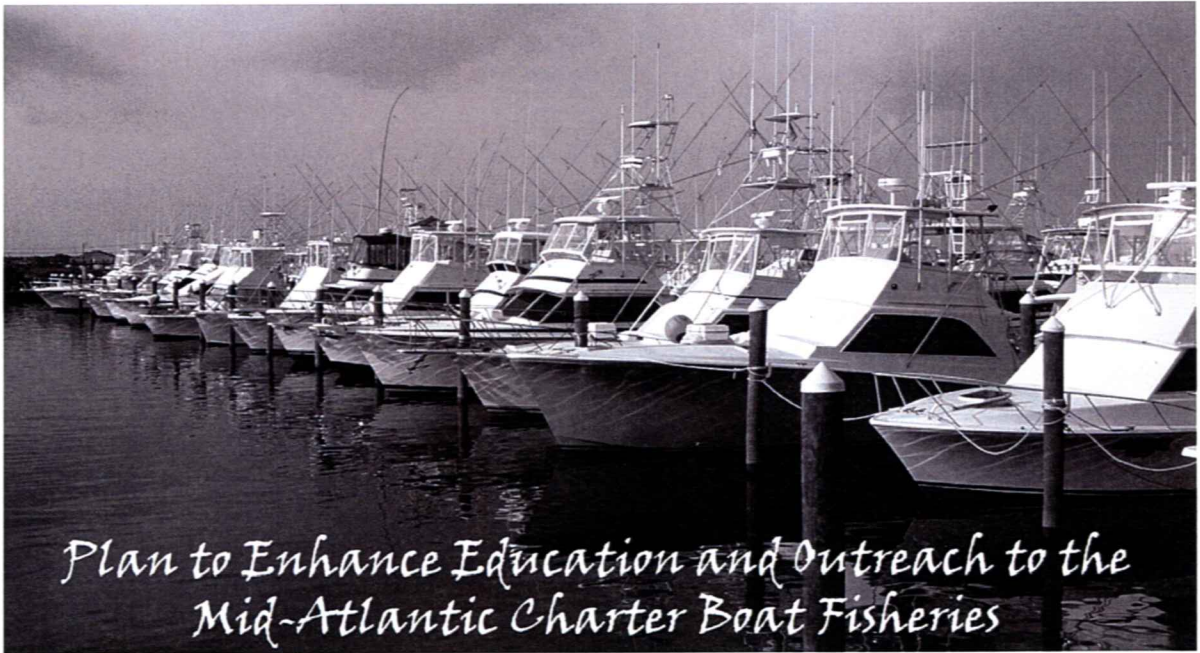


Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant

Marine Extension Programs' Regional Award for the
Fisheries Extension Enhancement Program



Submitted to:

Virginia Graduate Marine Science Consortium
170 Rugby Road, Madison House
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903

Submitted by:

Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program
School of Marine Science
Virginia Institute of Marine Science
P.O. Box 1346
Gloucester Point, Virginia 23062

VIMS Marine Resource Report No. 2005-2
VSG-05-02

Final Project Report Fisheries Extension Enhancement

Plan to Enhance Education and Outreach to the Mid-Atlantic Charter Boat Fisheries

Abstract:

A major component of the regional Sea Grant contribution to the Fisheries Extension Enhancement (FEE) initiative involved enhanced outreach and education to the Mid-Atlantic (North Carolina to New York) charter boat industry during the period 2002-2005.

Charter boats and party boats (“for hire”) represent a “keystone” sector of the fishing industry, in the sense that they provide a vital link between non-boat-owner anglers and the full spectrum of inshore, offshore, and highly migratory fisheries. As witness, the Mid-Atlantic charter and party boat fleet provided in excess of 1.25 million individual angler trips during 2004! This represents a growing sector of the region’s fisheries overall, one that interacts with all major saltwater fin-fish.¹

The for-hire fleet comprises elements of both recreational and commercial harvests, with unique attributes and business management challenges. The resulting complexity of management constructs faced by this “hybrid” sector is intensifying, as fishery managers consider new resource access measures: “control dates” for potential limited-entry programs, Marine Protected Areas, and imposed limits on the commercial sale of fishery products are some examples. Given the importance of the charter boat sector, enhanced data collection – including fishery observer coverage – is of growing interest to fishery managers and, in equal measure, of concern to vessel operators. Clearly, the apparent need for closer scrutiny of charter boat businesses has become an industry-wide priority. In view of these trends, the charter boat sector represented a logical target for expanded educational outreach among Sea Grant fisheries specialists.

To address this challenge, the region’s Sea Grant programs completed an ambitious outreach and education program to improve understanding of the fishery management complex by the “for hire” fishing industry. Similarly, the cooperative outreach initiative provided better understanding of the charter boat sector by federal, regional, and state resource managers.

With leadership and coordination provided by the Virginia Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program at VIMS (VSGMAP), the regional effort has been widely acknowledged as a significant success in delivering priority-focused, educational programs to the region’s charter boat owners and operators. The unique partnership brought state, regional, and federal fishery management bodies into the program development phase early in the FEE initiatives’ process. Those management bodies served as a “Charter Boat Workshop Steering Committee,” working alongside multi-state Sea Grant partners.

At the outset, a regional needs assessment was developed by the group and administered through the participating Sea Grant network in conjunction with charter boat trades associations. Over

¹ During 2000 the region’s charter and party boat fleet provided approximately 1.0 million individual angler trips. NMFS Personal Communication. MRFSS.

