

FINAL REPORT

**REVIEW OF THE
FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK
OF THE SOUTHEAST REGION (FIN)**

May 14, 2001

Executive Summary

The goals of the Fishery Information Network (FIN) address the crucial data needs for fishery assessment and management in the Southeast region (the coastal states from Texas to North Carolina, plus Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands). As such, the program has a great deal of inherent value and potential for supporting the management of marine fishery resources in the region. The program's vision of eventually providing "one-stop shopping" for fishery data is an ambitious goal, but if realized, would greatly facilitate the analysis of the diverse data needed to understand the region's fisheries. Although the FIN program was intended to encompass the entire Southeast region, it was evident during the review that the program has evolved to focus almost exclusively on the Gulf states.

The data collection programs implemented for recreational fisheries by the RecFIN(SE) program generally achieve their stated objectives, and have provided benefits in terms of greater "buy-in" by state fishery biologists and managers. Under RecFIN(SE), existing programs (e.g., Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey, MRFSS) have been successfully integrated, and new programs (e.g., charter boat survey) have been developed or enhanced. These developments appear to have improved the sampling coverage of selected recreational fishery sectors, improving the overall quality of the data describing the recreational catch and harvest. The quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) procedures for the recreational sampling programs appear strong, and we encourage the program leaders to view QA/QC as an ongoing need of the program. The principal area for improvement we see in RecFIN(SE) is an improved process for prioritizing sampling and data collection activities given the limited financial resources available. Such processes would need to more closely involve the end data users to better define acceptable levels of precision, and the sampling levels needed to achieve desired precision.

The sampling program for commercial fisheries (ComFIN) is less developed than the RecFIN(SE) program. While much effort has been expended in planning commercial data collection programs, the Review Panel was disappointed to see that these efforts have not produced any substantial data products. The Review Panel recognizes the difficulties the program has encountered in implementing a trip ticket program in all the Gulf States. Overcoming these impediments is critical, however, for ComFIN to meet its basic objectives. As in the business world, ComFIN can be viewed as being relatively early in the business development cycle. Following this analogy, it is critical to develop data products in the very near future, and further to develop the "market" for these products among the key data clients. In addition to developing a trip ticket program to acquire detailed landings and effort data, there have been ongoing planning efforts for collecting socioeconomic data for both recreational and commercial fisheries. While these planning efforts have resulted in some preliminary data collections, the program needs to move beyond the planning stage and into the implementation stage.

Beyond the data collection programs mentioned above, two areas appear to be lacking in the planning process. First, the issue of sampling commercial discards has not been addressed, even though this is important information for properly managing the region's fisheries. Second, a process is needed for bringing together habitat and environmental data. The Review Panel suggests that FIN not initiate new programs to collect these data, but rather coordinate with other groups to make existing data more readily available through the FIN program.

Several other areas of concern are more fully developed in the body of this report, including the need for effective outreach, funding for all geographic areas, and several technical/data concerns. As a final comment, however, the Review Panel emphasizes that for FIN to achieve its potential, it is essential that the FIN partners be fully invested and committed to the program. Selective participation in the programs being developed and implemented will subvert the cooperative nature of the partnership, potentially resulting in spatial or temporal gaps in sampling coverage. At some point, such gaps can render the data useless for providing the broad scale view of Gulf fisheries that FIN is intended to provide.

Introduction and Context of the Review

The Fisheries Information Network (FIN) is a state/federal cooperative program coordinated by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) with a goal “to coordinate marine fisheries information collection and dissemination in the southeastern United States.” As stipulated in their *Framework Plan for the Fisheries Information Network for the Southeastern United States*, the FIN program commissioned a “critical evaluation of the effectiveness of the program in achieving the respective goals and objectives.” At the request of the FIN partners, the Marine Fisheries Section of the American Fisheries Society selected four professionals with diverse expertise in fisheries science and management to conduct this review (see Appendix I for reviewers). Prior to meeting, the Review Panel was provided with extensive documentation regarding the FIN activities since 1996. Subsequently, the Review Panel met April 5-6, 2001 in Washington DC to conduct this review (see Appendix I for format and agenda). The following report presents the consensus review of the Review Panel regarding the FIN program, areas for improvement, and future direction. It is clear that FIN is a developing program rather than a finished product. Comments and recommendations in this review have been made with this in mind.

