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Office of Science
and Technology

Marine
Recreational
Information
Program

Gulf of Mexico State Survey Transition Research - Research Team

Gulf Of Mexico Fishery Management Council Scientific and
Statistical Committee Meeting
May, 2023

Overview

- Background
- Scope of Research Team
- Progress to date
- Next steps

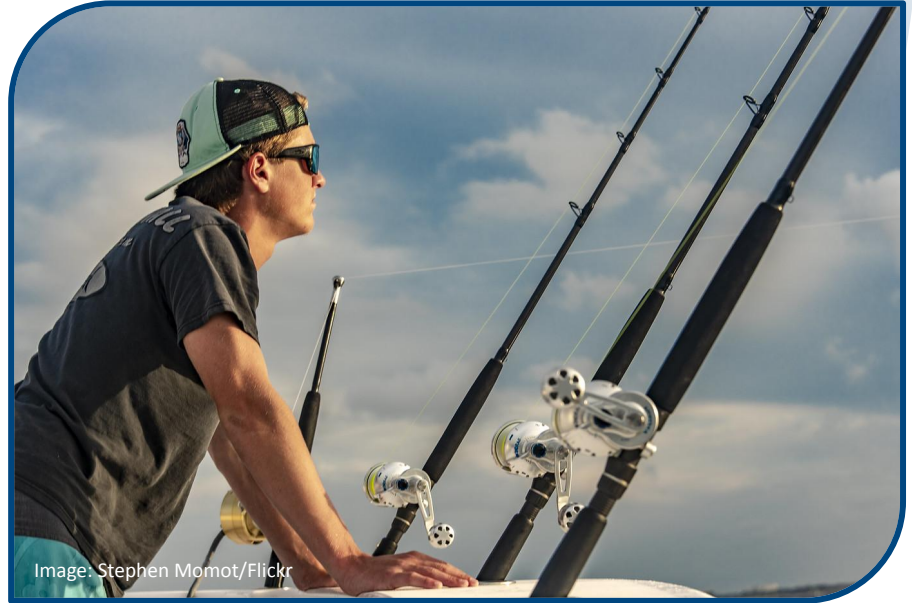


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Background

- Federal surveys designed to produce catch and effort estimates at the wave and annual levels for all species encountered
 - Challenge to balance the need for consistent catch trend information at the stock level and provide precise landings information for management of the state level
- State surveys developed to address short season management needs for more timely and precise catch information on red snapper and other reef fish species
 - State seasons that were inconsistent with federal seasons required higher resolution catch information to maximize season length



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- A series of GSMFC/NMFS workshops were undertaken (2013-2018) to evaluate and improve catch accounting methods for red snapper (and pulse/rare event species)
- New survey methods were introduced by LA in 2014, MS, AL and FL in 2015-2016
- Surveys were certified by NOAA Fisheries in 2017-2018
- Follow-up GSMFC and Council workshops in 2020 to agree upon near term calibration approach and to develop state survey calibrations
- 2022 workshop to formalize transition process for the State Surveys resulted in the development of two pronged approach to transitioning



Congressional Direction

- FY21 Appropriations - Joint Explanatory Statement
 - *(1) an independent assessment of the accuracy and precision of both the Federal and State recreational catch data programs in the Gulf of Mexico;*
 - *(2) recommended improvements to be made to the Federal and State recreational catch data programs in the Gulf of Mexico to improve accuracy and precision; and*
 - *(3) an independent assessment, based on the results of the two prior items, of how best to calibrate the Federal and State recreational catch data programs in the Gulf of Mexico to a common currency.*



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Gulf Surveys Transition Plan

- A transition plan is a certification requirement
 - Recognition of the need to complete transition process as soon as possible
 - Acknowledged challenges to full integration of estimates based on different survey methods into management and assessment processes
 - Interim (near-term) and long-term use of state survey information for management
 - Research to better understand factors contributing to differences in estimates (non-sampling error) and to make improvements to the surveys (called for by Congress)
 - Research Path
 - Implementation Path
 - Critical need to not have either path impede progress



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Gulf Surveys Research

- Gulf Surveys Research Planning Team - Subgroup of Gulf Transition Team
 - GSMFC, Gulf Council, States, NOAA SERO, SEFSC and OST
 - Co-chaired by Tom Frazer, Gregg Bray
- Initial Meeting focused on development of a draft research plan document:
 - Recognized the need to follow up on research related presentations made in preparation for the 2022 Workshops
 - States and NOAA requested to compile an inventory of ongoing, completed and planned research to address non-sampling error
- Second Meeting of the team planned for April 26th
 - Discuss draft document, research inventory and roadmap developed by independent consultants at 2022 workshop
 - Expansion of scope to include evaluation of offshore permits to improve data collection



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Research Inventory

- 24 research projects related to state and federal survey improvements identified
- 15 projects already completed
- 3 projects ongoing
- The majority of the projects had components that addressed at least in part non-sampling error but there were a number that focused on testing of surveys methods and sampling error
- One project set to begin in Wave 4 (July-August) 2023



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Draft Gulf Research Plan

- Goal to address independent consultant recommendations from the transition plan
- Five year timeline for completion
 - Short term (2023-2024)
 - Projects address four themes
 - Simulation and documentation (6)
 - Data auditing/methodology (4)
 - Collaborative experimental - non-sampling error (11)
 - Model based calibration (3)
 - Long term (2025-2027)
 - Annual workshop to review progress to date, revisit prioritization, decide if sufficient information is available to complete congressionally directed independent review
 - Gulf Team convene to decide on revisions to transition plan related to implementation of improvements, calibration methods



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April 26th Research Team Meeting

- Discussion focused on two items:
 - a. Transition related research prioritization strategies and criteria:
 - i. Draft Research Inventory
 - ii. Draft Project descriptions document
 - b. Council Motion:
Request that NMFS, GSMFC, and Council staff provide collaborative support to the 5 Gulf state fishery agencies for the express purpose of developing a universal, state managed, recreational saltwater angler landing permit program, to provide more precise fishing effort for use in both management and assessments.



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Research Prioritization

- Status of funding uncertain
- Some projects already planned, completed or underway
- Concerns that prioritization needs to be completed quickly
- Partners will be provided inventory to rank based on:
 - a. Value to State partner(s)
 - b. whether or not project was duplicative;
 - c. Applicability of findings/impact to transition process
 - d. Cost/funding status
 - e. Timeliness/duration
 - f. Consistency with roadmap produced by independent consultants (largely focused on identifying and addressing sources of non-sampling error)
 - g. Status of implementation
 - h. Logistics
 - i. Adequacy of information provided
- Initial prioritization to be completed by mid May, follow up meeting to finalize shortly thereafter



Council Motion

- Decision to add for discussion to GSMFC Technical Coordinating Committee October 2023 Meeting agenda
- In preparation for the TCC Meeting
 - OST will work with GSMFC to provide TCC with background information on the National Saltwater Angler Registry requirements as outlined in MSA (e.g., MOAs detailing license exemptions, Council presentation materials)
 - GSMFC will coordinate with partners to consider research project to develop white paper that outlines legislative and other considerations, compatibility with current state survey programs, potential improvements or new information, costs vs benefits and feasibility
- TCC will receive informational materials for review and feedback a few weeks prior to the October meeting



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Questions



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