

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
INTERNATIONAL BILLFISH ANGLER SURVEY
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0020**

A. JUSTIFICATION

This request is for a renewal of the information collection.

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

This Angler Survey began in 1969 and is an integral part of the Billfish Research Program (Billfish Program) at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC). The Angler Survey tracks recreational angler fishing catch and effort for Istiophorid billfish in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The data are used by scientists and fishery managers to assist with assessing the status of billfish stocks. This Angler Survey is intended for anglers cooperating in the Billfish Program and is entirely voluntary. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) collects fishing catch and effort information for most domestic and foreign fisheries, as part of Fishery Management Plans whose development is authorized by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), 16 USC 1851 et seq. Study of migratory gamefish that spend at least part of their life in US waters is also authorized under 16 USC 760e.

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 applicable NOAA Information Quality Guidelines.

This survey is conducted annually to track catch per unit of effort (CPUE) trends in the recreational fishery for Istiophorid billfish. The Angler Survey respondent card asks for the number of fishing days the angler expended, number and kind of billfish caught and the location fished in the preceding year. Data from this Angler Survey is utilized by fishery biologists investigating the health and stock condition of billfish resources throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Specifically, these data are used to track changing trends in recreational fishing effort in key areas throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Results are produced as in-house data reports, published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, in the Billfish Newsletter and elsewhere as appropriate. The Billfish Newsletter is an annual publication providing a summary of the Angler Survey and other Program results to the billfish angling community and is the primary outreach instrument to Program participants. Current and past issues of the Billfish Newsletter are available on the SWFSC's Billfish Program webpage (<http://swfsc.noaa.gov/frd-billfish.aspx>).

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 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. 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.

Collection of Angler Survey data does not utilize electronic or automated technology at this time. Surveys (paper forms) are sent to participants in December of each year and can also be accessed on the SWFSC's Billfish Program webpage: <http://swfsc.noaa.gov/frd-billfish.aspx>. Responses are entered into a data base as received. We are currently developing a web-based submission page and will ideally have that in place by December 2009, funding permitted, in time for collecting the 2009 recreational data.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The SWFSC's Angler Survey is the only study tracking billfish angling CPUE by domestic and international anglers in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The Angler Survey is unique to the billfish angling community and is not duplicated elsewhere.

NMFS collects fishing effort data for most commercial and recreational fisheries. The Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS) conducts telephone and dock survey data to track general recreational fishing effort within the United States (U.S.). The MRFSS does not identify fishing effort for the large, migratory billfish (Istiophorid) throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans. There are no known foreign agencies duplicating this effort. The SWFSC staff attends billfish related research conferences where knowledge about similar, repetitive surveys would be available, if there were any.

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

The Survey deals with individual anglers cooperating in the Angler Survey and does not impact any business entity.

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

Results of the Angler Survey are used by fishery research biologists at the SWFSC in determining the status of billfish stocks, biomass and trends in CPUE. This information is provided to fishery managers at the Fishery Management Councils and used in determining regulatory options. A break or disruption in the Angler Survey time line would jeopardize the SWFSC's ability to provide accurate management advice and recommendations to domestic fishery managers and to the State Department dealing with international fishery treaties.

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

This Survey is consistent with all 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 December 17, 2008 (73 FR 76616) solicited public comments. No comments were received.

Additional angler comments concerning the Angler Survey are requested annually in the Billfish Newsletter. No additional comments were received in 2008.

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

Response to the Angler Survey is completely voluntary. No rewards or offerings of any kind are available or offered to the respondents.

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

Angler Survey data and results are not 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.

This Angler Survey is entirely a recreational fishing query to determine angler catch and effort. There are no "sensitive" questions.

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

The burden to complete the Angler Survey respondent card is about 5 minutes per response. Our active mailing list varies from 2,000 to 2,800 participants. The number of respondents varies year to year, but in recent years we have received close to 1000 responses annually. Total annual burden is estimated at roughly 83 hours ($1000 \times 5/60 = 83$). Also see Section B, Question 1.

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 Question 12 above).

Postage is paid by the SWFSC if mailed from within the U.S. For those respondents mailing from foreign countries, there is only the cost of foreign postage, and that is estimated at US\$2.00 or less based on 2008 postage rates from the 3 foreign countries with the most survey respondents. Based on roughly 53 respondents per year (21% of 250 (10% of respondent universe), the estimated total yearly postage would be \$106.

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

Annual cost to conduct the Survey is approximately \$2,500. This includes printing, postage, and return postage when mailed in the US. This figure is based on actual expenses averaged over the last two years. Less clear is the in-house cost of staff (1 GS-9 and 1 GS-12) to order the printing, print the mailing labels, and mail the post cards, but 32 to 40 staff hours are estimated necessary to complete the mail out. Not included is staff time to enter respondent data into the data base, analyze data, report results in-house, prepare various manuscripts, prepare the Billfish Newsletter and respond to the Paperwork Reduction Act requirements.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

The adjustment change to burden occurred due to re-estimation of the number of respondents. Estimated respondents and responses have decreased from 1,500 to 1,000, and thus hours have decreased from 125 to 83. There is no expected change to miscellaneous costs, as they are already minimal, based on the few foreign responses. NOTE: ROCIS does show an increase of \$106, as when the information collection request was migrated to ROCIS, the cost was rounded down to zero.

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

The Angler Survey is conducted on a calendar year with completion scheduled by May of the following year. The Billfish Newsletter is the outreach method by which the SWFSC provides feedback to the recreational fishing community and is written for cooperating anglers participating in the Angler Survey and for the volunteers who conduct tag and release fishing for billfish. Content varies annually but always includes angling effort by area and species captured, reported catches, results from billfish tagging and general interest articles directed to the billfish angler. This peer-reviewed newsletter is approved for release by the SWFSC's Director. More robust analyses are conducted in support of fishery management and are reported in in-house reports, peer-reviewed scientific publications, and in Fishery Management Plans.

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.

NA.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-1.

NA.