

NOAA FISHERIES

Office of Science and Technology

Marine Recreational Information Program NOAA Fisheries' Fishing Effort Survey Pilot Study and Next Steps

Aug. 14, 2023 Evan Howell Director, Office of Science and Technology

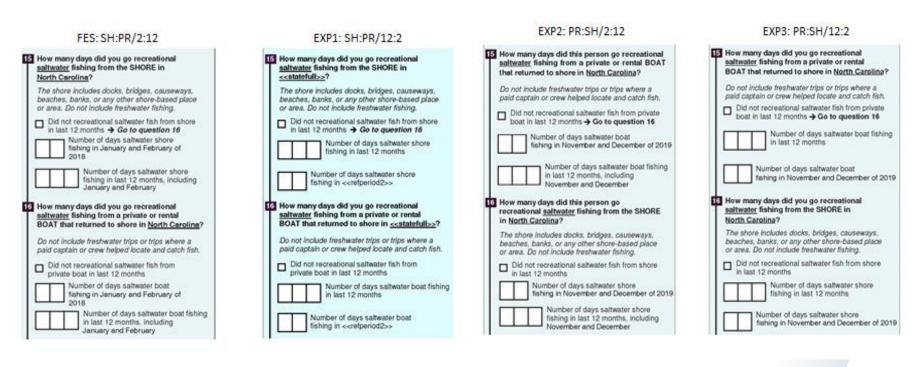
FES Pilot Study Key Points

- One of several studies to evaluate potential sources of bias in Fishing Effort Survey.
- Revising order of questions in pilot resulted in fewer observed reporting errors/illogical responses.
- Resulting effort estimates generally 30-40 percent lower for shore and private boat than estimates produced from current design.
- Limitations: Conducted over 6 months, smaller sample size than full FES administration, results varied by state and fishing mode.





Switching 2 & 12-month Fishing Activity Questions





Follow-up Study

- Revised design administered concurrently with current FES over full course of 2024 (larger sample size over longer duration).
- Received funding at end of July 2023 to conduct in 2024.
- New study design is informed by results of two previous pilot studies (one month waves, question order).
- Revised design includes changing the order of questions and also increasing the administration of the survey from every two months to monthly.
 - Study will determine **combined effects**, which allows for a more efficient transition/calibration process.
 - Monthly sampling is a priority of our partners and will produce more frequent estimates and a shorter respondent recall period that may also minimize reporting error.



Assessment and Management Implications

- Full potential impacts unknown until we've completed follow-up study.
- Effort data from FES (where it is conducted) remains best available science for tracking relative year-to-year and long-term effort trends.
- While scaling of the estimates may change if transitioning to a revised survey, we **expect critical catch and effort trend information to remain intact**.
- Focus on continued conversations with partners and programmatic improvements to further mitigate disruption to assessment and management in light of continuous survey improvement and future survey design changes.
- Opportunity to make fisheries management more resilient.

