

## NOAA ELECTRONIC REPORTING (from page 1)

Electronic reporting has the potential to reduce data collection costs and improve the quality of reported information, and several states - including Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi - have adopted mandatory or voluntary angler reporting apps. But the challenges associated with using these technologies to collect data from private anglers - especially when anglers are asked to voluntarily report their data through a website or mobile app - have the potential to bias resulting estimates.

**Opt-in angler reporting programs can experience low recruitment and retention rates, as well as a tendency for more avid anglers to participate.** To correct for these and other potential biases, independently conducted shoreside sampling must be used to confirm or correct missing or misfiled angler electronic reports. Shoreside validation is crucial, but adds cost and time to the data collection process.

More research will help understand how angler-submitted electronic data can best supplement the data the MRIP partnership collects through other means.

While the general surveys that measure the number of trips anglers take and the number of fish they catch are conducted through in-person, telephone, and mail surveys, advancing electronic reporting has been a long-standing focus of NOAA Fisheries and MRIP.

- In 2012, NOAA Fisheries and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council cosponsored a workshop that examined existing volunteer electronic angler reporting programs and discussed the criteria that would need to be met for similar programs to be used to collect data under MRIP.

- In 2013, NOAA Fisheries adopted a policy to encourage the consideration of electronic technologies to complement or improve fishery-dependent data collection programs. Since 2013, MRIP has supported more than a dozen studies related to electronic reporting.

- In 2016, MRIP published a statement affirming its commitment to develop sound electronic reporting tools and outlining its priorities to expand the use of electronic reporting. These include exploring the utility of angler reporting apps, determining how electronic technologies can support data collection by samplers in the field, and completing and certifying logbook-based electronic trip reporting in the for-hire sector.

- In 2018, NOAA Fisheries certified the designs of two supplemental surveys in the Gulf of Mexico that use electronic technologies to collect data from private anglers, paired with shoreside sampling to account for under- or misreporting. Also in 2018, MRIP adopted a four-part action plan to advance the use of electronic reporting.

- In 2019, catch survey samplers on the Atlantic coast began to use tablets to record and send angler intercept data. Initial reports indicate the time between an intercept and a data submission has significantly dropped, and staff are saving time processing, checking, and correcting data.

Learn more about MRIP's progress toward its electronic reporting action plan.

### About MRIP

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) is the state-regional-federal partnership responsible for developing, improving, and implementing surveys that measure how many trips saltwater anglers take and how many fish they catch.

Do you have a question about recreational fishing data collection or estimation? Email Dave Bard at [david.bard@noaa.gov](mailto:david.bard@noaa.gov) or visit [countmyfish.noaa.gov](http://countmyfish.noaa.gov).

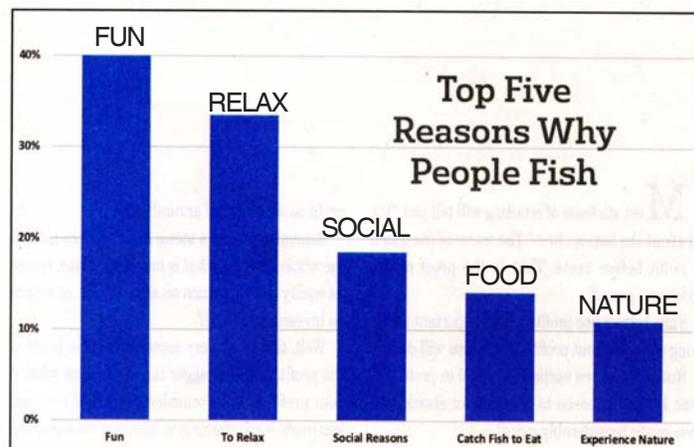
You can view the NOAA Fisheries report to Congress at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/webdam/download/94042422>

## WHY PEOPLE FISH (from page 1)

The chart here shows the top five reasons why people fish. Only one of those is unique to fishing: catching something to eat. The other four reasons tell us what fishing is as to compete with to get people's time - any activity that is fun, outdoors, and social in nature.

On top of all this, what about catching fish? A safe friend asked last year: "How many trips will an angler take without catching fish before fishing is no longer fun?"

Without catching a fish, are there better ways to relax or spend the day with a friend? Without understanding the importance of catching fish, how can our fisheries agencies provide the fishing experiences desired by most anglers?



Does the importance of catching fish vary by age, community, experience, and social pressure?

Until we understand how fishing satisfies what people want from their free time, the importance of catching fish and the numbers and quality of fish expected - as well as how those issues vary across different segments of anglers - we fall short of our knowledge of how to target anglers.

During 2019, in partnership with state fisheries agencies, the American Sportfishing Association will be officially researching this topic in more depth.

Watch for future reports on the results starting later this year.