

In addition to the work under the program our personnel has collaborated and participated in studies such as: The Characterization of Highly Migratory Species fishing and studies that will allow us to know the actual socio economic impact of marine recreational fishing in the Island.

This inter-agency effort among the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources DNER), the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSFMC) and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) constitutes one of the best tools that will help assure the best management of the Island's fisheries resources.



# Marine Recreational Fishing Statistics Survey (2000-2013)



This publication was prepared for informational use as part of the proposal entitled “Puerto Rico Marine Recreational Fishing (FA13AF00177) with funds provided by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency and Fish and Wildlife Service. All regulations mentioned are subject to modifications. To view current regulations and additional information go to:

PRDNER: [www.drna.gobierno.pr](http://www.drna.gobierno.pr)

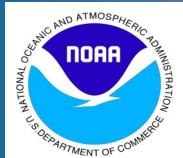
Caribbean Fisheries Management Council:

[www.caribbeanfmc.com](http://www.caribbeanfmc.com)

National Marine Fisheries Service:

[www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov)

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## Summary

The Marine Fisheries Statistical Survey (MRFSS) began in Puerto Rico in 1999 as an effort to monitor marine recreational fishing on the Island. To cover all aspects of recreational fishing, the program was then divided into two main components: first the evaluation of 3 modes of marine recreational fishing (shore, private boat and charter boat fishing) and second, the monitoring and evaluation of marine recreational fishing tournaments. In the first component, fishermen are interviewed and the following information is collected: catch, fish identification, length and weight of harvested fish, fishing effort, location, bait, gear and socioeconomic information (place of residence, target species, expenses during the fishing trip, etc.)

In tournament monitoring; our personnel visit fishing clubs and marinas to collect biometrical information as well as information on tagged/ released or lost fish and information on angler participation and effort at these events. The events in this group are unique due to the fact that anglers go out to sea to compete for prizes for their catch or releases.

These events target mostly pelagic species such as Dolphinfin (*Coryphaena hippurus*), Blue Marlin (*Makaira nigricans*), Sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*) and Wahoo (*Acanthocibium solandri*) among others.

When combined with the information provided by the angler interviews, we have a better perspective on marine recreational fishing in Puerto Rico.

This brochure summarizes findings from the interviews of marine recreational fishermen during the period of 2000-2013.

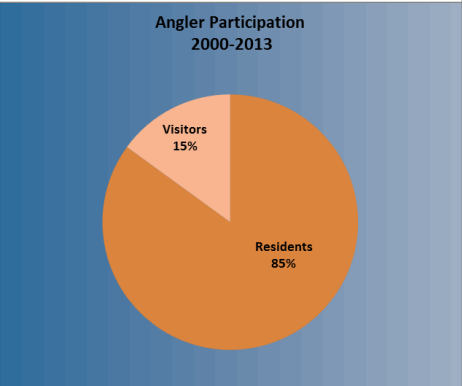
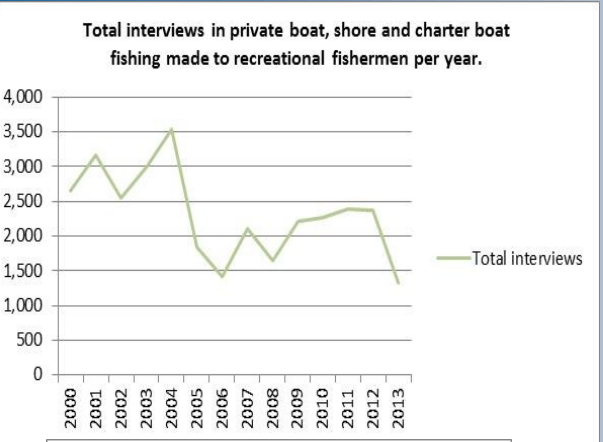
The methodology in this project consisted of on-site interviews of fishermen at the end of their fishing activity. All fishermen regardless of fishing mode (shore, private or charter boat fishing) responded to the same set of questions. The information provided by fishermen was processed and validated via telephone calls. This was done with the intention of assuring the quality of work of our interviewers and ask additional questions about their experience during that day. With further and careful analysis of the answers provided, the following results were obtained.



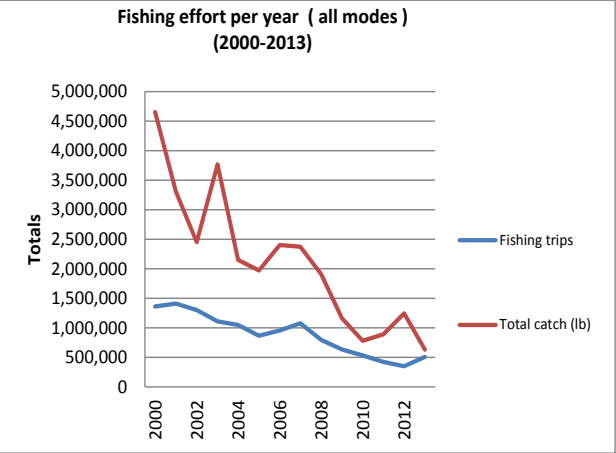
*Thanks to all recreational fishermen for their cooperation with this project.*

