists, and operators on a core set of requirements for any census-based electronic logbook program to be successful:

- Work toward achieving the goal of developing a complete census of all for-hire vessels in the fishery.
- Use MRIP-certified sampling designs to validate electronic logbook data.
- Include procedures for incorporating correction factors to account for any misreporting or non-reporting, based on validation data.
- Maintain a complete registry of all for-hire vessels and operators.
- Require mandatory weekly trip-level electronic reporting; build in flexibility to require more frequent reporting when necessary and for operators to declare periods of inactivity in advance.
- Allow the use of multiple authorized applications or devices for reporting, providing they meet data quality standards.
- Implement accountability measures to ensure compliance, and develop compliance tracking procedures that balance timeliness with available staff and funding resources.
- Reduce (or preferably eliminate) paper reporting and eliminate duplication of reporting requirements to ease operator reporting burdens.
- Maintain paper-based reporting options for catastrophic conditions.
- Closely coordinate design and implementation with states, Regional Offices, Science Centers, Regional Fishery Management Councils, and Fisheries Information Networks.

# DEVELOPING FOR-HIRE ELECTRONIC LOGBOOKS: THE MRIP ROAD MAP

## TASKS AND TIMELINE

### TASK 1

Complete and certify one or more **for-hire electronic trip reporting designs**, with validation and compliance assurance provisions.

### TASK 2

Develop a clear and direct process for making MRIP-certified designs available to **regional partners for implementation**, when identified as preferred methods.

### TASK 3

Support **development of electronic reporting systems** that can be used to implement MRIP-certified survey designs.

### ULTIMATE GOAL

Complete the process of developing and certifying census-based electronic trip reporting designs in for-hire fisheries to allow regional partners to implement these methods if they wish to do so, following necessary transition planning, benchmarking, and calibration.

