ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

GOOD DATA | GOOD DECISIONS

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BETTER DATA BETTER DECISIONS

Initial planning for an Atlantic coast cooperative fisheries-dependent statistics program began in 1994 to address deficiencies in the data available for fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (Program) was established in 1995 through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the 23 state and federal agencies responsible for marine fisheries management on the Atlantic coast.

The Program is currently budgeted at $3.5 million, annually. Approximately $2 million is disseminated to the Program Partners in support of data improvement projects through an annual competitive process. The remaining funds operate the Program.

Since its inception, the Program has created an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration with the partners. Technical and policy committees composed of staff from partner organizations and industry representatives set ACCSP data collection and management standards and internal Program policy. A full-time staff of nine work to implement these ACCSP standards and policies and support the data management and dissemination mission of the Program.

What is the value of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program?

Data collection standards have been modernized and streamlined using the ACCSP Program Design as a protocol.

The Data Warehouse is available as a source of complete, homogenized landings data with a time series of over 50 years for fisheries managers, scientists and the public.

Quota monitoring has been revolutionized for fisheries managers using Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS).

MISSION

Produce dependable and timely marine fishery statistics for atlantic coast fisheries that are collected, processed and disseminated according to common standards agreed upon by all Program Partners.

VISION

To be the principal source of fisheries-dependent information on the atlantic coast through the cooperation of all Program Partners in the collection and processing of common fisheries data, and dissemination of the information for purposes of fisheries science and management.

VALUES

Accurate data are required for good fisheries management decisions.

Coordination and collaboration amongst the Program Partners are essential for success.

The Program must be responsive to the changing needs for fisheries data.

Processes must be open and transparent but confidential data must be protected.

Data shall be accessible and easy to use.

Responsibilities should be matched with available resources.

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2008 COORDINATING COUNCIL MEMBERS

Spud Woodward
Chair, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

James Gilmore
Vice Chair, New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Mark Alexander
Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection

Douglas Austen
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Robert H. Boyles, Jr.
South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources

A.C. Carpenter
Potomac River Fisheries Commission

Alex Chester
NOAA Fisheries

Louis Daniel
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Paul Diodati
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Dan Furlong
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Jaime Geiger
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mark Gibson
Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife

Douglas Grout
New Hampshire Fish and Game Dept.

Peter Himchak
New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

Paul Howard
New England Fishery Management Council

Patricia A. Kurkul
NOAA Fisheries – Northeast Regional Office

George Lapointe
Maine Dept. of Marine Resources

Robert Mahood
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Gil McRae
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Roy Miller
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

Thomas O'Connell
Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources

Vince O'Shea
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Alan Risenhoover
NOAA Fisheries - Headquarters

Jon Siemien
District of Columbia Fisheries and Wildlife Division

Buck Sutter
NOAA Fisheries – Southeast Regional Office

Jack Travelstead
Virginia Marine Resources Commission

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

Committees are responsible for setting program policies and ACCSP standards, deciding annual funding allocations, overall program planning and coordination of data collection and data management programs.

The ***Coordinating Council*** is the governing body of the Program and oversees Program Design and implementation.

The ***Operations Committee*** serves as the steering committee to direct development of ACCSP standards and assimilates information from the various committees into cohesive recommendations to the Coordinating Council.

The ***Advisory Committee*** evaluates technical recommendations and advises on development and implementation of the Program.

The ***Biological Review Panel*** develops strategies and ACCSP standards to obtain biological data required for stock assessments. The Panel recommends annual target species and sampling levels for biological sampling and works with the Bycatch Prioritization Committee to integrate data collection protocols.

The ***Bycatch Prioritization Committee*** develops and updates ACCSP data collection standards and biennially ranks species for data collection priority based on statutory requirements, stock assessment and industry needs.

The ***Commercial Technical Committee*** develops catch and effort data collection ACCSP for all species commercially harvested on the Atlantic coast.

The ***Information Systems Committee*** identifies software applications that can meet reporting needs and develop recommendations to improve SAFIS.

The ***Outreach Committee*** provides guidance on how to effectively communicate with its stakeholders and advise on programs to implement ACCSP standards.

The ***Recreational Technical Committee*** develops ACCSP data collection standards for monitoring catch and effort of recreational and for-hire fisheries.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Maine Dept. of Marine Resources

New Hampshire Fish and Game Dept.

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife

Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

District of Columbia Fisheries and Wildlife Division

Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources

Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

New England Fishery Management Council

Potomac River Fisheries Commission

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Mid—Atlantic Fishery Management Council

NOAA—Fisheries

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

"Once just another odd combination of letters in a storm-tossed sea of federal and state acronyms, ACCSP is now a brand name recognized by anglers, commercial fishers, seafood wholesalers, scientists and fishery managers along the Atlantic coast."

Spud Woodward, Chair of ACCSP Coordinating Council and Assistant Director of Marine Fisheries, Coastal Resources Division, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

It is my privilege to be a part of the first annual report of the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program. Over the past 14 years, the staff and supporters of the Program have brought it from the shared vision of Atlantic Coast state and federal fishery managers to reality. While some of the Program plank owners are still active in fishery management, many have moved on to well-deserved retirements, leaving behind a new generation tasked with keeping the vision alive and moving forward. It's an honor to serve as Chair of the Coordinating Council as we strive to meet new challenges while finding new opportunities for success.

Foremost amongst our challenges is funding. The Program remains level-funded, while the costs of business have increased. Many Program Partners are experiencing severe budget cuts resulting from the decline in the U.S. economy. At jeopardy is the progress made over the past decade and a half as state and federal data-collection programs necessary to meet the needs of 21st century marine fishery management lose human and fiscal resources. Not surprising, over the past couple of years, the number of partner project proposals related to maintaining the integrity of state and federal data-collection programs has markedly increased.

The Operations and Advisory Committees have found themselves in a difficult position as they worked to reconcile the necessity of preventing "back slide" in data-collection programs with the mandate to make tangible forward progress toward full implementation of ACCSP standards and practices. A work group composed of members of the Coordinating Council, Operations Committee, Advisory Committee and staff has developed recommendations to bring clarity to the situation.

Another challenge facing the Program is maintaining credibility and relevance with its customers. While many partners and customers believe that ACCSP is the single, reliable source of Atlantic Coast fishery-dependent data and use the warehouse as the source of data, there are others who hold tightly to old ways. They rely on partner and sometime non-partner sources of data in lieu of going to the Data Warehouse. I'm glad to say that this number grows fewer each year as confidence in the Program continues to grow, thanks to the hard work of staff and the advocacy of partners.

A new opportunity to show the relevance of the Program is coordination with the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). Much of the groundbreaking work on survey design and implementation, performed by partners through Program sponsored projects, will be brought to this national effort. Plus, there is much cross-pollination between ACCSP committees and MRIP work groups, ensuring that the best minds are working to make MRIP a success. I look forward to seeing the ACCSP and MRIP partnership strengthen in the coming year.

Once just another odd combination of letters in a storm-tossed sea of federal and state acronyms, ACCSP is now a brand name recognized by anglers, commercial fishers, seafood wholesalers, scientists and fishery managers along the Atlantic coast. This name recognition did not come easy, and I want to thank the thousands of individuals who made it possible - from the data collectors working the docks to the programmers refining the database structure to the fishery scientists who shop the warehouse for data. They all devote themselves to the idea, "Good Data, Good Decisions."

Sincerely,
Spud Woodward
Chair of the ACCSP Coordinating Council

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Today, the Data Warehouse is populated with a time series of over 50 years of complete, homogenized landings data. These data are routinely provided to fisheries managers, scientists and the general public.

Mike Cahall, Director of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

I am pleased to present you with the first Annual Report of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. This report is intended to give our Program Partners, colleagues and friends an overview of the current state of the Program and provide details on progress towards our goals.

Since this is the initial Annual Report, it seems appropriate to revisit the state of fisheries data collection when the Program was created in 1995. Most, but not all, partners had some kind of fisheries-dependent data collection system. Partners had local systems that used unique coding schemes and collected data at different levels. It was challenging to combine these individual datasets into the homogenous whole dataset that is necessary to perform many analyses. The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program was created to address these and other issues.

When I joined the Program in 1998, we had three staff members. The first Program Design, outlining standards for data collection, coding and storage, was almost complete, thanks to the tireless efforts of our partners. The first iteration of the Data Warehouse was designed and built, but had no data. The entire system was contained on one, very small server. The framework was in place, but had not yet been used.

Ten years later, nearly every partner has successfully implemented standards compliant data collection programs either independently or using funds made available through a competitive process developed to distribute the funding the Program receives. Those few partners that have not yet fully implemented the ACCSP standards are working towards that goal.