General Findings

Prior to the signing of the FIN Memorandum of Understanding in 1996, there were a number of perceived problems, described to the Review Panel as:

- Lack of coordination among state/federal fisheries surveys
- Methodological differences among existing program elements
- Duplication of effort
- Insufficient sample sizes
- Variability in quality control standards
- Lack of social and economic data
- Limited access to commercial and recreational data
- Various other technical questions

The FIN program has made progress to rectify many of these deficiencies, often by drawing upon existing programs. The program has successfully brought together many partners representing state, territorial, and federal agencies, interstate commissions and fishery management councils. Cooperation among so many entities is crucial to achieving success in any data collection and exchange program. Complementing this, FIN has achieved what appears to be a great deal of coordination with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). Considering the overlap in fish stocks, fisheries management issues, and jurisdictions between the two programs, this coordination is necessary, and will be vital to maintain as the programs mature.

From the perspective of sampling programs, FIN has maintained and drawn upon valuable

historical data systems (e.g., port agent sampling) rather than creating new programs from scratch. In some cases, they have achieved what they perceive as improvements in pre-existing programs, such as in the sampling of recreational anglers as part of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) and the improved sampling of charter vessels. Both of these programs are conducted under the auspices of, and with funding from, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Institutionally, the creation of a “Gulf FIN” line item in the federal budget has helped to obtain dedicated funding to implement and maintain the program.

Although progress has been made in many areas, not all of the problems that prompted the development of FIN have been resolved. The Review Panel has grouped these deficiencies and related concerns into common subject areas that are addressed below.

Data Issues and Technical Needs

Socio-economic data needs -The economic add-ons (i.e., additional questions asked during the routine telephone surveys) to the MRFSS are a good start in filling data gaps, but greater priority needs to be given to this area. The lack of attention to socio-economic data was raised in the previous program review and there has been little progress except for the economic add-ons. Many people argue that fisheries management is really managing people. The paucity of socio-economic data may help explain why fishery management decisions that impact people tend to be so painful and why so many decisions end in gridlock in the fishery management process or are tabled until a crisis forces action. Before making decisions, fishery managers need to know what their impacts will be on recreational and commercial fishing communities. This requires data that for the most part are not available in the Gulf of Mexico. With the combining of RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN, this only doubles the social and economic data needs in the region. We realize that common paradigms of fisheries management have often paid little attention to the socio-economic needs of constituents, but we expect the FIN program to take the lead in recognizing the need for high quality biological, social, and economic data to successfully meet present and future fishery management challenges.

The Review Panel saw three additional needs for socio-economic information. First, economic data collected as part of the MRFSS should be analyzed and evaluated in a timely fashion in order to be useful for fishery management. We were disappointed that none of these data were provided to illustrate what was being done and why. Second, end users of the data need to be much more involved in defining social and economic data needs as well as in the evaluation of data that have been collected. And third, most of the attention to date has been in the economic area with little to no attention to social data needs. Whereas we recognize a certain overlap in these two areas of concern, we also recognize there are many more fisheries economists working in the region than sociologists. We would prefer to see social and economic data needs determined by a process involving managers and constituents rather than by default.

Additional data needs - By virtue of the types of data collected, FIN has been a system for acquiring fish harvest information rather than a comprehensive fisheries information system. A fishery has several important related components: fish stocks, harvesters (the recreational and commercial fisheries) all business infrastructure related to fishery management, and habitat. Data for only some of these components will be collected and made available to users in the near future or at some later date. The Review Panel recommends that essential fish habitat (EFH) and environmental data should be a part of the FIN and receive high priority. Likewise, there is a lack of discard data available for commercial fisheries whereas by-catch in recreational fisheries is being documented to some extent by the MRFSS. And finally, there is the lack of data overall for the U.S. Caribbean. Since Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are not represented in the U.S. Congress, it has apparently been impossible to secure the necessary funds for extending the MRFSS to this region as well as for collecting other needed fisheries-related data. If these funding needs cannot be met through some agreement with the Congress and the other fisheries management commissions, or by FIN staff working to secure foundation grant funding for assisting those currently not represented in fisheries management, then the U.S. Caribbean area should be dropped from the FIN Program. It makes no sense to continue to involve management personnel from the U.S. Caribbean in the FIN program, and imply data collection coverage in this region, when money is not likely to be forthcoming to meet their fishery information and data needs.

