

Annotated Agenda
MAFAC Meeting – Silver Spring, Maryland
November 6-8, 2018

1. Title of Discussion: Transition to Improved Survey Designs

2. Presenter: **Kelly Denit**, Division Chief, Domestic Fisheries, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

David Van Vorhees, Division Chief, Fisheries Statistics Division, Office of Science & Technology

3. Objective/Purpose (Informational)

Update MAFAC members on the transition to two new survey designs of the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), the Fishing Effort Survey and Access Point Angler Intercept Survey and related calibration efforts.

4. Background/Synopsis

The Marine Recreational Information Program recently implemented two new survey designs to provide more accurate monitoring of recreational fishing effort and catch on the Atlantic coast and in the Gulf of Mexico. In 2018, we implemented a new mail-based “Fishing Effort Survey” (FES) to replace the legacy “Coastal Household Telephone Survey” (CHTS) for better tracking of fishing effort by private boat and shore anglers. The FES provides better coverage of the angling population, obtains much higher response rates, and allows for more accurate recall and reporting of fishing trips than the CHTS. In addition, we implemented a re-designed “Access Point Angler Intercept Survey” (APAIS) in 2013 to provide more accurate information on the numbers and species of fish anglers are catching.

Because pilot studies indicated that the FES and new APAIS would provide different estimates of effort and catch than were produced from the prior surveys, we formed a Transition Team to plan a transition that would minimize potential disruptions to stock assessments and fisheries management. Included in that plan was a side-by-side benchmarking of the FES against the CHTS for three years to accurately measure consistent differences. This helped us to develop calibrations needed to convert past effort and catch estimates into estimates more comparable to those produced by the new methods. We held workshops to peer review and approve the calibration methods and we applied them to produce revised 1981-2017 effort and catch estimates that we released to the public in July of this year. The presentation reviews the results of the applied calibrations, showing how historical estimates of shore and private boat fishing effort have changed and how historical estimates of catch have changes for a few important fish species. It also reviews how the revised estimates will be incorporated into stock assessments and fisheries management over the next few years.

5. Discussion to be taken by MAFAC members

The presentation is designed to update MAFAC members, and provide background information for the FY2019 work of the Recreational Fisheries Subcommittee.