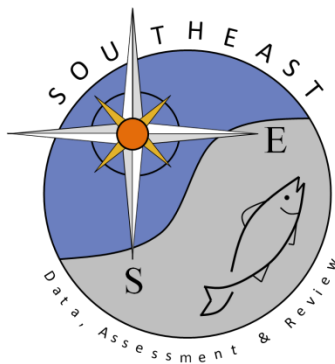


Size Composition Data Availability Overview of the Marine Recreational Information Program and Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRIP/MRFSS) in the U.S. Caribbean

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SEDAR103-DW-10

3 August 2026



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Please cite this document as:

Godwin, Katherine. 2026. Size Composition Data Availability Overview of the Marine Recreational Information Program and Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRIP/MRFSS) in the U.S. Caribbean. SEDAR103-DW-10. SEDAR, North Charleston, SC. 6 pp.

Size Composition Data Availability Overview of the Marine Recreational Information Program and Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRIP/MRFSS) in the U.S. Caribbean

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Science Center

6/16/2026

SEDAR 103: US Caribbean Application of Alternate Assessment Methods

Summary

The MRIP and MRFSS surveys are statistical surveys by which estimates can be made of historical characteristics of recreational fisheries through species composition and size composition.

I. Introduction

In preparations for the SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) 103: U.S. Caribbean Application of Alternate Assessment Methods; the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Sustainable Fisheries Division (SEFSC), Caribbean Fisheries Branch conducted data triage of the Marine Recreational Information Program and Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRIP/MRFSS). This document summarizes data collected from 2000 to 2017.

II. Sampling Method

The MRIP/MRFSS survey was a state, regional, and federal partnership fishing effort survey with the goal of collecting saltwater recreational fishing trip data, including how many trips anglers take and how many fish are caught (Coit and Spinrad 2023, NOAA Fisheries 2026).

A. Sampling Years

The MRIP/MRFSS survey sampled finfish in Puerto Rico from 2000 through 2017 and the U.S. Virgin Islands in 2000.

B. Geographic Range

The MRIP/MRFSS survey sampled finfish from the U.S Caribbean State and Federal waters.

C. Sample Size

The MRIP/MRFSS survey conducted 2,467 interviews collecting 16,906 lengths and 15,006 weights across 250 species with 11 unique gears in Puerto Rico. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, seven interviews collected 26 lengths and 41 weights across 13 species and two gears (Table 1).

D. Variables or Data Types Collected

The MRIP/MRFSS survey attempted to collect length, weight, island region, distance from shore, and date of collection from each specimen.

III. Results

The MRIP/MRFSS data was summarized at a regional level to identify trends in the number of interviews performed, lengths recorded, species observed, and gears used (Table 1).

The sampling intensity of each species collected during the MRIP/MRFSS survey was calculated by region. The species were divided into federally managed and unmanaged categories. The resultant sampling intensity characterizations were Data Rich, Data Inconsistent, Rarely Present, and Not Present. The Data Rich characterization was assigned to

a federally managed or unmanaged species that had sufficient and consistent data across the full time period of MRIP/MRFSS sampling. Sufficient and consistent data represents species whose length records represent greater than or equal to 2% of all length records of their respective region, have lengths recorded within the last ten years, and have an average interview count per year greater than or equal to 30 interviews or an average length count per year greater than or equal to 150 records (Table 2). The Rarely Present characterization was assigned to federally managed species with too few data to pass federal data confidentiality rules. This characterization was given to species whose length records represented less than 2% of length records of their respective region and had an average interview count per year of less than 30 interviews or an average length count per year of less than 150 length records. The Data Inconsistent characterization was assigned to federally managed or unmanaged species that had a “hit or miss” sampling consistency. This was characterized by any other combination of length record percentage representation and average length record or interview counts per year where lengths have been recorded in the last ten years (Tables 3 and 4). The Not Present characterization was assigned to federally managed species that were not found within the MRIP/MRFSS dataset.

After the species were categorized by region, data status, and management designation, grouped counts show that only one species was found to have a Rich data status across both regions and management designations (Table 5).

IV. Discussion

Based on the sampling methods and breadth of data, the MRIP/MRFSS data can be utilized to estimate historical characteristics of recreational fisheries through species composition and size composition.

V. References

Coit, J., & Spinrad, R. W. (2023). (rep.). Report to Congress - Marine Recreational Information Program: Report on State Partnerships. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3//2025-01/MRIP_Report_State_Partnerships_2024.pdf.

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VI. Tables and Figures

Table 1. Summary of Puerto Rican Caribbean Spiny Lobster data collected by the HJR and MER surveys from 2021 to 2023.

Region	First Complete Year	Years of Data	Interviews	Lengths	Weights	Species	Gears	Avg. Length Count per Interview
Puerto Rico	2000	18	2,467	16,906	15,006	250	11	6.85
U.S. Virgin Islands	2000	1	7	26	41	13	2	3.71

Table 2. Summary table of federally managed species sampled in Puerto Rico with a data status of Rich.

Federally Managed Puerto Rico Species - Data Status: Rich											
Species	Management		Year			Interview			Length		
Common	Stock	Class	Count	First	Last	Count	Mean	Percent	Count	Mean	Percent
Dolphin	Dolphinfish	indicator	18	2000	2017	744	41	30.16	4,062	226	24.03

Table 3. Summary table of federally managed species sampled in Puerto Rico with a data status of Inconsistent. Rows highlighted in yellow indicate species that have SEDAR Assessments performed previously on them in the island platform.

Federally Managed Puerto Rico Species - Data Status: Inconsistent											
Species	Management		Year			Interview			Length		
Common	Stock	Class	Count	First	Last	Count	Mean	Percent	Count	Mean	Percent
Lane snapper	Snapper 3	single	18	2000	2017	284	16	11.51	822	46	4.86
Yellowtail snapper	Snapper 5	single	18	2000	2017	229	13	9.28	550	31	3.25
Wahoo	Wahoo	single	18	2000	2017	228	13	9.24	467	26	2.76
Red hind	Grouper 6	indicator	18	2000	2017	189	10	7.66	557	31	3.29
Great barracuda	Barracuda	single	18	2000	2017	185	10	7.5	429	24	2.54
Coney	Grouper 3	indicator	17	2000	2016	165	10	6.69	610	36	3.61
Silk snapper	Snapper 1	indicator	18	2000	2017	134	7	5.43	754	42	4.46

Table 4. Summary table of federally unmanaged species sampled in Puerto Rico with a data status of Inconsistent.

Federally Unmanaged Puerto Rico Species - Data Status: Inconsistent									
Species	Year			Interview			Length		
Common	Count	First	Last	Count	Mean	Percent	Count	Mean	Percent
Blue runner	18	2000	2017	252	14	10.21	729	40	4.31

Table 5. Summary table of all species sampled in the U.S. Caribbean by federal management and data status designation by island platform.

Island	Species Type	Data Status			
		Rich	Inconsistent	Rare	Not Present
Puerto Rico	Federally Managed	1	7	50	18
Puerto Rico	Federally Unmanaged		1	191	
U.S. Virgin Islands	Federally Managed			5	51
U.S. Virgin Islands	Federally Unmanaged			8	