Data Collection - As currently planned, the backbone of the commercial fishery data collection effort (ComFIN) will be the “trip ticket” system of censusing all commercial fishing trips in each state. First and foremost, the Review Panel is concerned that after five years of program activity, no commercial data product of this type is yet available covering all of the FIN states. Regarding the planned implementation of trip tickets, the Review Panel questioned whether the proposed complete census of commercial fishing trips is essential, or whether a statistical sampling design would yield the necessary data. It was not evident during the review whether this debate had occurred, or if the FIN coordinators adopted the trip ticket approach based on an evaluation that considered all alternatives.

Within the biological sampling component of ComFIN and the charter boat survey, there was some concern that no mechanisms were built in to evaluate the adequacy of coverage area and sample size based on standard errors of estimated statistics. Any ongoing program of this type must integrate feedback and evaluation processes to ensure that the program adapts to changes in fishing patterns, species occurrence, etc. The Review Panel therefore recommends that a mechanism for determining the statistical adequacy of biological sampling allocations (e.g., number of scale or otoliths collected annually) should be developed. This mechanism should reflect the priorities of the various species/fisheries, as well as the precision required for their management.

Metadata - Information about data is second in importance only to the data itself. Information such as how, where and why data are collected, who is responsible for data management, and other such facets can greatly influence the resulting interpretation of the data. This information

about data is commonly called “metadata.” In a system such as FIN, that combines data from diverse sources, there may be several layers of metadata: that for each baseline data set, that for each of the recreational and commercial data components, and that for the FIN program as a whole.

Although the FIN program has constructed what they term “metadata” it appears that these “associated databases” only contain information such as weather data, regulations, etc. While these factors influence the character and interpretation of the fisheries data, and should continue to be collected, they are not “true metadata” that characterize the variables of the data sets. It was unclear whether the FIN program has developed “true metadata” either for the program as a whole or for the individual component databases (e.g., MRFSS). Furthermore, the FIN coordinators were unsure whether the metadata that *may* have been developed conforms to the standards of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC), which outlines standards by which metadata are to be reported for information collection programs supported by federal funds. The Review Panel recommends that the FIN program 1) undertake a program to develop “true metadata” for the FIN program as a whole; 2) to the extent possible, develop metadata for each of the component data sets of FIN; and 3) ensure that metadata reporting complies with the FGDC standards.

Data Management - On the issue of software/database development, it appears that substantial expenditures have already been made and more are planned in the near future. Although the Review Panel did not review the detailed background that led to the particular choices made, we felt that further consideration should be given to distributed databases. The FIN program is currently being developed as a centralized data system. For components such as the MRFSS, this is appropriate since it is single database, the data are derived from a structured sampling program, and the final estimates must be calculated from raw data. However, centralization for commercial fishery data may not be needed or economical given current technology, and given its collection by individual state programs. As understood by the Review Panel, the trip tickets will be a simple reporting of information on each trip, and may lend itself to a distributed data management system. Centralized databases require significant investments in hardware/software and in personnel. Conversely, distributed data systems may not require such heavy investment and have multiple added advantages, including vesting the responsibility of data quality and maintenance with those closest to the data collection efforts (in this case, the states). Considering the substantial cost-savings that *may* be achieved without sacrifices to data integrity, the Review Panel recommends that it would be worthwhile for FIN to evaluate and consider alternatives to the centralized data base system for ComFIN before proceeding with additional investments in infrastructure and personnel.

Quality Assurance / Quality Control

Quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) are necessary ingredients in any data collection program. The fishery data provided by the FIN program must be collected in a consistent manner that satisfies minimum standards. Otherwise, it is likely that the program will fail to build a

critical mass of satisfied users to support and sustain the program. In conjunction with the MRFSS, the FIN program has developed a detailed "Quality Assurance and Control Standards" document for the RecFIN(SE) portion of the FIN program and, according to the FIN Operations Plan for 2000, was planning to develop quality control processes for the ComFIN, including a Data Collection Procedures Document (Task B10) and a Quality Assurance and Quality Control Document (Task B14). The Review Panel urges that these tasks be completed, and, further, that the FIN managers recognize that QA/QC should be an ongoing activity; it is crucial to the success of the program and does not stop with the completion of the QA/QC documents.

One QA/QC activity that the FIN program has instituted (but not specifically identified as a QA/QC activity) is organizing workshops for the state and federal port samplers. The Review Panel commends the FIN program managers for accepting this task and urges them to consider expanding this activity. Regular regional meetings of port agents can be used to communicate quality standards and resolve differing interpretations of sampling methodology. Further, these meetings are a good vehicle for the continuing education of existing port agents and training of new agents. Likewise, this idea can be expanded to include workshops with others involved in data collection as well as with end data users.

