

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
SOUTHEAST REGION VESSEL IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0358**

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

The success of fisheries management programs depends on regulatory compliance. The vessel identification requirement is essential to facilitate enforcement. The ability to link fishing or other activity to a vessel owner or operator is crucial to the enforcement of regulations (50 C.F.R. 622.6 and 640.6) issued under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1881).

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.

A vessel's official number, under most regulations, is required to be displayed on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and weather deck. The official number and color code identifies each vessel and should be visible at distances at sea and in the air. These markings provide 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 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA/NMFS), the United States (U.S.) Coast Guard and other marine agencies in issuing violations, prosecutions, and other enforcement actions. Vessels that qualify for particular fisheries are readily identified, gear violations are more readily prosecuted, and this allows for more cost-effective enforcement.

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 technology. Transponders and vessel monitoring system units are comparatively very expensive and their signals cannot be accessed 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. An identifying number is required by NMFS. The U.S. Coast Guard requires the name, but not the number, 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.

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

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

If vessels were not identified, NMFS and the U.S. Coast Guard could not enforce the fisheries management measures. The frequency is one time, although the numbers must periodically be maintained to remain legible.

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 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 Federal Register Notice published on January 22, 2008 (73 FR 3697) solicited public 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.

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.

Each of 9,774 federally permitted vessels would be required to be marked with official numbers. Each vessel must be marked in three places, requiring 15 minutes each for a total of 45 minutes per vessel annually (initially for marking, and for subsequent annual touch-ups) for a total of 9,774 responses * 45/60 = 7,330.5 (7,331) hours.

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).

Materials, paint, paintbrush, and possibly stencil, are estimated to cost \$30.00 per vessel annually: 9,774 * \$30.00 = \$293,220.

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

There is no cost to the government.

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

Due to the removal of a color coding requirement for 200 fish trap vessels, at 30 minutes and \$20 per response, the burden and cost have been reduced by 100 hours and \$4,000. In addition, in ROCIS, there appears to be an adjustment – an increase of \$220. This is due to the cost's having been rounded down to the nearest thousand when the ICR was migrated to ROCIS.

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

The results are not 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 does not employ statistical methods.