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Northeast Region
State, Federal & Constituent Programs Office



FINAL REPORT

Grantee: ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

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Project Title: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE
STATISTICS PROGRAM

Period Covered: 03/01/99 - 02/29/00

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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Final Report
Grant Number NA97FGO046
Implementation of the
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program

Period of Performance: March 1, 1999 - February 29, 2000

Period Covered by this Report: March 1, 1999 – February 29, 2000

This grant was received by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (CFDA 11.474) to assist in the design and implementation of a cooperative marine and coastal fisheries statistics program that adequately meets the needs of state and federal fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. The mission of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is to cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate fishery statistical data and information for the conservation and management of fishery resources for the Atlantic coast and to support the development and operation of a national program.

Objectives. The following objectives have been established under the Memorandum of Understanding for establishment of an Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program to meet the overall program goal, as agreed to by all program partners:

- (1) To plan, manage, and evaluate a cooperative, coordinated, cost-effective, dependable, non-duplicative and accurate state-federal marine and coastal fisheries data collection program for the Atlantic coast in which the general public, fishermen, and fisheries managers have confidence;
- (2) To undertake a unified state-federal marine and coastal fisheries data collection system for the Atlantic coast, including both commercial and recreational sectors, to provide to the general public, fishermen, fisheries managers and stock assessment biologists, the best scientific and technical data needed for effective management on a timely basis;
- (3) To establish and maintain an integrated cooperative coastwide fisheries data management system among all Atlantic Coastal states from Maine to Florida, the regional fishery management councils, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other state or federal agencies involved in the collection, compilation, and management of marine, estuarine, anadromous and catadromous fisheries statistics; and
- (4) To support the continued development and operation of a national system to collect, manage, and disseminate marine fisheries information for use by states, councils, interstate commission, and federal marine fishery management agencies using the existing regional programs as building blocks.

Summary of Meetings

Meetings of several ACCSP committees and subcommittees were held during this reporting period to further develop and implement the program (Attachment #1 - Meeting Schedule). The following lists the major accomplishments during this reporting period.

Administrative Activities

The ACCSP Program Manager has continued to coordinate and plan for all ACCSP activities. The IS Program Manager continues to assist with the coordination of the ACCSP data management system and further development of the technical details of the system. Both the ACCSP Program Manager and IS Program Manager have been involved in all activities listed in this report. The ACCSP Administrative Assistant provided full staff support to the ACCSP Outreach Committee and has been given responsibility for staff support to the ACCSP Fisheries Statistics Advisory Committee. The ASMFC Director of Research and Statistics and other ASMFC administrative staff have provided in-kind staff support to the ACCSP through direct supervision of ACCSP staff, meeting planning, travel authorization, travel reimbursement, and other administrative and financial activities.

Other administrative activities accomplished by various ACCSP committees include:

- ▶ review and modification of the 1999 and 2000 Operations Plan
- ▶ drafting of the 2001 Operations Plan and approval by the Coordinating Council in February 2000

Coordination of ACCSP With Other Regional Statistics Initiatives

Members of the ACCSP are not actively attending meetings of the Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN), the Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN), and the Fisheries Information Network (FIN). However, coordination exists between FIN and ACCSP staff to ensure a consistent data collection and data management system from Maine through Texas, and to assist in the implementation of a national fisheries information system. GSMFC staff attend all ACCSP Operations Committee meetings and either ACCSP staff or representatives from the south Atlantic state marine fisheries agencies attend FIN work group meetings. Coordination will continue at this level throughout implementation of these programs.

Specific projects being coordinated between the Gulf initiative and the ACCSP include:

- ▶ implementation of the for-hire pilot study in South Carolina
- ▶ development of standards for the biological sampling program
- ▶ modifications to the discard/release/protected species program
- ▶ coordination in the development of the data management system for the biological sampling being developed through a contract under the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
- ▶ development of a coordinated permitting system

ACCSP Funding Process and Implementation Strategy

The Coordinating Council approved the funding decision process and this process was initiated in May 1999, with proposals submitted to the ACCSP Program Manager by September 1999. A total of 24 proposals were received totaling approximately \$4.5 million. Based on anticipated level funding, the Operations Committee recommended that 10 proposals be approved for funding at the \$1.49 million level. The Coordinating Council approved the Operations Committee recommendations in February 2000. Approved proposals included:

- ▶ the Commission grant for administrative and outreach activities
- ▶ development of a coastwide interactive voice recognition (IVR) system by NMFS-NER
- ▶ development of dealer software for electronic reporting by NMFS-NER
- ▶ continued implementation of the social/economic pilot study by NMFS-NER and the state of Georgia implementation of a commercial trip ticket system by Rhode Island
- ▶ piloting of the vessel registration system by NMFS-HQ
- ▶ data management contracts
- ▶ implementation of the ACCSP for-hire pilot study

Funding recommended to the state of North Carolina for uploading of commercial trip ticket data to the ACCSP data management system was accepted with the contingency that the state meet the ACCSP confidentiality and access standards.

