



NOAA FISHERIES
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Summit

Innovative Management Alternatives and Approaches

Description

Maximizing fishing opportunities while ensuring the sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities is a common goal of recreational fishermen and fishery managers. Traditional management approaches such as fishing seasons, size, and bag limits, in combination with more recent statutorily driven mechanisms including Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures, helped recover a significant number of fish stocks from “overfished” or “overfishing” conditions. However, many recreational fishermen remain frustrated with fisheries management and seek expanded fishing opportunities and more stable fisheries.

The recreational fishing community and fishery managers are exploring ideas to sustainably expand fishing opportunities and/or increase stability in recreational fisheries. Some ideas include shifting from a pounds harvested management approach to harvest rate management, depth-distance management approaches, expanding the use of conservation equivalency programs, adjusting quota allocations, and utilizing fish tags in certain circumstances. In 2016, revised guidelines for the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act’s National Standard One were published, providing the federal fishery management councils with additional management flexibility. The revised guidelines included clarifications on carrying forward unharvested quota from one fishing year to the next, use of multi-year periods for making overfishing determinations, and additional guidance on managing data limited stocks, among others.

This session on Wednesday, March 28 at 9:15am will feature panel presentations followed by a brief question and answer session and in-depth regional breakout group discussions. Breakout groups at 11:00am will work to identify specific challenges in their regions that innovative management approaches may address better than traditional management approaches, specific fisheries or fishery characteristics which may be particularly suited to application of innovative approaches, collaborative actions between fishermen, fishery managers, and scientists that may advance such approaches, and challenges and solutions to implementing innovative management approaches. A reflection panel at 1:15pm will then provide cross-regional sharing of ideas from the breakouts.

Breakout Group Discussion Questions

- What specific management needs or issues could be better addressed in your region by applying an innovative management approach?
 - In which fisheries do they arise?
 - Are there key characteristics of these fisheries which make them particularly suitable for innovative management?
- How can progress toward implementation of appropriate innovative management be made in your region?
 - What steps need to be taken and by whom; what are some identifiable obstacles and how can they be overcome?
 - What specific role can the recreational fishing community play?
- What are the key opportunities for collaboration between the angling community and managers/scientists?

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Socioeconomics in Recreational Fisheries Management

Description

NOAA Fisheries has made significant investments in improving the social and economic information available to fisheries managers, resulting in an increase in the amount of socioeconomic information on recreational fisheries. However, the highly specialized models and tools can be somewhat overwhelming, with questions arising about what models should be used to analyze a regulatory action and how best to interpret that information. While the FY17 Review of NOAA Fisheries Economics & Human Dimensions Program endorsed recent progress in its activities and outputs related to recreational fisheries, it also encouraged the Program to work more closely with managers and stakeholders to enhance their understanding of the models and information available for their use. Equally important, the reviewers also recommended a more systematic approach for getting input from managers and stakeholders on their needs.

This panel on Wednesday, March 28 at 2:00pm will feature an introductory presentation by NOAA Fisheries Chief Economist, Dr. Doug Lipton, who will provide a national overview of NOAA's socioeconomic programs, including a thumbnail sketch of key models and research, as well as highlighting both their applications and common misconceptions. A panel of regional economists and social scientists will then provide a more in-depth look at these models and emerging research, presentations on cultural considerations and application of socioeconomic information and analyses at the Regional Fishery Management Council level, and an industry perspective on social and economic information needs in the fishery management process. The panelists will engage in a facilitated discussion, including an open question and answer session with the Summit participants. Summit participants will then engage in small group discussion at roundtables in the main plenary room (Jefferson) at 3:45pm to brainstorm socioeconomic data and analysis needs, challenges, and application in decision making.

Small Group Discussion Questions

- What are the strengths and deficiencies of the economic and social information and analyses associated with recreational fisheries management?
 - Are their key issues/questions not being addressed by the current suite of socioeconomic data collection and analyses?
 - What changes/improvements would be beneficial and are there ways that fishermen and fishery managers/social scientists can work together to achieve them?
- Are there opportunities to better incorporate socioeconomic information into the management decision making process?
 - If so, where and how? What obstacles are there to doing so and how can fishermen and fishery managers/social scientists work together to overcome them?
- Are there examples in your region of when cultural considerations have been taken into account or ignored in the fishery management process?
 - What were those cultural considerations based on (e.g., people groups, fishing methods, etc.) and how can fishermen and fishery managers/social scientists work together to improve their consideration?



