

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
MARINE RECREATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAM  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0052**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

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

This request is for a revision of this information collection. Note: we are changing the name of the information collection from “Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey” to “Marine Recreational Information Program”.

Collection of these data is necessary to fulfill statutory requirements of Section 303 of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (16 U.S.C. 1852 *et. seq.* and to comply with [Executive Order 12962](#) on Recreational Fisheries. Section 303 (a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act specifies data and analyses to be included in Fishery Management Plans (FMPs), as well as pertinent data that shall be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce under the plan.

This revision will fulfill statutory requirements of Section 401 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act. Section 401 (g) requires that the Secretary of Commerce, “establish a program to improve the quality and accuracy of information generated by the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey”. MSA further specifies that future surveys should, “target anglers registered or licensed at the State or Federal level to collect participation and effort data”, and that the program, “to the maximum extent feasible implement the recommendations of the National Research Council [(NRC)]” that were provided in a 2006 review of the methods currently used by the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to survey marine recreational fishing effort and catch.

The NRC Review suggested that recreational fishing surveys suffer from inefficiency, potential bias due to under-coverage of angling populations, and potential bias due to nonresponse (NRC, 2006). NMFS is addressing these concerns by developing and implementing the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), an improved system of surveys that will replace existing marine recreational fishing data collection programs. One of the primary objectives of MRIP is to address the recommendation that future telephone surveys of fishing effort should utilize available lists of licensed or registered saltwater anglers as sampling frames. To this end, NOAA Fisheries is developing fishing effort surveys that sample from databases of licensed or registered saltwater anglers. To compensate for gaps in survey coverage resulting from exemptions to licensure requirements, MRIP has designed dual-frame telephone and mail surveys that ingrate angler license frames with random-digit-dial (RDD) frames and address-based sampling (ABS) sampling frames, respectively.

Dual-frame approaches provide measurable improvements in survey coverage but are not without their own limitations. Specifically, the dual-frame telephone survey design suffers from poor response rates, under-coverage due to the proliferation of non-landline telephone households, and an inability to match component sample frames, which is a critical aspect of

dual-frame designs. The dual-frame mail survey design offers improved response rates, the ability to weight sample data to adjust for nonresponse bias, relatively complete coverage of the target population, and an accurate means to identify overlapping frame units, but may not produce estimates in a timely enough fashion to satisfy customer needs (Mathiowetz et al., 2011).

This requested revision will address these limitations by testing a dual-frame, mixed-mode (telephone/mail) design for contacting anglers and collecting recreational fishing data. The design will support dual-frame estimation and maximize coverage by sampling from angler license frames and household address frames derived from the United States Postal Service Delivery Sequence File (DSF), and will maximize response rates and the timeliness of estimation by including both mail and telephone data collection. The survey will be designed to estimate recreational saltwater fishing effort, as well as measure the impact of data collection mode on survey response, coverage and measurement.

**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 all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.**

Recreational fishing catch and effort data are used annually by NMFS, regional fishery management councils, interstate marine fisheries commissions, and state natural resource agencies in developing, implementing and monitoring fishery management programs, per statutory requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Catch and effort statistics are fundamental for assessing the influence of fishing on any stock of fish. Accurate estimates of the quantities taken, fishing effort, and both the seasonal and geographic distributions of the catch and effort are required for the development of regional management policies and plans. Information collected through this study will be used to identify and quantify bias in ongoing recreational fishing survey methods, as well as test the feasibility of dual-frame, mixed-mode designs for collecting recreational fishing effort data. The results of the study will be used to develop more efficient and accurate surveys of recreational anglers.

The survey will utilize a dual-frame, multi-phase approach to identify anglers and collect information about recent saltwater fishing activity. Anglers will be sampled from both an address-based sample frame (ABS sampling) derived from the USPS Delivery Sequence File (DSF) and state databases of licensed saltwater anglers. ABS sampling will include a household screener questionnaire to identify saltwater anglers, a 2<sup>nd</sup>-phase angler questionnaire to collect information about saltwater fishing activity that occurred during a two-month reference wave, and a 3<sup>rd</sup>-phase questionnaire to collect information about encounters with sea turtles. The ABS household screener questionnaire will be administered by mail, the 2<sup>nd</sup>-phase angler questionnaire will be administered by either mail or Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing, and the 3<sup>rd</sup>-phase sea turtle questionnaire will be administered by CATI.