400 charter boat operators from N.C. to N.Y. completed the surveys, which queried educational needs and ranked educational priorities. The results of the needs assessment survey were invaluable in focusing educational elements for the first five, fully coordinated workshops conducted as part of the FEE Project during February and March 2003 throughout the region. Those workshops delivered timely educational information to charter boat operators and, at the same time, provided relevant feedback to federal, state, and regional fishery managers. Subsequent workshops were further tailored to the unique regulatory and business environments attendant to each state.

During 2003, the charter boat workshops were attended by over 250 charter boat operators from New York to North Carolina and were widely evaluated as very effective. Ninety-one percent of attendees reported that the program met or exceeded their expectations in post-workshop evaluations. Furthermore, 87% of respondents felt that continuation of the workshops as annual events would be valuable. Based upon the initial FEE workshop offerings, additional regional workshops were held during 2004 and 2005, reaching a total of 260 operators. These educational programs have now become annual events in New Jersey and the Delmarva region.

Beyond the acknowledged success of this FEE initiative, particularly noteworthy is the strengthening of a long-term partnership between the region's Sea Grant programs and the charter boat industry. Post-workshop evaluations and communications have confirmed that the programs were of real benefit to charter boat operators. The information provided served to enhance day-to-day business management decisions, while improving overall industry communications and organization.

Introduction-Rationale

The Mid Atlantic charter and party boat fleet provided in excess of 1.25 million individual angler trips during 2004, an increase of 25% since 2000.² It is a growing sector in the region, interacting in all major saltwater fin-fisheries. The charter boat and party boat (“for hire”) fishery is a “keystone” sector in the sense that it provides vital linkage between non-boat owner anglers and the full spectrum of inshore, offshore and highly migratory fisheries. The region’s for-hire fleet represents elements of both recreational and commercial harvest with unique attributes and educational needs as well.

The diversity of management regimes faced by this sector is increasing as fishery managers consider resource access issues such as the issuance of control dates for potential limited entry programs, consideration of MPAs, limitations on commercial sale of fishery products, etc. Given the importance of the sector, enhanced data collection including fishery observer coverage is of growing interest to fishery managers and concern to vessel operators. Future management directions must be the subjects of expanded educational outreach.

For example, year-to-year changes in target species’ regulations (size/bag limits, seasonal closures, and quotas) cause significant uncertainty regarding captains’ booking schedules and cash flow. Tightening fish taking regulations, and changing fishing ethics, are pressuring the industry into encouraging (and even leading) anglers to accept “catch and release fishing” as a major part of fee-based fishing activities. Depending upon geographic area, specific fisheries, and anglers’ ethnic mix, adapting to such changes in the “for-hire” fishery can significantly affect angler demand and thereby business decisions of captains and boat owners.

Objectives

The primary goal of this project was to improve the understanding of the fishery management complex by the “for hire” fishing industry and provide better understanding of this sector by federal, regional and state managers. Additionally, enhanced cooperation among the industry and the government was fostered as a result of this educational outreach. Such an educational focus on the for-hire fishing industry may improve industry’s willing cooperation with various management agencies; providing feedback and involvement that is increasingly vital both in the formulation of fishery management options and the ultimate implementation of management measures.

Client Bases

The passenger for hire fisheries in the mid-Atlantic region and North Carolina was targeted as a part of this project. The North Carolina fleet is mobile and similar in fisheries pursued to the rest of the region and as such is considered to be a logical target of this project. Substantial reliance will be upon existing for hire fishing organizations and overall guidance will be maintained with the National Association of Charter boat Operators (NACO).

² Charter boats operate under a charter for a price, time, etc and the participants are normally part of a pre-formed group of fishermen. Party boats, or “head boats” provide fishing space and privileges for a fee. Licensed captains and crews typically operate both.

The project primarily was intended to link this clientele with the appropriate fishery management bodies including the National Marine Fisheries Service, Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and member state fishery saltwater fishery agencies within the 6 state region.

Methods

The regional project was a fully cooperative venture with overall implementation enhanced by a steering committee of interested agencies and industry. The steering committee included representatives of the following organizations in addition to the 6 individual state Sea Grant College Programs³:

- NMFS Northeast Regional Office
- Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
- South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
- National Association of Charter boat Operators
- State Charter Boat Organizations

The committee met at the outset of the project to discuss specific interests, the proposed needs assessment, workshop agenda development as well as the overall schedule for the regional sea grant charter boat workshops.

A structured educational “needs assessment” was conducted in each state and was coordinated with existing charter boat associations and representative contacts throughout the region. Over 400 charter boat operators from N.C. to N.Y. completed surveys ranking extension educational priorities. A regional summary of each state’s needs assessment was provided the steering committee for input. (Appendix 1) Based upon the needs assessment and the steering committee consensus, educational programs and materials were developed to provide a basis for the initial 5 state/regional workshops. The results of the survey focused educational elements and provided the basis for agenda for 5 workshops held during February and March 2003 throughout the region. (Appendix 2)

The needs assessments provided the focus and prioritizing of educational elements, indicating that information on the status and trends in federal fisheries management regarding stock assessments and data collection, alternative management mechanisms such as marine protected areas were suitable topics for enhanced education from the workshops. Also Coast Guard safety education, industry marketing and economics, finfish product quality enhancement and other areas were identified as justifiable targets for the sea grant educational efforts.

