

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
LARGE PELAGICS FISHING SURVEY  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0380**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

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

This action seeks to revise the Large Pelagic Fishing Survey OMB Control No. 0648-0380 in the following ways:

- Remove the Highly Migratory Species Characterization Survey
- Remove the North Carolina (NC) Winter Bluefin Tuna (BFT) Dockside Survey
- Reduce estimated sample size of the Large Pelagics Biological Survey from 2,670 to 1,500 interviews
- Add an electronic Internet reporting option to the Large Pelagics Telephone Survey (LPTS) for all areas (previously only pilot tested in Puerto Rico).
- Add non-response follow-up survey to LPTS (Northeast only) which will include a mix of re-contact methods including phone, mail, and web based.

Since OMB Control No. 0648-0380 expires August 31, 2011, this action also seeks to extend approval for three more years.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is responsible for monitoring and managing United States (U.S.) marine fisheries resources. Collection of information regarding fishing for large pelagic species (tunas, billfishes, swordfish, and sharks) is necessary to fulfill the following statutory requirements: [Atlantic Tunas Convention Act](#) (16 U.S.C. 971 et seq.), the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), and to meet administrative requirements of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Marine Recreational Fishery Policy implemented to comply with [Executive Order 12962](#) on Recreational Fisheries.

The Atlantic Tunas Convention Act at 16 U.S.C. 971d(c)(3)(I) provides the Secretary of Commerce the authority to “require any commercial or recreational fisherman to obtain a permit from the Secretary and report the quantity of catch of a regulated species”. 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, which shall be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce under the plan. Recommendation One of the NMFS Marine Recreational Fishery (MRF) Policy focuses on developing “a comprehensive data acquisition and analysis system (participation, catch, effort and socio-economic data) on a regular, continuing basis” in support of the Executive Order 12962 requirement to assess the implementation and evaluate achievements of the “Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan.”

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act, signed into law in January 2007, 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 (MRFSS).” NMFS has organized a joint federal-state-community initiative to accommodate the requirements and timelines specified by MSA and to address

recommendations by the National Research Council in their 2006 report titled “Review of Recreational Fisheries Survey Methods.” This new initiative is called the Marine Recreational Information Program or MRIP (based on the original MRFSS). One of the stated objectives of MRIP is to improve and expand existing recreational data collection programs for large pelagic (i.e., highly migratory) species to meet management needs. Because highly migratory species are only sought on a relatively small proportion of the total marine recreational angler fishing trips made, the fishing effort directed at such species, and the resulting angler catches are generally not estimated very precisely or accurately by general (all species) recreational surveys. Therefore, the Large Pelagics Survey (LPS) was designed as a specialized survey that would focus specifically on the recreational fishery directed at large pelagic, also called highly migratory, species. This specialization has allowed higher levels of sampling needed to provide more precise and accurate estimates of pelagic fishing effort and catches of large pelagic species.

The LPS was designed to estimate the elements of the generalized catch equation. That is, the estimated total trips are multiplied by the estimated average catch per trip to determine total catch. Due to the migratory nature of large pelagic fishes, the LPS design considers geographic and seasonal variation in fish distribution and the differences in effort and catch characteristics of the fishing fleet. Given this variation and the data requirements for estimating the components of the generalized catch equation, the survey incorporates a multi-frame, stratified random sampling design. Specifically, the LPS consists of two complementary surveys: a directory frame telephone survey of tuna and/or HMS permit holders to obtain fishing effort information, and a dockside survey which collects catch information and also estimates the proportion of vessels fishing for large pelagics that are not on the telephone frame (non-permitted vessels and vessels fishing out of state). While catch information could be (and has been) taken over the phone, it is necessary to have the dockside survey to assess effort by non-permitted vessels, gather detailed information on catch (accurate species identification and length-weight measurements), and collect biological materials. In addition to the telephone and dockside surveys, collection of additional biological data and headboat data on large pelagics have been added as contract options in past years. This request includes all of the several data collection components for the LPS. Implementation of certain components will depend on fiscal year funding and NMFS priorities. The proposed annual reporting burden anticipates full funding for all components listed below.

Response to these survey components is mandatory under the authority of the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act. Implementing regulations at [50 CFR Part 635](#) require that operators of vessels issued permits for Atlantic highly migratory species (HMS), or who retain HMS, respond to surveys on fishing effort and catch.

**Current Surveys under this information collection that will be removed from OMB Control No. 0648-0380:**

**HMS Characterization Survey**

In a 2008 revision to OMB Control No. 0648-0380, an additional survey component was added to characterize the HMS recreational fisheries in the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean. Characterization in this context refers to a basic description of the fishery including overall effort, targeted effort, temporal and geographic distribution, tournament participation,

trip times, access site types and other relevant information. Characterization studies are an important initial step in the development and implementation of full-scale catch and effort data collection programs that can be used for fishery monitoring and management. Now that these fisheries have been characterized, there is no need to continue to include this component in the PRA. Therefore, this action seeks to remove the HMS Characterization Survey component of OMB Control No. 0648-0380.