Today, the Data Warehouse is populated with a time series of over 50 years of complete, homogenized landings data. These data are routinely provided to fisheries managers, scientists and the general public. The Program also runs the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS), the largest commercial fisheries data collection system on the Atlantic Coast, built using the standards put forth in the original Program Design. Many complex data processing tasks that used to take days and weeks now take hours. The single server has grown to six and the staff of three has grown to nine.

SAFIS, first deployed in May of 2004, has radically changed dealer reported data collection in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. Designed as a multi-agency system, SAFIS allows for the collection of near real time landings and catch data with almost immediate data availability to fisheries managers.

Since its initial roll out, SAFIS has undergone several enhancements. Working closely with our partners, an electronic trip reporting module was developed and deployed. The dealer reporting module is nearing the end of its life cycle and work is proceeding on a new version. We expect the new dealer reporting module to be made available during the 2009 fiscal year.

In many ways, 2008 was a turning point for the Program. In May, we supplied the 2007 Northeast landings data for the NOAA Fisheries' publication, Fisheries of the United States (FUS). At the close of 2008, activity was already underway to process data for the 2008 edition. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of our Northeast partners, the Program has been able to supply detailed data for FUS with improved timeliness. Further, the rigorous review this effort required has resulted in significant improvements in the quality, depth and accuracy of

the data in the Data Warehouse. Well ahead of our target, we are now able to provide a 58 year time series for all species in the Data Warehouse.

Over the course of the year, staff participated in several stock assessments by providing data, analyses and information systems resources. In addition to greatly increased activity of the on-line query system, the Program has supplied data in response to a wide variety of data requests from our partners, academia and the public.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the collaborative process that has been at the center of the Program. Our partners put in countless hours over many meetings to create and maintain the ACCSP standards and continue to work within their own agencies implementing them.

Shortly after the outset of the Program, our partners dedicated some of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Management Act funding for the Program and later lobbied successfully for a funding increase that allows the Program to provide support for numerous research and collection programs.

I'd like to extend thanks and the deepest appreciation on behalf of the staff and myself to all of those who have participated in the Program. Without your efforts and support we would have been unable to accomplish or make continued progress towards our mission. We respectfully submit this report to you, our constituents, and especially to our Program Partners, and look forward to continued progress towards all of our common goals.

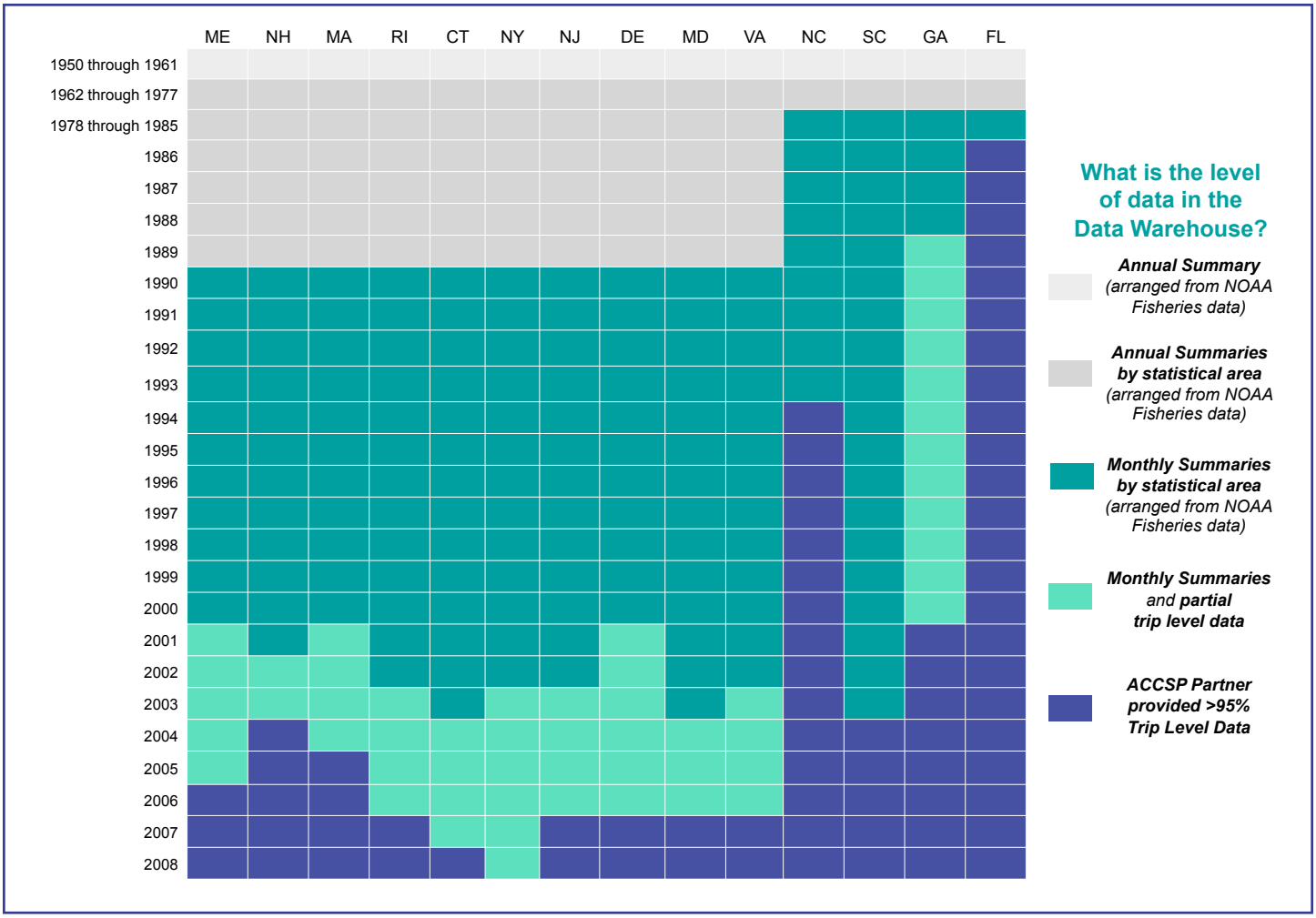
Sincerely,
Mike Cahall
Director of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

PARTNER IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCSP STANDARDS

The Program supports partners in achieving joint goals by awarding grants through a competitive process. These data collection projects have many similar objectives. Some of these include incorporating data into the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS), obtaining data for fishery management plans (FMP), increase sampling of the NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Fisheries Recreational Statistical Survey (MRFSS), as well as, promoting compliance for fishermen and dealer reporting.

Program Partners have made the most progress in meeting the ACCSP standards for the commercial catch and effort module. Nearly all partners have fully implemented ACCSP standards for commercial landings data collection in 2008. Figure 1 highlights the progression from annual reporting by state and species in 1950 to trip level by state, species, area and gear for 2007 data.

FIGURE 1: Progression of annual reporting by state and species in 1950 to trip level by state, species, area and gear for 2007 data



Several of our Southeast partners have trip level reporting programs that predate the Program. The increase in reporting can be expressed by the number of commercial landings reports in the Data Warehouse (Table 1). Lower record counts for earlier years indicate monthly or annual summary records for state dealers and fishermen. Improvements in recent years can be seen in Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina.

Did you know... How many MARKET CATEGORIES are being used in the Data Warehouse? 103

North Carolina, Georgia and Florida all had trip level reporting prior to the year 2000. The progression toward trip level reporting improves the ability of stock assessment scientists to evaluate changes in fish population status and fishing fleet behavior.

TABLE 1: Number of landings submitted by both dealers and harvesters by state of landings in the Data Warehouse. Records collected by NOAA Fisheries federally permitted dealers are included in each state summary.

State Landed	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
ME	13,478	15,954	15,008	15,889	15,858	27,455	57,598	196,991
NH	5,587	6,432	5,828	5,146	8,447	9,266	9,024	5,861*
MA	48,904	54,697	56,841	54,358	54,487	100,106	125,637	170,500
RI	23,421	27,262	31,353	30,916	34,487	30,283	42,649	67,464
CT	2,549	2,925	2,718	982	1,296	1,191	1,173	2,590
NY	22,886	22,476	22,682	22,447	32,095	41,638	41,287	37,209
NJ	17,323	17,848	32,737	28,586	31,514	35,113	34,091	35,082
DE	1,636	4,771	7,360	2,435	4,503	3,143	3,053	5,078
MD	6,558	5,453	4,986	3,317	4,209	5,759	6,669	128,645
VA	15,249	14,182	14,894	12,257	15,216	16,689	171,757	191,912
NC	234,406	239,922	212,457	193,109	182,422	152,170	146,996	155,951
SC	1,209	1,179	1,266	1,210	33,938	30,314	27,781	12,098
GA	17,471	16,855	16,666	15,587	14,604	15,277	16,201	14,571
FL	294,034	263,239	257,062	248,398	233,115	207,204	196,650	219,183
Total	704,711	693,195	681,858	634,637	666,191	675,608	880,566	1,243,135**

*New Hampshire data for 2007 are summary records compiled from trip level reports.
**2007 dealer reports represent over 2.6 million species landing records.