Post workshop evaluations were completed to solicit participant views and focus future Sea Grant educational efforts. (Appendix 3)

Further post workshop evaluations solicited feedback from participants on what changes or improvements in the conduct of their charter boat business the workshops had initiated.

³ New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, Sea Grant.

Outcomes and Impacts

By virtue of the formal needs assessments and educational programs, an improved understanding of unique trade issues facing the for hire fishing industry enables managers and fishermen to better determine management measures appropriate to the industry. Industry has an improved understanding of the fishery management issues in which they are stakeholders. Furthermore, enhanced client educational needs identification and communications resulted for both Sea Grant extension programs and the fishery management agencies. The post workshop evaluations provided objectives for future Sea Grant and clientele educational efforts.

The workshop evaluations showed that 92% of attendees rated the program as meeting and/or exceeding expectations. Business/finance/legal/marketing presentations were very well received. 92% of those responding to the workshop evaluation surveys indicated that they would like to see the program offered annually.

To begin to assess the impacts of the regional workshops, a post workshop survey of attendees of the 2003 Ocean City Maryland workshop was conducted prior to the 2004 event to begin to solicit information on the ultimate use of information learned at prior Sea Grant workshops. Twenty-four (37%) of the 2003 Ocean City workshop attendees solicited responded to the follow-up survey. The summary of the behavioral questions are summarized in the table below.

Did this program or prior workshops help you with any of the following?	
Reduce Operating Costs	25%
Improve Business Efficiency	46 %
Reduce Personal Liability	29%
Improve Safety Record	8%

The most common impacts noted in the follow-up evaluation were that the workshops helped in providing information to reduce costs and improve planning, finance and marketing. Important improvements were noted in evaluation of marine insurance coverages, accounting and safety requirements. Overall all respondents indicated that the workshops helped them make important decisions or changes in their charter businesses.

With the initial FEE effort successfully completed plans are to continue annual workshops in New Jersey and DelMarVa.

Appendix 1 Needs Assessment Survey

CHARTER BOAT & HEAD BOAT EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The Virginia Sea Grant College Program in conjunction with National Association of Charter boat Operators (NACO) is conducting a statewide charter boat, head boat, and guide boat educational survey to help design a program for an industry conference to be held during March 2003. This is part of a regional Sea Grant project that is being conducted from North Carolina through New York. In an effort to set up a workshop program of use to you in your business, we need to know **which areas you need to know more about**. Please take five minutes to complete the attached survey and return it to Sea Grant's office by fax, or mail it using the postage-paid envelope provided.

Thank you in advance for your time and effort in helping us collect this information. Your input will be a valuable tool to help develop more effective educational programs to better meet your needs.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me to discuss this or other ideas for educational programs that might help you improve your business.

Thank you for your assistance.

T.J. Murray
Marine Business Specialist
Virginia Sea Grant Program
Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Gloucester Point, Virginia 23062
Phone: 804-694-7190
Fax: 804-684-7161
<mailto:tjm@vims.edu>

Please Return this Questionnaire by September 30th, 2002

PLEASE SELECT THE TOPICS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE INCLUDED IN A FUTURE PROGRAM. THE FOLLOWING ARE IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER OF PRIORITY. Please rank the importance of learning more about these topics for your business by inserting a check mark where appropriate.

I. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT, AND YOUR CHARTER BOAT BUSINESS				
<i>Topic For Workshop Discussion</i>	Very Important	Important	Some What Important	Not Important
Federal & State New Regulations, Permits etc.				
Marine Protected Areas				
Onboard Observers				
Basics of Fisheries Management				
Catch & Release				
Sale of Recreationally Caught Fish				
Latest Coast Guard Regulations				
Regional Fishery Council Activities				
Fish Handling Quality & Safety (e.g. spoilage and histamines)				
Other (specify):				

II. BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & YOUR CHARTER BOAT BUSINESS				
<i>Topic For Workshop Discussion</i>	Very Important	Important	Some What Important	Not Important
Financial Management (e.g. Capital Construction Funds)				
Legal Issues				
Boat and Personal Insurance				
Everyday Marketing of your Business (e.g. web sites, pamphlets)				
Alternative Marketing Development (e.g. hotel packages, cooperatives)				
Alternative Activities for Off-season Business Development (e.g. sight-seeing, etc.)				
Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines Implementations				
Technology (new equipment)				
Other (specify):				

III. PLEASE LET US KNOW THE BEST WAY TO SEND INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORKSHOP AND INCLUDE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS, FAX #, MAILING ADDRESS BELOW:			
Please let us know . . .	Website/Email	Fax	Mail
How are you most likely to register?			
How would you like to receive workshop information?			

