

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
SOUTHWEST REGION VESSEL IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
OMB CONTROL NO.: 0648-0361**

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

The success of fisheries management programs depends significantly on tracking catch and effort of participants as well as their history of regulatory compliance. The vessel identification requirement is essential to facilitate these objectives. 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](#)) to govern domestic and foreign fishing and under authority of laws implementing international treaties.

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.

In the domestic Southwest Region fisheries regulated under [50 CFR Part 660](#), 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 West Coast coastal pelagic fishing vessels and U.S. vessels participating in the West Coast Highly Migratory Species (HMS) fisheries, with the exception of HMS Charter Recreational Vessels for which an exemption was granted and became effective September 5, 2007^a. These vessels are no longer bound by the vessel marking requirements under consideration.

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, 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.

Although, the information collected (vessel identification number) is not confidential it will not be disseminated to the public. There is no reason for doing so. The information is strictly for enforcement purpose or use by NMFS internally in situations involving damage, loss, and civil proceedings

^a Copy of the final rule for this exemption can be found at 72FR43563.

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. 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.

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 published in the *Federal Register* on November 14, 2007 (72 FR 64046) solicited comments. 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 affected is 1,750 which includes approximately 70 purse seine fishing vessels, 1,500 troll/baitboat vessels, 150 drift gillnet vessels, and 30 harpoon vessels. 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). The total estimate burden, therefore, is:

$$\begin{aligned} 1,680 \text{ vessels} \times .75 \text{ hours (45 minutes)} &= 1,260 \text{ hours} \\ 70 \text{ vessels} \times 1.25 \text{ hours (1 hour, 15 minutes)} &= 88 \text{ hours} \\ \text{Total} &= 1,348 \text{ hours} \end{aligned}$$

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 if a new permit or to re-apply paint to the official number if part of routine maintenance. It is assumed the vessel has paint brushes. At \$9 per vessel, the cost would be \$15,750 (\$9 x 1,750).

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.

There are several adjustments to burden and cost based on changes to numbers and categories of vessels:

a. Total decrease of 563 vessels from this collection:

- 1) Vessels fishing in the western Pacific region are now included in the Pacific Islands Region collection, OMB Control No.: 0648-0360. This resulted in a transfer of 311 vessels.
- 2) Due to the exemption of HMS Charter Recreational Vessels effective September 5, 2007, 250 vessels were removed from this collection.
- 3) There are two fewer harpoon vessels in this estimate.

b. There has been an increase of 832 in the number of West Coast Highly Migratory Species permits, resulting in an additional 800 troll/baitboat vessels, an additional 29 drift gillnet vessels and 3 additional purse seine vessels.

This results in a net increase of 269 vessels.

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.