Also, the Review Panel urges the FIN managers to consider using port agent and MRFSS sampler workshops to educate these personnel about their important role as outreach providers. Port agents and MRFSS samplers are an important link to the fishing industry, a link that is largely over-looked and underutilized. While their primary duties are the collection of standardized fishery data, they are the most visible interface between fishery management agencies and fishers. If given appropriate training and outreach materials, these personnel could be used to disseminate information about a broad spectrum of fishery management issues. The FIN program is well positioned to develop a program of outreach through the existing network of port agents and MRFSS samplers.

Institutional Issues

Commitment of Partners - In signing the Memorandum of Understanding of 1996, the FIN partners agreed to work collectively to improve fisheries data collection, management, and dissemination, ostensibly to improve the management of marine interjurisdictional fisheries. Each state, territory, interstate organization, and federal agency has different constraints and levels of motivations for participating in FIN and for management of marine fisheries.

It is undeniable that each partner has contributed in-kind personnel and services to this program over the years. While it is unreasonable to expect that each of the signatories to the MOU would contribute (or be able to contribute) equally to these efforts, the Review Panel is concerned that fully five years after the implementation of the MOU, the true commitment of each partner is not evident. This is particularly true in the willingness to contribute financial resources to the program. The largest single financial contributor to the program is the National Marine Fisheries Service. No funding was evident from other federal agency signatories such as the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service or the National Park Service. The major components of FIN, including the MRFSS and port agent system, were in place and funded by the NMFS prior to FIN. Further, it is evident that the lack of state partners committed to working toward unified data collection and data standards has been a significant impediment to assembling commercial fishery data.

The Review Panel was a little surprised, and somewhat concerned, that the review process did not involve more of the partners. Although the program manager for FIN and the program manager for the MRFSS led the review discussion, the only other representatives present were a single state representative and a NMFS economist. It was not clear to the Review Panel whether participation by partners was limited to minimize costs of the review, or was the result of limited interest on the part of the FIN partners. In either case, it would seem that involved partners would be interested in actively participating in the review process in order to strengthen their program.

The Review Panel strongly recommends that all partners reevaluate their level of commitment to fully implement FIN from a fiscal perspective and from a program implementation perspective.

Prioritization - One of the critical challenges facing the FIN program is developing priorities among the multitude of valuable activities that could be pursued. Developing priorities is particularly important given the limited fiscal and human resources available. From the information presented in the review, the process for developing priorities is not entirely clear. Although many of the potential users of the data have been involved in FIN development, the Review Panel did not see evidence of a consistent method for ranking the potentially competing needs and desires of these different users. Similarly, there does not appear to be a consistent approach for prioritizing the various fisheries to be sampled. We emphasize that ranking one fishery higher than another does not generally imply that resources should be entirely devoted to the higher ranked priority. Rather, rankings (relative to the priorities) can and should be generally used to guide the proportion of available resources devoted to each fishery or data user.

Beyond developing priorities, the Review Panel recommends that the cost of sampling should be taken into account when choosing among possible sampling programs to develop. For example, it may be wise to pursue a new area that is relatively inexpensive, even if it is not of highest priority. Using such an approach, FIN could maximize the benefits (in terms of information beneficial for fishery assessment and management) of current and new resources available to implement sampling programs. Although some of the programs currently being implemented may fall into this realm (e.g., gulf menhaden sampling program), the Review Panel did not see a clear mechanism or set of guiding principles applied to the program selection process.

Budgeting Concerns -One of the most significant changes since the last program review has been that the MRFSS for the Gulf of Mexico states is now funded through a line item in the Congressional budget. This is a major accomplishment for several reasons. First, it brings the budget closer to the recreational fishing constituencies in the region. This will likely ensure that the additional needs of the survey (if any) are well attended to. Second, it will ensure consistent

attention to the MRFSS over time. Third, it provides the opportunity to secure funding for additional data needs in support of fisheries management.

The Review Panel had three concerns with regard to these funding matters. First, we saw a need for clear priorities for additional funding sought from Congress. As discussed above, the FIN program should develop a process for establishing state level data needs and funding priorities. Data collection priorities are essential for the FIN to be a bonifide program. Second, there needs to be broad-based congressional support for the fisheries information line item in the budget among members of Congress instead of reliance upon only one or two powerful members. Without greater support across the Gulf States, we are concerned that the program may be in jeopardy in the future. Third, the matter of state-level buy-in and support continues to limit the FIN program. We were left with the impression that if federal funding was substantially reduced or eliminated, ongoing state-level data collection activities would be curtailed accordingly. The federal funds that are secured could be made available to the states on a matching basis to insure state level buy-in and support of agreed upon FIN priorities and programs. At the very least, state-level in-kind support should be documented on a regular basis to demonstrate state-level participation in the FIN program.