Please include your preferred contact address information (email, fax, mailing address):

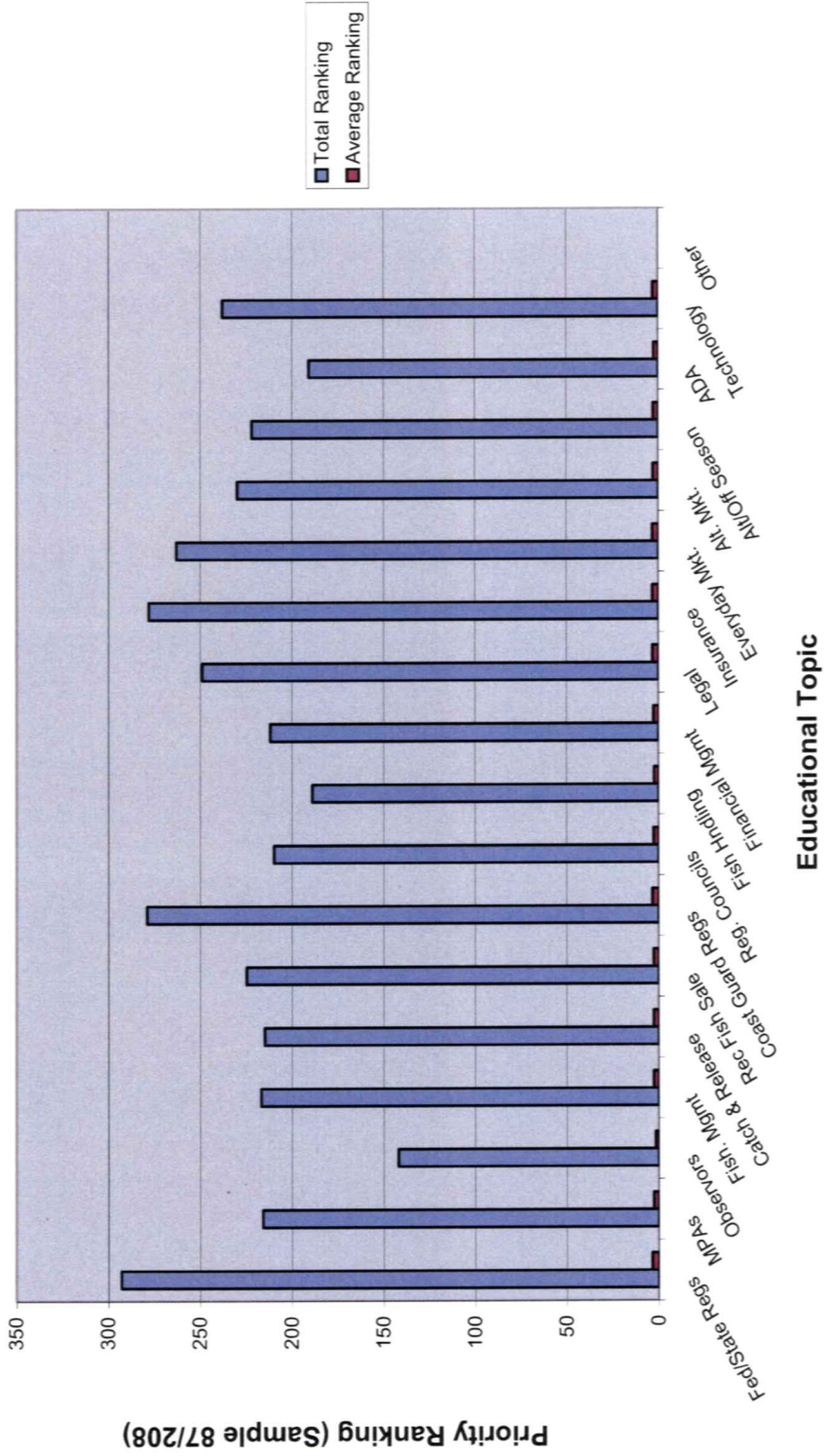
What is zip code? _____

Please Return this Questionnaire by September 30, 2002 to:

