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Overview of State Trip Ticket Programs in the Gulf of Mexico

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The Fisheries Information Network (FIN) is a state-federal cooperative program to collect, manage, and disseminate statistical data and information on the marine commercial and recreational fisheries of the Southeast Region. The FIN consists of two components: Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN) and the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network [RecFIN(SE)].

The backbone of ComFIN is the trip ticket program. This program identifies the universe of commercial dealers and fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico and captures all of the commercial catch landing in the Gulf of Mexico. The commercial data collection program is a mandatory, trip-based system where all dealers (with assistance from fishermen) are required to report standardized data elements. The minimum data elements are listed in Table 1 and are currently being collected by Louisiana, Mississippi (oyster only), Alabama and Florida via the state trip ticket programs. The catch data is collected at the trip-level and are designated by AT@ in Table 1. The other elements (detailed effort) will be collected by other methods and are designated by "B" in Table 1. Please note that some of these elements (designated by "B") are currently being collected by Florida via their trip ticket program. The standard FIN codes and formats for the required information are provided in Tables 2 and 3 as well as the standard measurements of various gears and list of validation methods shown in Tables 4 and 5.

The history of trip ticket programs in the Gulf of Mexico started in 1984 when Florida implemented their system. The next state to come on-line was Louisiana. Although Louisiana had legislation (1991) authorizing the Louisiana Department of Fish and Wildlife (LDWF) the implementation of a system, there was no funding associated with that authorization until 1999. In addition to the traditional paper reporting system, Louisiana pursued the development of electronic reporting and instituted this system in 2000. Currently, over 200 dealers from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida are utilizing the electronic reporting system. Mississippi and Alabama implemented trip ticket programs in 2000. Both of these states worked closely with Louisiana and utilized their experiences associated with the implementation of a trip ticket program. In Mississippi, the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) has taken a piece meal approach by implementing the system on a fishery-by-fishery basis. There has been resistance from industry to fully implement a trip ticket system for all species. DMR began collecting trip level data on the oyster fishery in 2002. DMR had an existing reporting system for oysters and they modified it to accommodate trip ticket reporting. Bait shrimp and finfish trip-level reporting were implemented in 2002 and 2003, respectively. In Alabama, Alabama Marine Resources Division implemented the trip ticket program for all species landing within the state. All the trip ticket data are housed within each of the state agencies responsible for collecting the information. In addition, the data is sent (monthly) to the FIN Data Management System (housed at the GSMFC office) and is loaded utilizing standard formats and codes.

Since trip tickets programs are fairly new data collection methods, steps have been taken to integrate the existing data collection programs with the trip ticket systems. The states and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) have worked with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in comparing the trip ticket data with the landings data that is collecting under the Trip Interview Program (TIP). Through the work of NMFS and state personnel, it has been determined that the trip ticket program accurately reflects the catch that is being landed in the various Gulf States. Therefore, landing information collected from the trip ticket programs are used as the "official" landings for those states with trip ticket systems. This allows the TIP port agents to focus of other data needs (biological samples, detailed effort, etc.) instead of collecting landings information. In addition, port agents provide feedback regarding the trip ticket data to state personnel to improve quality of data.

Table 1. Minimum data elements for the ComFIN trip ticket program (T = information collected on a trip ticket, B = information collected on trip ticket or via survey).

CATCH		
DATA ELEMENT	**DESCRIPTION**	**COLLECTION METHOD**
Trip date	The date (dd/mm/yyyy) that the trip started. A trip is defined as the time the vessel left the dock to the point that the product was transferred	T
Trip number	Sequential number representing the number of a trip taken in a single day by either a vessel or individual. The trip number will default to one (1) when only a single trip is conducted	T
Form type/version #	Version identification number for the ComFIN trip ticket. Criteria will be developed to determine when a new version of the form will be identified	T
Form/Trip ticket number	Unique identifier for a specific trip. This will be printed on the actual trip ticket form. The numbers will be consecutive and the first two digits will be unique state code	T
Vessel ID	Coast Guard or state registration number (will be linked to unique vessel identifier. These identifiers must be trackable through time and space.)	T
Participant ID	Fisherman license# (will be linked to unique participant identifier [SSN, fed tax id#, etc.]. These identifiers must be trackable through time and space)	T
Species	Code for the species of fish caught. Each species is to be identified separately. Use of market or generalized categories should be avoided within species code fields or variables.	T
Quantity landed	The amount of each marine species that is landed and/or sold.	T
Landing condition	Code for condition landed (whole, gutted, headed, etc.).	T
Quantity units	Code for the units used for measuring landings (pounds, kilograms, etc.).	T
Market size range	Actual size range of species landed by market category	T
Ex-vessel value or Ex-vessel price	The total dollar value for each species that is landed or sold by market category The price per unit weight paid for each species that is landed or sold by market category	T
County (minimum) or port (optional) landed	Code that will provide the location within a state where the product was transferred.	T
State landed	Code that will identify the state where the product was landed or unloaded.	T
Dealer ID	This element is an identifier for the dealer at the point of each transaction. In the case of multiple dealers, the landings would be reported separately for each dealer.	T
Unloading date	Date (dd/mm/yyyy) the landed species was transferred to a dealer.	T
Market category	Code that will specify any market or grade categories that affect price, usually size related.	T
Primary Gear	Code which describes the primary type of gear used to catch the landed species.	T
Area fished	Code that provides the primary location where fishing occurred, using FIN water body codes.	T

