

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION VESSEL AND  
GEAR IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0360**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

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

The success of fisheries management programs depends significantly on regulatory compliance. The vessel identification requirement is essential to facilitate enforcement. The ability to link fishing or other activity to the vessel owner or operator is crucial to enforcement of the regulations issued under the authority of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (MSA) to govern domestic and foreign fishing in the western Pacific region and under authority of laws implementing international treaties. Similarly, the regulations require that certain fishing gear in federally regulated western Pacific pelagic longline fisheries and western Pacific coral reef ecosystem fisheries be marked with the vessel's official number. The marking of gear is crucial to enforcement and valuable in actions concerning damage, loss, and civil proceedings.

This request is for a revision (extension with program changes).

**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.**

*Vessel Identification*

In the domestic western Pacific region fisheries regulated under [50 CFR part 665](#), the vessel's official number or international radio call sign (IRCS) is required to be displayed on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and on an appropriate weather deck. It identifies each vessel and should be visible at distances at sea and in the air. The requirements affect western Pacific pelagic longline vessels, pelagic troll and handline vessels, pelagic squid jig vessels, crustacean (lobster and deepwater shrimp) fishing vessels, bottomfish fishing vessels, precious coral fishing vessels, and coral reef ecosystem fishing vessels. Hawaii and Northern Mariana Islands bottomfish vessels in compliance with state/territory registration and marking requirements are exempt. Vessels with federal Pacific Highly Migratory Species permits (albacore trollers and some longliners) are currently exempt. Regulations in 50 CFR part 665.16 specify the requirements for the vessel identification.

Domestic fishing vessels used to fish for highly migratory species on the high seas in the Western and Central Pacific Convention (WCPFC) Area with a WCPFC Area Endorsement, or required to have an Area Endorsement, must be marked with their IRCS

number on both sides of the hull or superstructure and on a weather deck. Most of the western Pacific pelagic longline and tuna purse seine vessels would be subject to this requirement, per [50 CFR part 300, Subpart O](#). The identification numbers must meet size and color requirements specified in regulations in 50 CFR part 300.

In the South Pacific tuna purse seine fishery regulated under [50 CFR part 300 Subpart D](#), the IRCS number must be painted on both sides of the hull or superstructure and on the deck as specified in 50 CFR part 300. The IRCS number also must be painted on the side of any auxiliary equipment such as skiffs and helicopters.

The identification number provides law enforcement personnel with a means to monitor fishing, at-sea processing, and other related activities, to ascertain whether the vessel's observed activities are in accordance with those authorized for that vessel. The identifying number is used by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and other marine agencies in issuing citations, prosecutions, and other enforcement actions. Vessels that qualify for particular fisheries are readily identified, and this allows for more cost-effective enforcement. Cooperating fishermen also use the number to report suspicious activities that they observe. Regulation-compliant fishermen ultimately benefit as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred and more burdensome regulations are avoided.

### *Gear Identification*

Under 50 CFR part 665.804, the operator of each permitted pelagic longline vessel must ensure that the official number of the vessel is affixed to every longline buoy and float, including each buoy and float that is attached to a radar reflector, radio antenna, or flag marker, whether attached to a deployed buoy or possessed on board the vessel. Under 50 CFR parts 665.128, 665.228, 665.246, 665.428, and 665.628, traps and floats on board the vessel or deployed must be marked with the vessel's official number.

The regulations further specify how the gear is to be marked (e.g., the location and legibility of the marking). Gear that is not properly marked is considered unclaimed or abandoned property that may be confiscated. The identifying number on fishing gear is used by NMFS, the USCG and other enforcement agencies in issuing gear violations, prosecutions, and determining that longlines/traps are not illegally placed. Marked gear allows NMFS and the USCG to more readily enforce gear violations, thus allowing for more cost-effective enforcement. Cooperating fishermen also use the marking to report placement of occurrence of gear in unauthorized areas. Regulation-compliant fishermen ultimately benefit as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred and more burdensome regulations are avoided.

Although the information collected (vessel and gear identification numbers) is not confidential it will not be disseminated to the public. There is no reason for doing so. The information is strictly for enforcement purpose or use by NMFS internally in situations involving damage, loss, and civil proceedings.