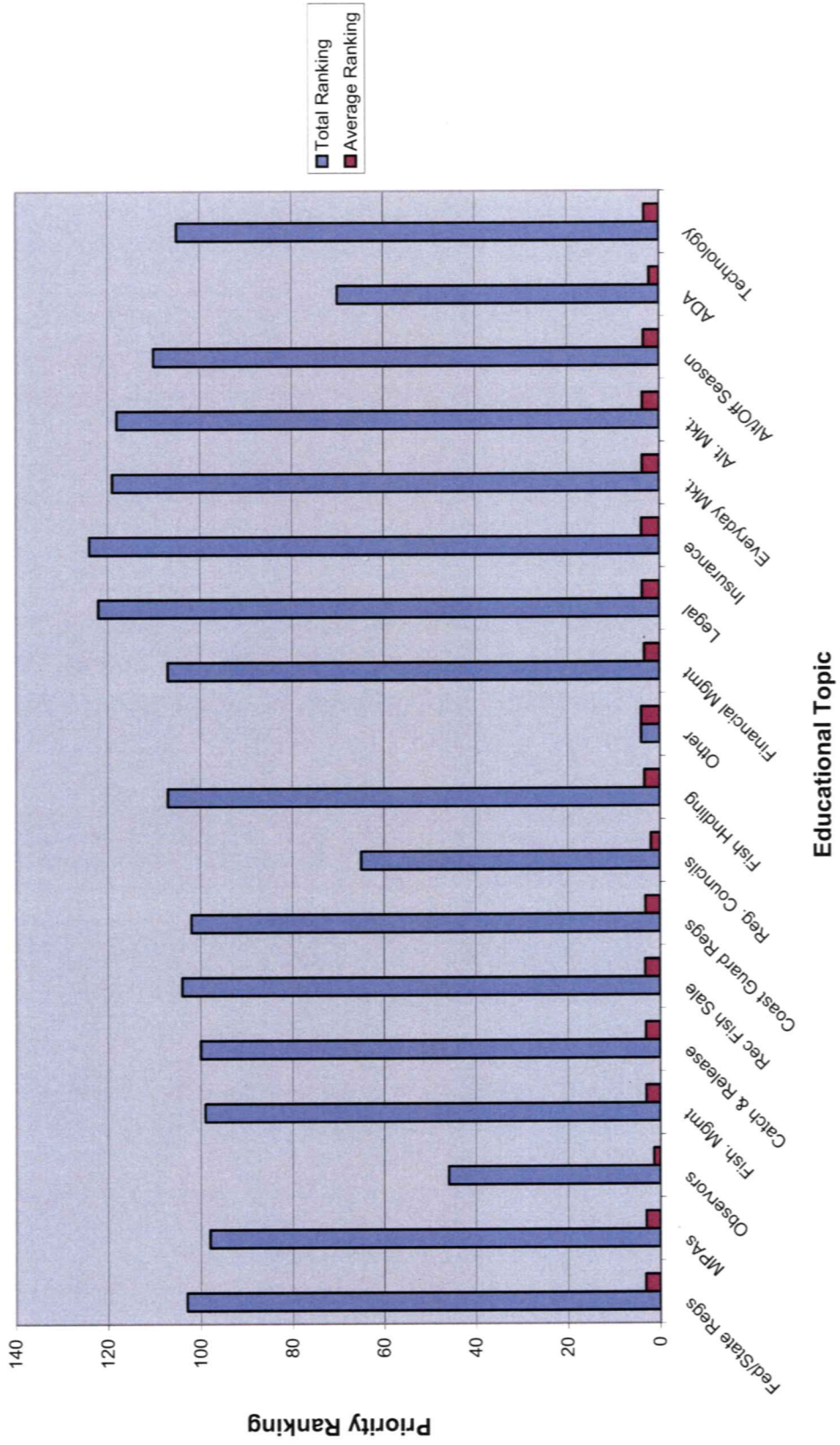
**Tom Murray • Virginia Institute of Marine Science • P.O. Box 1346 • Gloucester Point
•VA 23062 or Fax to 804-684-7161**

Appendix 2 Educational Needs Assessment Survey Results by State

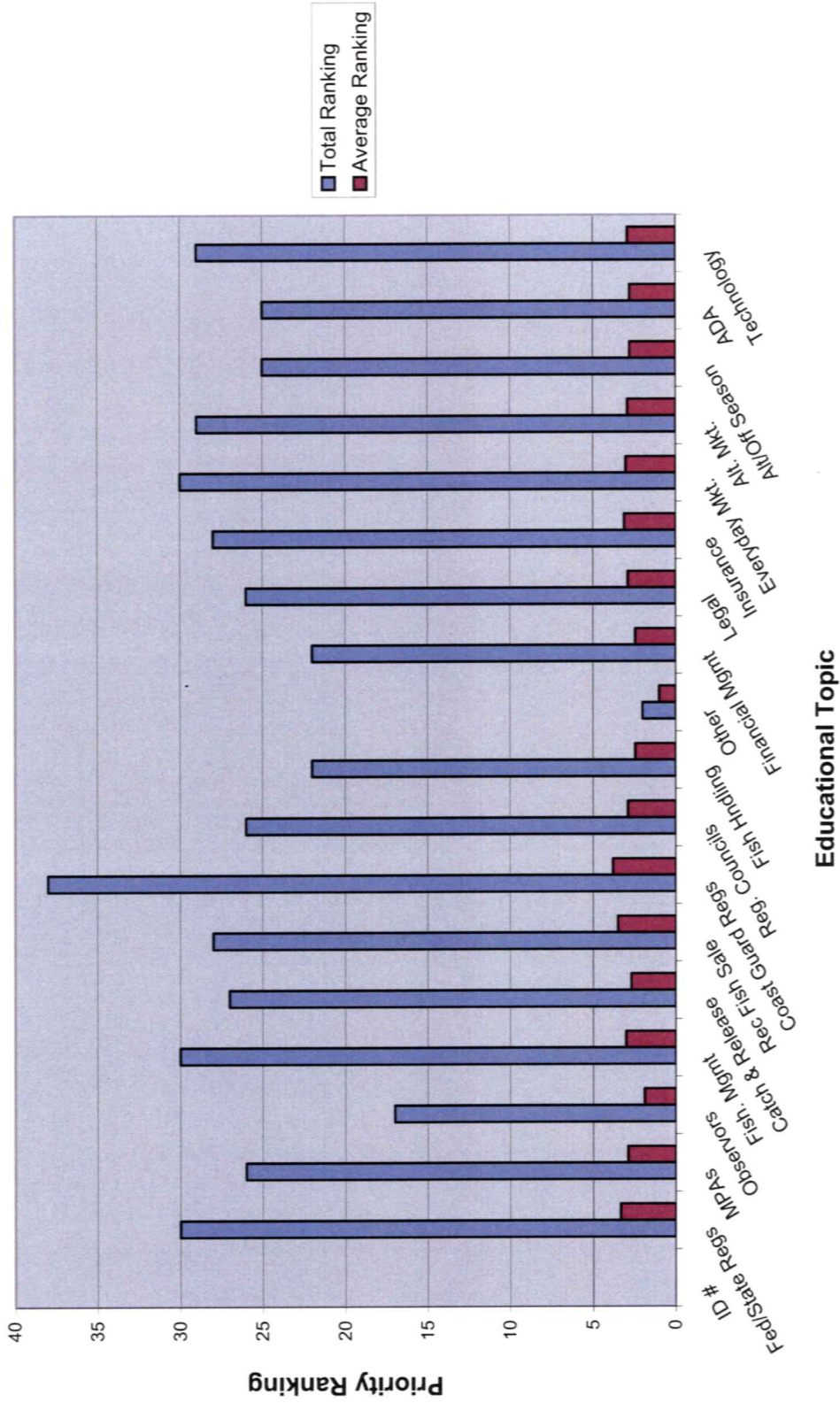
Virginia Charter Boat Educational Needs (October 10, 2002)



