



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# Marine Recreational Information Program

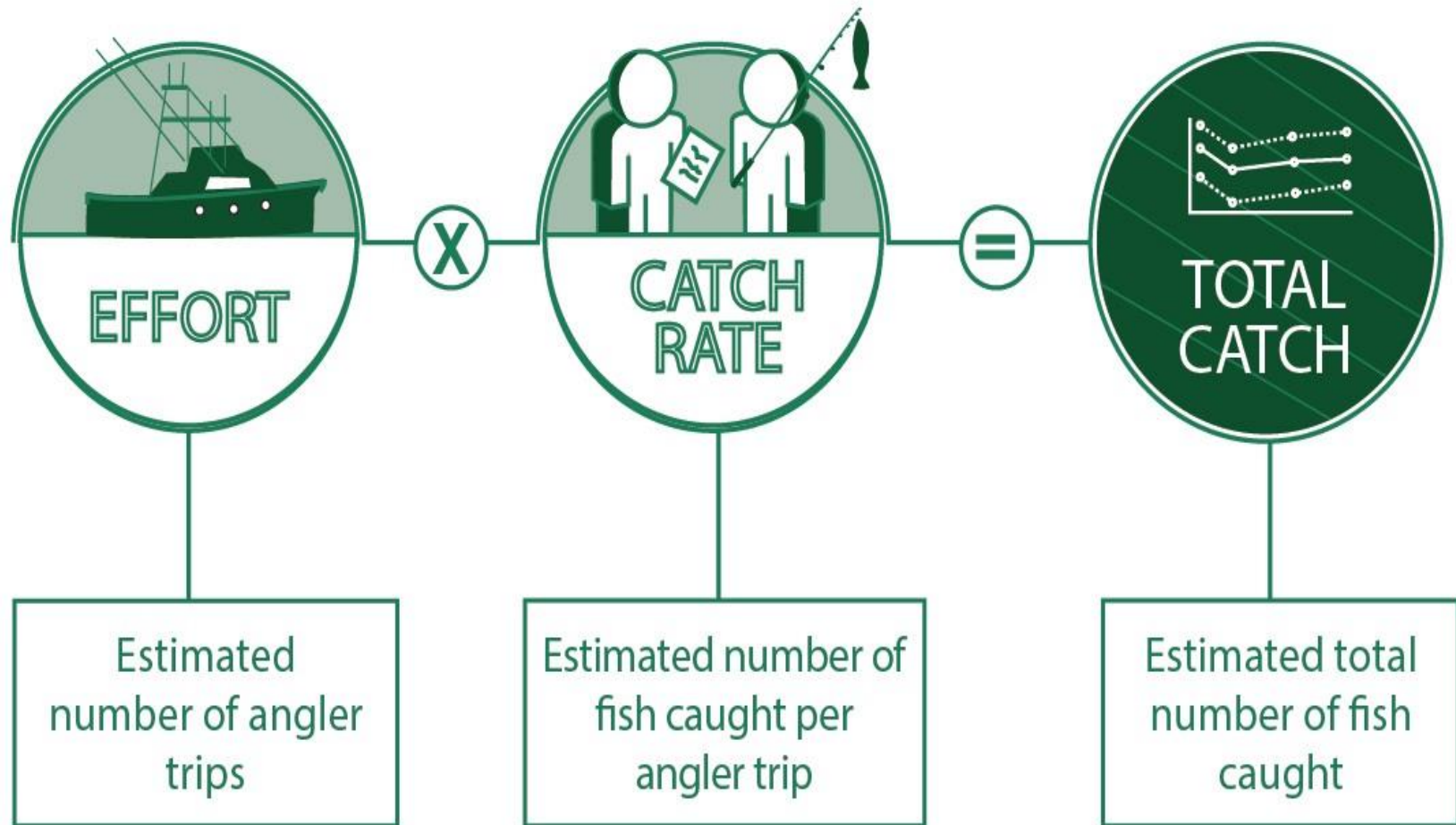
## Fishing Effort Survey Transition Plan

