

**JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGES FOR
SOUTH ATLANTIC SNAPPER-GROUPER OBSERVER PROGRAM
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0593**

The purpose of this request is to complete the consolidation of the Southeast Region observer programs into the information collection “Observer Programs’ Information That Can Be Gathered Only Through Questions” (OMB Control No. 0648-0593). The Final Rule for Amendment 15B to the South Atlantic snapper-grouper FMP, published on November 16, 2009 (74 FR 58902), requires an observer program for selected commercial, for-hire, and private recreational vessels in the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery. This information collection was approved under OMB Control No. 0648-0603 on January 4, 2010 and approval expires on December 31, 2012.

Amendment 15B to the South Atlantic snapper-grouper FMP requires an observer program for selected commercial, for-hire, and private recreational vessels in the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery. This information collection includes information collected by observers through standardized questions.

Each selected vessel would be notified via a registered letter one to two months before the observer is to board. This selection notification form will provide a time period during which a vessel would be required to notify NMFS 24 hours in advance of fishing so that an observer may accompany the trip. Vessels which inform NMFS they do not plan to fish would be placed in a holding pattern. Those vessels would be asked to notify NMFS via the **fax notification form** when they next plan to fish so they can be assigned an observer. Once selected to carry an observer, a vessel must obtain a Coast Guard safety inspection through a dockside examination. This will require that a **safety form** be completed and submitted prior to the observer trip. Observers will ask necessary **questions** during the trip. Upon completion of the observed trip the vessel representative will complete and submit an **observer evaluation form**. Questions and forms are those used for the Southeast Region Shrimp and Reef Fish observer programs, already included in OMB Control No. 0648-0593, and burden and cost will be added to that information collection in OMB Control No. 0648-0593 (NMFS administration and regulations are the same for both).

Table 1. Public response hours involved per trip for proposed observer data collection programs.

	Safety Form	Fax Notification Form	Observer questions	Observer Evaluation	Total
South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Observer Program	35 minutes	15 minutes (plus \$0.08 average per fax)	40 minutes	15 minutes	105 minutes (1.75hours)

Table 2. Number of South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper permitted vessels, trips, observed trips, for proposed data collection actions in Amendment 15B. (2009 Data).

Respondents and Totals	# Permitted Vessels	# Trips	# Observer Trips (349)	# Public Hours (611)
Commercial	721	15,086	71	124 (1.75x71)
For-Hire	1,533	9,607	150	263 (1.75x150)
Headboat	85	11,665	128	224 (1.75x128)
Recreational	Not available	1,243,576	0	

Total additional costs: 349 x \$0.08 = \$28.