Personnel Involvement - Related to problems identified earlier regarding the process for developing priorities, the Review Panel was concerned that not all data clients/users are completely integrated in FIN development. A group of particular concern is stock assessment scientists. It appears that fulfilling the data needs of this group (e.g., Gulf-wide landings; age and length composition of important fisheries, etc.) is one of the principal benefits to be derived from the Gulf-wide focus of FIN. Although each partner is represented on the steering committee, the Review Panel did not see a clear indication that stock assessment scientists are well represented on the FIN committee or working groups. As an example, one stock assessment scientist, working on Gulf of Mexico fisheries, that was contacted by the Review Panel was only vaguely familiar with the FIN initiative. The active involvement of this group, as well as other users, will be critical to developing feedback regarding the adequacy of the data collected for stock assessment and other fishery management-related purposes. Such feedback is essential for refining sampling plans (e.g., balancing the number of otoliths collected from various fisheries). Developing feedback between the end users of the data and the FIN program will also be important to help better define the benefits produced through FIN implementation. Documenting and measuring the benefits generated by improved data collection programs will be a challenging task, but is an important step toward enhancing the program and providing the involved partners with a measure of accountability.

Another group that does not appear to be well represented on the FIN committee is the staff from the Gulf Fishery Management Council. While the members of the Council are critical policy makers in the Gulf region, the staff members are routinely called upon to collate and synthesize data on the important interjurisdictional fisheries of the Gulf. As such, meeting their informational needs should be an important consideration in FIN implementation. We strongly encourage the FIN program and Council staff to develop stronger working relationships in order

to reduce duplication of effort and address the management needs of the Council. Council members, particularly those state and federal representatives whose agencies are partners in FIN, should also be more cognizant of the ability of FIN to contribute to their data needs as they formulate fishery management plans.

Dissemination - With the diversity of potential data users, a challenge facing FIN is to decide how best to disseminate the information that is being gathered, and how to measure the success of the program in meeting the stated goal of data dissemination. Even with a well-structured database, users need to know the data are available, and some users may need the data summarized at various levels before it is truly accessible to them. The Review Panel did not see a clear vision for this important piece of the process connecting data collection to information delivery.

One of the strengths of FIN is the mixture of hiring capabilities offered by the states, NMFS, and the Gulf States Marine Fishery Commission. The majority of people conducting interviews for the MRFSS program in the Gulf are presently employed directly by state agencies. In cases where personnel need to be hired quickly, or relocated, or where state hiring freezes or caps are in place, the cooperation among the FIN partners can overcome such constraints and impediments to efficient sampling. However, we must caution that state assumption of the MRFSS field sampling must not lead to a diversion from the overall MRFSS sampling protocols that would render the Gulf data incompatible with data collected from other regions. Allowing such diversion to occur would be a significant step back from the goals of FIN to improve consistency in data collection/compilation and would seriously jeopardize the utility of the long-term data base established in 1979 for MRFSS.

ComFIN/RecFIN Merger - An additional issue that the Review Panel discussed relates to the proposal to merge ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) more closely. The Review Panel felt that there are benefits in maintaining the current level of separation between ComFIN and RecFIN(SE). One advantage is that the budgets for each of these programs tend to derive from different sources. As such, the benefits from these budget expenditures are clearer and the responsiveness to the end user is enhanced when the programs maintain their distinctness. Also, the sampling approaches are generally quite different in each of these programs, minimizing the benefit from merger.

Outreach

One important aspect of the FIN mission is to "disseminate marine commercial and recreational fisheries statistical data and information" and to that end the program plans to develop collections of fishery data that can be readily accessed via the Internet. The Review Panel was told that one long-term goal of FIN was to provide "one-stop shopping" for fishery data and information. It is laudable that FIN is striving to serve as a repository for regional fisheries data (similar to how PacFin services the US West Coast). However, simply producing databases of fisheries information will not satisfy the program's mission unless the data are widely used and appreciated by an active and engaged audience. To date the FIN program has concentrated

primarily on the development of products (fishery information). Time and energy also needs to be spent on marketing available products.

