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# Recreational Federal Permits: Exploring the benefits and impacts on surveys

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
June 9-13, 2025

# National Saltwater Angler Registry (NSAR) History

- Established through MSA to become an “address book” of recreational anglers used by MRIP for the Fishing Effort Survey (FES)
- MSA restricted what NOAA could require in NSAR
  - Information collected: Name, email, date of birth, mailing address, telephone number, and states intended for fishing
  - Annual registration and valid for one year for \$29 per license
- All 4 South Atlantic states are exempted from NSAR having agreed to regularly provide state license information to NOAA Fisheries

Back to Fisheries National Saltwater Angler Registry

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Individual Angler Registration Form

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you plan to fish in ANY state or U.S. territory EXCEPT Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, it is very likely that the state will require you to obtain a saltwater recreational fishing license or registration for your fishing activity, in which case you will be AUTOMATICALLY registered with the National Saltwater Angler Registry and should NOT register here.

**An individual angler registration covers only one angler. If you would like to register more than one angler, you will need to complete a separate registration for each angler.**

\* Is required.

**Angler Information**

\* First Name:  Middle Initial:

\* Last Name:  Suffix:

\* Date of Birth:  (mm/dd/yyyy) (e.g. Jr., Sr., III)

Email Address:  Confirm Email:

☐ I acknowledge by not entering an email address, I will not receive an electronic copy of my registration card. I will print the confirmation page for my records.

**Registration Card Mailing Address Information**

It is very important that you enter a valid mailing address as this is the address to which your registration card will be mailed. You do not need to enter more than one address or register more than once if you own more than one home or fish in more than one location.

\* Address Line 1:  **The system will attempt to standardize and validate address information. You may be prompted to clarify or confirm certain address information.**

(street number and street name, e.g. 123 Main St)

Address Line 2:

(apt/floor/suite, e.g. Apt #123)

\* City:

\* State:

\* Zip Code:  (5 digit zip code only)

**Survey Contact Telephone Information**

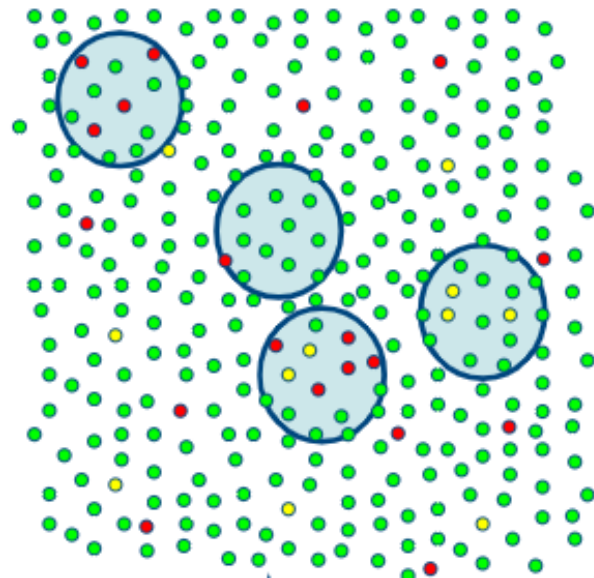
Registration in the National Saltwater Angler Registry establishes your eligibility to participate in surveys about your fishing activity. Information obtained from these surveys is used to determine the health and sustainability of the fishery and make informed decisions about how many fish can be caught the following year. Please enter a permanent (i.e. not temporary or local) phone number where you would prefer to be reached if you are selected to participate in an angler survey.

\* Phone Number:  Phone Extension:

(no punctuation, e.g. 8005551212)

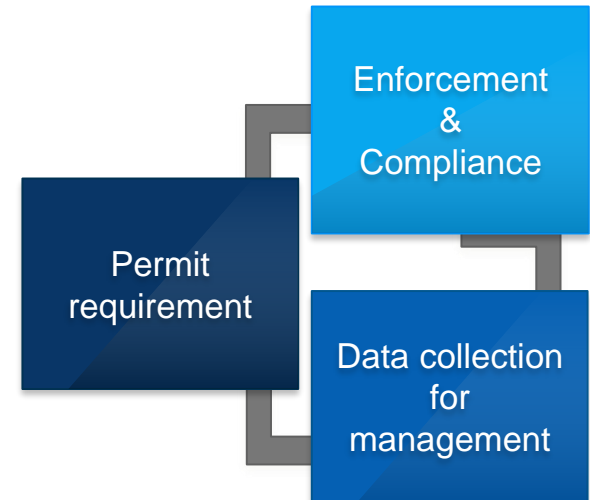
# Use of NSAR for MRIP Fishing Effort Survey (FES)

- FES was designed to cover general private boat/shore fishing - this includes effort for inshore and offshore species
- NSAR and state fishing license information help improve the sample frame for FES by identifying angling households that we can sample at higher rates, but challenges remain:
  - State license exemptions
  - Unlicensed fishing
  - Licenses are for general marine fishing (making it difficult to separate inshore and offshore effort)
    - A few states have endorsements or identifiers for anglers who fish offshore



# Permits

- Permits are a tool in the fishery manager toolbox
- In general, a permit can assist managers by:
  - Identifying fishing participants and their characteristics for social and economic impacts
  - Creating mechanisms for compliance with fishery regulations
  - Creates additional data collection opportunity by providing a framework for mandatory reporting (census)
  - Improving efficiency of survey data collection



# Permit Units

- **Angler permits**

- Accounts for all anglers on a vessel
- Greater data collection scope
- Greater total cost to agency and industry
- More difficult to enforce
- Aligns with FL State Reef Fish Survey

- **Vessel permits**

- Aligns with existing vessel permits (e.g., for-hire or commercial who utilize their vessel recreationally)
- Smaller data collection scope
- Lower agency and industry costs
- Simplifies identification and enforcement

# Using Offshore Permits to Improve Federal Surveys

- Current federal surveys (APAIS/FES) are designed to collect data for both state and federally managed species.
- Due largely to sample size and estimate timeliness constraints, federal surveys are challenged to provide reliable and precise catch estimates for:

- Rare-event species
- Short season or pulse fisheries
- Smaller scale offshore species



- ***How could a permit\* address these issues?***
  - A means to identify offshore anglers (sub-population) more effectively for data collection

# MRIP Change Considerations

## Could leverage an offshore permit to:

1. Add focused sampling of offshore fishing trips to existing surveys to improve efficiency of offshore data collection (cost-neutral)
  - **Tradeoff:** Would reduce precision of data for inshore species (both state-managed and inshore components of federally managed species)
2. Develop new specialized surveys
  - **Tradeoff:** Would require additional resources
3. Reallocate FES and APAIS resources to focus more on offshore sampling
  - **Tradeoff:** Would reduce precision and require additional resources for inshore data collection



# Conclusions

- **Permits can serve as an important tool to improve data collection and management**
- Council needs to carefully weigh benefits to trade-offs for different permit and survey options:
  - Augment existing surveys, including targeting offshore trips
    - May lose precision for inshore species
  - Refocus FES and APAIS on offshore fishing only
    - States would need to collect in-shore rec data (time and \$)
  - Develop new specialized surveys (time and \$)
    - Compatibility with other surveys/estimates
- **Permit scope (unit) has additional trade-offs**
  - Vessel or angler permits can be utilized
  - A vessel permit may be more cost effective for data collection and management than an angler permit



# Questions?