Partners using SAFIS electronic dealer reporting module (eDR) all meet ACCCSP standards for data availability and timeliness. For some partners, using their own systems to collect commercial landings is more applicable. The efforts to conform to the standard of sharing data with partners 90 days from original receipt are still an ongoing effort.

Several partners implemented improvements to their data collection programs to meet or exceed the ACCSP standards in 2008. For dealer reporting, Maine moved to mandatory trip level reporting, New York began entering state trip level reports into SAFIS eDR and Delaware began laying the foundation for state dealer reporting. The remaining partners maintained pre-existing trip level dealer reporting programs, with improvements in participant and permit tracking. Connecticut, New York and New Jersey began using SAFIS electronic trip reporting (eTrips) as a method for fishermen to report. Additionally, Maine and Massachusetts implemented fishermen reporting for at least 10% of lobster fishery participants to remain compliant with regional fishery management plans. NOAA Fisheries, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission maintained their own fishermen reporting system.

This year, the Program continued to support additional recreational sampling for Atlantic states. Recreational fisheries continue to be monitored by MRFSS, and the Program is involved in the transition of MRFSS to the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP).

PARTNER PROJECT SUMMARIES

The following is a detailed summary of the current Program Partner projects executing various pieces of the overall mission of the Program. Unless otherwise noted, these projects received funds in 2008 using resources made available through a competitive process developed to distribute to the funding the Program receives to partners to implement the ACCSP standards.

Implementation of a Mandatory Dealer Reporting System for Maine Commercial Landings According to ACCSP Standards
Maine Dept. of Marine Resources (DMR)

The goal of this project is to switch from monthly summary reporting for specific species to trip level reporting for all species.

The Department hired staff to outreach to industry through phone calls or meetings, encourage and provide technical guidance for dealers using electronic reporting methods, enter landings and monitor compliance for non-electronic reporting methods, audit all incoming data for errors and help non-compliant dealers get up to date on reporting.

Seven different information submission methods, including three that are electronic, were created and a trip level regulation was passed in June 2007. Dealers were given until January 2008 to choose a reporting method and begin reporting.

Manually entered reports nearly doubled in 2008, as most dealers do not have the ability to electronically report. However, the compliance rate has significantly improved through the help of outreach. Minor setbacks discovered were audits not being completed as frequently as expected, the inability to upload data on a monthly basis and audits not being built into SAFIS. The Department has already created a system to upload monthly data to the Data Warehouse. Also, the Software Team is in the progress of developing audits in SAFIS which should be completed by summer 2009 to better achieve mutual goals.

Portside Bycatch Sampling and Commercial Catch Sampling of the Atlantic Herring *(Clupea harengus)* and Atlantic Mackerel *(Scomber scombrus)* Fisheries
Maine Dept. of Marine Resources (DMR)

This project aims to monitor the bycatch of non-target species for management and conservation in all commercial fisheries.

Twelve sites have been identified for surveying purposes. Data will be collected and processing methods explained to industry members at these locations. The target sampling level is 5% of the weekly herring landings and 2% of the mackerel landings.

In November and December of 2008, 24 Atlantic herring samples were processed for length, weight, age, sex, gonad maturity and stomach contents. Nine herring bycatch samples were collected, and twelve species of bycatch were documented. The Atlantic mackerel season begins in January, so no samples or bycatch samples have been recorded yet. In past years, the survey has revealed extremely small levels of bycatch in the herring fishery and minor levels of bycatch in the mackerel fishery.

Conversion Factor Update Sampling in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts – Pilot Phase
Maine Dept. of Marine Resources (DMR), Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and New Hampshire Fish and Game Dept. (FGD)

This is a pilot project meant to illustrate methods for updating conversion factors. The conversions transform reported weights to a standard weight unit based on the species. After factors have been computed the conversions are used for landing statistics, economic analyses and stock assessments.

Through the development of a standard sampling design and protocol, a select group of species will be used for implementation of the project followed by an evaluation of the success of this project. The evaluation will lead to recommendations for future conversion factor projects.

The primary conversion factor is the one associated with the Program Partner supplying the data. If a partner has not provided a conversion factor for the species, unit of measure, market and grade category combination, then the NMFS conversion factor for this combination will be used.

Three species were initially chosen for the project: sea scallops *(Placopecten magellanicus)*, monkfish *(Lophius americanus)* and Atlantic herring *(Clupea harengus)*, and a conversion sampling protocol was written for each species. Communication was then established with fishermen and fishermen groups willing to participate and provide samples for the study. Data have been entered into the Marine Resources Environmental Information System for eleven of the fifteen completed sample trips.

Maintenance and Coordination of Fisheries-Dependent Data Feeds to ACCSP from the State of Rhode Island
Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)

This project continues coordination and oversight of quota monitoring, resource assessment, license tracking and resource allocations based on SAFIS and the Rhode Island Commercial Harvester Logbook. Data feeds of catch and effort, port sampling and at-sea observation data established to the Data Warehouse will be made accessible to others.

Technical support for dealer electronic reporting regulations, as well as, the SAFIS quota monitoring program will be provided while creating compliance monitoring protocols for species. Support will be provided to the harvester catch and effort logbook program, and data feeds to the Data Warehouse for harvester logbook, port and at sea observer data are being maintained.

Harvester catch and effort data streams and dockside sales logbooks have been implemented for all finfish and crustacean species. These data are reviewed for quality and entered into the Data Warehouse. The dealers required to report through SAFIS will continue to receive technical support as needed.

Trip Level Reporting for Lobster Harvesters in Massachusetts
Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF)

The goal of this project is to guarantee trip level reporting by a minimum of 10% of the active lobster fishermen, based on a requirement of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's American Lobster FMP, Addendum X. An additional benefit is that DMF will be able to generate annual summaries as opposed to permit holders submitting their own annual reports.

The Division elected to use a modified version of the SAFIS eTrips application to implement required trip level reporting. A total of 127 permit holders were selected to participate in this program. This number is adequate to achieve the 10% goal in 2008.

By March 2008, the SAFIS eTrips application was operational. To date, 8,688 trips have been entered with nearly 1 million pounds of lobster and other species reported. The Division is in the process of transitioning more of the fishers to eTrips, reducing data entry burden and improving timeliness.

Continuation and Expansion of the New York Fishery-Dependent Data Collection and Biological Sampling
New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

This project aims to implement and maintain ACCSP standards in the commercial food fish fisheries for vessel and dealer reporting, data delivery and biological sampling in New York.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County - Marine Program was contracted to review and process fishery-dependent data as they are collected. Dealer reports will be quality controlled to ensure that they are submitted accurately and in a timely manner. Vessel trip reports will be completed for each fishing trip and submitted monthly. Party and charter boat license holders will also report. Dockside and market biological sampling will continue and expand as needed.

Data collected from state licensed fishermen and dealers were quality controlled and entered into the appropriate SAFIS module. Biological sampling continued in 2008 with 9,549 lengths recorded from 17 commercial species and 3,771 age samples were collected. *(This is a project the Program is currently implementing with funding from 2007.)*

New Jersey Implementation of ACCSP Commercial Fisheries Data Collection; Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting, Electronic Dealer Reporting, and Biological Characterization
New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)

This project will sustain electronic reporting, support quota management through SAFIS electronic dealer reporting (eDR), implement a statewide commercial license to enforce reporting for all marine species and increase biological sampling and data entry into BioTrack.

In 2007, the Division transitioned exclusively to SAFIS electronic reporting. Also, they initiated biological characterization of four commercially important fish species and facilitated implementation SAFIS eTrips. Phase I of eTrips (fishermen entry) is operating successfully with 82 user accounts and data reports generated monthly. Phase II of

eTrips (state staff data entry) is now being used to enter 2009 commercial harvest level data. Commercial landings are now being appropriately entered, enabling quota management. Legislation of a statewide commercial license to sell or buy commercially targeted marine species was supported.

At-sea and dockside lobster biological sampling has been implemented in combination with mandatory lobster landing statistics. Biological sampling for Commission regulated species has continued as legacy, current and future data are entered into BioTrack.

Continuation of Initiating State Dealer Reporting in Delaware, Year 2: Implementation
Delaware Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)

The goal of this project is to establish a seafood dealer reporting and a seafood dealer license in Delaware. The institution of both would help Delaware comply with ACCSP reporting standards, obtain market information for fisheries transactions and improve data quality.