Sampling from angler license databases will include a 1<sup>st</sup>-phase angler questionnaire, which will be identical to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-phase ABS angler questionnaire and will be administered by both mail and

CATI, and a 2<sup>nd</sup>-phase sea turtle questionnaire, which will also be identical to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-phase ABS sea turtle questionnaire and administered by CATI.

Specific data elements that will be collected in each questionnaire include:

ABS Household Screener Questionnaire (1<sup>st</sup>-Phase ABS Sample):

- a) Questions about weather and visitation to coastal areas are included to engage non-anglers and reduce the potential for nonresponse bias,
- b) Total number of adults in the household,
- c) An identifier (first name or initials) for each adult in the household is used to address second-phase ABS respondents,
- d) Gender and age of each adult in the household is used for nonresponse weighting adjustment and/or post-stratification,
- e) Participation or likely participation in the following recreational activities during the past year is used to identify likely saltwater anglers for second-phase ABS sampling, as well as provide some incentive for non anglers to participate in the survey:
  - a. Recreational freshwater fishing,
  - b. Recreational saltwater fishing,
  - c. Recreational boating or sailing,
  - d. Scuba diving or snorkeling,
  - e. Dolphin or whale watching,
- f) A preferred telephone number for a possible follow-up telephone interview.

Angler Questionnaire (2<sup>nd</sup>-Phase ABS Sample and 1<sup>st</sup>-Phase License Sample):

- a) Questions about fishing activity in the past 12 months, 8 months and 4 months are used to screen for recent fishing activity and assist with recall,
- b) Total number of recreational fishing trips, number of recreational fishing trips taken on privately owned boats, and number of shore fishing trips taken during the reference wave will be used to estimate fishing effort,
- c) Questions about the time of fishing trips and type of access to the water (public/private sites) is used to assess the coverage of complementary onsite surveys,
- d) The area where most of the fishing trips taken during the reference wave occurred is used to post-stratify estimates into sub-state domains for management purposes as well as estimate fishing effort by management area (inland waters, state territorial seas, Federal Exclusive Economic Zone),
- e) Possession of a valid saltwater fishing license will be used to identify overlap between ABS and license sample frames,
- f) Telephone usage is used to assess the coverage of current RDD sampling designs,
- g) Questions about observed encounters with sea turtles will be used to identify the sample for a more detailed follow-up questionnaire about sea turtle encounters.

Sea Turtle Encounter Questionnaire (3<sup>rd</sup>-Phase ABS Sample and 2<sup>nd</sup>-Phase License Sample)

- a) A question to confirm at least one observed encounter with sea turtles during the previous 12 months,
- b) A question about the disposition of the sea turtle will determine if the sea turtle was hooked or entangled in fishing line,
- c) The number of sea turtles that were entangled or hooked,

- d) The type of sea turtle,
- e) Where the turtle was hooked and if the hook was removed,
- f) The disposition of the turtle when it was released.

As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the information gathered has utility. NOAA Fisheries will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with 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. Although the information collected is not expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results will be used in scientific, management, technical or general information publications. Should NOAA Fisheries decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and 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.**

The surveys will be conducted by telephone and mail. Automated technology will be used to identify overlapping records between angler list frames and random household address frames. Telephone interviews will be conducted through Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI).

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

NMFS has the lead Federal responsibility for collection of data from marine recreational fishermen and coordinates marine recreational fishing informational needs with other agencies. For example, in 1987 NMFS coordinated an economic study of marine recreational anglers on the Atlantic Coast with the Environmental Protection Agency. Also NMFS has worked with State fishery agencies each year to coordinate data collection efforts and avoid duplication. In some cases, NMFS employs State personnel under contract to conduct field interviewing. The Survey is not conducted in Texas, since existing Texas-sponsored surveys provide the information that would have been obtained by NMFS.

