

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHERY STATISTICS SURVEY  
OMB CONTROL NO.: 0648-0052**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.**

Collection of these data is necessary to fulfill statutory requirements of Section 303 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1853 et. seq. and to comply with **Executive Order 12962 on Recreational Fisheries**. Section 303 (a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act specifies data and analyses to be included in Fishery Management Plans (FMP), as well as pertinent data that shall be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce under the plan.

In the past, it was thought that commercial fisheries took the greater part of the fishery catch in the marine waters of the United States. However, most species of fish in estuarine and inshore areas, as well as in many open ocean waters, are harvested by both commercial and recreational fishermen. Recent data indicate that catches by the marine recreational fishery are a significant portion of the total landings of many marine species. Therefore, it is essential to monitor both the commercial and recreational components of the fishery on a continuing basis. The Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) makes up the core of the Agency's recreational fishery data collection efforts. Implementation of the new components and sampling levels for the previously approved survey components will depend on fiscal year funding.

This revision will fulfill statutory requirements of Section 401 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act. Section 401 (g) requires that the Secretary of Commerce, "establish a program to improve the quality and accuracy of information generated by the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey". The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act (MSRA), further specifies that future surveys should, "target anglers registered or licensed at the State or Federal level to collect participation and effort data", and that the program, "to the maximum extent feasible implement the recommendations of the National Research Council" that were provided in a 2006 review of the methods currently used by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), to survey marine recreational fishing effort and catch. One of the major NRC recommendations was that future telephone surveys of fishing effort should utilize available lists of licensed or registered saltwater anglers as sampling frames.

**2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.**

The MSRA, signed into law in January 2007, requires that the Secretary of Commerce develop and implement a program to improve the quality of marine recreational fishing data by January 1, 2009. Furthermore, MSRA specifies that future fishing surveys target anglers registered at the State or Federal level. Recognizing that available angler list frames may not provide complete

coverage of people who fish recreationally in saltwater, the NMFS, Office of Science and Technology developed a “dual-frame” telephone survey approach that combines more efficient sampling from angler list frames with the less efficient RDD sampling of residential households. Currently, the approach has been implemented in the Gulf of Mexico Region, and it is anticipated that the methodology will be expanded to other states and regions as state and/or Federal saltwater angler registries are implemented (as required by MSRA). Preliminary results suggest that the use of participant list frames is greatly increasing the efficiency of telephone sampling efforts over levels achieved by random-digit-dialing (RDD) household surveys: to date, calls to those on the angler lists result in an average of 45-55% responding that they have had recent fishing activity, compared to 7-12% for the RDD surveys. This request is to expand the dual-frame methodology into North Carolina, which recently implemented a state saltwater fishing license.

The data are used annually by NMFS, regional fishery management councils, interstate marine fisheries commissions, and state fishery agencies in developing, implementing and monitoring fishery management programs. Failure to conduct these data collections would prevent the Secretary from meeting statutory requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act of 1996.

Catch and effort statistics are fundamental for assessing the influence of fishing on any stock of fish. The quantities taken, the fishing effort, and both the seasonal and geographic distributions of the catch and effort are required for the development of regional management policies and plans. Social and economic data are used to provide descriptive and behavioral information on marine recreational fishing participants; provide estimates of the value of important recreational fisheries; analyze fisheries management decisions regarding allocation, changes in management strategies or changes in factors that affect catch rates and/or access to marine recreational species for fishing sites; estimate the contribution of recreational fisheries to regional economies; and estimate the impact of fisheries regulations on regional economies. In addition to the need for data on recreational anglers, fisheries management requires cost-earnings on the charter boat fleet.

Accurate and timely catch statistics collected over the range of a species must be used in association with biological studies to perform the stock assessments necessary for monitoring the effectiveness of fishery management planning for optimum yield. Several fish species are now being managed under FMP quota systems that include recreational fishery components. For example, this collection has been the key source of data used to monitor recreational quotas for the harvest of red snapper, king mackerel and Spanish mackerel in the Southeast Region. This collection provides coastwide information on quantity, species composition, and size distribution of catch. Such information is not available from any other source. For example, catch distributions and harvested size distributions obtained in this data collection have formed the basis of FMPs developed for bluefish, red drum, red snapper, summer flounder, weakfish, winter flounder, and other key species targeted by the marine recreational fishery.

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the information gathered has utility. NMFS will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response #10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is

designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to Section 515 of Public Law 106-554.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.**

The methodological approach for the MRFSS has been developed and refined over 23 years, employing the experience of NMFS statisticians and contractors in statistical sampling and survey methods. State-of-the-art interviewing methods have been used to minimize response times. The proposed data collections require interviewer-mediated reporting of data by respondents in order to minimize item non-response and maximize accuracy of the collected data and statistics estimated from those data. The proposed telephone survey requires use of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) methods that greatly reduce response errors and data entry errors.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

NMFS has the lead Federal responsibility for collection of data from marine recreational fishermen and coordinates marine recreational fishing informational needs with other agencies. For example, in 1987 NMFS coordinated an economic study of marine recreational anglers on the Atlantic Coast with the Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, NMFS has worked with State fishery agencies each year to coordinate data collection efforts and avoid duplication. In some cases, NMFS employs State personnel under contract to conduct field interviewing. The Survey is not conducted in Texas, since existing Texas-sponsored surveys provide the information that would have been obtained by NMFS.

