



Pacific Coast Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN)

Ryan Denton
California
Dept Fish & Wildlife

National Academy of Sciences Committee

June 26, 2025



Washington

Ocean Sampling Program

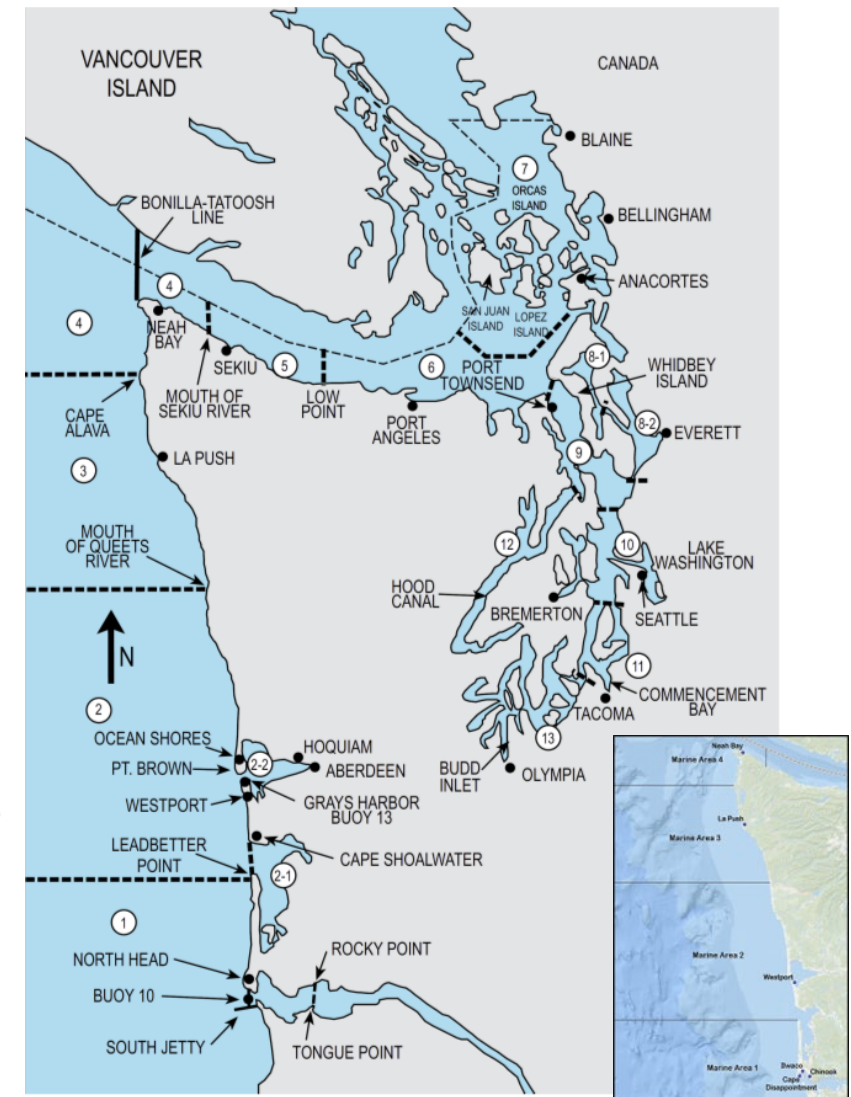
- Marine Areas 1-4; Salmon, Bottomfish, Pacific halibut, Albacore tuna
- **MRIP Certified, 2023**
- Access point survey
- Produce weekly/monthly estimates of marine catch (retained/released) and effort (boat/angler trips)
- Major ports sampled March – October
- Strata: port/marine area/trip type (e.g., salmon, bottomfish, etc.)/mode (party charter, private/rental)

Puget Sound Sampling Program

- Marine Areas 5-13; Salmon, Bottomfish, Pacific halibut
- MRIP Certification – Paused
- Access point survey (CPUE) and telephone survey (effort)
- Produces bimonthly estimates of bottomfish catch (retained/released)
- Phone survey draws from Washington licensed angler database

Marine Fish Science Bio Data Collection Program

- Not considered for MRIP certification
- Select port coverage: Neah Bay (MA 4), La Push (MA 3), Westport (MA 2)
- Bottomfish biological data (length, weight, otoliths) collection
- Data inform stock assessments, do not inform catch/effort estimates



Washington Recreational Fishery Marine Areas (MAs)

Coast: 1-4, Straits and Puget Sound: 5-13



Challenges

Inadequate funding

- Level or declining funding that fail to meet baseline program needs
- Lack of funding for program improvements
- Risks diminished data quality

Inability to fully staff programs

- Rely on seasonal positions for angler intercept surveys: Remote locations lack housing; more urban areas are unaffordable for seasonal technicians who typically fall lower on the state pay scale
 - Fill gap by pulling data managers into the field → burdens catch estimation process
 - OSP purchased trailers and rents a house year-round to sub-let to seasonal staff → Adds “landlord” to program manager responsibilities, significant financial impact
- Pilot project to evaluate and implement use of video systems to collect effort data → Some efficiency gains but also shifts staffing needs from field positions to data analysts