The project began by identifying commercial seafood dealers within the state and introducing them to voluntary reporting. An outreach effort has been ongoing, and is directed toward assuring seafood dealers of data confidentiality, system security and the need for dealer reporting. Additionally, SAFIS has been introduced and offered to seafood dealers as an electronic reporting option. However, many seafood dealers do not have access to internet and a paper reporting option will be offered.

Information Technology Support for Maryland Data Collection, Storage, and Transfer in Support of ACCSP Objectives
Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)

The goals of this project are to maintain annual transfers of biological data to the Data Warehouse, promote on-line dealer and fishermen reporting while maintaining SAFIS, improve frequency in the uploading of Maryland commercial data and work on metadata for project use.

In 2006, the project manager created a database permitting consolidation of fishery-dependent biological sampling data and translation into ACCSP codes. These data will be loaded into the Biological Module of the ACCSP Data Warehouse. A data dictionary was created for the DNR Fisheries Service.

This project was delayed due to a hiring freeze. In March 2009, advertising for a new position was reinitiated.

Conduct of Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey Random Digit Dialing, For-Hire Telephone Calls, and Dockside Sampling in North Carolina During Wave 1, Year 4
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF)

This project aims to fill gaps within MRFSS for the striped bass fishery along the Outer Banks during Wave 1 (January through February) when the survey is not performed.

Staff coordinated with NOAA to achieve the appropriate telephone sample sizes based on Wave 2 sampling quotas and 10% of the For-Hire Survey (FHS)

frame coverage. A telephone sample involving random digit dialing and FHS was ordered through a NOAA contractor and sampling took place during Wave 1 with results later analyzed.

During Wave 1 of 2008, approximately 675 for-hire fishing operations were surveyed with an 87% contact rate in the charter boat mode and 100% contact rate in the headboat fishery. Through the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS), 265 twelve month and 55 two month fishing households were identified. Dockside sampling resulted in 764 anglers providing species composition, biological samples and catch per unit effort. When combining the dockside sampling with the results of the FHS and CHTS, estimates of the overall catch and angling effort were made.

Estuarine Bycatch Assessment in North Carolina Commercial Fisheries
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF)

The goal of this project is to build on the existing inshore water estuarine commercial gillnet observer program in North Carolina. Another goal is to sustain commercial fisheries and protect endangered or threatened species by obtaining effort, catch and bycatch data.

Observers were trained to collect, code, verify and enter data into the DMF Biological Database to be used for analysis.

In 2008, observers obtained nearly 300 commercial gillnet observations on which data analyses will begin immediately following data entry and corrections. This project will continue in sampling in 2009. *(This is a project the Program is currently implementing with funding from 2007.)*

Continuation of Sampling for Hard Part/Aging from the Commercial Fishery for Snapper/Grouper Complex in South Carolina
South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)

The goal of this project is to increase biological data collection in South Carolina to include age structure sampling. Such data can be used to support stock assessment analyses, which inform FMPs. Current dockside sampling occurring in South Carolina has emphasized length and weight data. This project expands the sampling to include otoliths.

An otolith removal technique, that ensures the market condition of the fish is not compromised, was instituted. A sampling protocol established by the Biological Review Panel regarding in-person interviews to gather catch-effort information and data processing was also implemented. On-line databases were used for catch, effort and length frequency data entry.

There has been a significant increase in the collection of biological data, which has resulted in considerable improvements in the quality of data available to both age and length based stock assessments for the snapper/grouper complex.

Conversion of American Lobster Data Warehouse from Business Objects to Oracle Discoverer
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)

The goal of this project is to convert the ASMFC American Lobster Data Warehouse from a Business Objects platform to an Oracle platform. End users of the Lobster Data Warehouse have been having difficulty developing data queries with the original software, Business Objects. Transforming the Lobster Data Warehouse to Oracle software will facilitate technical support and use of the Lobster Data Warehouse in stock assessments and other analyses.

Working in cooperation with Program staff, the Commission has developed written requirements for the new reports. An existing contract will be used for the development work. Staff and Technical Committee members will test the new interface. Staff will update the Lobster Data Warehouse User's Manual. The new interface will be available for use in the 2009 annual data upload and future American Lobster Technical Committee analyses.

Reducing Catch and Effort Variances for Important Managed Recreational Fisheries on the Atlantic Coast (Maine through Georgia)
ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee

The goal of this project is to reduce PSE to less than 20% for harvest estimates of key state and federally managed species through MRFSS. The project provides more accurate and representative data and regional catch estimates from the marine recreational fishery to be used by fishery managers in assessing the impacts of recreational fishing on finfish stocks.

Optimal sample sizes were determined following an analysis of annual PSE for effort estimates by state from the CHTS. Doubling the sampling size will reduce PSE by approximately 25%.

This project continues to reduce annual PSE in each state involved, with most states reporting a PSE below 10%. As MRFSS transitions to the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), funding for the project will be revisited.

Increase Intercept Sampling Levels for the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), For-Hire Methodology of the Charter Boat and Headboat Fishery on the Atlantic Coast (Maine through Florida)
ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee

The goal of this project is to support a 100% increase in charter boat sampling and 50% increase in headboat sampling levels for MRFSS and acquire "adequate precision" of less than 20% Proportional Standard Error (PSE) on an annual per species basis to help in reaching the main goals of MRFSS. Regional catch estimates will be used to assess the impacts of recreational fishing on finfish stocks by fishery managers.

Charter boat anglers are interviewed dockside while headboat sampling occurs on board with two samplers. Doubling MRFSS Intercept Survey sampling resulted in a decrease of approximately 29% PSE. Increases in 2007 achieved the proposed goal of increasing catch estimate precision by state.

PROJECT FUNDING

In 2008, approximately $2 million was awarded to thirteen projects, in addition, funds provided to operate the Program itself. Table 2 presents the distribution of funds.

TABLE 2: Partner funded projects and distribution of funds

Partner	Title	Total
ME DMR	Implementation of Mandatory Mandatory Dealer and Harvester Reporting in Maine	$375,453
ME DMR	Portside Bycatch Sampling and Commercial Catch Sampling of the Atlantic Herring and Atlantic Mackerel Fisheries	$120,015
ME DMR/MA DMR/NH FGD	Conversion Factor Update Sampling in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts - Pilot Phase	$39,884
RI DW	Maintenance and Coordination of Fisheries Dependent Data Feeds to ACCSP from the State of Rhode Island	$135,079
MA DMF	Trip Level Reporting for Lobster Harvesters in Massachusetts	$34,865
NJ DFW	New Jersey Implementation of ACCSP Commercial Fisheries Data Collection; Electronic Vessel Trip Reporting, Electronic Dealer Reporting, and Biological Characterization	$293,014
DE DNR	Continuation of Initiating State Dealer Reporting in Delaware. Year 2: Implementation	$92,715
MD DNR	Information Technology Support for Maryland Data Collection, Storage and Transfer in Support of ACCSP Objectives	$115,183
NC DENR	Conduct of Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey Random Digit Dialing, For-Hire Telephone Calls, and Dockside Sampling in North Carolina During Wave 1, Year 4	$44,100
SC DNR	Continuation of Sampling for Hard Part/Aging from the Commercial Fishery for Snapper/Grouper Complex in South Carolina	$44,374
ASMFC	Conversion of American Lobster Data Warehouse from Business Objects to Oracle Discoverer	$74,234
ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee	Increase Intercept Sampling Levels for the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), for-hire methodology of the Charter Boat and Headboat Fishery on the Atlantic Coast (Maine through Florida)	$359,753
ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee	Reducing Catch and Effort Variances for Important Managed Recreational Fisheries on the Atlantic Coast (Maine through Georgia)	$265,690
ACCSP	ACCSP Administrative Grant	$1,509,547
	Total	$3,503,907

TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Program is separated into 3 distinct divisions to effectively move toward continued progress of the common goals of the Program.

- Staff is dedicated to handling the ACCSP standards and administrative aspects of the Program, as well as, outreach.
- The Data Team works with the partners to identify, transform and audit datasets so they can be included in the Data Warehouse. They also provide data services to partners by answering data queries and participating in data intensive fisheries activities such as stock assessments.
- The Software Team designs and builds the data collection systems that the Program manages on behalf of its partners, and internal systems that support Program activities.

The following is a review of the highlights of the Data and Software Teams, as well as, accomplishments for outreach in 2008.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE DATA TEAM

The Data Team was officially created and staffed in 2008. The Data Team improves data collection, expands the completeness and accuracy of the ACCSP Data Warehouse and advances the availability and dissemination of the data. Activities during 2008 continued to focus primarily on catch and effort data. However, projects were initiated to catalog biological and bycatch programs along the Atlantic coast.

