



## RECREATIONAL FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK

PACIFIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

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### **RecFIN Update**

Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting  
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Major changes are being made in sampling methods for recreational fisheries that feed into the coastwide Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN) this year. As in the past, RecFIN remains the coastwide database that serves as a repository for recreational catch and effort data for California, Oregon and Washington. The 23+ year-old Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) has or is being phased out in all three states under the following timeline:

California : January, 2004  
Oregon: July, 2003  
Washington: July, 2003

**California** The MRFSS and the State Ocean Salmon Project are being replaced in January, 2004 by one all inclusive survey – the California Recreational Fisheries Survey (**CRFS**). It will sample all fisheries and modes.

**Oregon** In July, 2003, Oregon continued with its ongoing Oregon Recreational Boat Survey (ORBS) and replaced MRFSS with a new inland boat and shore survey using the states' angler license frame to estimate effort.

**Washington** In July, 2003, Washington maintained its Ocean Sampling Program (OSP) and replaced Puget Sound MRFSS boat and shore sampling with a new Puget Sound Boat Survey. The states' angler license frame will be used to estimate angler boat effort in Puget Sound. Shore sampling was discontinued in July, 2003.

RecFIN funds formerly used to conduct MRFSS in the three states have been redirected to support, along with state funding, the cost of these new programs. A brief description of the new programs in the three states follows:

## CALIFORNIA

### **California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS): A Plan to Collect and Estimate Recreational Fishing Catch and Effort California Department of Fish and Game**

In recent years, many recreational management decisions for state nearshore species and federal groundfish species have been based on the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) data. Compared to other sources of recreational data for California, these data provide the most comprehensive coverage for all species and recreational fishing modes (man-made structures, beaches and banks, private and rental boats, and partyboats). However, constituents and fishery managers have expressed concern over the use of these data in making crucial management decisions, particularly in-season decisions for groundfish. In response, policy representatives from the West Coast recommended, and Dr. W. Hogarth, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), approved the development of a new program.

The new recreational sampling program for California, the California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS), was developed by staff from the California Department of Fish and Game (Department) and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC). We recognized the importance of integrating the strengths of the current recreational programs into the design of this new program while also providing for new data needs. Thus, we designed this program to include both the comprehensive coverage of the MRFSS program and the field based effort sampling (for the private vessel mode) of California's Ocean Salmon Project. We also incorporated into the program design a single coordinated sampling effort by Department and PSMFC staff. In addition, we included the use of Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) logbooks for comparison with the CPFV effort estimates.

The goal of California's new sampling program is to produce the timely fishery-based data needed to manage California's marine recreational fishery resources. However, the initial focus of the CRFS program will be to produce timely catch estimates with reasonable confidence limits for salmon, groundfish stocks declared overfished by NMFS, and for those stocks with a directed harvest.

The Department plans to fully implement the CRFS program beginning in January 2004. This program includes the following components.

#### **All Fishing Modes**

##### *Reporting of catch and effort at a finer geographical resolution*

California will be divided into six survey areas primarily along county lines.

##### *Reporting of effort and catch estimates at monthly intervals*

Estimates of catch and effort will be made monthly for each survey area for non-salmon species and biweekly for salmon. Estimates will include private access sites and night fisheries.

### *Estimation of angler effort using an angler license database*

A California angler license database (ALD) will be developed by acquiring contact information from one in every 20 sport fish license buyers and a monthly telephone survey will be conducted to collect additional fishing effort information.

### *Increased creel sampling*

Creel sampling levels will be increased for private and rental boats (PR) and CPFV vessels in all six survey areas within California.

### **Private and Rental Boat Survey (PR)**

Three different methods will be used to sample the PR fishing mode: Primary PR, Secondary PR, and Private PR. Primary PR sites will be visited more frequently and will be sampled with an on-site survey for effort and catch. Secondary PR sites will be visited less often and will be surveyed by a roving sampler for effort and catch. Effort from private access PR sites will be surveyed through an ALD telephone survey while catch rates and species composition will be based on the catch from nearby primary and secondary PR sites. Primary sites also will be sampled at levels that are sufficient to meet ocean salmon management data requirements, including the collection of coded wire tags.

### **Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel Survey**

The three surveys of CPFV fishing currently used in California will continue. These are: the salmon survey for catch and effort; the on-board observer survey for catch rates; and a vessel telephone survey for effort. In addition, the CPFV telephone survey for effort will be compared with effort data collected directly from the landings and CPFV logbooks.

### **Beach and Banks Survey**

Two techniques will be used to sample the Beach and Bank mode: a survey of catch collected at publicly accessible access sites during daylight hours by a field sampler; and the ALD telephone survey for all effort.

### **Man-made Structures Survey**

Two techniques will be used to sample the Man-Made Structures: a survey of angler counts and catch collected at publicly accessible sites during daylight hours by a roving sampler; and the ALD telephone survey for effort at private access sites and during the night.

## **OREGON**

### **Oregon Recreational Boat Survey (ORBS)**

The Oregon Recreational Boat Survey (ORBS) will continue as the sampling program for all ocean boat trips during the fishing season (Mar-Oct). The catch for the Jan-Feb and Nov-Dec time periods (less than 5% of annual catch) are estimated based on the Mar-Oct sampling applied to temporal patterns observed during a recent three year study(1998-2001) of year round sampling. This survey uses exit counts at major ports to estimate fishing effort. Dockside interviews of

boats collect data on catch by species, target species, discards, lengths and weights, and to recover salmon tags. At sea ride-alongs are also used in summer to gather more specific data on discards. The state makes monthly catch and effort estimates and provides them to the RecFIN database.

### **Shore and Estuary Boat Survey (SEB)**

Commencing in July, 2003 Oregon implemented it's new shore and inland boat survey (SEB). This survey uses the state's electronic angler license frame to call anglers to estimate fishing effort for these two modes. The angler phone survey for inland and shore effort is done bimonthly. Angler interviews at the fishing site provides information on catch, length data by species, discards, target species and other biological data. Sample data is provided to PSMFC for estimation of total catch and effort and loading into the RecFIN database. Catch and effort estimates are made by PSMFC on a bimonthly basis.

## **WASHINGTON**

### **Ocean Sampling Program (OSP)**

Washington is continuing to sample all ocean boat effort with their Ocean Sampling Program (OSP). The OSP estimates effort by exit counts of vessels at the ocean ports. Angler catch is collected from dockside angler interviews which provide data on catch and length by species, discards, target species, recovery of salmon tags and other biological data. Catch and effort estimates are made monthly and provided to PSMFC for loading into the RecFIN database.

### **Puget Sound Boat Survey**

Commencing in July, Washington began a new Puget Sound boat survey that like Oregon uses their angler license frame to estimate fishing effort. An angler phone survey bimonthly estimates fishing effort for the previous two month period. Dockside interviews of anglers are used to collect information on catch, length data by species, discards, target species and other biological data. Washington makes bimonthly catch and effort estimates for Puget Sound boats and provides it to PSMFC bimonthly for loading into the RecFIN database.

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