

Chairperson's Introduction

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The methods used to collect data on recreational fishing are determined by a number of factors—such as the type of information required, the temporal and spatial scale of the study area, the characteristics of the fishery and the resources available (personnel, funds and equipment). These factors have led to a wide variety of methods being used in past Australian studies.

Large-scale surveys, such as Statewide and national surveys, have generally been conducted by omnibus or general population surveys, where a random sample of the target population is interviewed and their responses extrapolated for the total population.

Roving and access site creel surveys have been extensively used, particularly in estuarine and marine inshore waters. The choice of creel survey method has been determined largely by the geographical characteristics of the fishery, with a variety of combinations used in different areas.

Where the target population is known and accessible (e.g. via licence or registration details), data have often been collected by questionnaires, with the mode of delivery most frequently by mail or self-administered. Other methods of contact, such as

telephone surveys and personal interviews, have been used relatively infrequently.

Other methods used occasionally include diaries or logbooks, aerial surveys and analysis of historical data sets, such as long-term records of angling clubs and charter boat operators.

A substantial literature exists for the sampling design and analysis of recreational fisheries data. While the majority of past surveys have conformed to well established principles, the final sampling designs have varied considerably. The need for variety, both in choice of method and sampling design, is forced upon researchers attempting to fit theoretical sampling designs into field-based programmes.

This Session will examine some of the problems associated with common sampling methods. These will be highlighted by panellists in the context of studies with which they have been involved, with suggestions about how these problems have been, or potentially can be overcome.