

**Report to Congress
on
Section 201 of the Modernizing Recreational
Fisheries Management Act of 2018**

Section 201 of the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act: Cooperative Data Collection (rephrased)

Within one year after the enactment of this Act, the Secretary (in consultation with the Councils' SSCs) shall develop [a report \(I.1, Att. 2\)](#) on facilitating greater incorporation of data, analysis, stock assessments, and surveys from State agencies and nongovernmental sources into fisheries management decisions.

The report shall **identify types of data and analysis, especially concerning recreational fishing**, that can be used (in management) including setting standards for the collection and use of that data and analysis in stock assessments and surveys...

And shall **provide specific recommendations for collecting data and performing analyses** identified as necessary to (improve) future stock assessments, including whether such data and analysis could be provided by nongovernmental sources; and

Consider **the extent to which the acceptance and use of data and analyses identified in the report in fishery management decisions is practicable and compatible** with the requirements of section 301(a)(2) (best scientific information available).

Report outline

- Types of data and analysis *currently used* in fisheries management
 - catch, abundance, biological, ecosystem, and socioeconomic data; fishery-dependent vs. fishery-independent; and current cooperative research efforts.
- Inclusion of state and NGO sources (*current practices*)
 - Non-governmental data sets, most frequently those collected by state agencies, can be *and are* incorporated into stock assessments... In all circumstances, the data must undergo a rigorous peer review prior to its inclusion in an assessment.”
- Improving accuracy and precision of data and stock assessments
 - Recommendations in the most recent NMFS Stock Assessment Improvement Plan, as well as external reviews, related to data collection.
- Best scientific information as a basis for fishery management
 - Summarizes National Standard 2 guidelines, Stock Assessment Improvement Plan recommendations, NOAA recommendations for use of citizen science, MRIP certification process for catch and effort survey methods
- Recommendations

Report recommendations for state and NGO partners

1. To the extent practicable, acceptable assessment data should be based on:
 - a) **sampling within a plan for covering the entire stock range,**
 - b) **relatively long time-series and commitment to maintain data collection for the foreseeable future, and**
 - c) **peer-reviewed sampling design.**
2. Partners designing scientific studies should **reach out early and often to stock assessment staff** to help shape sampling strategy and allow review.
3. To the extent practicable, data and analyses should be **delivered in the format most appropriate for intake into assessments models or management systems.**

Report recommendations for NMFS and Councils/SSCs (1 of 2)

1. **Develop and document a clear process for reviewing new data** prior to incorporation into an assessment, particularly a new assessment or a research/benchmark assessment. This process could be similar to the **public data review workshops** (such as SEDAR in the Southeast), and could include the SSCs, or other methods. While peer review of assessments includes review of the data used, having a prior review step could facilitate the incorporation of new data.
2. **Consider identifying a liaison at NMFS Science Centers or Councils to assist non-governmental entities** in designing studies and/or connect them with the appropriate assessment staff at the appropriate steps in the assessment process for the consideration of their data.

Recommendations for NMFS and Councils/SSCs

(2 of 2)

3. Liaisons could develop **communication and outreach regarding data needs and data collection programs**, and work with cooperative research staff and grant programs, as well as integrate Council Research Priority Plans, and/or Science Center Science Plans.
4. **Capitalize on existing grant programs**, such as Saltonstall-Kennedy, as well as regional programs, such as the Marine Fisheries Initiative (MARFIN) or North Pacific Research Board as venues for communicating about research and data collection programs, as well as research and data needs.