

**MRIP Listening Session**  
**Southwest and Northwest Regions**  
**Summary Report**

**Location:** La Jolla, California

**Date:** April 22, 2008

**Purpose:** To gather input from the NMFS Northwest and Southwest Regions and Science Centers, Pacific Fisheries Management Council members and staff, and state partners to assure that the MRIP design we are developing is appropriately tailored to the specific fishery management and stock assessment needs of the region. Further, such an assessment will enable us to begin to identify and prioritize regional needs for MRIP projects for the next round of project funding, with FY 2009 funds.

**MRIP Team Members:** Gordon Colvin, Preston Pate (by telephone), Forbes Darby, Rob Andrews, Scott Sauri

**Agencies/Groups Represented:** Pacific Fishery Management Council, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, SW Regional Office, SW Fishery Science Center, NW Regional Office, NW Fishery Science Center, States of California, Oregon and Washington

**Attachments:** Agenda, list of attendees

**Major Points and Comments:**

1. In 2003, Pacific RecFIN replaced MRFSS for Oregon and Washington, and in 2004 for California, with the commencement of the California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS). Essentially, RecFIN is comprised of several independent surveys including the Washington ocean boat survey; Washington Puget Sound survey; Oregon ocean recreational boat survey; Oregon shore and estuary boat survey; and the various components of the CRFS. Washington and Oregon have suspended registry-based surveys of shore fishing, and the Oregon shore and estuary boat survey is not currently being conducted. California continues to sample all modes.
2. The total budget for RecFIN is about \$5 million, of which \$1.2 million is NMFS ST 1 funding in lieu of the MRFSS spending and \$1.0 million goes to CRFS via the NWFSC. The federal funding from ST 1 (previously for MRFSS and now for RecFIN) has been essentially level since 1993.

3. For the most part, preliminary RecFIN estimates are produced monthly, with a one-month lag (i.e. January estimates come out on March 1). For certain fisheries with short seasons (e.g. salmon, Pacific halibut and, this year, California rockfish), very preliminary estimates are produced weekly while the fishery is active. These time scales allow the Council and NMFS to make in-season changes to fishery regulations as needed.

4. The RecFIN states and the Council note that the RecFIN partners have developed the RecFIN survey program to produce data with much greater temporal and spatial resolution, and also with a much higher proportion of biological sampling, than the traditional MRFSS program had delivered in the region and/or that is produced elsewhere in the country. The partners wish to ensure that the investment they have made in improved recreational data collection does not result in continued level funding of their programs, while supplemental funding is directed to improving surveys in other regions. At a minimum, the states wish to see funding increased sufficiently to enable them to resume shore and other sampling efforts in state waters that they have had to curtail while investing in enhanced ocean surveys to meet the needs of the Council-managed fisheries.

5. The RecFIN program managers estimate that an increase of about \$2.0 million per year would address the program's principal needs. This level of additional funding would add Oregon and Washington shore sampling and restore the Oregon estuary sampling, including use of the license frame for this effort. Sample size would also be increased, and additional at-sea ride-a-longs for discard data with more precise species ID and some size data could be funded. This additional sampling effort is needed for effective in season quota management, including discard mortality estimates.

6. The RecFIN data supports cooperative management of groundfish, coastal pelagic, HMS and ocean salmon fisheries. The catch data for salmon while they are in the states' internal waters, including the rivers above tidal influence, are provided by the states' inland fisheries agencies, the Tribes, and dam owners and hydropower producers. The partners do not see the need for MRIP-based survey support for these inland salmon fisheries.

7. In 2006, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission conducted a workshop on recreational data needs for Pacific Coast fishery management and stock assessment. The summary results of the 2006 workshop (attached) were used during this Listening Session as a starting point for discussing current needs. For the most part, the needs identified in 2006 were reaffirmed and updated at this Session.

**Comments Specific to Data Needs:**

## **Groundfish**

1. Groundfish are managed to units of one-tenth of a ton. This could include a very small number of fish. Maintaining capacity for very timely and precise catch estimates to enable in-season adjustments is critical.
2. For stock assessments, the principal need of analysts is for ready access to the raw data.
3. As rockfish stocks rebuild, improved stock assessments will be essential. Data that would be very helpful for improving assessments includes: improved estimates of discard rates and discard mortality; additional length/age and length/weight data.
4. In the future, rockfish management will likely become even more spatially oriented (i.e. area closures), so maintaining and improving spatial resolution of species-specific catch data is important. Specific needs include:  
Washington: collect data on water area and depth of catch;  
Oregon: collect additional data on water area and depth of catch;  
Washington and Oregon: collect data in missing modes (shore). This need is applicable to other fisheries as well.

## **Salmon**

1. For salmon, we need to sample at least 20% of the landed catch (or recover heads) to determine the wild vs. hatchery component. Maintaining biological and sea sampling programs is critical. Also, stock assessors need metadata on these samples.
2. At a minimum, biweekly estimates of catch are needed (and maintain weekly estimates for Washington and Oregon) for in-season management.

## **Coastal Pelagics and HMS**

1. Private access trips are a concern for HMS. Private access and night trips are a particular concern for billfish and sharks.
2. HMS are under sampled in the for-hire at-sea sampling because of the long duration of the trips.
3. A multi-level effort is needed to design a biological sampling program for HMS catch and bycatch data for shore and boat fisheries.
4. Tournament fishing data are needed.

## **State Fisheries**

1. Funds are needed to re-start surveys of shore and estuarine fisheries. Data will be used to address the needs of state-managed fisheries, including anadromous fisheries such as steelhead and sturgeon, and marine fisheries such as ocean perch. State data are also essential in other management applications such as: Natural Resource Damage assessment; marine protected areas; human health and fish consumption.

**Comments Specific to Outreach:**

1. Outreach and consultation with the Tribes in the Region should be undertaken.

**Comments Specific to Socioeconomic Data:**

1. HMS trips from California to Mexico are not in the FIN database, but we do need to capture the socioeconomic data attributable to these trips.

**Future Funding Priorities:**

1. The principal need is for improving the RecFIN website and providing enhanced partner access to the data. RecFIN will submit a proposal to the MRIP Design and Analysis Work Group for \$100K of FY 08 MRIP funding to initiate this work<sup>1</sup>.

2. Funding is needed for outreach to improve compliance with CPFV (for-hire) logbook reporting and for supporting pilot private access reporting projects.

3. Studies to validate angler registries (e.g. additional dual frame projects on the west coast) as sample frames would be beneficial.

4. Funding is suggested for a study to explore the hypothesis that telephone surveys may bias effort estimates upward and, if so, to explain the reasons for that bias.

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<sup>1</sup> This project is intended to present the data in a more user friendly form and provide canned tables flagged to the Pacific Council's harvest guidelines for the novice to track catches against allowable catches for the season. Logging of a lot of metadata would also explain the variations in data and sample surveys since 1980. A whole new user friendly site with wiki site lists with maps and facilities would also be part of the redesign under this requested amount.