**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 requirement that each vessel display an identification number on its deckhouse or hull, and its weather deck, does not lend itself to collection of information technology.

Transponders and vessel monitoring system units are comparatively expensive and their signals cannot be accessed directly by the USCG in the air or by its vessels at this time. Similarly, gear identification does not lend itself to collection of information technology. No other technology appears to be less costly and still capable of providing the necessary information to support enforcement.

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

There is no duplication with other collections.

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

Most of the vessels are categorized as small businesses. The collection of information will not have a significant impact on these small businesses, and no special modifications of the requirements were considered necessary to accommodate the needs of these small businesses.

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

The NMFS and USCG could not enforce the fisheries management measures if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

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

No special circumstances require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the 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 soliciting comments was published on March 24, 2011 (76 FR 16610). No comments were received.

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

No payments or gifts are provided.

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

There is no assurance of confidentiality provided. This is public information.

**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.**

There are no sensitive questions.

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

The estimated total number of vessels requiring marking is 295 (228 western Pacific pelagic longline vessels, 10 Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIA) pelagic troll & handline vessels, 1 western Pacific pelagic squid jig vessel, 10 western Pacific bottomfishing vessels, 2 western Pacific lobster vessels, 1 western Pacific deepwater shrimp vessel, 3 western Pacific precious coral fishing vessels, and 40 South Pacific tuna purse seine fishing vessels). For all but the purse seine vessels, the burden is estimated at 45 minutes each (15 minutes for each of three locations on the vessel). For the purse seine vessels, the burden is estimated at 1 hour and 15 minutes (15 minutes for each of three locations on the vessel plus 15 minutes each for one skiff and one helicopter).

Also, longline and western Pacific coral reef fishing gear are required to be marked: Hawaii Longline vessels have 120 gear markings on average, American Samoa and Western Pacific Longline have 100, and Western Pacific coral reef vessels have 20. Each gear marking is estimated to take 2 minutes.

The total estimated burden per the table below is: respondents and responses: 295 vessels plus 26,080 pieces of gear = 26,375 (a decrease of 806, down from 27,181); hours: 241 plus 869 = 1,110 (a decrease of 24, down from 1,134).

Fishery	Vessels	Unit Time (min)	Total Time (min)	Avg. # Gear Per Vessel	Total Gear	Unit Time	Total Time	Totals
Hawaii Longline	164	45	7,380	120	19,680	2	39,360	
Am. Samoa Longline	60	45	2,700	100	6,000	2	12,000	
WP General Longline	4	45	180	100	400	2	800	
PRIA Troll & HL	10	45	450	n/a	n/a	0	0	
WP Pelagic Squid Jig	1	45	45	n/a	n/a	0	0	
WP Lobster	2	45	90	n/a	n/a	0	0	
WP Deep. Shrimp	1	45	45	n/a	n/a	0	0	
WP Bottomfish	10	45	450	n/a	n/a	0	0	
WP Prec. Coral	3	45	135	n/a	n/a	0	0	
SPTT Purse seine	40	75	3,000	n/a	n/a	0	0	
RESPONSES	295				26,080			26,375
HOURS			14,475 (241 hours)				52,160 (869 hours)	1,110 hours

The WCPFC Area Endorsement vessel identification requirement is covered by compliance with western Pacific and SPTT purse seine fishing vessel identification requirements.

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection, excluding the labor costs in Question 12 .**

The only cost to respondents is the cost of the paint to apply the vessel’s official number and gear markings. It is assumed the vessel has paint brushes. At an estimated \$150 per vessel annually, the cost would be \$44,250 (an increase of 14,150, up from \$30,100).

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

There is no cost to the Federal government.

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

Program changes are due to addition of new Federally managed pelagic squid jig and deepwater shrimp fisheries, deletion of the no-longer active NWHI bottomfish and lobster fisheries, and adjustment of the fisheries affected by the WCPFC Area Endorsement marking requirements.

In addition, estimated annualized costs were adjusted for higher costs of supplies, offsetting a small decrease in costs related to decreased responses.

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

No results are published.

**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.**

Not Applicable.

**B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS**

This collection of information does not employ statistical methods.