EFFORT		
DATA ELEMENT	**DESCRIPTION**	**COLLECTION METHOD**
Trip date	The date (dd/mm/yyyy) that the trip started. A trip is defined as the time the vessel left the dock to the point that the product was transferred	T
Trip number	Sequential number representing the number of a trip taken in a single day by either a vessel or individual. The trip number will default to one (1) when only a single trip is conducted	T
Form type/version #	Version identification number for the ComFIN trip ticket. Criteria will be developed to determine when a new version of the form will be identified	T
Form/Trip ticket number	Unique identifier for a specific trip. This will be printed on the actual trip ticket form. The numbers will be consecutive and the first two digits will be unique state code	T
Gear(s)	Code(s) which identify(s) all the gears used to catch the landed species.	B
Area fished	Code that provides all locations where fishing occurred, using FIN water body codes.	B
Disposition	Code which describes the fate of the catch (i.e. discards, bait, personal consumption, etc). Disposition of discards should be recorded (i.e. regulatory vs. other discards, dead or alive, etc.)	B
Quantity of gear	The amount of gear employed	B
Days at sea	Days from the start of the trip to the return to the dock	B
Number of crew	Number of crew on each trip, including captain.	B
Fishing time	Total amount of time (hrs) that gear was in the water and/or amount of search time for each trip	B
Number of sets	Total number of sets or tows of gear during a trip	B

Table 2. Standard code formats for required information to be provided on a trip basis by all Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean dealers and fishermen under the FIN commercial data collection program.

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	FORMAT
Form Version	Form Type/Version Number	8 digit alphanumeric
Start Year	4 Digit Year when trip started	YYYY
Start Month	2 Digit month when trip started	MM
Start Day	2 Digit day of month when trip started	DD
Supplier Vessel ID	Local Partner Vessel Identifier	10 digit character
Supplier CF ID	Local Partner Commercial Fisherman Identifier	11 digit character
Trip Nbr	Number of trips (default 1)	2 digit numeric
Species ITIS	Landed Species	11 digit ITIS code (see Table A.8)
Reported Quantity	Landed quantity in reported units	8 digit numeric plus two decimal points
Unit Measure	Unit of measure of the reported quantity	2 digit character code (see Table A.2)
Disposition Code	Disposition of the landed species	3 digit character code (see Table A.4)
Dollars	Dollar value of landed quantity (total dollars of sale to dealer)	5 digit numeric plus three decimal points
County Code	County species landed in	FIPS codes 3 digit character: county (see Table A.8)
Port Code	Port species landed in	FIPS codes 5 digit character: port
State Code	State species landed in	2 character state alpha abbreviation (see Table A.8)
Supplier DR ID	Local partner dealer identifier	2 character state alpha abbreviation plus 8 character code (see Table A.2)
Unload Year	4 digit year when catch unloaded (year of sale to dealer)	YYYY
Unload Month	2 digit month when catch unloaded (month of sale to dealer)	MM
Unload Day	2 digit day of month when catch unloaded (day of sale to dealer)	DD
Market Code	Market code of landed species	2 digit alpha-numeric code (see Table A.5)
Grade Code	Grade of landed species (landing condition)	2 digit numeric code (see Table A.6)
Gear Code	Primary gear used	3 digit numeric code (see Table A.3)
Gear Quantity	Number of gear employed	6 digit numeric

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	FORMAT
Days at Sea	Number of days at sea	5 digit numeric
Crew Size	Vessel crew size (including Captain)	3 digit numeric
Fishing Hours	Number of hours gear was in water (soak time)	5 digit numeric
Area Fished	NMFS area codes	3 digit numeric (see Table A.10)
Sub-Area Fished	Sub areas within areas	4 digit numeric (see Table A.2 & A.10)
Gear Sets	Number of gear sets	3 digit numeric

Table 3. Summary of standard FIN codes and formats for units of measurement, length type, dealer identification, general fishing area, access site type, and tissue type.

DATA ELEMENT	CODING
Units of Measurement	BG: bags or sacks BR: barrels BU: bushels or baskets BX: boxes CM: centimeters DZ: dozens GL: gallons GM: grams HH: hogsheads (1225 pounds; used in sardine industry) KG: kilograms LB: pounds LT: liter MM: millimeters MP: meat pounds MT: metric tons NO: numbers OZ: ounces PS: pounds in shell QT: quarts TH: thousands of standard fish (670 pounds; used in menhaden industry) TN: short tons UK: Unknown unit
Length Type	CC curved carapace width (turtles) CF: curved fork length CL: carapace length CO: core length CU curved carapace length (turtles) CW: carapace width FL: fork length LT: lip thickness (for conch, VI) SD: shell diameter SG shell length (for conch, VI) SH shell thickness (clams, NC) SL: standard length TL: total length
Dealer Identification	ST1234567 ST: indicates state (or part of dealer ID number in LA) 1234567: indicates dealer ID number
Area Fished	NMFS area codes
Sub-Area Fished	0000: 0-3 miles 0001-9997: Inshore water body codes

