

Procedures for State Partner Review of NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Information Program Preliminary Estimates

Updated 12/16/2024

Background

These procedures describe a formal, but still evolving, process for state partner review of preliminary catch and effort estimates to better leverage their local fisheries expertise in MRIP quality control processes. A data review tracking tool is also in development to streamline and improve efficiency of data reviews and to serve as a comprehensive, transparent record of estimate reviews and outcomes. These procedures will continue to be refined based on partner feedback and will be revisited once the data review tracking tool is operational.

Preliminary Estimate Review Process

1. **NOAA Fisheries' Office of Science and Technology (OST) notifies states and commissions that preliminary catch and effort wave estimates are posted via the [online query tool](#) and ready for review (message distributed through automatic email wave notifications).**
 - a. If not already receiving these automated notifications, please [subscribe to OST's email service](#) (copy link URL and paste into a new browser; enter site as a Guest if login appears): Under "Information Options" on the subscription form, select "MRIP estimates" and "MRIP public use datasets."
2. **State staff examine NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) estimates for the following scenarios:**
 - a. High-profile species in respective state/region with an unexpectedly high or low estimate in comparison to other estimates in the year/season or the same wave over time.
 - i. If working with size data: unexpected/unusual length and weight distributions.
 - b. An estimate that unexpectedly exceeds an annual catch limit by a significant amount.
 - c. An estimate for a high-profile species that unexpectedly exceeds an annual catch limit by any amount (e.g., species in rebuilding plan status for which overage paybacks are required).
 - d. An estimate that is significantly misaligned with seasonal or in-season projections.
 - e. A very high or very low estimate in comparison to other estimates in the year/season or in the same wave over time for species with short seasons.
 - f. Landings for prohibited species or species landed out of season.

- g. A very high or very low estimate for species with pending regulation/Fishery Management Plan changes or with near-term stock assessments.
 - h. Additional guidance for review:
 - i. Extremely low estimates:
 - 1. Changes to extremely low estimates do not have to be flagged (e.g., a 10-year time series with an average of 1,500 fish suddenly increases to 3,000 fish), unless they are going to have a significant impact on management decisions
 - 2. Time series that fluctuate between zero and a small number (e.g., several thousand fish) do not need to be flagged, unless they are going to have a significant impact on management decisions
 - ii. Highly imprecise estimates (Percent Standard Error>50):
 - 1. Highly imprecise estimates generally do not need to be flagged unless they are being used for a high-profile management decision/action or an estimate has a high PSE in a time series that is typically precise (e.g., a wave estimate has a PSE more than 15% above typical PSEs for the time series, and also results in the PSE of the cumulative or annual estimate rising above 50).
3. **State feedback is compiled and provided to OST for further investigation.**
- a. For efficient and timely review of flagged estimates, it is imperative that state partners providing feedback are as specific as possible and include the following information:
 - i. The estimate in question, being as specific as possible (e.g., if applicable, clarifying the state, year, wave, fishing mode, area fished, catch type and/or effort).
 - 1. For catch type: please note if an interview has a catch count that appears out of line for what's expected for that species, fishing mode, or area fished.
 - ii. The rationale for flagging the estimate, referring to one or more of the triggers above (section 2).
 - iii. A summary of a preliminary investigation of the raw Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) or For-Hire Survey (FHS) data if states have identified anything in these data that could be driving one of the above scenarios (e.g., outlier sample weights, unusual observations, potential errors).
 - b. **Atlantic process for sending feedback to OST:**
 - i. Due to the logistics of coordinating across all Atlantic coastal states and the regional prevalence of low-effort waves early in the calendar year, state review will occur three times throughout the year:
 - 1. Review of waves 1-3 in mid-August/Sept to be added onto the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistic Program's routine wave 3 meeting. Review of Wave 4 in mid-October to early November to be added onto ACCSP's routine wave 4 meeting.
 - 2. Annual review meeting for Waves 1-6 in mid- to late-March.

ii. Atlantic Partner Review Schedule:

Wave	Public Release Date	Atlantic Partner Review Period
1	April 15	Review of waves 1-3: Aug. 15-Sept. 15
2 & Updated W1	June 15	
3 & Updated W2	Aug. 15	
4 & Updated W3	Oct. 15	Review of wave 4: Oct. 15-Nov. 15
5 & Updated W4	Dec. 15	Final review of waves 1-6: Dec. 15-April 1
6 & Updated W5	Feb. 15	
Final 1-6	April 15 Of following year	

iii. In preparation for these meetings, states will follow the steps outlined in [step 2 above](#).

iv. Feedback can be emailed directly to the designated NOAA Fisheries' OST POCs and ACCSP POC.

c. **Gulf process for sending feedback to OST:**

i. State review will occur every wave. Following the automatic email notification from OST that preliminary wave estimates have been posted, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission will send out a call for estimate review from states, setting a deadline for feedback.

ii. Gulf Partner Review Schedule:

Wave	Public Release Date	Gulf Partner Review Period
1	April 15	April 15-May 15
2 & Updated W1	June 15	June 15-July 15
3 & Updated W2	Aug. 15	Aug. 15-Sept. 15
4 & Updated W3	Oct. 15	Oct. 15-Nov. 15
5 & Updated W4	Dec. 15	Dec. 15-Jan. 15
6 & Updated W5	Feb. 15	Feb. 15-March 15
Final	April 15	March 1-April 1

1-6	Of following year	
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- iii. States will coordinate internally on their investigations following the guidance described in step 2 and 3a above, and share their estimates of concern with GSMFC for compilation. GSMFC will then send compiled state feedback by the last date of the partner review periods to OST for further investigation.
 - iv. Annually, GSMFC will schedule and facilitate an estimate review meeting prior to the publication of final estimates.
- 4. OST investigates the flagged estimate, documents the outcome of the investigation, and emails those findings to the relevant state and commission staff, cc-ing relevant council staff.**
- a. The message should include the following:
 - i. Original estimate, updated estimate (if updated)
 - ii. A summary of the investigation and outcome
 - b. Note: Depending on the volume of flagged estimates, there may be limitations to how fast OST can 1) investigate an estimate of concern, 2) make any needed revisions, 3) document the investigation and 4) communicate those outcomes to appropriate parties. In the event that OST cannot address every estimate of concern prior to the updated estimate release date, estimates will be prioritized based on partner input.

Revision of Final Estimates

MRIP data are reviewed and revised according to the schedules outlined above. Our goal is to prioritize preliminary estimate review such that all needed minor revisions are identified within-year, making revision of final estimates a rare occurrence. The intent is to balance data revisions with the need to maintain time series continuity and minimize disruptions for data customers as well as to ensure the efficient use of staff and partner resources.

Generally there are two categories of revisions to final estimates:

- **Major revisions**, where the impact is significant and may alter the overall interpretation of the data and the potential consequences for fisheries management (e.g., design changes, calibration and [a transition plan per policy directive 04-114](#)). When required, major revisions will be made to reflect important updates.
- **Minor revisions**, where the impact is minimal and does not alter the overall interpretation of the data (e.g., historical wave estimate for unmanaged species). Minor revisions to final data will generally not be made unless estimates are being recalculated for other reasons (i.e., a major revision).