The Data Warehouse

The Data Warehouse was conceived and built to contain fisheries-dependent data in a standard format and coding in a modular design. Priorities for development are 1) commercial and recreational catch and effort data 2) biological sampling 3) bycatch and discards and 4) socio-economic data. To date, work has focused on the catch and effort module with limited projects contributing to the biological sampling module.

Two catch and effort projects completed in 2008 greatly expanded the amount of information contained in the Data Warehouse. Data completeness was expanded by improving granularity for 2007 data and adding historical commercial landings data from 1950 to 1980. The Data Warehouse now contains Atlantic coast wide landings data from 1950 to the present.

Data are primarily accessed through an on-line query interface for named users. Data Warehouse accounts are either non-confidential or confidential accounts. SAFIS

accounts are reserved for partners since the data in SAFIS are not considered final. In 2008, the Data Warehouse had 246 users with non-confidential accounts and 154 users with confidential accounts. These users ran 1,093 non-confidential queries and 612 confidential queries and our partners ran 2,240 SAFIS queries in 2008 (Figure 2).
This year marks a significant turning point in the use of the data in the Data Warehouse. Over 1,700 queries were

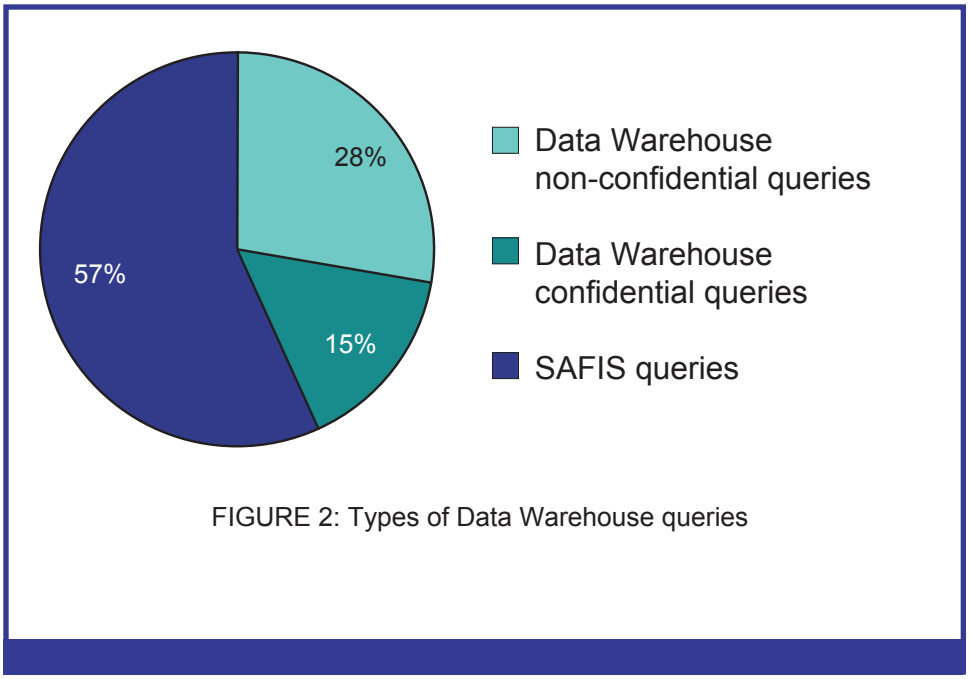


FIGURE 2: Types of Data Warehouse queries

run in the Data Warehouse and over 2,200 queries were run in SAFIS using the on-line user interface. Staff responded to 15 custom data requests including the first major data request from the New England Fishery Management Council.

The majority of Data Warehouse queries sought either landings or fishery participation data. Both state and federal partners have used the Data Warehouse to gather landings for stock assessments. It has also been employed to gather fishery participation information. Some users have accessed landings and values to inform regulatory decisions or populate economic models. Those using SAFIS to run queries often monitor regulatory compliance and landing quotas. Partners can utilize both systems to audit local databases for quality control.

"Looking back at 2008, I'd say that we really appreciated staff participating in several SEDAR data workshops as it provided us additional data and provided the Program increased visibility among those who work on SEDAR assessments. It also showed ACCSP how information is actually used and therefore what next steps are necessary to use the Data Warehouse as an assessment data source. In particular, they provided MRFSS CPUE and catch data for areas outside the Southeast that were both incorporated in the Spanish mackerel and vermilion snapper assessments. Now that the historical data back to 1950 is in the system, I expect the Program to be an important data source for many SEDAR assessments in the future, starting with red drum this year."

John Carmichael
Fishery Stock Assessment Scientist
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Did you know... How many SPECIES are being used in the Data Warehouse? *774*

Stock Assessments

The Data Team attended and provided data for three Southeast Data Assessment and Reviews (SEDAR) in the last year (Table 3). These intense data activities have expanded the utility the Program provides to both partners and users. For the first time, the Program functioned as the default data source for red drum commercial landings for SEDAR 18. Program data were provided for use in several stock assessments and management decisions including American lobster, red drum, smooth dogfish, Spanish mackerel, vermilion snapper, weakfish and winter flounder. Program data were also used by partners to evaluate quota overages and reporting compliance.

Data and Confidentiality

Along with data dissemination, comes the responsibility of protecting confidentiality. A key factor of the Data Team is striving toward the right balance between safe and available data. This year, the confidentiality policy and request forms were updated for clarity and content. Changes include direction to users on data summarization, streamlining the confidential request process for users and partners and the automatic expiration of confidential access.

TABLE 3: Data provided for Southeast Data Assessment and Reviews by Data Team in 2008

STOCK ASSESSMENT	DATA
SEDAR 16 – King Mackerel	*Commercial:* Trip level South Carolina dealer reports for 2005-2007. Trip level GA fishermen reports for 2001-2007. *Recreational:* An index of abundance and bag limit analysis based on MRFSS data.
SEDAR 17 – Spanish Mackerel and Vermilion Snapper	*Commercial:* Trip level SC dealer reports for 2005-2007. Trip level GA fishermen reports for 2001-2007. *Recreational:* An index of abundance and bag limit analysis based on MRFSS data for both species.
SEDAR 18 – Red Drum	*Commercial:* Annual landings by state and gear type for all states on the Atlantic coast with the exception of North Carolina. *Recreational:* An index of abundance and bag limit analysis based on MRFSS data.

TABLE 4: Datasets Submitted for inclusion in Fisheries of the United States, 2007 data

Data Set	Partner	Specific Data Provided By Source
1	ACCSP	Maine state and federal dealer reports (SAFIS)
		New Hampshire state and federal dealer reports (SAFIS)
		Massachusetts state and federal dealer reports (SAFIS)
		Rhode Island state and federal dealer reports (SAFIS)
		New York dealer reports (SAFIS)
		Delaware federal dealer reports (SAFIS)
		Maryland federal dealer reports (SAFIS)
		Virginia federal dealer reports (SAFIS)
2	NOAA Fisheries	Maine bluefin tuna and ocean quahog/Surf clam ITQ – CFDBS
		New Hampshire bluefin tuna and ocean quahog/Surf clam ITQ – CFDBS
		Massachusetts bluefin tuna and ocean quahog/Surf clam ITQ – CFDBS
		Rhode Island bluefin tuna and ocean quahog/Surf clam ITQ – CFDBS
		Connecticut bluefin tuna and ocean quahog/Surf clam ITQ – CFDBS
		New York bluefin tuna and ocean quahog/Surf clam ITQ – CFDBS
		New Jersey bluefin tuna and ocean quahog/Surf clam ITQ – CFDBS
		Delaware bluefin tuna and ocean quahog/Surf clam ITQ – CFDBS
		Maryland bluefin tuna and ocean quahog/Surf clam ITQ – CFDBS
		Virginia bluefin tuna and ocean quahog/Surf clam ITQ – CFDBS
3	ME DMR	Maine supplemental state dealer reports
4	NH FGD	New Hampshire coastal harvester
5	NH FGD	New Hampshire lobster supplemental
6	NOAA Fisheries	Massachusetts swordfish canvas – CFDBS
7	RI DFW	Massachusetts supplemental lobster (fisherman reports)
8	NOAA Fisheries	Rhode Island RICAN07 – CFDBS
9	RI DFW	Rhode Island horseshoe crab supplemental
10	RI DFW	Rhode Island lobster supplemental * received in final data only
11	CT DEP	Connecticut comprehensive dealer/fishermen report (all species)
12	NY DEC	New York horseshoe crab reports
13	NY DEC	New York Hudson river shad
14	NY DEC	New York crustacean
15	NY DEC	New York lobster annual recall
16	NY DEC	New York shellfish data
17	NY DEC	New York striped bass tag reports
18	NOAA Fisheries	New Jersey swordfish canvas – CFDBS
19	NOAA Fisheries	New Jersey fishermen reporting CFDBS (tautog, hard clam, lobster)
20	NJ DFW	New Jersey fishermen and dealer reports (eel)
21	NOAA Fisheries	New Jersey fishermen reporting CFDBS (blue crab)
22	DE DNR	Delaware finfish trip level
23	DE DNR	Delaware shellfish
24	MD DNR	Maryland fisherman reports
25	VMRC	Virginia fisherman reports
26	VMRC and NOAAFisheries	Virginia submitted PRFC data
27	NC DENR	North Carolina state trip reports
28	SC DENR	South Carolina state trip reports
29	GA DNR	Georgia state trip reports
30	FL FWCC	Florida state trip reports

CFDBS - Commercial Fisheries Database System
ITQ – Individual Transferable Quota
PRFC - Potomac River Fisheries Commission
RICAN07 – Rhode Island State supplemental landings

Fisheries of the United States

The Program worked in cooperation with NOAA Fisheries - Northeast Regional Office (NERO) to bring together commercial landings data from Maine to Virginia for the annual publication Fisheries of the United States (FUS). Through an open and collaborative process, the partners planned for the submission and compilation of 30 datasets, including SAFIS dealer reports (see Table 4).

