

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION VESSEL AND  
GEAR IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS  
OMB CONTROL NO.: 0648-0360**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

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

The success of fisheries management programs depends significantly on regulatory compliance. The vessel identification requirement is essential to facilitate enforcement. The ability to link fishing or other activity to the vessel owner or operator is crucial to enforcement of the regulations issued under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act ([MSA](#)) as amended in 2006, to govern domestic and foreign fishing in the western Pacific region and under authority of laws implementing international treaties. Similarly, the regulations require that certain fishing gear in federally-regulated western Pacific pelagic longline fisheries, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands crustacean fisheries (currently not active), and western Pacific coral reef ecosystem fisheries be marked with the vessel's official number. The marking of gear is crucial to enforcement and valuable in actions concerning damage, loss, and civil proceedings.

This collection renews Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control No.: 0648-0360, changes the title from "Southwest Region Gear Identification Requirements" to "Pacific Islands Region Vessel and Gear Identification Requirements" and adds vessel ID requirements for western Pacific fisheries and the South Pacific purse seine fishery from OMB Control No.: 0648-0361. Vessel ID requirements for fisheries off the U.S. west coast will continue to be covered under OMB Control No.: 0648-0361.

**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.**

*Vessel Identification*

In the domestic western Pacific region fisheries regulated under [50 CFR Part 665](#), the vessel's official number is required to be displayed on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and on an appropriate weather deck. It identifies each vessel and should be visible at distances at sea and in the air. The requirements affect western Pacific pelagic longline vessels, pelagic troll and handline vessels, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands crustacean (lobster) vessels, western Pacific bottomfishing vessels, and precious coral fishing vessels. Regulations in 50 CFR Part 665.16 specify the requirements for the vessel identification.

In the South Pacific tuna purse seine fishery regulated under 50 CFR Part [300](#) Subpart D (Sections 30-46), the international radio call sign (IRCS) number is used and must be painted on the hull and on the deck. The IRCS number also must be painted on the side of any auxiliary equipment such as skiffs and helicopters.

The identification number provides law enforcement personnel with a means to monitor fishing, at-sea processing, and other related activities, to ascertain whether the vessel's observed activities are in accordance with those authorized for that vessel. The identifying number is used by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and other marine agencies in issuing citations, prosecutions, and other enforcement actions. Vessels that qualify for particular fisheries are readily identified, and this allows for more cost-effective enforcement. Cooperating fishermen also use the number to report suspicious activities that they observe. Regulation-compliant fishermen ultimately benefit as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred and more burdensome regulations are avoided.

### *Gear Identification*

Under 50 CFR Part 665.24, the operator of each permitted pelagic longline vessel must ensure that the official number of the vessel is affixed to every longline buoy and float, including each buoy and float that is attached to a radar reflector, radio antenna, or flag marker, whether attached to a deployed buoy or possessed on board the vessel. Under 50 CFR Part 665.27, the operator of a commercial lobster fishing vessel registered to fish in Permit Area 1 (Northwestern Hawaiian Islands) must ensure that the vessel's official number is marked legibly on all traps and floats maintained on board the vessel or in the water. Under 50 CFR Part 665.606, all fish and crab traps on board the vessel or deployed must be marked with the vessel's official number.

The regulations further specify how the gear is to be marked, e.g., the location and legibility of the marking. Gear that is not properly marked is considered unclaimed or abandoned property that may be confiscated. The identifying number on fishing gear is used by NMFS, the USCG and other enforcement agencies in issuing gear violations, prosecutions, and that longline/traps are not illegally placed. Marked gear allows NMFS and the U.S. Coast Guard to more readily enforce gear violations, thus allowing for more cost-effective enforcement. Cooperating fishermen also use the marking to report placement of gear in unauthorized areas. Regulation-compliant fishermen ultimately benefit as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred and more burdensome regulations are avoided.

Although the information collected (vessel and gear identification numbers) is not confidential it will not be disseminated to the public. The information is strictly for enforcement purpose or use by NMFS internally in situations involving damage, loss, and civil proceedings.

### **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 requirement that each vessel display an identification number on its deckhouse or hull, and its weather deck, does not lend itself to collection of information technology. Transponders and vessel monitoring system units are comparatively expensive and their signals cannot be accessed directly by the U.S. Coast Guard in the air or by its vessels at this time. Similarly, gear identification does not lend itself to collection of information technology. No other technology appears to be less costly and still capable of providing the necessary information to support enforcement.