Sampling Design

- Minor port coverage requirement, 3-year cycle → exacerbates staffing challenges, have demonstrated assumption of no/low effort is valid
 - Options: Eliminate requirement and reconsider based on new utilization information, or lengthen cycle to every 5 years (or more)

Insufficient internal survey design/statistical capacity and expertise

- Stalled documentation and review of Puget Sound Sampling Program
- May constrain/delay implementation of transition from licensed angler telephone survey to web-based platform

Benefits to Certification

- Recognition
- No apparent tangible effect, e.g., improved funding

ORBS Certification Progress

Ocean Recreational Boat Survey (ORBS)

- Moving forward with stratified, two-stage cluster estimation design
 - o Supported via several statistical consultant reviews
- Legacy estimates - Stratified SRS, estimation methodology

Certification Hurdles

- Addressing under coverage within a survey design framework (e.g., unsampled port/time periods)
- Limited auxiliary data (i.e., census data or proxy data)
- Uncertainty around private vessel mode estimates
- Estimates extend beyond 30% and 50% recommended PSE thresholds
- Varies spatially, temporally and by estimate (i.e., rare species)





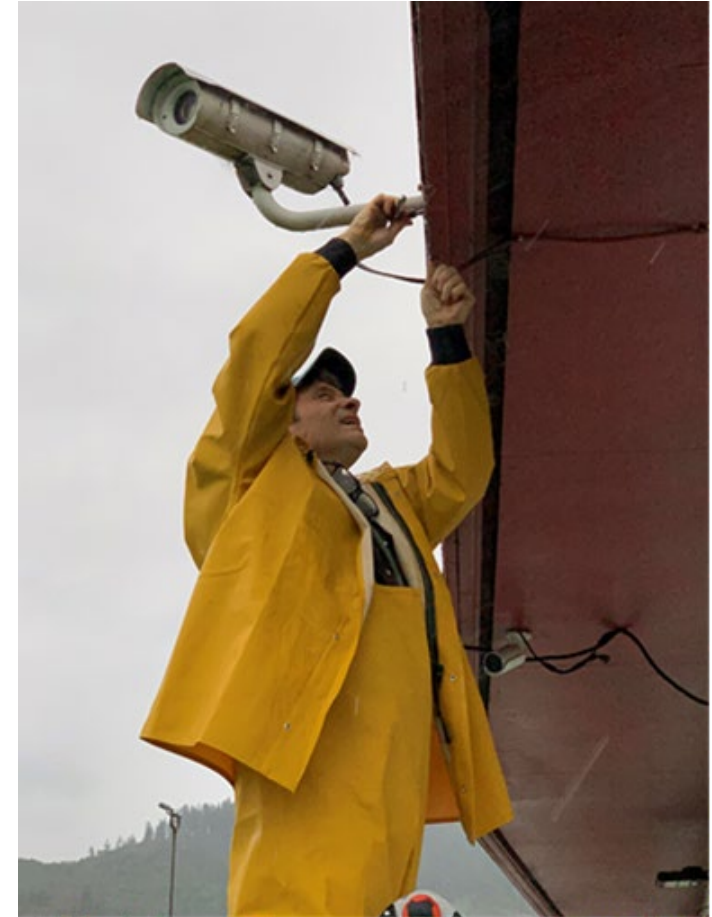
Support Needs

Technical Support:

- Survey statistician(s) to help address state specific needs (e.g. survey design, analysis)
- Additional data processing and management capacity

ORBS Resources:

- Periodic full-year coastal sampling for some or all ports
- Periodic sampling of minor ports
- Full-year utilization of Video Boat Count system
- Stable funding that increases annually to reflect inflation and increased staffing costs





California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS)

- **Catch and effort data are collected for four modes of fishing:**

- Private and rental boats (PR)
- Party or charter boats (PC)
- Man-made structures (MM)
- Beaches and banks (BB)



- **Methods of CRFS data collection:**

- Field intercept surveys
- Offsite survey (ALDOS)





MRIP Certification Status

Key

Review	Comm	Cert.	Imp.
--------	------	-------	------

- PR Modes (PR1/PR2)

Certified by MRIP in July 2023



- ALDOS

Certified by MRIP in July 2023



- MM Mode



- BB Mode



- PC Mode





Challenges Meeting MRIP Standards

- **Insufficient Funding**

- CRFS is joint funded by two Federal funding sources, both of which have been stagnant or decreased in recent years
- Funding challenges negatively impact data quality

- **Field Staffing Levels**

- Difficulties recruiting and retaining staff have had a negative impact on meeting minimum sampling goals

- **Support Staff Capacity**

- Limited IT and analytical staff capacity has slowed full implementation of certified methods and ability to respond to MRIP feedback

