

ADDENDUM
to the
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
for establishment of an
ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE
STATISTICS PROGRAM
(ACCSP)

ACCSP Coordinating Council APPROVED: 18 May 1999

INTRODUCTION

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) and their member states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, began planning a regional initiative for the collection and management of recreational fisheries data in the early 1990's. At the suggestion of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Regional Office, the South Atlantic states, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico were included. A Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN(SE)) was signed by eighteen agencies and organizations in 1993. Realizing the need for commercial fisheries coordination, ComFIN was initiated during this same period. ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) were combined in 1996 to form the Fisheries Information Network (FIN).

Concurrent with the development of the ComFIN and FIN, state and federal partners began development of a comprehensive data collection and data management program for the Atlantic coast. The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) MOU was signed by 23 partners in May 1995.

STATUS

Coordination of both technical and administrative elements between the Southeast and Atlantic coast programs has been regarded as high priority. The culmination of the two efforts, i.e., formation of a national fisheries program, has been the goal at all levels of both programs. The South Atlantic states and the NMFS Southeast system formed the bridge between the two initiatives. From the outset of the ACCSP, the intent of the South Atlantic states was to participate actively in the FIN initiative until the development of the ACCSP reached a level that would make participation on both fronts burdensome. Discontinuation of active South Atlantic state participation in the FIN initiative should be considered a logical and welcomed outcome, given the robust growth of the ACCSP.

A unanimous recommendation was formulated during the November 1998 FIN Committee meeting; that upon approval by the ACCSP Coordinating Council and the GSMFC, the South Atlantic states will discontinue active participation in the Southeast FIN initiative.

The rationale for the recommendation is as follows:

- The development of the ACCSP has reached a level that requires singular participation by the South Atlantic state partners.
- Coordination between the FIN and ACCSP has been, and will continue to be, a high priority at all levels.
- ACCSP and GSMFC staff personnel participate actively on the FIN Committee and ACCSP committees, respectively.
- The standing FIN/ACCSP Compatibility Workgroup has been formed and there is cross-representation on numerous committees, to help insure rapport and the sharing of ideas and products between the two Programs.

This addendum to the ACCSP MOU a) does not preclude the South Atlantic States from participation in FIN activities, and b) that the South Atlantic states will continue as signatories to the FIN MOU.