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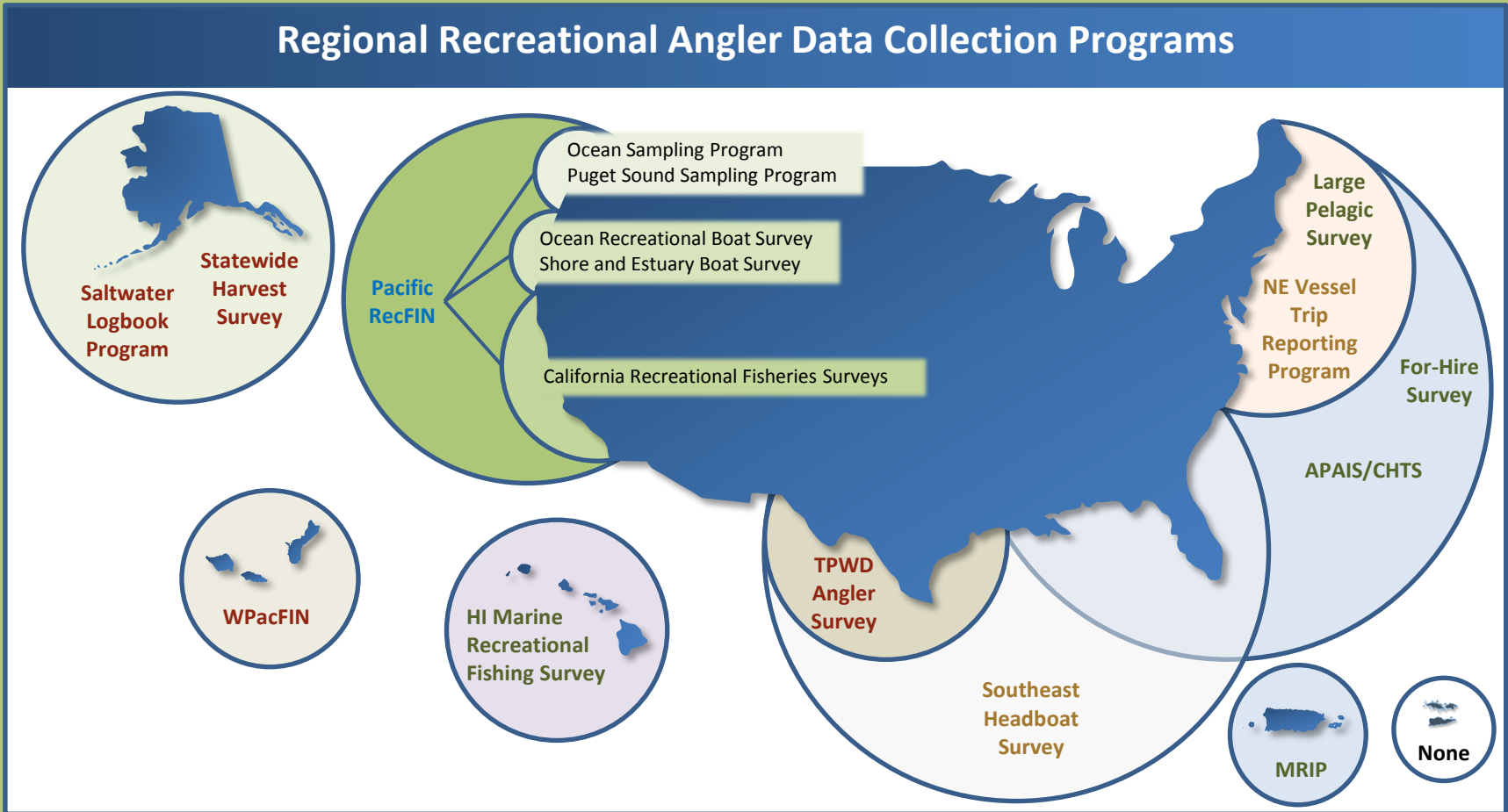
*Chief, Fisheries Statistics Division  
Office of Science and Technology  
Co-Chair of MRIP Transition Team*

