

**SUPPORT STATEMENT
SOUTHEAST REGION LOGBOOK FAMILY OF FORMS
OMB CONTROL NO. 00648-0016**

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS.

There are two data collection activities within 0648-0016 in which statistical sampling methods are used: (1) the collection of trip-level cost and earnings data as an add-on to the snapper-grouper logbook with those selected also required to submit annual fixed cost survey data; (2) the collection of discard data as a supplement to the reef fish/snapper-grouper logbook.

1. Describe the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used.

The population of boats to be sampled is determined from logbook reports submitted to the NMFS during 2006. Commercial fishermen are required to submit a trip report within seven days after the completion of each Gulf of Mexico reef fish, South Atlantic snapper-grouper, mackerel, shark and Atlantic dolphin /wahoo logbook trip. Fishermen who did not participate in these fisheries during a given month are required to submit a 'no-fishing' report at the end of the month.

In 2007, approximately 3,500 boats were permitted to fish in at least one or more of these fisheries during 2006 of which 2,063 distinct vessels reported fishing activity. To reduce the reporting burden on the fishermen, two separate 20% samples of the vessels with a Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic snapper-grouper, king mackerel, Spanish mackerel or shark permit were selected to report. To assure that the samples were representative of the total universe of vessels with Federal permits, stratified, random samples were selected from the universe of all vessels with the above types of Federal permits. A two-tiered stratification was used. One tier was geographical, and the universe was divided into two geographical strata - the Gulf of Mexico (Florida Keys to the Texas-Mexican border) and the South Atlantic (which extends from the North Carolina - Virginia border to the Florida Keys). The second stratum was based on the type of gear. There were six categories in this stratum - handline, longline, trolling, trap, gill nets, and diving. In all, there were 12 strata for the random sampling of vessels. A 20% sample was selected randomly from each of the 12 strata. Slight adjustments were granted for permit holders who held permits on more than one vessel, did not plan on fishing in 2006, or were selected for reporting in other data collection programs not covered under this information collection. The cost and earnings data survey received approximately 300 responses.. The discard program received approximately 347 responses.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection, including the statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection, the estimation procedure, the degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification, any unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and any specific use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

See Question 1 for information about sampling.

The cost and earnings data are collected on the same logbook form on which the catch and effort data are reported. Fishermen who are not selected to submit economic information receive a cover letter instructing them not to report the cost earning section of the form. Fishermen who are selected to report economic information receive a cover letter instructing them to report the economic information in addition to information about their catches and fishing effort.

A separate form to collect information about annual fixed costs will be mailed to the selected fishermen in the spring of each year, with the timing established to take advantage of the availability of information about annual expenditures as recently compiled for end-of-year federal income tax purposes. Trip reports about routine harvesting costs and annual reports on fixed costs will be submitted to the NMFS/SEFSC logbook program in Miami, Florida.

Data will be used for descriptive and analytical purposes. Descriptive uses include the estimation of average harvesting costs per boat per trip and total harvesting costs for all boats and all trips in the sampling universe. Data may also be used to test for seasonality of average harvesting costs per trip. Analytical uses include evaluations of regulatory proposals.

The supplemental discard logbook is mailed to selected permit holders along with their regular coastal logbooks at the start of the year. The fishermen record interactions with endangered species and discard information from target species for each trip. Annual reporting would result in poorer quality data because fishermen will not be able to remember their fishing activity for that length of time. There are no specialized sampling problems anticipated with the supplemental discard logbook. Information from discard logbooks is used for stock assessments and management decisions.

3. Describe the methods used to maximize response rates and to deal with nonresponse. The accuracy and reliability of the information collected must be shown to be adequate for the intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a specialized justification must be provided if they will not yield “reliable” data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

Project staff obtained input on this proposed data collection program from commercial fishermen throughout the jurisdiction of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Input included fishermen’s opinions about the types of information that they can provide with minimum burden, and the format for collecting data. Their input was used in the development of survey instruments so that they would be easier to complete, with questions revised for clarity and to obtain more accurate data. Renewal of permits will be delayed if the information is not received, to ensure compliance (and thus close to a 100% response rate).

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Tests are encouraged as effective means to refine collections, but if ten or more test respondents are involved OMB must give prior approval.

Because of the large universe and the anticipated variation in reported economic data and discard or interaction data, it is not feasible to do a test with fewer than 10. However, interaction with and feedback from the fishermen that are using the forms will provide sufficient information about the forms and collection procedures to make whatever adjustments are needed. In 2006

adjustments to the reporting form, instructions, database design, and the quality control procedures were made. Furthermore, analyses of the data will provide information about the variations in the economic and discard data to determine whether the strata and sample sizes are appropriate.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design, and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

The following Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff was consulted on the statistical aspects of this data collection activity:

Dr. Steve Turner, Survey Statistician	(305) 361-4482
Dr. Clay Porch, Director, Sustainable Fisheries Division	(305) 361-4232

Dr. Steve Turner, Group Leader, Fisheries Statistics Group, is responsible for the data collection activity.