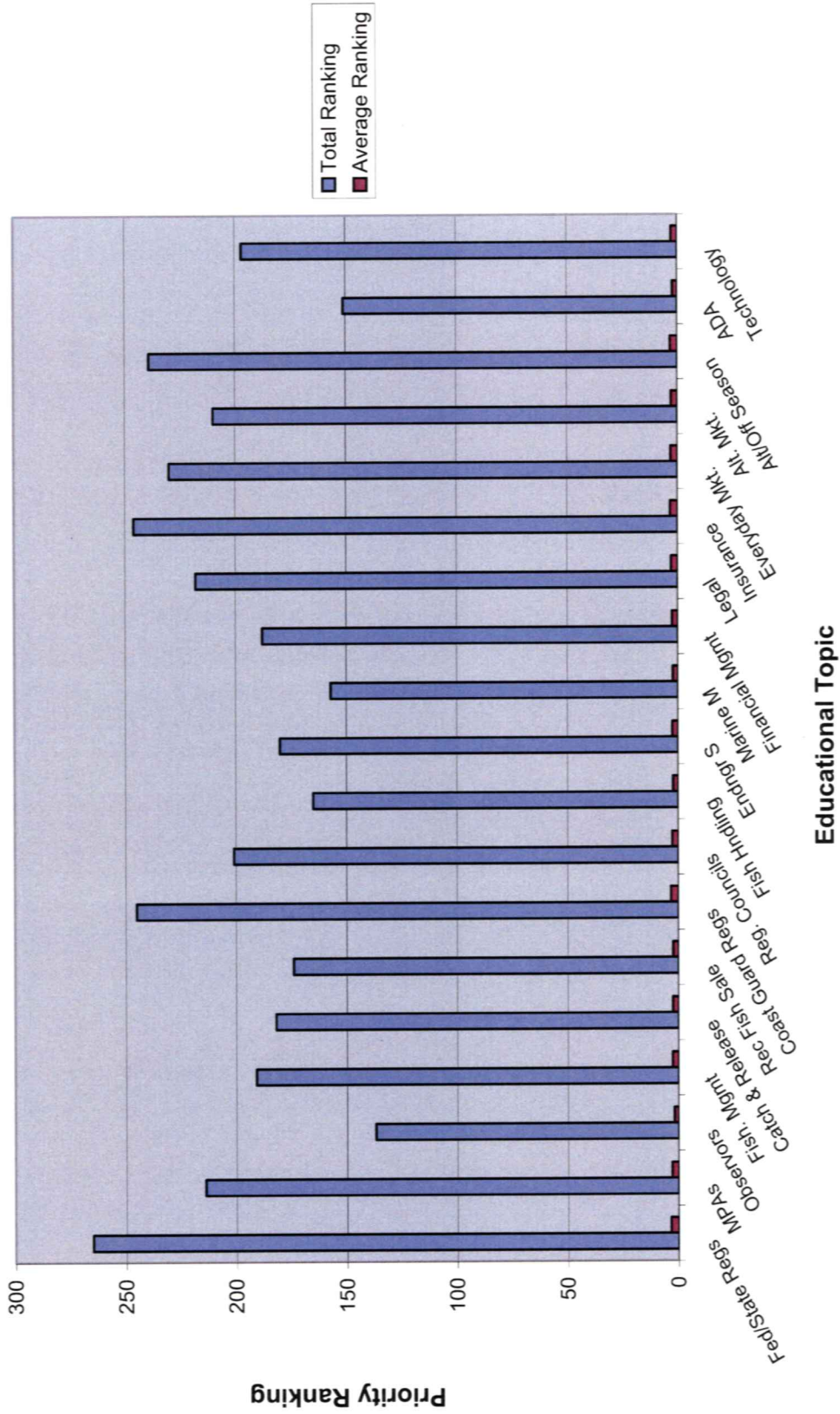
Maryland Charter Boat Educational Needs (2002)