Gulf Council Data Collection Committee  
June 8, 2015

# Estimating Recreational Fishery Catch



# Estimating Recreational Fishing Activity

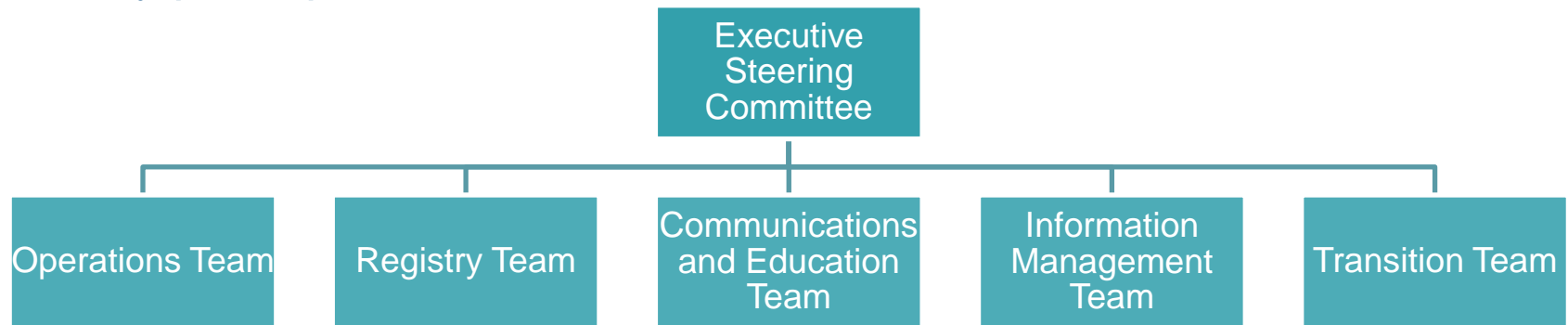


Data generated by a series of regional surveys (not census)

# MRIP Approach

## 1. Partner-inclusive governance

key participation from councils, commissions, and states



## 2. Deliberate, well-articulated process



## 3. Regional Implementation

# MILESTONES OF THE MRIP PROGRAM

Marine Recreational Information Program



New Magnuson-Stevens Act mandates

MRIP Established

National Saltwater Angler Registry launched

Launch of new angler catch survey protocols

Benchmarking of new mail survey with existing phone survey

National Research Council (NRC) findings released

Research and pilot projects begin

Re-estimation of historic catch based on improved methodology

