

TIMELINE



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SUMMER 2005: NOAA Fisheries hires the National Academy of Sciences' Natural Research Council to conduct an independent scientific review of the government's data collection programs related to saltwater sportfishing.

APRIL 2006: National Research Council releases their findings, recommending NOAA Fisheries and partnering state agencies dramatically redesign angler surveys to update data collection methods and analyses and foster positive public relations.

SEPTEMBER 2006: NOAA Fisheries convenes a gathering of state and federal fisheries agency leaders, managers, and biologists in Denver, Colorado, to evaluate current data needs and review the National Research Council's findings. NOAA Fisheries is tasked with preparing, in cooperation with states and other partners, a blueprint for redesigning angler surveys by June 2008.

OCTOBER 2006: An executive steering committee—primarily made up of NOAA Fisheries experts and regional fisheries council and commission representatives—is formed to oversee efforts to develop this blueprint.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2006: The executive steering committee holds a series of conference calls with key constituents from the recreational fishing community to get initial input and invite participation throughout the redesign process.

JANUARY 2007: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act is reauthorized. The legislation echoes many of the concerns raised by the National Research Council in calling for redesigned angler surveys. It also includes a requirement for NOAA Fisheries to develop a new national saltwater angler registry as a key part of a broader redesign effort.

FEBRUARY 2007: To formalize plans to redesign the angler surveys, the executive committee launches an initiative to develop the Marine Recreational Information Program to address the National Research Council recommendations and Magnuson-Stevens Act mandates. This new program will be phased in to eventually replace the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Surveys (commonly called MRFSS) that have been in place for nearly 30 years.

MARCH-JULY 2007: Executive committee establishes teams of experts from NOAA Fisheries, state agencies, regional fisheries councils and commissions, and partner organizations to deal with distinct aspects of the redesign process. Teams are tasked in these focus areas: Data Management and Standards, Design and Analysis, For-Hire Surveys, Highly Migratory Species Surveys, the Saltwater Angler Registry, and Communications. This approach promotes a survey redesign process that is inclusive and transparent.

SPRING 2007: NOAA Fisheries' Assistant Administrator Bill Hogarth dedicates almost \$2 million from fiscal year 2007 discretionary funds to develop the Marine Recreational Information Program (an increase to the \$8 million budget for the program).

AUGUST 2007: Teams in charge of distinct aspects of the redesign effort meet in St. Pete Beach, Florida, to begin developing project proposals that address the highest priority recommendations from the National Research Council and the Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements.



DECEMBER 2007: NOAA Fisheries agrees to invest nearly \$2 million for a dozen projects proposed by teams during fiscal year 2008. These include projects related to using dual frame survey methods, reducing potential for bias in catch and effort estimates, establishing survey standardization, and improving data collection from for-hire vessels and for highly migratory species.

JANUARY 2008: NOAA Fisheries issues a proposed rule (developed by the Saltwater Angler Registry Team) on the national saltwater angler registry requirements and state exemptions. A proposed rule is a public document announcing significant government plans and offering opportunity for public input, usually for 60 days or more.

On the Horizon...

ONGOING: Leaders from NOAA Fisheries, state natural resource agencies, and regional fisheries councils and commissions spread the word at numerous conferences and other venues to keep partners and the public well informed and engaged in the redesign process.

JUNE-JULY 2008: Blueprint for the Marine Recreational Information Program will be unveiled.

JANUARY 2009: As required in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, NOAA Fisheries will deliver to Congress a comprehensive report on all efforts underway to phase in the new Marine Recreational Information Program.