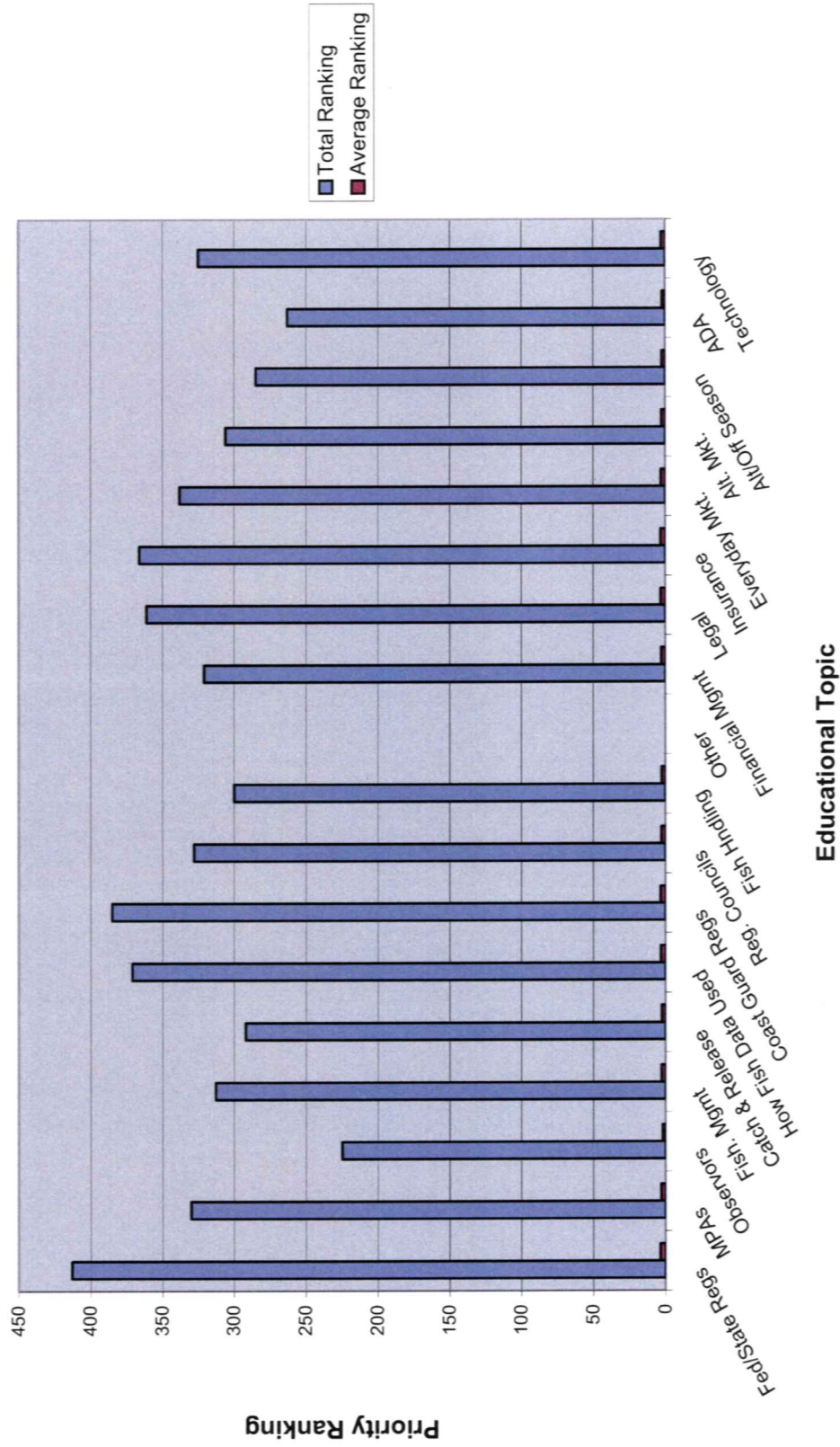
Delaware Charter Boat Educational Needs (2002)



North Carolina Charter Boat Educational Needs (October 2002)



New York Charter Boat Educational Needs (2002)



New Jersey Charter Boat Needs Assessment 2002

PLEASE SELECT THE TOPICS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE INCLUDED IN A FUTURE PROGRAM. THE FOLLOWING ARE IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER OF PRIORITY. Please rank the importance of learning more about these topics for your business by inserting a check mark or where appropriate.

I. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT, AND YOUR CHARTER BOAT BUSINESS

Topic For Workshop Discussion	Very Important	Important	Some What Important	Not Important
Federal & State New Regulations, Permits etc.	42	13	2	2
Marine Protected Areas	15	20	17	7
Onboard Observers	7	4	20	25
Basics of Fisheries Management	18	21	12	8
Catch & Release	17	20	12	10
Sale of Recreationally Caught Fish	15	23	8	14
Latest Coast Guard Regulations	36	19	5	0
Regional Fishery Council Activities	16	30	12	2
Fish Handling Quality & Safety (e.g. spoilage and histamines)	11	12	23	10
Other (such as Crew Safety):	14	12	6	3

II. BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & YOUR CHARTER BOAT BUSINESS

Topic For Workshop Discussion	Very Important	Important	Some What Important	Not Important
Financial Management (e.g. Capital Construction Funds)	18	21	12	6
Legal Issues	29	22	7	2
Boat and Personal Insurance	32	17	8	1
Everyday Marketing of your Business (e.g. web sites, brochures, etc.)	26	23	7	4
Alternative Marketing Development (e.g. hotel packages, cooperatives)	17	23	13	6
Alternative Activities for Off-Season Business Development (e.g. sight-seeing, etc.)	17	18	13	11
Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines Implementation	6	18	17	17
Technology (new equipment)	15	27	11	4
Other (specify):	5	0	0	0

III. PLEASE LET US KNOW THE BEST WAY TO SEND INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORKSHOP AND INCLUDE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS, FAX #, MAILING ADDRESS BELOW:

Please let us know . . .	Website/Email	Fax	Mail
How would you like to receive workshop information?	18	5	38
How are you most likely to register?	14	6	36

Please include your preferred contact/address information (email, fax or mailing address):

What is your zip code? _____

Thank you very much!