### **NC Winter BFT Dockside Survey**

The primary purpose of the NC Winter BFT Dockside Survey was to collect catch data needed to generate weekly estimates of the recreational fishing effort directed at large pelagic species and the recreational catch of BFT and other large pelagics. The information obtained from each boat captain included total BFT landed, total BFT released, method of fishing, hook type, fishing location, lengths and weights. This survey will no longer be conducted since it has been replaced by a more general dockside survey for all species (Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey, OMB Control No. 0648-0052) and a bluefin tuna landings catch card census program (OMB Control No. 0648-0328).

### **Current Surveys under this information collection that will be revised under OMB Control No. 0648-0380:**

#### **Large Pelagics Telephone Survey**

The telephone survey collects data to determine, on a weekly basis, the average number of large pelagic fishing trips per active boat in the recreational large pelagics fishing fleet. The survey is conducted weekly by interviewing a random sample of charter boat captains and private boat owners (bi-weekly for private boats) who have obtained permits that allow them to fish for large pelagic fishes. Therefore, this survey is restricted to individuals who have professed to be likely participants in the fishery. The Large Pelagics Telephone Survey is typically conducted only from Maine through Virginia. However, if funds become available, NMFS may opt to conduct these surveys in the Southeast and Gulf states. Justification for expanding the LPTS to the Southeast and Gulf is included as part of this request even though this option may not be exercised in any given year.

Representatives of vessels selected for the telephone survey are mailed pre-notification letters informing them that they have been selected and indicating the dates for which they will be expected to report about when called. The pre-notification letter includes a log-sheet and fax number for vessel representatives who would rather fax us their data instead of being called by phone.

Response to the telephone survey is mandatory and is a condition of permit issuance. Certain identifying data elements are obtained from a fishing permit database and can be pre-coded by the telephone interviewer for each potential respondent prior to dialing. The screening introduction questions are asked in order to establish contact with the primary respondent and confirm that he/she is a captain or owner of a vessel that fishes for large pelagic fishes. If the primary respondent no longer owns or operates the permitted vessel, then questions are asked to determine the new owner/operator of the vessel. If the primary respondent is not likely to be available for an interview, then either an

appropriate proxy (or secondary respondent) is identified for an immediate interview or the call is terminated.

Once contact with the primary or secondary respondent is established, questions are asked to confirm respondent and permitted vessel identification, to ask for a preferred interview time, to identify, and obtain telephone numbers of, other operators of the vessel, and to determine whether the respondent can accurately respond to questions about all of the vessel's large pelagics fishery activity during the prior week. In addition, the respondent is required to identify whether the vessel is ever used as a charter or headboat or is strictly used for private recreational fishing. Classification of vessels is necessary because effort and catch rates are likely to differ among these boat categories and sampling and subsequent estimations of effort and catch are conducted independently for each boat category. Headboats are not included in the LPS estimates but have been sampled through a contract option in past years. Charterboats are included in the Large Pelagics Telephone Survey but the sample is drawn as part of the NMFS For-Hire Survey. Thus sampling of HMS charterboat captains is conducted as an add-on to the For-Hire Survey. Since the For-Hire survey is included in the MRFSS approval under 0648-0052, it was not necessary to justify the charterboat component of the Large Pelagics Telephone Survey again here. However, collection of data from charterboat captains on the dockside large pelagics survey (see below) is covered under this request.

Each qualified operator of a permitted vessel is required to provide information on the fishing trips directed at large pelagic species during the prior week (or two weeks) including trips outside of the state where the vessel is normally docked or within the home port state. Respondents must provide the total number of fishing trips, as well as the date, time of day and species target of each trip. In addition, for each in-state trip the respondent must provide the type of access site used, the name of the site, whether the trip was associated with a tournament, and the fishing gears used. This information is needed to help describe the type of fishing activity which occurred.

For each trip using rod and reel or handline, the respondent must provide the number of fishing lines used and the time spent with lines in the water. Data are collected to accurately describe the amount of fishing effort by gear type in hours. For each use of a particular gear type, the respondent must identify the types of bait and fishing methods used. Finally, for each trip the respondent must provide the number of people who actually fished for large pelagics, as well as the identity and location of the fishing grounds where they fished. The prior information is needed to allow estimation of effort in terms of individual angler trips, and the latter is needed to allow post-stratification of effort by fishing area. The 2010 revision to OMB Control No. 0648-0380 added five questions to the Puerto Rico LPTS related to marlin post-release mortality indicators.

