

# Report from Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Executive Director - Dave Donaldson

September 13, 2024

- Continue with Data Collection Activities
  - Concerned about 2025 due to funding shortfalls
    - Will not be able to conduct biological sampling without additional funding
    - These data provide ages for state and federally-managed species
    - Critical to accurately assessing stocks
  - Longer-term issues
    - Long-term funding for new state recreational surveys in Mississippi and Alabama
      - Mississippi and Alabama are implementing new recreational surveys to collect catch and effort in their states
      - Utilizing the LA Creel methodology
      - Currently have funds to support the implementation of these surveys but concerned about long-term funding to support them
- On positive note – Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding
  - Gulf States, NOAA Fisheries and Commission working cooperatively on several issues
    - Revitalize and strengthen State/Federal partnership
    - Develop Recreational Data Standards
    - Evaluate and Improve FIN Data Management System
    - Convene Recreational Fishing Effort Validation Workshop
    - Convene Improving Recreational Discard Data Workshop
  - Recreational Fishing Effort Validation Workshop
    - Held June 4-6, 2024 in New Orleans
    - Participants from all Gulf States, private recreational industry, NOAA Fisheries and various other agencies
    - Discussed variety of alternative methods for estimating effort
    - Best method(s) still to be determined but will probably be a suite of options and may vary by state
  - Recreational Discards Workshop
    - Held July 30 – August 1, 2024 in New Orleans
    - Participants from all Gulf States, private recreational industry, NOAA Fisheries and various other agencies
    - Presentations addresses various issue including:
      - Understanding magnitude of released catch estimates for key stocks
      - How current survey efforts collect released catch data
      - Concerns and struggles regarding collecting discards data
      - New approaches
        - At-sea observers in for-hire fleet
        - Remote monitoring video camera systems
        - Citizen science angler reporting applications
        - Using pre-trip notification catch cards
  - Steering committee using findings from Effort and Discards workshops to develop a request for proposals (RFP)

- Purpose – solicit research projects in these two areas of recreational fisheries data
- Approximately \$10M in available funding for projects
- Targeting Fall 2024 to publish RFP
- Targeting early 2025 to select research projects (as determined by panel of reviewers)
- Targeting CY2025 to begin research projects