Develop new mail effort survey based on pilot studies

National Research Council (NRC) Review of MRIP Progress

- Milestone
- Milestone in response to NRC guidance (*completed*)
- ⊙ Milestone in response to NRC guidance (*in progress*)



# MRIP on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts

1

- NOAA has now addressed the major NRC recommendations for improving catch estimates for shore and private boat fishing on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts

2

- The new MRIP Fishing Effort Survey will address the NRC recommendations for improving estimates of the numbers of shore and private boat fishing trips.

3

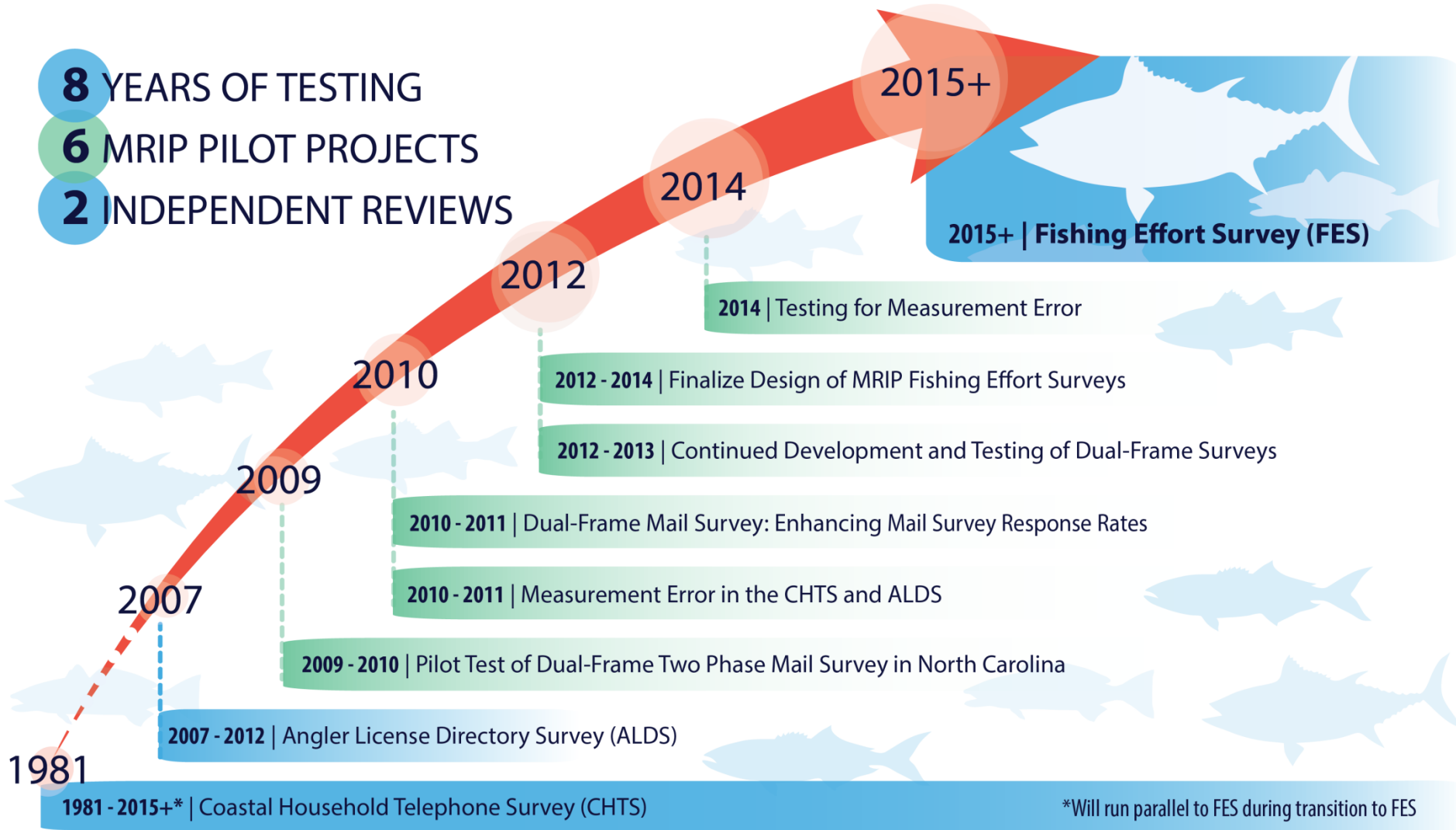
- Transitioning to this new survey will take three years & require continuing collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