Outreach and marketing of the FIN program should be fundamental and on-going. Outreach is not likely to be effective if it is simply producing an occasional video and brochure about the program. Effective outreach activities require planning and continued commitment of staff and resources. The Review Panel recommends that a strategy for outreach be developed that identifies desired outcomes (e.g., stock assessment scientists and Gulf Council staff members routinely consult the FIN databases) and alternative methods for achieving those outcomes (presentations, mailing lists, newsletters, a website). Outreach activities should be planned at the forefront, not the end of the program. Two forms of outreach are needed: one to the end users of the data (stock assessment scientists, fishery managers, etc.) and one to the providers of the raw data (commercial harvesters, recreational anglers, etc.).

Based on the materials provided to the Review Panel, it is clear that the FIN program managers are aware of the need for outreach activities. Task 4 of the FIN Operations Plan for 1997 was "Establishing an Educational Work Group ... to develop and design an outreach program". This task was also part of the Operations Plan for 1999 (Task 5) and for 2000 (Task B6). However, the materials provided to the Review Panel did not indicate any accomplishments with regard to these tasks, although they have produced a draft RFP for future outreach. We feel there are numerous ways that outreach could be integrated into existing and new FIN program activities.

For example, in 1997 the FIN program established "a user advisory group to provide input into the RecFIN (SE)/ComFIN process" (FIN Annual Report for 1997). In addition to providing important feedback on FIN program activities, the advisory group could also be used to promote the program with potential users. During the 2001 FIN review, D. Donaldson indicated that the advisory panel is comprised of GSMFC advisory members, who meet routinely in conjunction with GSMFC meetings. It would probably be advantageous for the FIN program to include end-users (e.g., stock assessment scientists and Gulf Council staff) in its advisory program, in addition to members of the fishing industry, thereby expanding the range of participants in its programs.

Also, the FIN program could take on the role of coordinating certain aspects of the outreach services pertaining to data collection and dissemination. The FIN program could facilitate information exchange between the agencies, the commercial and recreational fishing communities, and the public by offering workshops to explain and discuss fishery data issues.

Conclusion

The Review Panel realizes the FIN is a "work in progress" but we were disappointed by the slow pace and lack of overall progress in terms of implementation of an information network since 1995. There was enthusiasm evident in the last review of the RecFIN(SE) program but the emphasis was mainly on the planning and designing of the information system. Aside from the apparent success of the GSMFC member states conducting the MRFSS field intercepts, there

appear to still be no data products available from the FIN. If there was no FIN, the GSFMC could still have responsibility for the collection of MRFSS data and they could provide a web link to the MRFSS data set as maintained by the NOAA NMFS. There appears to be reluctance on the part of some FIN partners to engage in program implementation. If there continues to be a lack of financial and programmatic buy-in by the states and a total dependence on federal funding, it may not be realistic to pursue the idea of a fisheries information network as described in the FIN Annual Reports and Framework Plan. At some point, GSFMC officials may have to recognize there are serious institutional constraints that prevent full implementation of this innovative and useful idea, and consider whether it is worthwhile to continue pursuing it.

APPENDIX I

Reviewers

Dr. Robert Ditton, Professor, Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77840-2258; (979)845-9841; rditton@unix.tamu.edu

Dr. Daniel Hayes, Associate Professor, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Michigan State University, 334C Natural Resources Building, East Lansing, MI 48824-1222; (517) 432-3781; hayesdan@msu.edu

Mr. Andrew Loftus, Natural Resources Consultant, 3116 Munz Drive, Suite A, Annapolis, MD 21403; (410) 295-5997; Aloftus501@aol.com

Dr. David Sampson, Associate Professor of Fisheries, Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station, Hatfield Marine Science Center, Newport, OR 97365-5296; (541) 867-0204; David.Sampson@hmsc.orst.edu

Review Format

- I. Call to Order/Introductions
- II. Overview of the Fisheries Information Network
 - a. History/Background – Dave Donaldson
 - b. Mission and goals and objectives- Dave Donaldson
 - c. Organizational Perspective - Dave Donaldson
 - d. Partner Perspectives – Maury Osborn
 - e. Current and Future Activities - Dave Donaldson/Maury Osborn
- III. Question and Answer Period
- IV. Development of FIN Program Review Report – Review Panel

FIN Partners Present

Dave Donaldson, FIN Data Program Manager

Maury Osborn, NMFS Marine Recreational Fisheries Survey Program Manager

Kevin Anson, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Steve Holiman, NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center