Specialized NMFS data collections, such as the Large Pelagics Survey (LPS), which obtains information on recreational catch of large pelagic species, such as tunas, billfishes and pelagic sharks, overlap to a minor extent with the MRFSS and its related data collections. Such overlap with the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) and its related catch component is minimal because the MRFSS is designed to cover marine recreational fishing for all finfish species. Contacts with anglers who fished for large pelagic species are relatively rare in these samples, however, anglers who fish for large pelagic species are not excluded from the MRFSS sampling because representative sampling of their fishing trips in relation to other marine recreational angler fishing trips is necessary to avoid biasing catch estimates for any given species.

In some states, NMFS has required anglers to report their catches of Atlantic bluefin tuna for the purpose of real-time quota monitoring. Although that data collection overlaps to a minor extent with the MRFSS, it does not collect information on the other finfish species caught on bluefin tuna fishing trips. That specialized data collection places a priority on obtaining up-to-date catch information on only one species. On the other hand, the MRFSS is designed to obtain accurate marine recreational fishery catch information for all finfish species. Therefore, the minimal overlap is necessary.

Within this information collection: Mail surveys that sample from angler lists will be integrated with surveys that sample from random address frames. Sample frames will be matched prior to data collection to identify overlapping units. Data reconciliation software that has been specifically developed to match records from multiple databases will be used to identify overlapping units. Similar procedures will be used to identify overlap between mail and telephone surveys.

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

No small businesses will be impacted by this revision.

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

Information collected through this study will be used to develop improved surveys of recreational anglers as mandated by Section 401 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act. Failure to implement the data collection will delay the Agencies' effort to develop and implement the Marine Recreational Information Program.

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

The collection is consistent with 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 May 17, 2011 (76 FR 28421) solicited public comment on this revision. No comments were received.

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

The sample of anglers/households will receive a \$1.00 cash incentive. The benefits of cash incentives on mail survey response rates are well documented (Church, 1993).

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

As stated on the instruments, responses are kept confidential as required by section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens and [NOAA Administrative Order 216-100](#), Confidentiality of Fisheries Statistics, and will not be released for public use except in aggregate statistical form without identification as to its source. Section 402(b) stipulates that data required to be submitted under an FMP shall be confidential and shall not be released except to Federal employees and Council staff responsible for FMP monitoring and development or when required under court order. Data such as personal addresses and phone numbers will remain 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.**

No sensitive questions are asked.

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

The revised total respondents for OMB Control No. 0648-0052 will be 783,405, a net increase of 37,060 over the current 746,345 respondents; responses, 963,557, a net increase of 37,976 over the current responses of 925,581, and burden, 53,494 hours, a net increase of 3,854 hours from 49,640 (elimination of a previously approved mail survey (screening and main questionnaires) results in a decrease of 10,500 respondents, 17,600 responses and 1,703 hours). In addition to these decreases, new respondents, responses and hours are shown below in the burden table.

The ABS household screener questionnaire will be completed by approximately 38,400 respondents ( $38,400 \times 5 \text{ minutes} / 60 \text{ minutes} = 3,200 \text{ hours}$ ). Of these, approximately 3,408 will complete an angler mail questionnaire ( $3,408 \times 10 \text{ minutes} / 60 \text{ minutes} = 568 \text{ hours}$ ) and approximately 3,408 will participate in an angler CATI interview ( $3,408 \times 6 \text{ minutes} / 60 \text{ minutes} = 341 \text{ hours}$ ). In addition, approximately 4,720 anglers sampled from saltwater fishing license databases will complete an angler mail questionnaire ( $4,720 \times 10 \text{ minutes} / 60 \text{ minutes} = 787 \text{ hours}$ ), and an additional 3,440 anglers sampled from license databases will complete an angler CATI interview ( $3,440 \times 6 \text{ minutes} / 60 \text{ minutes} = 344 \text{ hours}$ ).