DATA ELEMENT	CODING
	9998: EEZ 9999: International waters
Distance From Shore (generated values for the database)	0 = unknown distance 1 = inland < 0 2 = inshore (0-3 miles on Atlantic and Gulf coasts and U.S. Virgin Islands, 0-9 nautical miles on Florida, Puerto Rico, and Texas Gulf coast *(Territorial waters)* 3 = EEZ (3-200 miles on Atlantic and Gulf coasts and U.S. Virgin Islands, 9-200 miles on Florida Puerto Rico, and Texas Gulf coast. 4 = International (Greater than 200 miles)
Access Site Type	0 = NA **Public Access** 1 = launch ramp 2 = boat slip 3 = moored from dock 4 = other **Private Access** 5 = personal residence/dock 6 = private locked gate marina 7 = private property unlocked marina 8 = other
Tissue Type	This is a two digit numeric code that designates what type of tissue sample was taken: 01 = Muscle 02 = Eyes 03 = Stomach

Table 4. Standard measurements of quantity of gear, fishing time, and number of sets for specific gear types.

TYPE OF GEAR	QUANTITY	FISHING TIME	NUMBER OF SETS	TIME SET/RETRIEVED
Traps and Pots	Number traps/pots pulled	Mean soak time	N/A	Set: when first pot goes over Retrieved: from the moment buoy line is retrieved
Trawls	Number of nets towed	Total tow time	Number of tows	Set: when winch stops Retrieve: when winch starts
Gill Nets Entanglement	Total net length	Soak time	Number of hauls	Set: when first buoy goes over Retrieve: when last buoy comes on board
Longlines	Number gangions/hooks	Soak time	Number of hauls	Set: start of set Retrieve: retrieval of set
Dredges	Number pulled	Total tow time	Number of tows	Set: when winch stops Retrieve: when winch starts
Nets	Number of pieces of apparatus	Soak time	N/A	Set: when first net goes over Retrieve: from moment buoy line is retrieved
Hook and Line	Number of lines (Number of hooks is secondary)	Soak time (w/o transition time)	N/A	Set: when first lines are lowered Retrieve: when last lines are pulled up
Purse Seines	Length of floatline	w/ planes: Search time w/o planes: Soak time	Number of sets	w/ planes: Set: plane up, sonar on Retrieve: plane down, sonar off w/o planes: Set: when nets are put in water Retrieve: when nets are removed from water
Hand Gear	Number of lines (Number of hooks is secondary)	Soak time	N/A	Set: when gear is put into water Retrieve: when gear is removed from water
Spears/gigs	Number	Search time	N/A	N/A
Haul seines	Length of net	Soak time	Number of sets	Set: when net is put in water Retrieve: when net is removed from water
Cast nets	Number of nets	Active hours fishing	N/A	N/A
Rakes, hoes and tongs	Number of pieces of appartus	Active hours fishing	N/A	N/A
By hand	N/A	Active hours fishing	N/A	N/A

Table 5. Prioritized list of validation methods to be used by FIN partners to verify the accuracy of commercial catch and effort information submitted through the ComFIN.

VALIDATION METHOD	DEFINITION / CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Fishery-Dependent and -Independent Surveys	Any fishery-dependent survey detailed in the FIN Program Design Document, or any fishery-independent survey. A four-prong approach using the following methods is preferred: 1. Port Sampling Programs 2. At-Sea Observer Programs 3. Law Enforcement Presence < overflights < boarding and summons reports < vessel tracking system < audits and inspections < violations hotlines < customs data < consistency of penalties between states 4. Distribution of periodic data summaries to fishermen for self-verification	Presence at the docks or on vessels is the best method of verification and should be given highest priority. Provides direct liaison between the fishermen and fisheries managers. For trip and discard verification. Through direct presence of law enforcement personnel at the docks or through the listed methods. Periodic distribution of standard data summaries to fishermen and dealers provided through the FIN data management system.

VALIDATION METHOD	DEFINITION / CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Mandatory Random Fish-House/Fishermen Audits and Inspections	Audits and inspections of records either on-site or at an agency of records kept by fishermen and dealers of productions, purchases, and sales of fishery products in comparison to those data actually submitted to and received by the reporting agency. < Record content, submission frequency, and retention period specified by federal and/or state statutes or other regulations. < Statistically valid random selection of a portion of the fishermen and/or dealers involved in fisheries or a particular stratum of a fishery to assess compliance rates with reporting rules and accuracy of reporting data. < Scope of audits may require additional information to that reported in order to verify accuracy of reported data. Auditors must be granted official access to these additional sources of information as needed to perform such audits.	Should be used only on an as-needed basis.
Other Methods	< Random additional logbooks < Independent reports from fishermen and dealers of certain data elements < Fishermen permit qualification < Quota monitoring activities < Any combination of the above	Should be used only on an as-needed basis.