# EVOLUTION OF THE EFFORT SURVEY

8 YEARS OF TESTING

6 MRIP PILOT PROJECTS

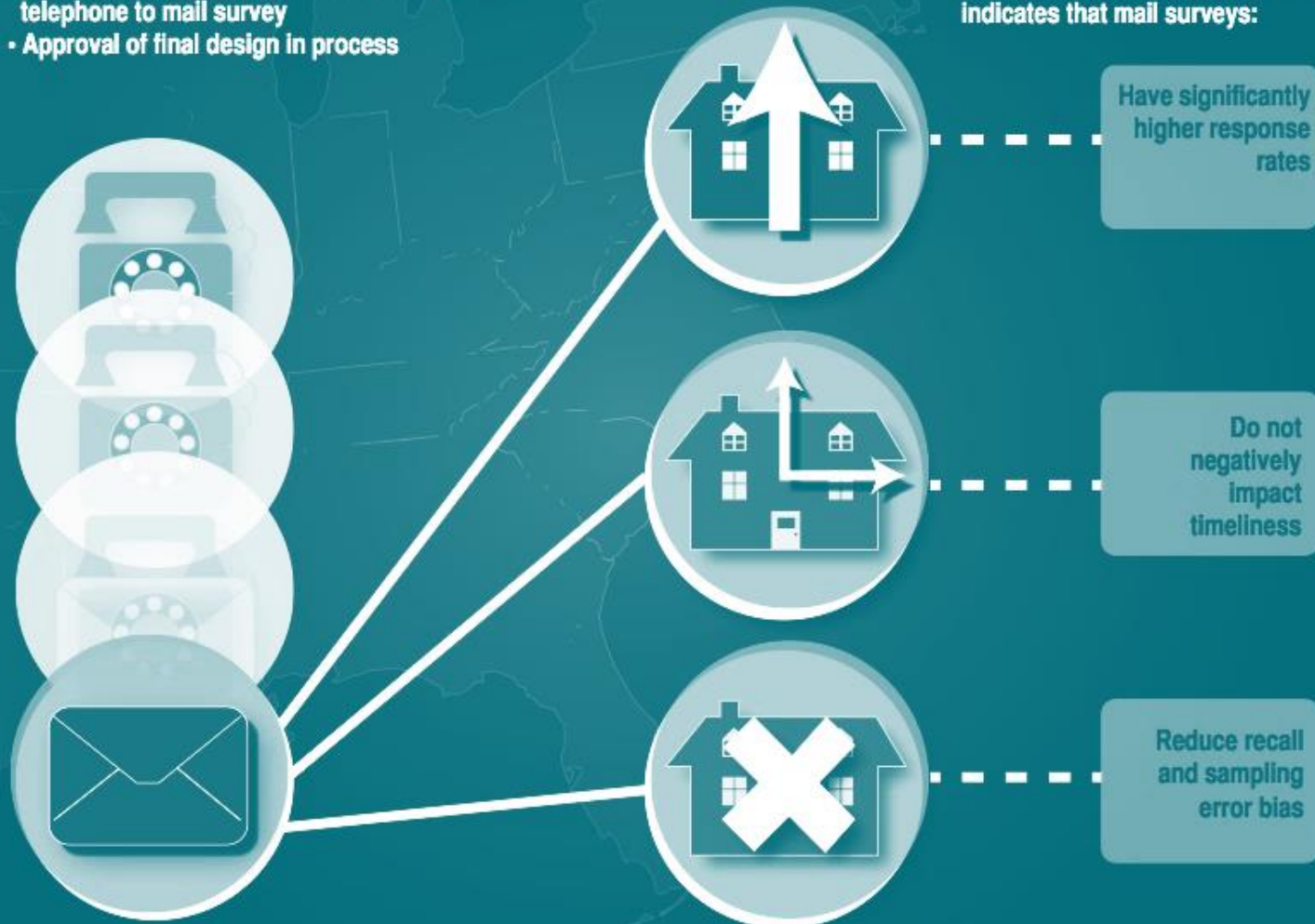
2 INDEPENDENT REVIEWS



# New Mail Survey

- Series of pilot studies underway since 2009
- Recommend fundamental design change from telephone to mail survey
- Approval of final design in process

Extensive pilot testing, validated through independent peer review, indicates that mail surveys:





# Problems with Current Telephone Survey

- Random Digit Dialing is inefficient way to contact anglers
  - Contacts many households with no fishing participation
- Only covers coastal zone households
  - Does not reach anglers who live more than 25-50 miles from coast
- Industry-wide, response rates for telephone surveys are dropping precipitously
- 40% of US households do not use land line telephones

# Advantages of Mail Contact Method

- Extensive pilot testing, validated through independent peer review, indicates:
  - Mail survey response rates (40.4%) are nearly 3X greater than phone survey response rates (14.4%)
  - Getting responses by mail does not negatively impact timeliness – results from the mail survey can be delivered on the existing telephone survey schedule
  - More households reached by mail than by phone – reducing potential undercoverage errors

# Mail Survey Efficient at Finding Anglers

- Uses multiple databases:
  - USPS address database covers virtually all persons living in the United States
  - The National Saltwater Angler Registry provides mailing addresses of known fishing participants
  - Sample of USPS addresses gets matched with NSAR addresses
    - All matched addresses kept
    - Only 1/3 of unmatched addresses kept
    - Allows higher sampling level for households with registrants

# New Mail Survey

## Pilot Study Results

- Total effort estimates consistently much higher than Coastal Household Telephone Survey estimates
  - Private boats 2.6x higher
  - Shore fishing 6.1x higher
- This will result in much higher catch estimates for all species
- Increase is driven by a higher proportion of households reporting fishing, not higher reported trips per household

## Implications

- Higher estimates do not necessarily mean we are overfishing
- New estimates will not be directly comparable to catch limits based on assessments that used the legacy survey estimates
- Potentially significant impacts on historic data time series and thus allocation, assessments, and management

# Addressing the Implications

**Aligning the new estimates with the historical time series is necessary before the new mail survey can be considered the ‘best available science’**

- *Until the new estimates and the historical time series are in the same ‘currency’, the estimates cannot be used*

**A Transition Team was formed to meet the challenge of developing a transition process for implementing the new mail survey**

- *Members include NOAA Fisheries, Fishery Management Council, Interstate Marine Fisheries Commission, and state natural resource agency staff*