Please Return this Questionnaire by September 30, 2002 to:

**Susan Halsey • New Jersey Sea Grant Extension Program • Building #22 • Ft. Hancock • NJ 07732
Or Fax to 732-872-9573**

Other

I. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT, AND YOUR CHARTER BOAT BUSINESS				
<i>Topic For Workshop Discussion</i>	Very Important	Important	Some What Important	Not Important
Crew Safety	12	11	6	2
Latest Regulations		1		
Fire Fighting	1			
Passenger Safety	1			
How to Decrease Liability	1			
NMFS Sharing Catch Data with States	1			

II. BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & YOUR CHARTER BOAT BUSINESS				
<i>Topic For Workshop Discussion</i>	Very Important	Important	Some What Important	Not Important
Federal Regulations	1			
State Website/ Booklet Directory of Charter Boats	1			
Paper Work Reduction	1			
Scuba Diving Topics/Safety	1			
6 Pack Charter Boats Not Subject to Coast Guard Regulations	1			

Total Number of Surveys Received = 62

Maryland/Delaware Charter Boat Workshop
Harrison's Harbor Watch Restaurant, Ocean City, Maryland
Thursday, March 13, 2003 9:00 am – 3:45 pm

- 8:00 - 9:00 am **Registration and Welcome Coffee**
- 9:00 – 10:45 am **Fishing for Hire - Charter Boat Business and Marketing** **Panel Discussion**
- **Banking and Loans for the Charter Business** - Joe Waters, Marketing Specialist, Ocean City, Maryland
 - **Charter Boat Legal Issues** - Steven White, Attorney At Law, Wright, Constable & Skeen, Baltimore, Maryland
 - **Off-Season Marketing** - Ruth Waters, Harrison Group, Ocean City, Maryland
 - **Marketing/Finance for Your Charter Boat Business** - Captain Greg Ignash, Charter Boat "Reel Addiction", Ocean City, Maryland
- 10:45 – 11:00 am **Coffee Break**
- 11:00 am – Noon **Coast Guard Safety and Insurance — What's in Store for 2003?**
- **Vessel Safety, Equipment Requirements, Employee Safety, USCG/OSHA Jurisdiction and Other Issues** – Dennis Spain, Passenger Vessel Safety Specialist, 5th District, USCG, Portsmouth, Virginia and Tim Grant, Officer in Charge, Ocean City Coast Guard Station, Ocean City, Maryland
 - **Charter Boat Insurance: What You Need to Know and What You Can Expect** - Jay Tawes, Tawes Insurance Company, Crisfield, Maryland
- Noon – 1:00 pm **Buffet Lunch**
- 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm **Fishery Management Panel Discussion: Emerging Issues and Data Collection Programs for the Charter Boat Industry - Federal, Regional and State Presentations:**
- **Fishery Data Collections** - Dave Van Vorhees, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Silver Spring, Maryland
 - **Regional Fishery Management** – Chris Moore, Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council, Dover, Delaware
 - **Delaware's Artificial Reef Program and State Fishery Management Issue Update** – Jeff Tinsman, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Dover, Delaware
 - **Maryland State Fishery Management Issue Update** – Martin Gary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Annapolis, Maryland
- 2:30 – 2:45 pm **Coffee Break**
- 2:45 – 3:00 pm **Handling Your Catch: Histamines and other Seafood Safety Issues** - Doris Hicks, Delaware Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service, University of Delaware, Lewes, Delaware
- 3:00 – 3:45 pm **Charter Boat Captain's Round Table--Captains discuss-debate critical topics and revisit earlier comments to highlight key issues facing the industry**
- **Captain Keith Ward** – "Prime Time II", Chesapeake Bay
 - **Captain Monty Hawkins** - "Morning Star", Ocean City, Maryland
 - **Captain Greg Ignash** – "Reel Addiction", Ocean City, Maryland
 - **Captain Jerry Blakeslee** – "Grizzly", Lewes, Delaware
- Adjourn**

**Charter Boat Operator's Workshop
Evaluation Form**

Thank you for participating in this new program. As a part of the Sea Grant educational process, we would like to collect feedback from you that will help us develop charter boat programming in the future. We value and need your input, so please take a few moments to fill out this questionnaire.

1. Overall, did the conference meet your expectations? Please circle one.
- A. Fell far short
 - B. Fell somewhat short
 - C. Met my expectations
 - D. Somewhat exceeded my expectations
 - E. Greatly exceeded my expectations

Comments: _____

2. Please indicate what topics you would like to see at future meetings.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting management for your charter business | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal fishing regulations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guide licensing and regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> Web page design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing tournament ethics | <input type="checkbox"/> Off-season charter business strategies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fish quality and safety | <input type="checkbox"/> More charter captains presenting information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal business issues | <input type="checkbox"/> More resource related issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State fishing regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> More safety related topics/demonstration |

3. If not listed in question 2 above, what subjects would you like to see in future programs?

4. Where did you hear about the charter boat workshop? _____

5. What was the most valuable presentation for your business? _____

5. Why did you attend this workshop? _____

6. Would you like to see the program in another location? If so, Where? _____

7. What program changes would you recommend? _____

8. Do you think an annual workshop would be of value? Please circle one. YES NO