Angler License Directory Surveys (ALDS) are being integrated with the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) in a dual-frame survey approach. This introduces the slight possibility that a household or individual could be selected for both surveys (CHTS and ALDS) during a single sampling period in areas where the sample frames overlap. Sample draws for each survey are being carefully sorted and screened to identify households that have been selected for both surveys, and measures have been implemented to ensure that a household is not contacted multiple times during a single sample period.

**5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

No small businesses will be impacted by this revision.

**6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.**

An annual survey of recreational anglers is required to monitor changing conditions in the fishery and support modifications in fishery regulations for each fishing year. A continuous time series of data is scientifically essential. Start up costs in hiring and training of interviewers and in overhauling of the site, selection frame for biannual surveys would greatly exceed the

budgeted amount for the Survey, and reduce funds available to collect sufficient interviews to meet statistical objectives.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.**

The collection is consistent with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines.

**8. Provide a copy of the PRA Federal Register notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

A Federal Register Notice, published on September 12, 2007, solicited public comment on this revision. Several comments were received regarding the proposed survey. Comments are summarized below.

Comment: Limiting the phone survey to licensed anglers will not account for those anglers fishing without a license.

Response: Unlicensed anglers will be accounted for through the existing CHTS. The CHTS will be integrated with the ALDS in a dual-frame approach.

Comment: Two individuals recommended the use of email or online surveys.

Response: Future efforts to collect recreational fishing information may utilize the use of online reporting tools. The purpose of this revision is to refine a survey methodology that utilizes angler directories as sampling frames as required by MSRA.

Comment: Three comments supported the proposed survey in NC, suggesting that it will be a substantial improvement over the existing survey.

**9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

No payments or gifts to respondents are given under this program.

**10. Describe any assurance or confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

Responses are kept confidential as required by section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens and NOAA Administrative Order 216-100, Confidentiality of Fisheries Statistics, and will not be released for public use, except in aggregate statistical form without identification as to its source. Section 402(b) stipulates that data required to be submitted under an FMP shall be confidential and shall not be released except to Federal employees and Council staff responsible for FMP

monitoring and development or when required under court order. Data such as personal addresses and phone numbers will remain confidential.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

No sensitive questions are asked.

**12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.**

**Directory Frame Telephone Survey of Licensed Marine Recreational Anglers**

This revision includes only adjustments to hours associated with conducting directory-frame telephone surveys. No other survey component will be affected by this revision.

	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Contacts</b>	<b>Mean Time (min.)</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
<b>Anglers with no trips*</b>	17,068	17,068	1.0	284
<b>Anglers with trips</b>	11,378	11,378	7.0	1,327
<b>TOTALS***</b>	28,446**	28,446		***1,611

\* Based on 40 percent of anglers having trips during last two months.

\*\* New totals include 3,750 additional contacts in North Carolina (2,250 expected to report no trips and 1500 to report trips,) resulting in 272 additional hours.

\*\*\* This information is shown as (c) in Total program burden below

**Total program burden:**

<b>Survey</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Contacts</b>	<b>Hours</b>
<b>(a) Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS)</b>	497,729	482,354	12,647
<b>(b) Longitudinal Sampling – CHTS</b>	0	37,500	4,375
<b>(c) Angler Directory Telephone Surveys *</b>	28,442	28,442	1,611
<b>(d) Base Intercept Survey</b>	153,000	168,300	11,858
<b>(e) For-Hire Telephone Survey</b>	8,500	44,200	5,157
<b>(f) Vessel Directory Maintenance</b>	5,000	5,000	167
<b>(g) Economic Telephone Survey</b>	0	0	1,038
<b>(h) Economic Intercept/Telephone Survey</b>	0	38,500	3,239
<b>(i) Economic Telephone Survey of Angler Directory</b>	22,000	22,000	978

<b>(j) Follow-up Economic Mail Survey</b>	0	50,400	1,400
<b>(k) Economic Survey of For-Hire Businesses</b>	0	1,125	2,108
<b>(l) Biological Data Collection</b>	10,000	10,000	167
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>724,671</b>	<b>887,821</b>	<b>44,745</b>

\* This revision includes only adjustments to burden hours associated with angler license directory telephone surveys. Total contacts and burden hours reflect these adjustments.

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in #12 above).**

These data collections will incur no cost burden on respondents beyond the costs of response time.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.**

Annual cost to the Federal government is approximately \$350,000 divided as follows: \$300,000 in contract award money and \$50,000 in professional staff, overhead and computing costs.

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB 83-I.**

We are requesting an adjustment of 3,746 respondents and 272 burden hours to expand an existing data collection methodology to North Carolina. Expansion of the methodology to North Carolina (NC) will help satisfy the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act.

**16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.**

All data collected and analyzed will be included in table format available on the web page of the Fisheries Statistics Division, Office of Science and Technology, National Marine Fisheries Service. The web address is <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/recreational>. Additional summaries of data will be included in the annual publication "Fisheries of the United States."

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.**

N/A.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-I.**

There are no exceptions.