

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
MARINE MAMMAL HEALTH AND STRANDING RESPONSE PROGRAM SURVEY
FOR STRANDING NETWORK PARTICIPANTS
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-xxxx**

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has the authority to establish and manage the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSRP) under Title IV of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) (16 U.S.C. 1421 *et seq.*). The National Marine Mammal Stranding Network is a major component of the MMHSRP and consists of organizations nationwide that respond to stranded cetaceans and pinnipeds (except walrus) on land and within United States (U.S.) waters. These organizations are authorized either through Stranding Agreements issued by NMFS under section 112(c) (16 U.S.C. 1382 *et seq.*) of the MMPA or under section 109(h) (16 U.S.C. 1379 *et seq.*) of the MMPA, which authorizes Federal, state, and local government employees to take marine mammals in the course of their official duties. Organizations involved in the Network include academic institutions, museums, government agencies, Native American tribes and Alaska Native Communities, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and individuals.

The National Stranding Network is managed by the NMFS Office of Protected Resources. The Network is organized into six Regional Stranding Networks corresponding with each of the NMFS jurisdictional regions: Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, Alaska, and Pacific Islands. The MMHSRP is beginning program reviews of the Regional Stranding Networks and the survey will be used to assist in the evaluation process. Data will be collected regarding performance, organizational structure, objectives, and needs of the regional program as well as the overall national program. Specific information to be collected includes:

- 1) training levels and perceptions of experience among network participants;
- 2) funding and support among network participant organizations;
- 3) network management and administration;
- 4) satisfaction with protocols and response activities among network participant organizations;
- 5) communication, evaluation, and assessment among network participants and NMFS;
- 6) outreach, publicity, and NMFS support; and
- 7) network improvement.

The information will be used to prioritize and discuss issues of concern and assist with future program management and planning.

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 contractor, Responsive Management, will conduct the survey, analyze the data, and provide NMFS with a final report. The survey will be conducted once in each NMFS region, starting with the Southeast and Southwest Regions in 2008. The final report will include an overall summary, a summary of overlapping themes, common issues in each region, and issues specific to each region. Regional meetings will be held to prioritize and discuss issues of concern that

were highlighted in the survey responses. The results of the survey will be disseminated to members of the regional stranding networks and will not be disseminated to the public.

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 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 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. Although the information collected is not expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in management, technical, or general informational publications. Should NMFS decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and 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.

Respondents may complete the survey in multiple modes: telephone, mail, e-mail, and/or via a program website. In this way, a respondent will be able to submit responses according to the survey format best suited to his/her schedule. The link, to be set up after this request is approved, will be provided to those respondents choosing this mode.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The MMHSRP has not previously conducted program reviews and therefore has not gathered this information from Regional Stranding Network participants. This information has not and is not being collected separately by Regional Stranding Coordinators or other members of the regional stranding networks.

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

This information collection will not have a significant impact on small businesses or entities as the survey is voluntary and will be administered only once to the respondents.

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

If the information collection is not conducted, NMFS will not be able to conduct a thorough program review of each Regional Stranding Network. Without this information, adequate management and policy decisions cannot be made, which may impact the quality and effectiveness of the National Marine Mammal Stranding Network.

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

Not applicable.

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 3698), solicited public comments on the survey. No public comments were received.

Discussions were held with the Marine Mammal Commission to review the MMHSRP, current practices and program objectives for each of the Regional Stranding Networks, and the goals of the program evaluation. The survey questions were developed by Responsive Management (outside contractor) and NMFS Protected Resources staff. The survey questions were reviewed by the NMFS Regional Stranding Coordinators for content and clarity.

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

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents.

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

The survey respondents will be instructed not to include personal information, including phone numbers and e-mail addresses. In accordance with the **Freedom of Information Act**, any personal information inadvertently included may be redacted from a response to a request for information by another party, depending on the information and circumstances. All information collected from the survey will be protected. Responses will not be associated with a name when data is analyzed or reported. Any identifying information used to ensure accuracy of data collection will be excluded from the data analysis. Hard copy survey responses will be handled only by analysts and Responsive Management personnel. Upon completion of the study, hard copy survey responses will be destroyed. The electronic database of survey submissions will be

password-protected and accessible only to Responsive Management analysts working on the study.

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.

The information collection does not require the submission of information of a sensitive nature.

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

Responsive Management will survey two individuals at each of the organizations in the six Regional Stranding Networks and survey 100 program volunteers in each region. The total sample size of stakeholders (including volunteers) will be 882 over 3 years. The approximate number of respondents in 1 year would be 294. Each individual survey would take up to 1 hour. The estimated annualized burden hours would be 294.

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).

There would be no annual cost burden to the respondents. Each individual would only be surveyed one time, for up to 1 hour. Most interviews would be conducted by telephone and would not add any additional costs to the respondent. For interviews not conducted by telephone, surveys would be sent by mail and would include pre-paid envelopes to return the completed survey to Responsive Management.

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

The information collection has been contracted out to Responsive Management. The current contract for Responsive Management includes developing and conducting the survey, analyzing the survey data, and developing a final report. For two regional surveys, the cost of these services is approximately \$42,500. An additional four regional surveys would be needed to finish the program reviews. The additional surveys would cost approximately \$85,000. The total cost to the Federal government will be \$127,500, annualized to \$42,500.

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

This request is for a new collection.

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

All telephone, mail, e-mail and/or web survey data will be processed and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 10.0 for Windows software, and the analysis of the telephone survey will include a regional breakdown of results. Data processing and analysis will include data entry of the mail and e-mail surveys, coding, cleaning of data,

preparation of straight tabulations, computer programming with cross tabulations, and preparation of study printouts. Survey results will be presented at regional stranding network meetings in each NMFS region. A final recommendations and strategies report will be written based on the survey results.

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.

Not applicable.

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

There are no exceptions.