Partners provided direction on the complex combinations of the various datasets. Some datasets are supplementary, which can be added together, while others contain duplicate records for the same landing and must be merged. All of these datasets were obtained in the spring of 2008 as preliminary and again in the fall as final data. The Data Team began the coordination process for 2008 end of year landings submission to the Program in November.

By working with partners to develop the FUS dataset, the Program populated the Data Warehouse at finer resolution and supported our mission to "produce dependable and timely marine fishery statistics for Atlantic coast fisheries that are collected, processed and disseminated according to common ACCSP standards agreed upon by all Program Partners." New data loads were developed for 19 state datasets, including Maine state dealer reports and various species-specific datasets from New York.

The Program continued to get monthly trip level reports from Georgia and Florida and annual submissions from North Carolina and South Carolina. New software was written to merge dealer and fishermen reported landings from Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. Finally, landings submitted directly to the Program by South Carolina and Georgia were provided to NOAA Fisheries - Southeast Regional Office for inclusion in FUS.

Historical Data

The commercial landings time series was extended backward to 1950. Please reference Figure 1 on page ( ) which illustrates the improvement in data collection from annual summaries in 1950 to monthly summaries in later decades to primarily trip level reporting in recent years. These extended historical data have greatly improved the ability for the Program to provide comprehensive data to stock assessments.

Recreational catch and effort data collected by the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey from Maine to Florida are also available through the Program's website (*www.accsp.org*). Standard queries are available for the duration of the time-series (1981 to 2007). Advanced queries for directed trips and catch frequency analysis are also available for over 50 species.

The biological sampling module contains data for American lobster (1981-2007) and herring samples collected by Maine (2004-2007). Both biological datasets were used to support stock assessments in 2008.

Improvements and Availability

As the Data Team staff has grown, additional efforts have gone toward improving data quality and accuracy. Staff implemented landings checks against the NOAA Fisheries and other datasets. Based on new data feeds developed for FUS, modifications to the Data Warehouse were implemented and the documentation for standard transfer formats was updated. These changes include the addition of port of landing, dealer sold to and price to fisherman reporting structures. This year staff completed a project to update how participant, dealers and fishermen, information is stored in the Data Warehouse to match the more detailed structures in SAFIS. Each participant now has one record for the person, business with multiple permits, licenses that may be issued by different state or federal agencies. This structure change enables better resolution to questions such as "how many fishermen and/or dealers are there?" or "how many fishermen and/or dealers have permits from multiple agencies?"

Lastly, a less visible role of the Data Team is to ensure that all of the computer systems are online and available. To that end, regular maintenance continued on network stability, server hardware and software updates, database back-ups and file backups to tape. During 2008, the original SAFIS database server, bought in 2003, was replaced and the old server repurposed.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE SOFTWARE TEAM

The Software Team designs and builds the data collection systems that the Program manages on behalf of its partners, and internal systems that support Program activities.

Existing Software Applications

Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information Systems (SAFIS) is a real time, web-based reporting system for commercial landings on the Atlantic coast. It is currently comprised of three distinct applications. It is important to recognize that while these applications stand alone, all are kept within the same database and therefore can share ACCSP standards and codes. The three current SAFIS applications are:

- Electronic Dealer Reports (eDR) is a forms based application that collects landings data from the dealers. These data include condition and price.
- Electronic Trip Reporting (eTrips) is a web-based application that gathers catch and effort data from fishermen.
  These data include gear used, fishing area and disposition.

TABLE 5: #eTrip reports as of Feb 29, 2009

Partner	# eTrip Reports as of Feb 29, 2009
MA DMF	11,327
NJ DFW	6,325
NY DEC	449

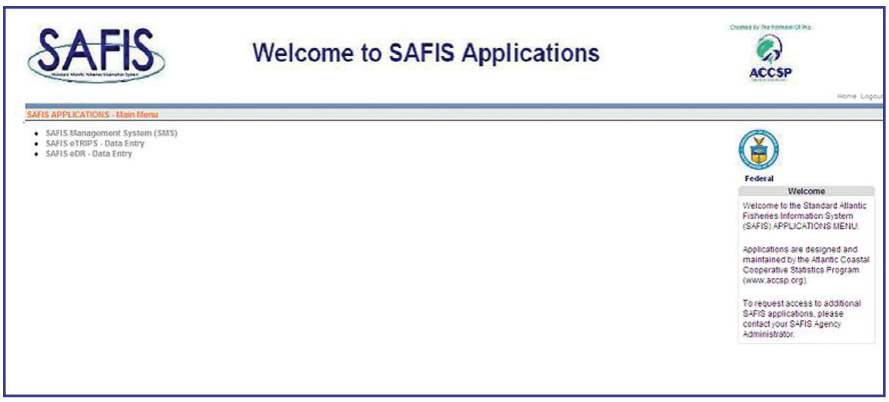
- SAFIS Management System (SMS) is a web-based application that provides tools to SAFIS administrators for management.

In April 2008, the Information Systems Committee held its annual meeting. At that time, the eDR system had been in production for 4 years. The system has logged 1,709,152* dealer reports, comprised of 4,191,554* landings.

The Committee initiated a review of the existing eDR to address outstanding design issues and new requirements. The SAFIS Redesign Effort Draft was provided to the Operations Committee in August 2008 and was the basis of the requirements analysis. It is from this document that the SAFIS Database and System Redesign have launched.

*Count based on query of SAFIS dealer reports and landings tables as of February 29, 2009.

The SAFIS redesign effort is a year-long effort and touches upon all the existing SAFIS applications.
The most extensive redesign effort will be the database redesign and the creation of a web-based eDR system. Currently eDR is available using Oracle Forms. Forms have been eclipsed in recent years by Oracle Application Express (APEX). APEX is a rapid web application development tool for the Oracle database. In the future, all SAFIS applications will be made available in APEX as will be the case in eDR. *

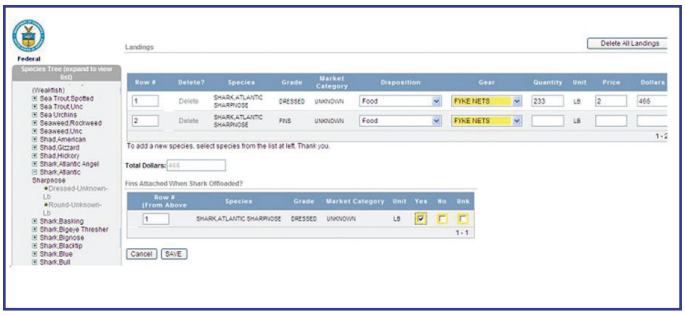


In addition to the APEX development platform, major changes will be made in the accessibility of all SAFIS applications to provide a cohesive look and feel to any application within SAFIS, (pictured below, left.) A new logon system is being developed to provide one user id and one password regardless of SAFIS applications.

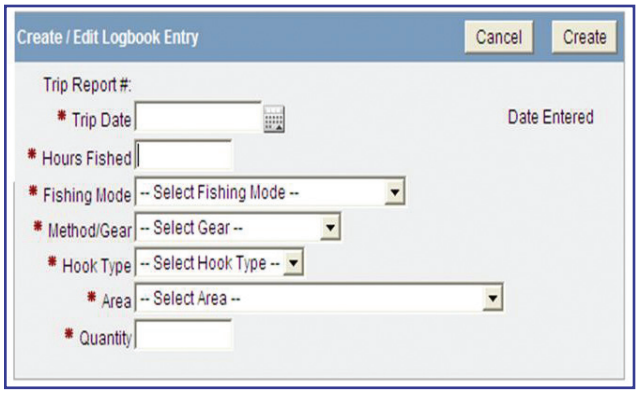
Latest Software Applications

In February 2009, the Program was approached with the opportunity to handle data for highly migratory species (HMS). The NOAA Fisheries HMS Management Division implemented Amendment 2 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS Fishery Management Plan in July of 2008. That amendment implemented the requirement that all sharks in the Atlantic must be offloaded with their fins naturally attached. The NOAA Fisheries - Southeast Regional Office had changed their HMS dealer forms to include a check box for dealers to indicate whether sharks were offloaded with their fins naturally attached or not. The checkbox gives fishermen and dealers the ability to show law enforcement that sharks were offloaded with their fins naturally attached, even if the 5% fin-to-carcass ratio is exceeded.

