

**MAFAC Recreational Fisheries Subcommittee
DRAFT Work Plan - 2018-2019**

(v. 2018.08.28)

OVERVIEW

At its June recent meeting, MAFAC passed the following motion related to potential work to engage the Recreational Fisheries Subcommittee for the coming year. The MAFAC motion was:

The Recreational Subcommittee of MAFAC plans to meet with NOAA Fisheries staff via conference call or webinar before the next MAFAC meeting to identify potential issues of focus for the Subcommittee.

Prospective issues include, but are not limited to, electronic catch reporting, examining participation in recreational fisheries (number of anglers) and permitting (state and/or federal) to better identify the universe of offshore anglers, and improved public-private engagement and collaboration.

Once the subcommittee agrees on a focus, a follow-up call will be held with MAFAC to obtain concurrence of the full Committee on pursuing the agreed upon topic.

Upon MAFAC concurrence, the subcommittee will initiate work.

The Subcommittee reviewed several prospective topics under these broad categories, and identified these two topics to address.

TOPICS FOR MAFAC CONSIDERATION

1. Electronic Reporting by private anglers

GOAL: Develop recommendations on how to overcome challenges related to recruiting and retaining participation for non-for-hire anglers in electronic catch reporting programs

BACKGROUND: Despite substantial expressions of interest by private (non-for-hire) anglers for electronic catch reporting (ER), participation and long term retention in ER programs is a particular challenge to successful implementation of such programs. The “participation quandary” must be overcome if electronic catch reporting is to meaningfully contribute to non-for-hire data collection. Effort to resolve the participation quandary may provide ample opportunity for public-private collaboration (e.g. outreach projects). The challenge would be to examine how recruitment, retention, and participation of private anglers could be improved for ER programs.

MAFAC Members: Richard Yamada, Donna Kalez

NOAA Fisheries Advisors: Brett Alger, Laura Oremland, Tim Sartwell

TASKS:

1. Survey existing private angler electronic data collection programs across the nation (including regional, state, and citizen science projects) and evaluate the recruitment, participation and retention success of each project.

2. Through the survey, solicit suggestions on how improvements could have been made to increase the success rate in each of the evaluation areas.
3. Interviews program staff, oversight administrators, and participants if possible, will be conducted.
4. After a review of findings, the Committee will prepare a report to the Secretary, recommending key elements for consideration when developing electronic data collection programs for private anglers in the future.

Tentative Timeline of Steps

Nov 2018 – Jan 2019	Identify and prioritize list of programs to review
Feb 2019 – March 2019	Develop Survey Format and Interview Questions/Protocols
Apr 2019 – June 2019	Conduct Interviews
July 2019 – Oct 2019	Draft Recommendations
Dec 2019	Final Report

Potential questions for the survey to address:

- *What are the challenges to recruiting and retaining participation of non-for-hire anglers in electronic catch reporting programs, and how can they be overcome?*
- *MAFAC could assess how well existing models are working (e.g. Gulf State programs and pilot programs, if not too premature)*
- *Evaluate potential uses of electronic apps by private angler citizen science. How do you manage angler expectations for use of results vs a scientific based reality? Is the value gained worth the effort? How do you improve the value of such a large undertaking?*

2. Improving Quantification of the Universe of Fishermen

GOAL: to identify and recommend improvements to better quantify the universe of recreational anglers in Federal waters.

BACKGROUND: Estimates of the universe of private recreational anglers in Federal waters have a high degree of uncertainty. While federal permits are required for the for-hire sector, which defines their boat universe but not angler total, the private recreational fishing sector is less well defined. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (2006) mandated establishment of a federal registry of anglers who fish in federal waters and for anadromous species to provide better estimates. This requirement has been met primarily through collaboration with and use of state data generated from state recreational fishing license programs or state registries. However, state recreational fishing license programs generally do not provide accurate counts of the total number of anglers fishing in federal waters or for federally managed species due to their design and numerous license exemptions and other factors: combined fresh and saltwater licenses; state level exemptions for fishermen over 65, under 16, veterans, and disabled; free fishing days; etc.

This uncertainty contributes to challenges in both the science and management of fisheries in which recreational anglers participate, complicating and contributing to frustration and dissatisfaction among stakeholders. Improving the accuracy of the number and identity of offshore participants should yield more effective and cost efficient sampling of catch history and the socio-economic behavior of anglers. The product of which can be a reduction in scientific uncertainty in setting harvest rates, more responsive management and improved understanding of economic multipliers related to offshore fishing... Concurrently, knowing the subset of saltwater anglers that are fishing in federal waters enables NMFS to develop a cost-effective and direct communications strategy to build relationships and improve the level of trust between the agency and the angling public. While the impact of such improvement may vary from fishery to fishery, establishing an adequate private angler quantification process should automatically provide actionable and useful information into the future.

MAFAC Members: Robert Gill, Rip Cunningham, Robert Jones

NOAA Fisheries Advisors: John Foster, Russ Dunn

TASKS

1. Identify and specify the sources of the current register of federal recreational anglers. Catalogue the characteristics of each, with specific emphasis on their contribution to the inaccuracy of the total count. *Duration - 3 months*
2. Confer with leadership of each source to determine a) their perceived accuracy, b) what changes, if any, they have planned for the near future, and c) changes they would like to make if they had the opportunity and capability. Quantify to the extent possible, even if very uncertain, the probable change in number of anglers from the current estimate to the resulting anticipated change. *Duration - 6 months*
3. Use commonalities of deficiencies and/or planned improvements to formulate possible recommendations to existing systems. *Duration - 1 month*
4. Evaluate relevant terrestrial examples of solutions to similar challenge and brainstorm possible recommendations, including different approaches than current. *Duration - 1 month*
5. Evaluate all practicable recommendations with the benefits and detriments of each resulting in a ranked order, including estimated quantification. *Duration - 3 months*
6. Using the highest evaluations, develop recommendations to the Secretary with a work plan to accomplish each recommendation. *Duration - 4 months*

Total time - 18 months

Projected timeline:

9/18 - Work plan approval by MAFAC Committee

11/18 - Update ongoing status to Committee

12/18 - Complete spreadsheet of existing systems

3/19 - Complete feedback with state licensing directors/MRIP. Update task status to MAFAC Committee.

5/19 - Complete recommendations to existing systems

7/19 - Develop possible alternative systems to achieve better handle on numbers of private recreational anglers.

9/19 - Complete evaluation of all plausible recommendations for improvement

1/20 - Provide report to MAFAC Committee of recommendations to the Secretary for improvements to the existing Nation Saltwater Angler Registry (NSAR) program

2/20 - MAFAC Committee approval of recommendations