# RESULTS

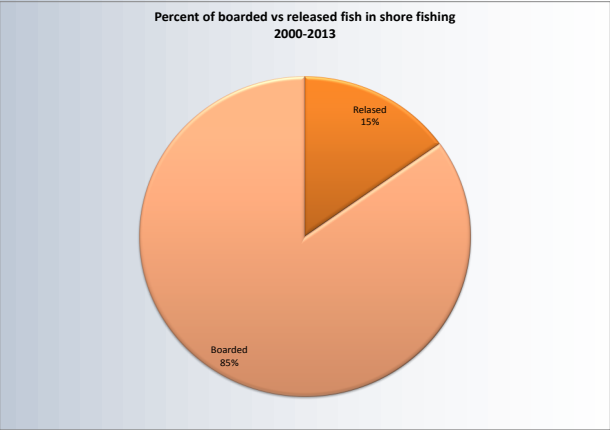
Anglers were interviewed at previously selected sites, including ramps, piers, shore fishing sites, marinas etc. A total of 32,429 angler interviews were completed in the Island. In 2004, fishermen participation increased considerably. In 2006, total number of interviews dropped to a large extent, by 2009 these numbers improved for a few years declining sharply in 2012-2013.



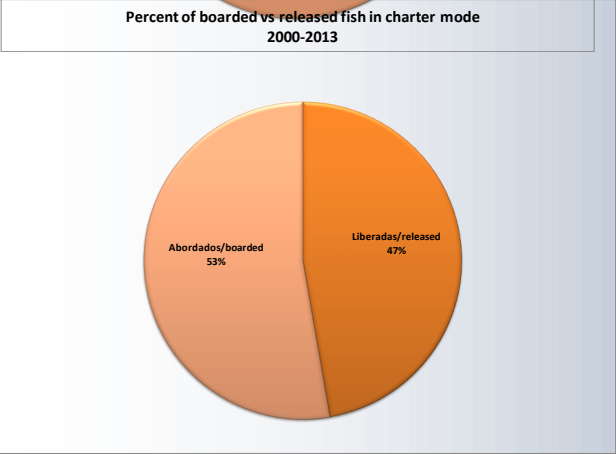
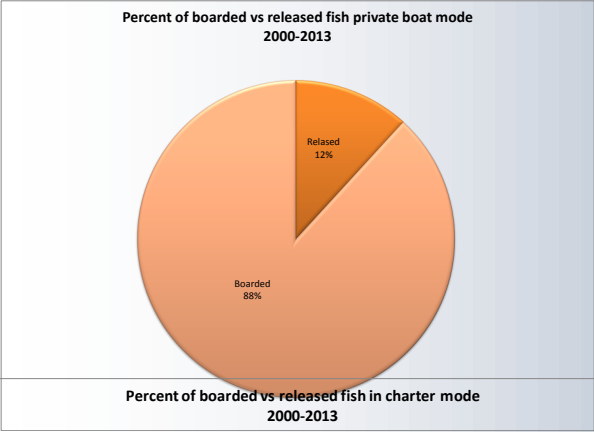
Most of the anglers that took part in the interviews identified themselves as residents of the Island. The number of visitors that come to the Island to fish remained relatively constant over time



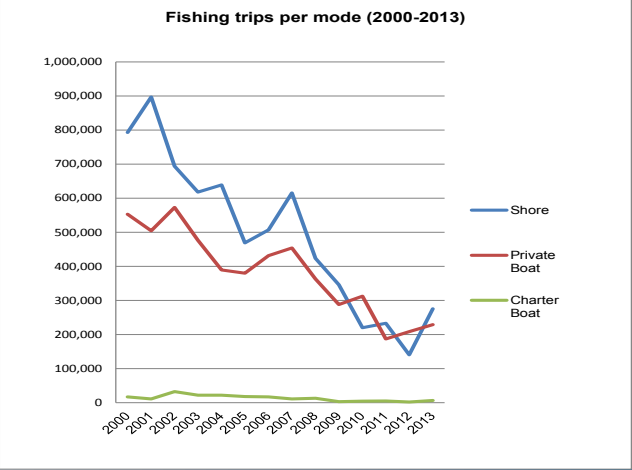
In biological terms fishing effort is defined as the amount of time invested in the attempt to harvest fish. This part of the measurement of the success fishermen have in catching fish. Effort tendencies for marine recreational fishing show that even though the amount of fishing trips (“effort”) in some years has increased, total capture by recreational fishers is declining rapidly.



Anglers in the shore and private boat modes reported that most of their catch was kept. In these fishing modes, fishermen harvest an assortment of species, and in many cases did not specify preferences in targeted species.



Meanwhile, fishermen in charter boats reported that most of their catch was released. For the most part, chartered fishing trips are in pursuit of pelagic species and/or species that are most valuable when released. These include Billfish and Tarpon.



When data from interviews in all fishing modes are combined, we can observe the impact of recreational fishing activities in the Island. In 2001, a total of 896,675 shore fishing trips were reported Private Boat fishing had its peak during the year 2000 and charter boats in 2002. This information is valuable for the drafting of laws and regulations, management plans etc. that are in harmony with the fishery resource, ensuring a good fishing experience for the angler and its sustainability. All activities related to recreational fishing are regulated at state level by the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources that has the mandate to create laws and regulations that help to manage the Island fishery resource, ensuring the health of the ecosystem thus making the angler’s experience rewarding. For these purposes we have the Puerto Rico Fishing Law 278 and the Fisheries Regulation 7949. Both establish standards by which fishing practices in the Island are guided.