The Software Team was asked to design an analogous system for northeast dealers through SAFIS. At the time of the request, the SAFIS redesign was well under way (pictured below). Analysis of the new eDR determined that data collection for HMS could be facilitated with some restructuring. The eDR will automatically prompt users to provide data for HMS data.



In addition to the SAFIS redesign effort, the Software Team has designed a web-based logbook (pictured below, right) for Massachusetts Recreational Fishers. The system is voluntary, and collects data on all recreational species caught in Massachusetts. The system is expected to be in production by May 2009.



*Current SAFIS applications designed in APEX include SAFIS Management System (SMS) and eTrips

OUTREACH

Who Uses the Data Warehouse?

The Program reached out to gain a better understanding of our end users in the Fall of 2008. Non-confidential and confidential users of the Data Warehouse were presented an on-line survey. What follows is a review of the results. The Program gained insight into where, why and how often the customers use the Data Warehouse.
A special thanks goes out to all those that were available to provide this valuable feedback.

What region of the Atlantic coast are you from?
Non-confidential Users vs. Confidential Users

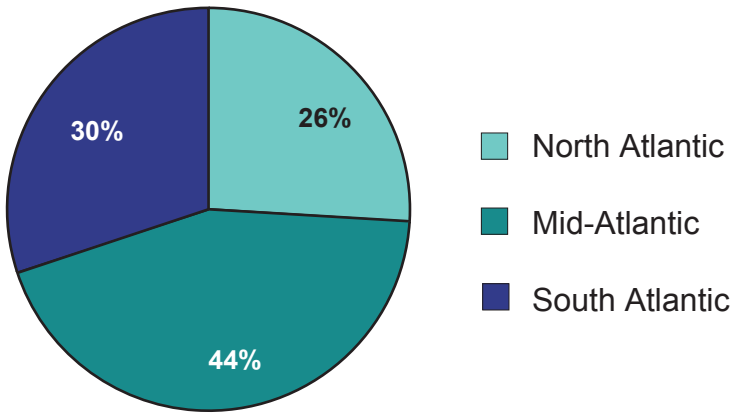


FIGURE 3: What region of the Atlantic coast are you from?
Non-confidential Users

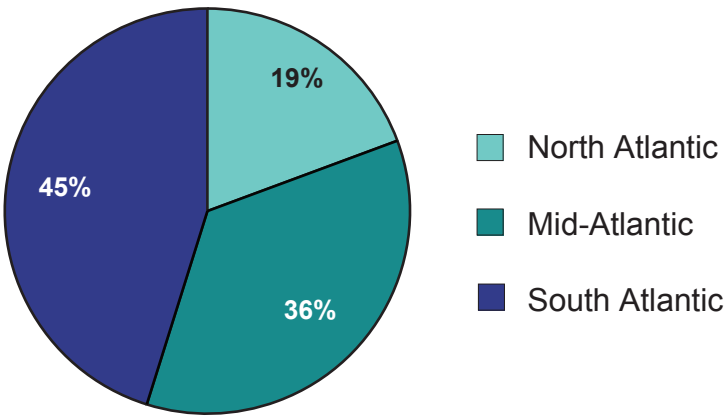


FIGURE 4: What region of the Atlantic coast are you from?
Confidential Users

How are you employed?
Non-confidential Users vs. Confidential Users

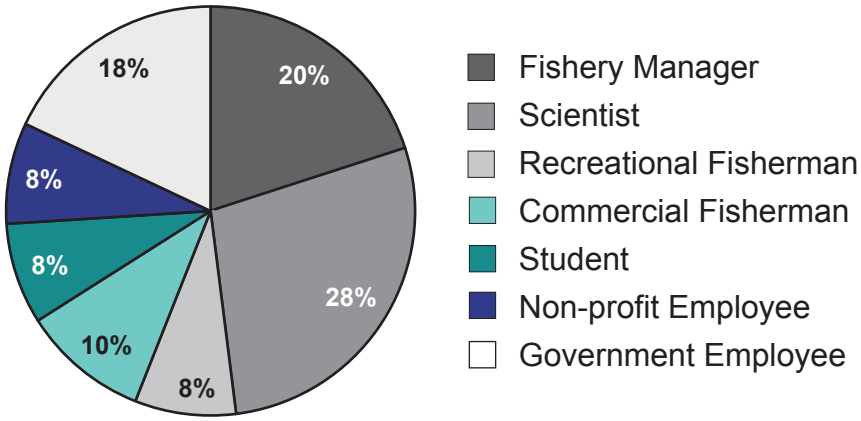


FIGURE 5: How are you employed?
Non-confidential Users

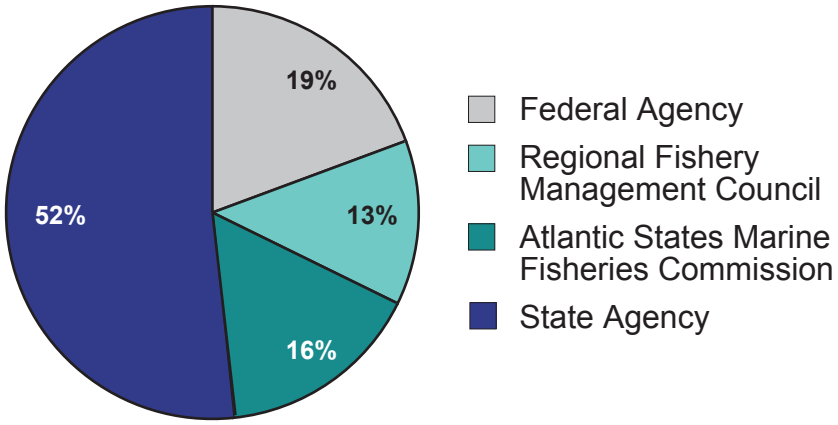


FIGURE 6: How are you employed?
Confidential Users

How often do you visit the Data Warehouse?
Non-confidential Users vs. Confidential Users

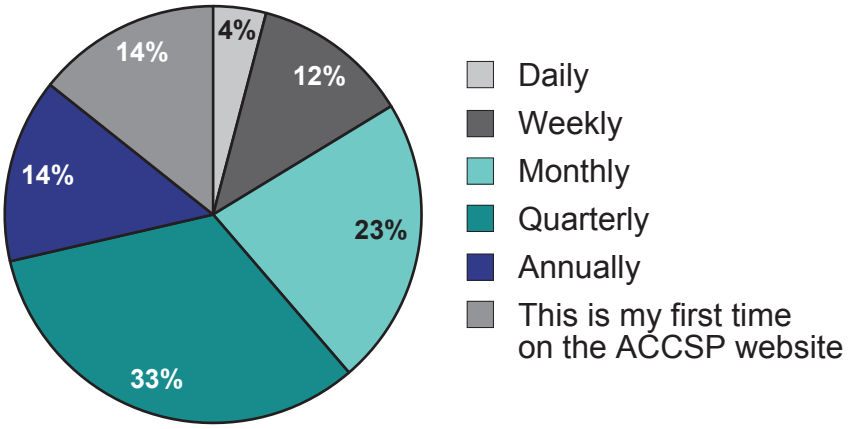


FIGURE 7: How often do you visit the Data Warehouse?
Non-confidential Users

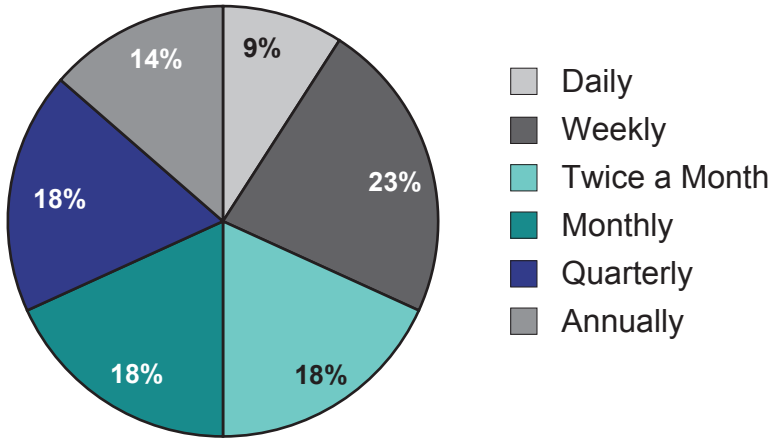


FIGURE 8: How often do you visit the Data Warehouse?
Confidential Users

What is the purpose for extracting information from the Data Warehouse?
Non-confidential Users vs. Confidential Users

