![NOAA logo and NOAA FISHERIES]

For-Hire Data
Makes a Difference

When you and your clients participate in recreational fishing surveys, you're making a vital contribution to the assessment and management of U.S. fish stocks. Combined with commercial catch data, biological research, and information collected from direct observations of fisheries, the information you provide supports sustainable fisheries for future generations.

Atlantic and Gulf For-Hire Data Collection Programs

Different data collection programs gather different pieces of information about for-hire fishing activity. Taken together, these complementary programs provide a more complete picture of for-hire catch than any single one could.

LARGE PELAGICS SURVEY[1]
Collects catch and effort data from private and charter boats targeting large pelagic species from **Maine** to **Virginia**.

ACCESS POINT ANGLER INTERCEPT SURVEY[1]
Collects catch data from shore, private boat, and for-hire anglers from **Maine** to **Mississippi**, and in **Hawaii**.

FOR-HIRE SURVEY[1]
Collects effort data from for-hire vessels from **Maine** to **Mississippi**. (Private recreational angler effort data is gathered on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, and in **Hawaii**, through the mail Fishing Effort Survey.)

GREATER ATLANTIC ELECTRONIC VESSEL TRIP REPORTS[2]
Collects catch and effort data from federally permitted for-hire vessels with **New England** and **Mid-Atlantic** permits, regardless of waters fished.

SOUTHEAST REGION HEADBOAT SURVEY[3]
Collects catch and effort data from federally permitted headboats from **North Carolina** to **Texas**.

SOUTHEAST FOR-HIRE ELECTRONIC REPORTING PROGRAM[4]
Collects catch, effort, and economic data from federally permitted for-hire vessels with **South Atlantic** permits, regardless of waters fished.

In-person survey **Phone survey** **Electronic logbook**

[1] Administered by NOAA Fisheries' Office of Science and Technology.
[2] Administered by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office.
[3] Administered by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center.
[4] Administered by the Southeast Regional Office.

For-Hire Captains: Your Questions Answered

Why are for-hire clients surveyed about their catch instead of captains?

We collect catch information from for-hire clients instead of captains so catch rate data is consistent and comparable across for-hire, shore, and private boat modes. That's because our estimates of catch rate are based on the number of trips taken by anglers, not boat trips. Therefore, we follow the same practice in each mode, interviewing individual anglers about their individual catch. To collect the most accurate information possible, field interviewers working for our state partners are trained to help anglers identify the area they fished and the species they caught.

Can the reporting process be simplified?

For-hire state and federal data collection programs each serve a vital, unique purpose in estimating total recreational fishing catch, though we recognize this can create a reporting burden. That's why we are working with our partners at the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program to help streamline for-hire reporting.

How does NOAA Fisheries use for-hire electronic logbook data?

All federally permitted for-hire vessels with New England or Mid-Atlantic Council permits are required to submit electronic Vessel Trip Reports to NOAA Fisheries' Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO), regardless of the area fished. To be used as a sound scientific method, self-reported data needs to be validated through independent observation. Data collected through these eVTRs are used alongside data collected through the For-Hire Survey to estimate for-hire fishing effort and to inform fishery science and management decisions. eVTRs are used to make our sampling frame more efficient and to supplement the FHS. We remain committed to working with state and regional partners to advance the appropriate additional uses of electronic reporting technologies in recreational fishing data collection.

Why do I need to respond to multiple surveys? Is my data double-counted?

For-hire operators required to submit electronic vessel trip reports (eVTRs) to GARFO are not called as part of the general For-Hire Survey (FHS). However, some for-hire operators who submit eVTRs to GARFO may be called as part of the Large Pelagics Telephone Survey (an add-on to the FHS), which collects distinct information from active HMS permit holders from June through October from Maine to Virginia. Different survey methods are used to gather different types of catch and effort data. We link data we collect from the for-hire community to unique vessel identification numbers to prevent data from being counted more than once.

How do you evaluate the quality of your estimates?

While no statistical surveys are free of errors, our staff practices extensive quality assurance and control measures before our estimates are published. This includes checking for errors in data entry and investigating any unusual changes in trends for high-interest species. Partners with local knowledge are also able to provide feedback on the estimates. To aid in quality data usage, we also publish measures of precision alongside the estimates to indicate how confident we are in the estimate reflecting the actual population value.

Why do data collection methods change over time?

We routinely conduct research and pilot studies to identify and evaluate potential survey design improvements. Our data collection and estimation methods undergo extensive testing, evaluation, and independent peer review, and our work is informed by recommendations from an independent team of expert statistical consultants.

Participation in the For-Hire Survey is mandatory for vessels that possess limited-access Charter/Headboat Permits for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species and Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish. All for-hire captains and anglers are encouraged to participate in our surveys. The more information we have, the better the quality of data to inform fisheries management decisions.

Estimating Total For-Hire Catch

CATCH RATE
Estimated number of fish caught per angler trip

X

EFFORT
Estimated number of angler trips

=

TOTAL CATCH
Estimated total number of fish caught

countmyfish.noaa.gov