ACCSP staff facilitated meetings between each individual state agency and the relevant federal partners to discuss what needs to be done to implement the program, including funding issues. All ACCSP partners responded to a standard questionnaire as a first step in determining what is required to fully implement the ACCSP in each jurisdiction. Information was compiled documenting the responses from the questionnaire, as well as information obtained from each jurisdiction.

The Operations Committee drafted benchmarks for confidentiality of agency data and met jointly with the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee to develop language for access by NOAA law enforcement personnel to supplement these benchmarks. The Coordinating Council approved these confidentiality benchmarks in November 1999 and February 2000.

Data Management Activities

The development of the ACCSP data management system has continued through this grant reporting period, with the major focus on development of a prototype system for the Northeast Region dual reporting system and the Florida trip ticket program. Evaluation of the prototype system was completed through appointments of evaluators by each ACCSP partner. Data from the Florida trip ticket system has been uploaded to the ACCSP data management system. The IS Program Manager has met with data management personnel from the state of Georgia to initiate uploading of Georgia trip ticket data to the ACCSP data management system. The Coordinating Council approved criteria for moving individual agency databases into the ACCSP data management system. In conjunction with these standards the Operations Committee has

developed a short-term scenario for uploading current trip level and summary data so that the ACCSP data warehouse will have maximum utility in the shortest possible timeframe. The Operations Committee developed a draft form for access to the ACCSP data management system in order to implement the benchmarks for access to confidential data.

The Operations Committee and Coordinating Council solicited proposals from partner agencies for hosting of the ACCSP data management system. The Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service Headquarters and the state of Florida submitted proposals. The Council approved NMFS-HQ as the interim host site until dedicated ACCSP funding becomes available, and at that time to evaluate this interim strategy to determine whether it meets the needs of the ACCSP prior to moving the system to a non-shared environment. The Council also approved the Commission as the agency that should hire and house all ACCSP staff.

Social and Economic Pilot Study

The Social/Economic Commercial Harvester Pilot Study is currently being implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service - Northeast Region and the state of Georgia. Oversight to this project is provided by the Committee on Economics and Social Science's Commercial Harvester Subcommittee. The following activities have been accomplished in support of this pilot study:

- ▶ the subcommittee submitted a proposal for continued funding during FY2000
- ▶ a timeline was developed for continued implementation of this study
- ▶ the CESS Subcommittee worked jointly with the ACCSP Outreach Committee to develop a process for obtaining public input into this study
- ▶ the Outreach Committee solicited proposals for conducting outreach to commercial fishermen

Implementation of Georgia Trip Ticket Program

The state of Georgia has implemented a commercial trip ticket program for all commercial fisheries. The program began January 1999 and all data collected through this program will be uploaded to the ACCSP data management system. The IS Program Manager met with data management personnel in the state of Georgia to develop a plan of action to convert all Georgia trip ticket data to the ACCSP standard formats and upload the data to the ACCSP data management system. Georgia is also implementing the social/economic pilot study for commercial harvesters to assess implementation of this program at the state level and linkage of social/economic data to data collected through the trip ticket program.

ACCSP Outreach Activities

The ASMFC and the NMFS-NER contracted with Tricorn, Inc. to conduct several focus groups from Maine through North Carolina to obtain information from key commercial fishermen and fishing organizations on the best manner to implement the social-economic pilot study. Focus groups were conducted in Hampton (VA), New Bedford (MA), Cape May (NJ) and Riverhead (NY). Summaries of all focus groups, an initial report, and a final report have been submitted.

This contract also provided recommendations for overall strategies for general ACCSP outreach.

The ACCSP Outreach Committee reviewed the ACCSP web design and provided suggestions for modification to the IS Program Manager. The committee reviewed the information from the ACCSP recreational roundtables and developed suggestions for a short-term strategy to address recommendations developed during these meetings. The committee developed a long-term strategy and budget for submission to the ACCSP for FY2000 funding and reviewed the ACCSP legislative brochure for possible modification into a more general informational document.

The Outreach Committee sponsored a workshop to educate Atlantic coast press and information/education personnel from the ACCSP partner agencies. The Outreach Committee developed informational materials for this workshop, including information for the social/economic pilot study, and general ACCSP folders and business cards.

Technical and Advisory Committee Activities

The Recreational Technical Committee, Commercial Technical Committee, Biological Review Panel, Discard Prioritization Committee, and Advisory Committee met during this reporting period. These committees discussed the following issues:

- ▶ implementation and/or development of several ACCSP modules
- ▶ implementation of the for-hire pilot study
- ▶ development of standards for the collection of biological samples through a shore-based sampling programs
- ▶ review of data elements and standards for collection of discard/release/protected species data through an at-sea observer program and more qualitative methods
- ▶ review of the ACCESS database on fisheries characterization
- ▶ development of a process for prioritizing fisheries for at-sea observer coverage
- ▶ implementation of the one-ticket/two-ticket evaluation study
- ▶ evaluation of standard codes and formats
- ▶ further development of a program for collection of recreational shellfish data

The Committee on Economics and Social Sciences met during this reporting period and discussed the following issues:

- ▶ approval of the design for the commercial harvesters pilot study
- ▶ development of a data collection program for fishing communities