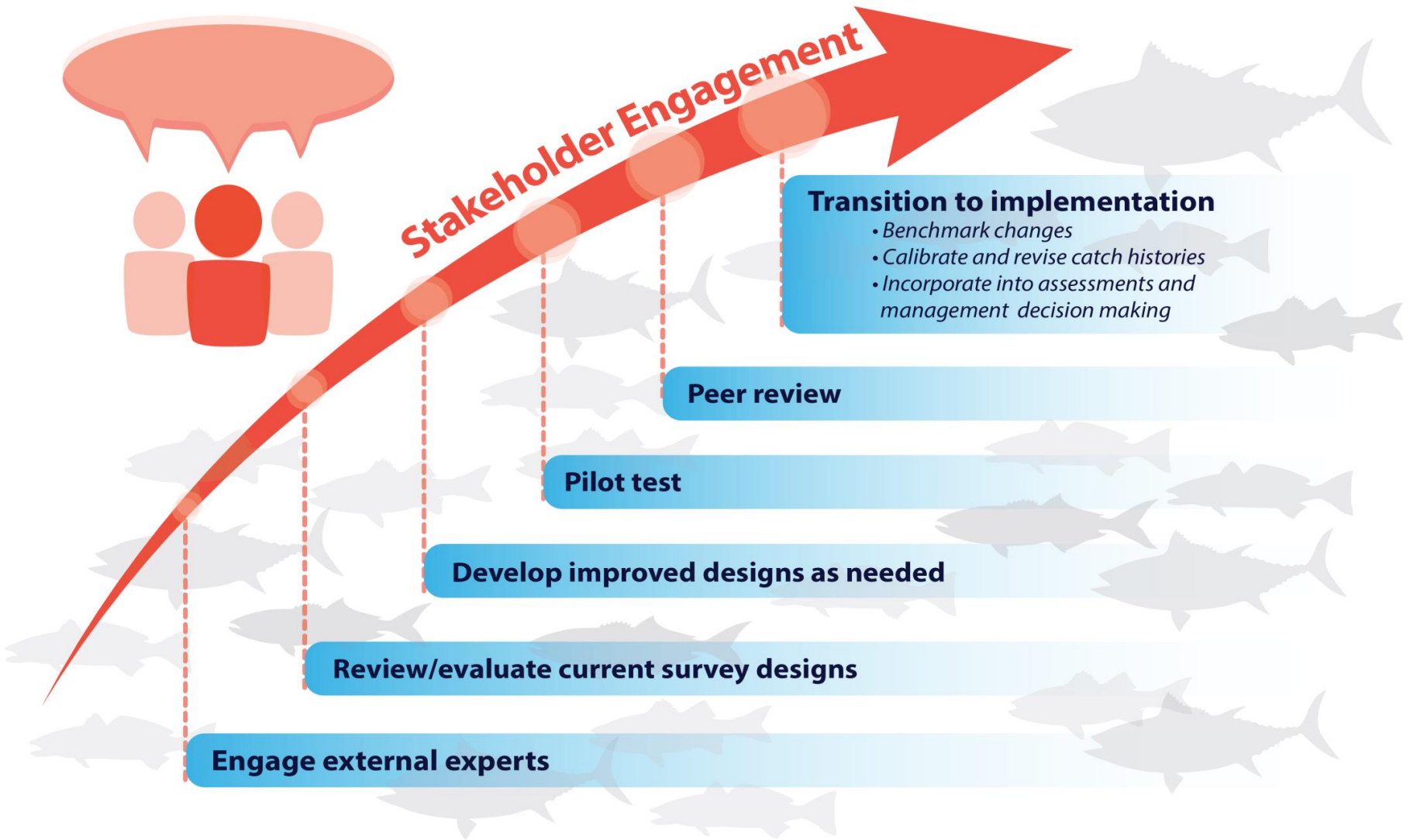
**A transition period is needed to be sure we have an accurate measure of consistent differences between the new mail survey and the historical phone survey**

- *We need to understand the differences for each state and fishing mode and evaluate what is causing them*

# Transition Plan Overview

- Three-year transition period from current phone survey estimates to new mail survey estimates.
- Phone survey estimates will be used for science and management until the calibration models are developed, peer-reviewed, adopted and used to update stock assessments and annual catch limits.
- Plan developed with extensive regional and state-level input through Atlantic and Gulf subgroup of the Transition Team.

# OVERALL TRANSITION APPROACH



# 5-Step Transition Approach

for incorporating new estimates into the management process:

## Step 1

**2015-2017**

- Benchmarking

## Step 2

**2016-2017**

- Calibration model development

## Step 3

**2017**

- Re-estimation of historical catch

## Step 4

**2017-2018**

- Incorporation of new estimates into stock assessments

## Step 5

**2018**

- Incorporation of new estimates and ACLs into management actions



# What does this mean on the ground?

- The phone survey will be used for management purposes until 2018
- NOAA Fisheries will be working with states, councils, and commissions over the next 3 years to understand the new mail survey estimates and incorporate them into management and assessments
  - Progress and findings will be shared publicly throughout the transition
- Impacts will vary from species to species and are difficult to predict
  - The partners on the transition team are working together to address high priority species first

# Key Messages: Other Improvements

1

- NOAA is working with partners to develop, test and certify specialized survey methods for red snapper and other rare event and pulse fisheries

2

- NOAA is working with partners to develop, test and certify for-hire electronic logbook reporting and validation designs

3

- Empower regional implementation teams to make key decisions on implementation of MRIP-certified methods and set investment priorities



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# Questions & Discussion