To improve response rates, an electronic Internet reporting option was added to the Large Pelagics Telephone Survey (LPTS) in the 2010 revision. The Internet option was pilot tested initially in Puerto Rico but may be expanded to other areas in future survey years. As explained in the 2010 revision Supporting Statement, adding the Internet reporting option is not expected to have a noticeable impact on average response time.

Also, starting in 2011 a non-response follow-up pilot survey (second attempt to conduct the full survey, not a separate instrument) will be implemented to assess the impact of non-response bias

on catch and effort estimates. Recent response rates for the LPTS have been around 70-75%. Attempts will be made to re-contact all non-respondents using multiple methods including phone, mail, Internet, as necessary. The non-response follow-up study will be conducted only in the Northeast states from Maine through Virginia. The results of this pilot will be used to determine how to address non-response bias in future survey years.

While many telephone calls do not result in complete interviews (e.g., vessel owner not home) and many calls are of short duration (vessel not used for large pelagics trips in prior week), some lengthy calls (15-20 minutes) are required when collecting information from captains who took several trips in the preceding week. Given this mix of potential responses, the response burden for the average telephone interview was previously estimated at 8 minutes. The non-response follow-up survey will increase the average interview time by approximately 25% or 2 minutes. This assumes rates of LPTS non-response comparable to recent years and that virtually all non-respondents can be contacted. Therefore, the revised average LPTS response time per attempted contact is 10 minutes when the non-response follow-up survey is in place. The response burden for vessel representatives who chose to fax or use Internet to provide their information instead of participating by phone is also estimated to be 10 minutes on average.

### **Large Pelagics Biological Survey (LPBS)**

During the period covered by this submission, NMFS anticipates the need for biological data for large pelagic species. These efforts may not be implemented in any given year due to funding restrictions. Supplemental sampling may be conducted for the purpose of collecting supplemental length and weight information on certain key management species (e.g., bluefin tuna). In some years samplers also collect fish body parts including otoliths (inner ear organs), vertebrae, spines, and gonad samples that are used for age and growth, fecundity, and natal origin studies. Data collection for this survey will be unique not only in the amount of data obtained but also in the number of species encountered on an assignment.

Biosampling consists of intercepting captains/mates/owners at weighing or cleaning stations who have just finished fishing trips for large pelagic fishes and recording various lengths and weights by species. Additional information such as date, site and vessel name, vessel type, and if possible, gender of each fish will also be recorded during biological assignments. Most of the information collected during a biological sampling assignment is obtained directly from the fish rather than the angler/captain, thus the reporting burden for the respondents is extremely small. Other than requesting permission to sample the fish, the only questions asked of respondents are relative to fishing location, fishing gear, tournament participation and condition of the fish at time of capture. It is estimated that total response time (respondent burden) for a biological intercept is 1 minute.

Starting in 2011, the sample size for LPBS under this submission will be reduced from 2,670 to 1,500 interviews to better reflect the volume of biological samples needed and the anticipated budget available for this type of data collection.

**Current Surveys under this information collection with no requested changes to questions or burden OMB Control No. 0648-0380:**

**Large Pelagics Dockside Intercept Survey (LPIS)**

The dockside intercept survey collects data needed to determine the average weekly catches per charter and private boat trips of bluefin tuna (BFT) by market category and of other large pelagic fishes by species or species group. The survey is conducted continuously over the course of the fishing season by intercepting and interviewing charter boat captains and private boat owners who have just finished fishing for large pelagic fishes. Individuals interviewed would be selected at random during 2 to 8 hour field assignments distributed randomly across fishing access sites and days, where fishing sites would be weighted by expected numbers of active fishing vessels. Response is mandatory for persons holding fishing permits and for persons landing regulated species. The questionnaire is designed to obtain information on the fishing methods, locations and catches of all large pelagic species. The LPIS is typically conducted only from Maine through Virginia. However, if funds become available NMFS may opt to conduct these surveys in the Southeast and Gulf states. LPIS sample size includes interviewing in the Southeast and Gulf regions even though this option may not be exercised in any given year due to funding limitations.

The intercept survey interview begins by ascertaining whether a potential respondent is indeed the owner or operator of a vessel that has just finished fishing for large pelagic species. Data elements are determined by the date and site assigned to an interviewer prior to interviewing. The status of an attempted interview (refusal vs. cooperation) is recorded as a data element and information about refusals is made available to enforcement. Once an eligible owner or operator has been identified, he/she is required to provide the name, HMS permit number, (or either Coast Guard number or State registration number), of the vessel used on the fishing trip. The respondent must then identify the boat's classification for LPS sampling and the time of its return to port. In addition, the respondent is asked questions to determine the target species for the trip, whether the vessel participated in a fishing tournament, the gear types used, the effort associated with each gear type, and the baits and methods associated with each gear type. The respondent must also indicate the number of people who fished for large pelagic species during the trip and must identify the name and location of the fishing grounds, the distance from shore, the depth and the surface water temperature where fishing occurred.