Of individuals who complete the angler questionnaire, approximately 200 will complete a sea turtle CATI interview ( $200 \times 5 \text{ minutes} / 60 \text{ minutes} = 17 \text{ hours}$ ). Approximately 1,000 nonrespondents to the ABS household screener questionnaire will complete a follow-up questionnaire ( $1,000 \times 10 \text{ minutes} / 60 \text{ minutes} = 167 \text{ hours}$ ). Approximately 500 nonrespondents to the angler questionnaire will complete a follow-up mail questionnaire ( $500 \times 10 \text{ minutes} / 60$

minutes = 83 hours) and an additional 500 nonrespondents will complete a follow-up CATI interview (500\*6 minutes/60 minutes = 500 hours).

Total burden *attributable to this revision* will be approximately 5,557 hours, determined as follows:

Activity	# Respondents	# Responses	Minutes / activity	Total Hours
ABS Household Screener Questionnaire - Mail	38,400	38,400	5	3,200
ABS Angler Questionnaire – Mail <sub>2</sub>	3,408	3,408	10	568
ABS Angler Questionnaire – CATI <sub>2</sub>	3,408	3,408	6	341
License Sample Angler Questionnaire - Mail	4,720	4,720	10	787
License Sample Angler Questionnaire - CATI	3,440	3,440	6	344
Sea Turtle Questionnaire - CATI <sub>2</sub>	200	200	5	17
Nonresponse ABS Household Screener Questionnaire – Mail	1,000	1,000	10	167
Nonresponse Angler Questionnaire – Mail <sub>2</sub>	500	500	10	83
Nonresponse Angler Questionnaire – CATI <sub>2</sub>	500	500	6	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,560</b>	<b>55,576</b>		<b>5,557</b>

2. Respondents are a subset of the ABS Household Screener Questionnaire and do not represent new respondents. Total respondents shown are UNDUPLICATED respondent for this survey.

**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).**

These data collections will incur no cost burden on respondents beyond the costs of response time.

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

Annual cost to the Federal government is approximately \$2,000,000 divided as follows: \$1,800,000 in data collection costs and \$200,000 in professional staff, overhead and computing costs.

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

The net increase of 3,854 hours is the result of the following program changes:

- 1) *Elimination of a previously approved mail survey resulted in a reduction of 10,500 respondents, 17,600 responses and 1,703 hours.*
- 2) Implementation of a household screening mail survey (ABS Household Screener Questionnaire) to identify recreational saltwater anglers resulted in an increase of 3,200 hours.
- 3) Implementation of 2<sup>nd</sup> phase ABS mail surveys of recreational saltwater anglers (ABS Angler Questionnaire – Mail) resulted in an increase of 568 hours,
- 4) Implementation of 2<sup>nd</sup> phase ABS telephone surveys of recreational saltwater anglers (ABS Angler Questionnaire – CATI) resulted in an increase of 341 hours,
- 5) Implementation of mail surveys of licensed saltwater anglers (License Sample Angler Questionnaire – Mail) resulted in an increase of 787 hours,
- 6) Implementation of telephone surveys of licensed saltwater anglers (License Sample Angler Questionnaire – CATI) resulted in an increase of 344 hours,
- 7) Implementation of telephone surveys about sea turtle interactions resulted in an increase of 17 hours,
- 8) Telephone and mail follow-up interviews with nonrespondents resulted in an increase of 300 hours (167 + 83 + 50).

There are no changes to any of the other information collections under this OMB Control Number.

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

All data collected and analyzed will be included in table format available on the web page of the Fisheries Statistics Division, Office of Science and Technology, National Marine Fisheries Service. The web address is <http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/recreational>. Findings from the study will be presented at appropriate profession meetings (e.g. American Fisheries Society, Joint Statistical Meetings and will be submitted for publication in appropriate statistical or fisheries peer-reviewed journals.

**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.**

Not Applicable.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.**

Not Applicable.