



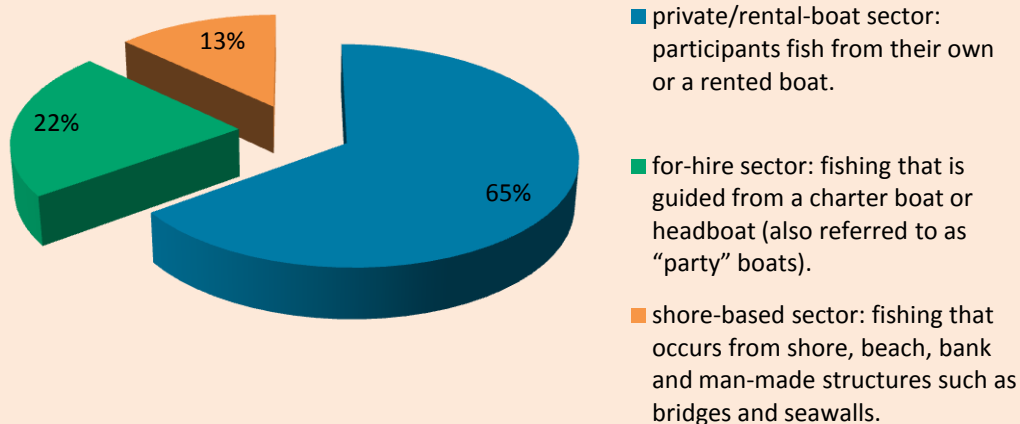
A DAY ON THE WATER: WHO IS CATCHING THE MOST FISH IN U.S. RECREATIONAL FISHERIES?

Figueira, W. and F.C. Coleman. 2010. Comparing landings of United States recreational fishery sectors. *Bulletin of Marine Science*. 86:499-514.

In the United States, fisheries managers are charged with maintaining fish populations at sustainable levels. One of the largest challenges to management and conservation is identifying all of the sources of fishing mortality to determine how many fish remain and how many can be caught. Across the U.S., regional and species differences determine whether commercial or recreational fisheries account for the majority of landings. Within recreational fisheries, managers generally recognize three sectors – private/rental boat, for-hire and shore-based. Understanding each sector's contribution to the recreational fisheries catch is essential for effective data collection and sustainable management.

In a new study, Drs. Will Figueira and Felicia Coleman aggregated landings data from all U.S. recreational fishing survey programs to assess the contribution of each individual fishing sector to total recreational catch within the contiguous U.S.


U.S. Marine Recreational Fish Landings (weight) by Sector




Recreational Fishing Data: Collecting recreational catch and effort data can be difficult. The majority of recreational fishing data in the U.S. is collected at docks, boat ramps and shorelines, as well as through phone surveys, as part of the Marine Fisheries Recreational Statistics Survey (MRFSS). The MRFSS is undergoing revisions to improve the data's accuracy. One improvement to the survey, now called the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), is the transition to the National Saltwater Angler Registry Program, which will provide a list of fishing participants to contact for information rather than the current system of randomly contacting individuals of coastal households.


Regional differences


In all regions, the ocean features and the main species of interest help to dictate which recreational sectors play the most important roles in U.S. state and federal waters.

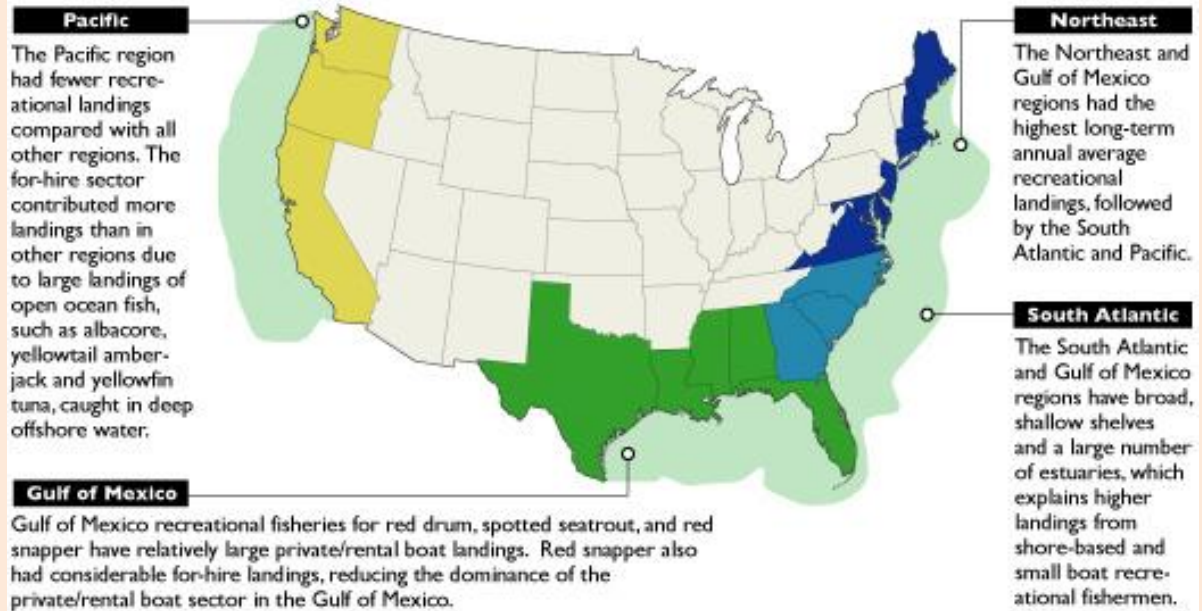
Key  State and federal waters (Exclusive Economic Zones)

 States that border Pacific region

 Gulf of Mexico states

 Northeast states

 South Atlantic states
includes east coast of Florida



Results:

- The study indicates that the private/rental boat sector accounts for the majority of recreational fisheries landings - 65 percent by weight. Although the for-hire sector probably fishes with greater efficiency, the large number of participants in the private/rental boat sector is enough to outweigh the efficiencies.
- Because the sector that accounts for the majority of landings is the sector where data collection is the most challenging, there is a fundamental need for a more extensive and improved data collection system for private and rental boats.
- The authors suggest that one of the most reliable methods for improving the available information is establishing a universal licensing program, which is in its beginning stages in the U.S. with the recent creation of a National Saltwater Angler Registry.

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The Lenfest Ocean Program was established in 2004 by the Lenfest Foundation and is managed by the Pew Environment Group.



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