

**JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT
LARGE PELAGIC FISHING SURVEY
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0380**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is requesting two minor changes to the Large Pelagics Telephone Survey (LPTS) to be piloted in Puerto Rico only: 1) changes to the questionnaire used for the LPTS, and 2) addition of an electronic Internet reporting option for respondents in Puerto Rico as an alternative to the traditional phone interview or fax options. *In order for the survey to start on time in Puerto Rico, approval is needed no later than June 1.*

The LPTS form was included in a 2008 revision to OMB Control Number 0648-0380, expiration date: 08/31/2011. The revised form, to be administered in Puerto Rico only, shows additional questions highlighted (questions 31-35). The additional questions are designed to help fisheries scientists improve estimates of post-release mortality of billfish that are caught and released. This information is important because over 95% of billfish caught by recreational anglers are released. The mortality rate associated with catch and release fishing is difficult to estimate. Controlled experiments have shown correlations between mortality rates and factors related to the catch event, including hook types used, hook location, water temperature, and water depth when fish are hooked. These questions will be asked only of a small subset of LPTS interviews: i.e. Puerto Rico interviews only and only when respondents indicate they have caught and released a billfish during the 2-week reporting period.

These questions will add an estimated average of two minutes per large pelagic trip profiled. Based on previous survey results, we estimate that each successful LPTS contact in Puerto Rico will result in an average of 0.43 profiled large pelagic trips. Incorporating the estimated target sample size of 2,860 contacts annually for Puerto Rico, we estimate the increased burden hours for this form changes as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &2,860 \text{ contacts} \times 0.43 \text{ trips per contact} \times 2 \text{ minutes per trip}^* \\ &= 2,459.6 \text{ minutes or } 41 \text{ hours} \end{aligned}$$

To improve response rates, this action also seeks to add an electronic Internet reporting option to the Puerto Rico LPTS. Internet surveys are generally thought to take less time to complete compared to telephone interviews. We estimate the Internet option will take respondents 3 minutes less to complete per profiled trip compared to the telephone survey. We also estimate that 25% of profiled trips will be reported via the Internet. The estimated decrease in burden hours resulting from this change is calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} &2,860 \text{ contacts} \times 0.43 \text{ trips per contact} \times 3 \text{ minutes per trip} \times 0.25 \\ &= 922.35 \text{ minutes or } 15.4 \text{ (15) hours} \end{aligned}$$

*This results in a 1 minute increase per trip

The net increase in burden hours resulting from the two changes requested is **25 hours** (41 minus 15).