

**Supporting Statement
for
Mandatory Ship Reporting System for the Northeast
and Southeast Coasts of the United States**

A. Justification

1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The northern right whale is currently an endangered species. Previous to the establishment of the reporting system, there were high mortality rates attributed to collisions with ships account for up to 50% of all recorded deaths. The populations of remaining northern right whales are concentrated in two regions on the eastern coast of the United States. The northeastern mandatory reporting area is located mainly off the coast of Massachusetts and is primarily a feeding area for the whales. The southeastern mandatory reporting area is located off the coasts of Georgia and Florida and encompasses the species only known calving grounds for the whales. The purpose of establishing mandatory reporting systems is to reduce the likelihood of collisions between ships and northern right whales in these areas.

The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998 (Section 313) includes an amendment to Section 11 of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act (33 U.S.C 1230(d)) that provides for Coast Guard authority to establish mandatory ship reporting systems. Based on a proposal by the United States, the International Maritime Organization adopted a resolution to establish two mandatory ship reporting systems. One system is identified as WHALESNORTH and the other system is identified as WHALESSOUTH. These systems are designed to inform mariners of the presence of whales in shipping lanes.

This information collection supports the following strategic goals:

Department of Homeland Security

- Protection

Coast Guard

- Protection of Natural Resources

Marine Safety, Security and Stewardship Directorate (CG-5)

- Human and Natural Environment: Eliminate environmental damage associated with maritime transportation and operations on and around the nation's waterways.

2. By whom, how, and for what purpose the information is to be used.

This reporting requirement triggers issuance of information to the mariner. This information that includes warnings of the risk of hitting northern right whales, where to obtain seasonal right whale advisories, and where to consult for

information about precautionary measures that mariners may take to reduce the risk of hitting northern right whales.

3. Consideration of the use of improved information technology.

This is an electronic information collection. The mariner must report when entering either of the reporting systems. There are no recordkeeping requirements.

We estimate that 100% of the reporting requirements can be done electronically. At this time, we estimate that 100% of the responses are collected electronically.

4. Efforts to identify duplication. Why similar information cannot be used.

A vessel owner/operator must only report in once when first entering the reporting system and is not responsible to report again when leaving. This will minimize the burden on the mariner while providing increased protection to the existing northern right whale populations.

5. Methods to minimize the burden to small businesses if involved.

It is not anticipated that this collection will impact small businesses. The reporting requirement associated with this collection is mandatory for vessels greater than or equal to 300 gross tons. The information collection is approximately 5 minutes per vessel when entering one of the mandatory reporting systems.

6. Consequences to the Federal program if collection were not done or conducted less frequently.

If the collection were collected less frequently, some vessels would enter these critical zones without receiving instructions or avoidance information and potentially hit a northern right whale.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause the information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with guidelines.

This information collection is conducted in manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2).

8. Consultation.

A 60 day Notice (See [USCG-2008-1240], February 4, 2009, 74 FR 6044) and a 30 day Notice (See [USCG-2008-1240], April 27, 2009, 74 FR 19100) was published in the Federal Register to obtain public comment on this collection. The USCG has not received any comments on this information collection.

9. Explain any decision to provide payment or gift to respondents.

There is no offer of monetary or material value for this information collection.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents.

There are no assurances of confidentiality provided to the respondents for this information collection.

11. Additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

There are no questions of sensitive language.

12. Estimates of reporting and recordkeeping hour and cost burdens of the collection of information.

This FY08 data is the best estimate for future year data. "Number of respondents" reflects the number of unique vessels that were affected by the MSR, and the "number of responses" reflects the number of reports that were legally required for FY08.

	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses
WHALESNORTH	350	1,149
WHALESSOUTH	517	1,491
Total	867	2,640

Hourly burden per transmission = 5 minutes (approximately .08 hours)

The total **annual hour burden** for respondents is –

2,640 transmissions/year X (.08 hours/transmission) ≈ **211 hours per year**

The total **annual cost burden** for respondents is –

2,640 trans./year X (.08 hours/trans.) X \$ 37/hour ≈ **\$7,807 per year**

(Hourly wage is per COMDTINST 73101.1L *Hourly standard rates for personnel for GS-5 through GS-8 equivalent*)

13. Estimates of annualized capital and start-up costs.

There are no recordkeeping, capital, start-up or maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

14. Estimates of annualized Federal Government costs.

The estimate for the annualized Federal Government costs is approximately \$135,000 for FY09. The cost is based on the MSR contract, system upgrades, and satellite services. Annual estimated costs beyond FY09 are approximately \$135,000.

15. Explain the reasons for the change in burden.

The change in burden is an ADJUSTMENT due to a decrease in the estimated number of annual responses.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published for statistical use, outline plans for tabulation, statistical analysis and publication.

This information collection will not be published for statistical purposes.

17. Explain the reasons for seeking not to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information of collection.

The Coast Guard will display the expiration date for OMB approval of this information collection.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

The Coast Guard does not request an exception to the certification of this information collection.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.