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Expanding Recreational Fishing Opportunity through Conservation

Description

Proper conservation of habitats, forage fish and sport fish populations are important in maintaining diversity and enhancing recreational fishing opportunities. While anglers practice and recognize the importance of conservation, there is potential to expand conservation actions to more anglers and increase or enhance fishing opportunities. The use of descending devices, circle hooks, and barbless hooks to reduce post-release mortality has demonstrated potential to increase recreational fishing opportunities. Through the efforts of for-hire and private anglers, the use of descending devices on the West Coast led directly to reopened and expanded recreational fishing opportunities. The West Coast “conservation credit” approach reduced the frustrations associated with limited fishing opportunities stemming from high release mortality rates and could be a model for other regions to examine.

Anglers and angling organizations are key partners in a variety of habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement activities such as dam removal, river restoration, oyster bed restoration, and sea grass restoration. These habitat enhancements directly benefit a variety of life stages for recreational species and their prey. Forage fish issues are becoming increasingly visible as ecosystem management approaches are considered by fishery managers.

During a panel on this topic on Thursday, March 29 at 1:15pm, a series of speakers will discuss habitat protection and restoration, forage fish, and reducing release mortality. Mr. John Armor, Director of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, will moderate the panel to help answer participant questions about successful conservation actions. Regional breakouts on this topic at 2:30pm will allow participants to brainstorm and develop collaborative strategies that may lead to expanded fishing opportunities by improving conservation in their local waters.

Breakout Group Discussion Questions

- What opportunities exist in your region to collaborate on protecting/improving habitat or forage fish that are important to recreational species? What hurdles would need to be overcome?
- What can be done to elevate understanding of the role that conservation can play in improving recreational fisheries? How can fishermen, managers, scientists, and other coastal and ocean users (e.g., developers, energy producers, aquaculture, etc.) collaborate on this?
- Are there conservation issues (barotrauma or otherwise) in your region for which the Pacific Council’s successful rockfish conservation credit approach could serve as a model?
 - What are they, what steps need to be taken by whom, and how can fishermen, managers, and scientists collaborate on this?
 - What specific role can the recreational fishing community play?
- What additional steps can be taken in your region to further improve survival of fish released by recreational fishermen? How can fishermen, managers, and scientists collaborate on this?



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Angler Engagement in Collaborative Data Collection and Reporting

Description

Information used to assess and monitor recreational fisheries catch and effort is traditionally collected using familiar methods: paper reporting, mail and phone surveys, and dockside intercepts of fishermen. Recreational for-hire data collection programs across the country are moving towards electronic trip reporting (ER), including the use of smart phones, computers, VMS, and tablets to collect, transmit, and store fishery-dependent data. In addition, there is strong interest within the angling community for participation in direct trip reporting via cell phone and tablet by private anglers. Managers are developing and testing such private angler ER survey designs for specialized purposes such as state-level red snapper data collection in the Gulf of Mexico. Harnessing technology to expand angler contributions to recreational reporting in a way that complements traditional fishery-dependent data collection holds enormous opportunity. Electronic reporting may also facilitate collection of important non-catch related data as well, such as data that enable tracking of changes in geographic or seasonal distribution of fish populations. However, this shift poses many new challenges such as achieving and sustaining angler participation in ER programs, assuring angler reports meet survey design performance requirements, comparability of data across States and Regions, verification of angler reported data, and the costs of implementing ER-based data collection programs.

Sessions on this topic on Thursday, March 29 at 8:15am and 8:30am feature presentations from a variety of fisheries and electronic reporting programs. Dr. Luiz Barbieri of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute will kick off the discussion by presenting an overview of the potential opportunities and challenges of recreational ER for both catch and non-catch reporting, and will review the findings of the National Academies of Sciences on this topic. A moderated panel discussion will then explore a) the specific circumstances/requirements for an ER system to produce useable catch data; b) the circumstances/requirements for an ER system to produce other kinds of data that can inform science and management; c) characteristics that make an ER program usable and successful for the angling community and managers; d) potential challenges impeding ER implementation; and e) potential strategies for overcoming challenges, such as encouraging consistent angler use. The panel discussion will be followed by a brief audience question and answer session. Participants will engage in deeper discussion during regional breakout groups at 10:15am. A reflection panel at 11:30am will provide cross-regional sharing of ideas from the breakouts.

Breakout Group Discussion Questions

- What characteristics of an electronic reporting program would make anglers more likely to use it? What is the preferred tool among anglers to provide catch data (e.g., app, web portal, something else)?
- How can we recruit and sustain consistent and accurate participation by fishermen of all ages in electronic reporting programs?
 - What are the opportunities for fishermen and managers to work together to do so?
 - What specific role can the recreational fishing community play?
- In addition to catch and effort data, what other data do you feel would be useful to collect and think fishermen would be willing to share via ER?
- The pre-summit survey highlighted the need for a sustained dialogue and engagement with anglers on electronic reporting. How might this be accomplished after the Summit?