

# » Making Your Catch Count...

MRIP is changing the way managers, scientists and anglers are working together to ensure the sustainability of saltwater fishing.



## What is MRIP?

The Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP, is the new way the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries) is counting and reporting key aspects of recreational fishing activity: it factors in the catch—or the tally of the number, size and species of fish being caught, plus the effort—another way of saying how many people are fishing, when and how often. Launched in 2008, MRIP has been designed from the ground up as a comprehensive overhaul of NOAA Fisheries' previous estimation methods.

It will not only produce better estimates of fishing activity—and ultimately, the health of fish stocks—but will accomplish this through a process grounded in the principles of transparency, accountability and engagement.

MRIP is designed to meet two critical needs. The first is to provide the detailed, timely and scientifically sound estimates upon which fisheries managers, stock assessors and marine scientists can rely to ensure the sustainability of ocean resources.

Equally important, MRIP will address head-on stakeholder concerns

**MRIP will not be a fisheries management “silver bullet”; it is the commitment to a process in which end users’ needs are a top consideration.**

about the reliability and credibility of recreational fishing catch and effort estimates.

MRIP explicitly recognizes that the numbers we produce do not exist in a vacuum; they have real impacts on the lives and livelihoods of millions of Americans.

## How will MRIP benefit anglers?

MRIP will benefit anyone concerned about the sustainability of our ocean resources. It will provide better data by addressing potential biases in past methods, and by adapting to meet emerging science and management needs.

It's very important to understand that MRIP may not have a significant impact on current estimates of fishing regulations. But it will be the basis for a collaborative process for evaluating what the numbers tell us and how we should respond.

In the end, the better the information we have, the better the decisions we can make about how best to conserve our oceans and ensure their sustainable use.

## Where can I learn more?

To learn more about MRIP at the national level, visit [www.countmyfish.noaa.gov](http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov). To learn more about what it means to you as an angler, get involved! Go to council meetings, become active with your fishing club, and check back with the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife throughout the fishing season.

## MRIP Quick Facts

2011 marks the second year of the National Saltwater Angler Registry. Find out if **YOU** need to register for the federal program.

(At the time this *Digest* was published, the New Jersey Saltwater Recreational Registry Program (NJSRRP) had not yet been completed and approved by NMFS; see page 14 for details. The NJDEP is working to have the free NJSRRP available for individuals and for-hire vessels to register sometime in May. Anglers and for-hire vessels will register through the NJDEP Web site.)

### You **MUST** register if you:

- » Fish in federal waters, or
- » Target or catch anadromous species (saltwater fish that spawn in freshwater like river herring, shad or striped bass) in any tidal waters, and
- » Do not meet any of the exemptions under the law.

### You are **EXEMPT** if you:

- » Are under 16, or
- » Only fish on federally permitted charter, party or guide boats, or
- » Hold a Highly Migratory Species Angling permit, or
- » Are fishing commercially under a valid license, or
- » Are already registered through an exempted state.

## Register and Fish the Same Day!

Visit [www.countmyfish.noaa.gov](http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov) or call toll-free **888-MRIP-411 (888-674-7411)**.