

American Fisheries Society  
Southern Division

RESOLUTION ON STANDARDIZATION OF  
FISH DATA MANAGEMENT

Adopted February 3, 2017

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WHEREAS, the mission of local governing fish and wildlife agencies is to conserve, protect, restore, enhance and manage fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for current and future use, benefit, and enjoyment by state and province residents and visitors, and;

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of local governing fish and wildlife agencies to sample, record, and analyze the status of all fish species in their jurisdiction to inform management and conservation actions and expenditure of funds, and;

WHEREAS other non-governing organizations such as universities, research institutions, NGO's and the private sector collect a vast amount of freshwater fisheries data that could be applied to broader uses, and;

WHEREAS, the fish data collected by local governing fish and wildlife agencies and others is increasingly being shared in support of regional and national management and conservation efforts, and;

WHEREAS, the American Fisheries Society has published *Standard Methods for Sampling North American Freshwater Fishes* (Bonar et al. 2009) and *Investigation and Monetary Values of Fish and Freshwater Mussel Kills* (Southwick and Loftus 2003) to provide guidance for, and in some cases legally codified, effective sampling methods, and;

WHEREAS, the American Fisheries Society has supported efforts to improve platforms and standards for sharing fish data for many years through the work of its regional and national technical committees, and;

Whereas the American Fisheries Society, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and other organizations have conducted numerous symposia, workshops, summits, and meetings on freshwater data standardization and data sharing, and;

WHEREAS, in some cases the fish data collected and managed by governing fish and wildlife agencies and others continues to lack sufficient consistency and quality control to support science-based decisions, therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Southern Division, American Fisheries Society, assembled at its annual meeting on this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of February in the year of 2017 at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma urges the local governing and provincial fish and wildlife agencies and others collecting freshwater fish data in North America to commit the necessary staff and financial resources to improve the utility of freshwater fish data through the following actions:

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- Bring freshwater fish sampling methods by all agency staff into compliance with existing fish sampling standards to ensure consistency in the data over time and across the jurisdiction.
- Where possible, build from findings of prior data summits and interagency symposia (many available at [www.fishdata.org](http://www.fishdata.org)) to advance the ability to effectively share information with other agencies.
- Where possible, bring existing fish standard sampling protocols into compliance with recommendations in Bonar et al. (2009) to ensure proper site selection, deployment of equipment, and quantification of sample bias and capture efficiency.
- Develop and maintain metadata describing the sample objectives, site selection criteria, site conditions, and other information contained in AFS guidance to ensure that data are properly used in analyses.
- Employ quality assurance/quality control procedures to ensure that data are accurate and properly recorded.
- Maintain a statewide data management system to facilitate data management, quality control and ability for sharing.
- Utilize standards for data sharing to facilitate sharing of fish data with users other than the originating agency.
- Encourage and facilitate data sharing to support management and conservation actions beyond agency jurisdiction or specific but sometimes narrow data collection purposes.