Table 6: What is the purpose for extracting information from the Data Warehouse? **Non-confidential Users**
Quota monitoring
Recreational information
Check compliance
Stock assessments
Fishery management plans
Provide seasonality data to chefs who want to source local seafood
Cross-check data in federal and state databases
Look for vessel and dealer landings
Academic research

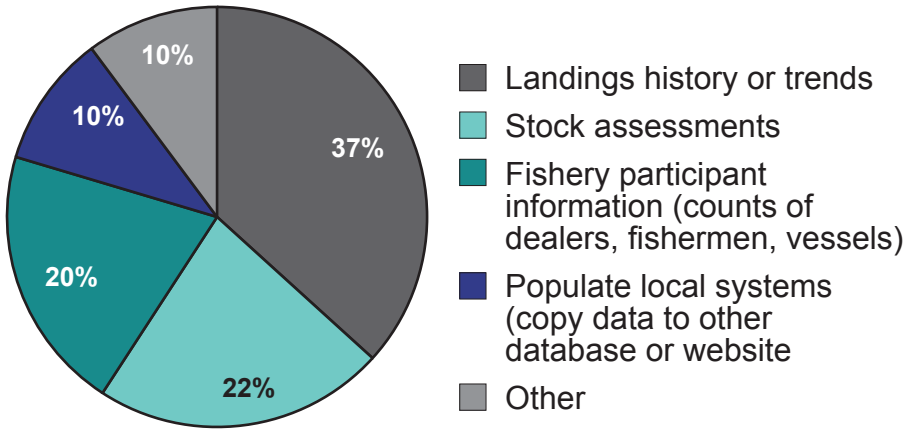


FIGURE 9: What is the purpose for extracting information from the Data Warehouse?
Confidential Users

Outreach efforts of the Program extended beyond distributing surveys to our constituents. The 2008 milestone for outreach of the Program was the development of the 2008-2012 Outreach Strategic Plan. The objectives include:

- obtain committee member understanding of the goals of the Program by October 2008,
- inform committee members of the annual priorities,
- increase the number of news stories mentioning the Program's data by 2008,
- improve the awareness of the Program's mission and activities among state fishery managers, stock assessment scientists and the fishing community by 25 percent by 2011,
- obtain majority recognition as the primary source for marine fisheries data on the Atlantic coast by 2011,
- increase audience confidence in fishery statistics by 25% by 2011,
- promote query of the Data Warehouse at least once a year,
- increase partner participation in the Program's process by 10% each year until 2012, and
- raise awareness of the need for increased program funding.

The Program made headlines as a primary source of data collection design and provided data for fisheries decisions for the Atlantic coast. This was noted in many documents including (but not limited to):

TABLE 7: Publications the Program contributed to as a source of data

Organization	Publication
NOAA–Fisheries	Fisheries of the United States, 2007 Ed.
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	Weakfish Management Board Economic Assessment of Mid-Atlantic Horseshoe Crab and Dependent Fisheries Including a Qualitative Discussion on the Potential Effects of Addendum IV
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council	Fishery Ecosystem Plan On The South Atlantic Region, Volume 1: Introduction and Overview, April 2008 Snapper Grouper Amendment 15B
Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program	Operations Plan 2008 Near Shore Trawl Survey, Peer Review Documentation, November 2008

The staff was also able to educate constituents by presenting and exhibiting at the American Fisheries Society 138th Annual Meeting in Ottawa, Canada; the 64th Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference in Galloway, New Jersey; and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Summer Meeting in Orlando, Florida.

The first issue of the Program's quarterly electronic newsletter, Fisheries Files, was also released in 2008.

PROGRAM FUNDING

As in previous years, the administrative budget accounted for slightly less that 45% of the overall budget. The administrative budget funds staff support, information systems resources, travel for meetings and outreach. For 2008, personnel are the majority of the administrative budget followed by committee travel and information systems. Overhead charged to the program covers office space, utilities and administrative support provided to the Program by the Atlantics States Marine Fisheries Commission, a partner centrally located.

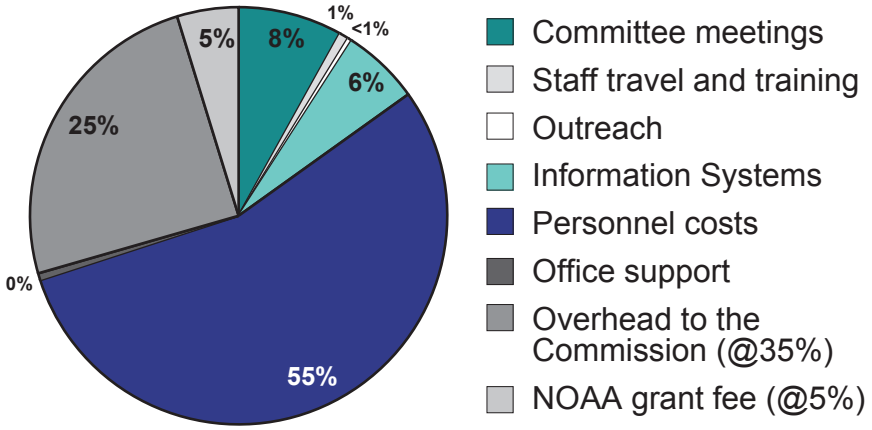


FIGURE 10: Distribution of the Program's administrative grant - $1,509,547

LOOKING AHEAD

From the Director

The Strategic Plan for 2008-2012 identified the number one challenge to the success of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program as "The availability of funding and human resources." I wish it were possible to say that this has not been the case, but it certainly has come to pass. The recent economic downturn has severely strained the budgets of our Program Partners, forcing cutbacks in funding that in years past would have been unthinkable. Financial stresses have been so serious that the Program has restructured the funding priorities to ensure that we do not lose progress that has already been made as state agencies are forced to cut back funding for fisheries statistics.

That being said, I do believe that forward progress can continue, even in this environment. For commercial catch and effort data, we will continue to build on our existing foundations. The enhancements that the Software Team is working on will make the eDR and eTrips systems easier to use and provide much better data collection capability. We are working with NOAA Fisheries to implement electronic dealer reporting in the Southeast, and we look forward to working with the Highly Migratory Species system enhancements, as well as, the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) as they move forward. A joint effort is under way with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to develop a trap tag transfer system that may serve as a prototype for others. We also hope to deploy a greatly simplified public user query interface in 2009 and to collect, manage and provide better fisheries metadata.

There are further opportunities in using the resources that the Program already has to provide 'value added' data. By using standardized formulas, it should be possible to calculate some of the more commonly used indexes such as catch-per-unit-effort. Of course, the Program will continue to participate in fisheries data workshops, stock assessments and other data related activities whenever it is appropriate. Additional enhancements to the website will make data easier to access and to understand.

The next priority is the biological module. Although we may not have enough funding to directly fund coast wide sampling improvements, we do have the resources in information systems to acquire, load and manage biological data. For 2009 and beyond, we hope to build an Atlantic coast biological programs catalog and an Atlantic coast observer and bycatch programs catalog. These will be prioritized, loaded and made available.

If additional funding were to become available, the need for additional biological sampling data would be assessed and quantified. Appropriate projects would be put into place to help ensure that those needs were met.

Since the inception of the Program in 1995, there have often been what seem to be insurmountable challenges. We have been able to overcome them by working together. While funding may slow our progress for the short term, I have no doubt that we will be able to achieve our vision of becoming *the principal source of fisheries-dependent information on the Atlantic coast soon enough.*

STAFF MEMBERS

Michael S. Cahall, Director
Julie Marie Defilippi, Data Coordinator
Christopher Hayes, Data Coordinator
Karen E. Holmes, Software Team Leader
Ellen Lovelidge, Program Coordinator
Ann McElhatton, Outreach Coordinator
Jennifer Ni, Information Systems Specialist
Paul Philip, Programmer
Geoffrey White, Data Team Leader

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Upper left- ACCSP
Lower right - Blake Price, NC DENR
Lower left - Freefoto.com
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ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM

Produce dependable and timely marine fishery statistics for Atlantic coast fisheries that are collected, processed and disseminated according to common standards agreed upon by all Program Partners

1444 "Eye" Street NW, Suite 410,
Washington, D.C. 20005
(p) 202.216.5690
(f) 202.289.7265
(e) info@accsp.org
www.accsp.org

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