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

There is no duplication with other collections. The U.S. Coast Guard requires that the name of the vessel be marked on its hull, so this information collection meets both USCG and NMFS requirements, and only NMFS requires the gear marking.

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

Most of the vessels are categorized as small businesses. The collection of information will not have a significant impact on these small businesses, and no special modifications of the requirements were considered necessary to accommodate the needs of these small businesses.

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

The NMFS and U.S. Coast Guard could not enforce the fisheries management measures if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

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

No special circumstances require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the OMB guidelines.

**8. Provide information on 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 notice soliciting comments was published in the Federal Register on November 8, 2007 (72 FR 63164). No comments were received.

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

No payments or gifts are provided.

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

There is no assurance of confidentiality provided. This is public information.

**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.**

There are no sensitive questions.

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

The estimated total number of vessels requiring marking is 301 (236 western Pacific pelagic longline vessels, 10 Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIA) pelagic troll and handline vessels, 8 Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) bottomfishing vessels, 10 western Pacific bottomfishing vessels, 10 western Pacific lobster vessels, 2 western Pacific precious coral fishing vessels, and 25 South Pacific purse seine fishing vessels). Although there are 15 NWHI lobster permits, none have fished since 2000, and under the Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Monument regulations at 50 CFR Part 404, none are allowed to fish within the monument. For all but the purse seine vessels, the burden is estimated at 45 minutes each (15 minutes for each of three locations on the vessel). For the purse seine vessels, the burden is estimated at 1 hour and 15 minutes (15 minutes for each of three locations on the vessel plus 15 minutes each for one skiff and one helicopter).

Also, longline and Western Pacific coral reef vessels have gear required to be marked: Hawaii Longline vessels have 120 gear markings on average, American Samoa and Western Pacific Longline have 100, and Western Pacific coral reef vessels have 20. Each gear marking is estimated to take 2 minutes. Note: no burden is included for the 10 coral reef vessels as permits have been issued and none seems likely to be issued in the next few years.

The total estimated burden per the table below is: respondents and responses: 301 vessels plus 26,880 pieces of gear = 27, 181; hours: 238 plus 896 = 1,134. The previous totals, for gear marking only, were 42, 600 responses and 1,420 hours.

<b>Fishery</b>	<b>VESSELS and Vessel Marking Responses</b>	<b>Unit Time (min.)</b>	<b>Total Time (min.)</b>	<b>Avg. # Gear per Vessel</b>	<b>Total Gear Responses</b>	<b>Unit Time (min.)</b>	<b>Total Time (min.)</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Hawaii Longline	164	45	7380	120	19680	2	39360	
Am. Samoa Longline	60	45	2700	100	6000	2	12000	
WP General Longline	12	45	540	100	1200	2	2400	
NWHI Bottomfish	8	45	360		0	2	0	
NWHI Lobster	0	45	0	0	0	2	0	
PRIA Troll & HL	10	45	450	0	0	2	0	
WP Lobster	10	45	450	0	0	2	0	
WP Bottomfish	10	45	450	0	0	2	0	
WP Prec. Coral	2	45	90	0	0	2	0	
WP Coral Reef*	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	
South Pacific Tuna (Purse seine)	25	75	1875	0	0	0	0	
	<b>301</b>				<b>26,880</b>			<b>27,181</b>
<b>Hours</b>			<b>238.25</b> (14,295 min.)				<b>896</b> (53,760 min.)	<b>1,134</b>

\*Not currently counted as respondents

**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).**

The only cost to respondents is the cost of the paint to apply the vessel's official number and gear markings. It is assumed the vessel has paint brushes. At an estimated \$100 per vessel annually, the cost would be \$30,100.

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

There is no cost to the Federal government.

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

The adjusted burden and cost is due to: 1) transferring 238 hours of vessel marking requirements for western Pacific and South Pacific tuna purse seine fisheries from OMB Control No.: 0361), 2) an increase of 28 hours in longline vessel gear marking due to updated estimates and 3) a decrease of 552 hours for gear marking of the not currently active NWHI lobster vessels' traps. The final result: the increase due to 238 transferred hours, plus the net decrease in gear marking of 524, is a decrease of 286 hours.

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

No results are published.

**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.

**B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS**

This collection of information does not employ statistical methods.