The interview concludes with questions pertaining to identification, enumeration and measurement of the fishes caught. The respondent must indicate the numbers of each species caught that were kept, released alive, and released dead. The interviewer requests permission to measure available fish and proceeds to obtain length measurements on individual fish of each available species in the catch. The catch information is critical to determination of the average catches by species per boat trip from the intercept survey sample. Collection of the catch information by gear type allows for possible post-stratification of the catches by gear category. While many dockside intercepts are of short duration (no catch of large pelagics during trip), some longer interviews are required when collecting information from captains who caught and/or released many large pelagic fish during a successful trip. Given this mix of potential responses (2 minutes for no catch to 15 minutes for trips with catch available to measure), the response burden for the average dockside intercept is estimated at 5 minutes.

Evaluation of field interviewer performance will be accomplished by a telephone follow-up to validate 10 percent of intercepts. Validation calls only require the respondent to verify that the intercept took place at the time and site recorded by the field interviewer and that the interviewer was courteous, professional and followed certain procedures. Telephone validation follow-ups are estimated to take 1.5 minutes on average.

### **Large Pelagics Headboat Survey**

Headboats (also known as party boats) are vessels that take anglers fishing for a relatively modest fee paid on an individual basis and tend to be licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard to carry more than six passengers. This differs from the pre-arranged groups of six or fewer anglers that tend to make up charter boat clientele and who typically pay as a group for a full or half-day charter. Headboats normally take trips targeted at certain species (e.g., flounder, bluefish, and striped bass) during the appropriate fishing season and generally take short (6-10 hr) trips. There is a small component of the Atlantic headboat fleet that, among other more usual trips, seasonally schedules trips targeted at large pelagics (e.g., bluefin, yellowfin, and bigeye tunas). Some of these trips last overnight due to the distances to the offshore canyon fishing areas. These large pelagics trips are normally scheduled well in advance of sailing dates to allow time for marketing the trip and registering enough anglers to make the trip profitable. The Large Pelagics Headboat Survey (LPHS) is conducted for the purpose of collecting data needed to determine the total catch by headboats of bluefin tuna by size category and of other large pelagic fishes by species. While the need to account for this component of the fishery is identified, the LPHS may not be implemented in any given year due to funding restrictions.

It is necessary to survey this component of the fleet separately because, due to the number of anglers (10-40 per vessel), the focused fishing grounds (e.g., Hudson Canyon) and the short season for large pelagics (usually August/September), the effort and catch rates differ markedly from those of charter vessels (usually 6 anglers or less). Given the small size of the large pelagics headboat fleet (potential fleet of no more than 50 boats participating in season), it should be possible to census this component of the fishery each year.

Before the start of the headboat season (August/September), a list will be established of all headboats which might fish for large pelagic fishes each year based on the most recent LPS list of headboats, the most recent NMFS HMS Charter/Headboat permit list and any current year telephone sampling contacts. Based on review of dockside intercepts and telephone contacts, revisions to the list may be provided throughout the season.

NMFS will call each vessel owner before the start of the fishing season and request the planned schedule of large pelagics headboat trips. A contact person will be identified for each boat and the time(s) and phone number(s) at which to reach that person will be established for collection of information on trips scheduled and those actually taken. An anticipated schedule of trips and anticipated length of each fishing trip (single day, ½ day, multi-day) will be developed for each boat in a given month. Schedules may change due to weather, fishing regulations (changes in catch limits or fishery closures), or an insufficient number of anglers to warrant the high operating costs of the offshore trip.

According to the sailing schedules indicated by headboat operators, the appropriate person will be contacted to obtain the information for each completed trip and, if appropriate, any

information on changes in schedules for the month. Interviewing procedures for the party/head boat survey are similar to those used in the telephone survey on fishing effort.

The information obtained from each eligible captain/owner or crew member interviewed by telephone includes:

- The numbers and dates of large pelagic fishing trips taken during the previous week (including those that were observed during on-board assignments described below);
- The date, day, access site, inlet, fishing location, and target category for each trip; and
- The number of anglers on board and the number of lines in the water during each trip.

The time per response for telephone interviews of headboat captains is estimated at 8 minutes. In addition to the telephone contacts for a census of effort, up to two trips per vessel will be selected for placement of an on-board observer to collect information on catch. The average catch information will be combined with the fishing effort data for each vessel to estimate total catch and total landings.

Additional information collected during on-board headboat assignments includes fish lengths and fish sample information similar to that obtained during dockside intercepts and biological sampling assignments. However, this supplemental information is collected directly from examinations of the fish, thus there is no additional respondent burden.

**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 applicable Information Quality Guidelines.**

NMFS, regional fishery management councils, interstate marine fisheries commissions, and state fishery agencies use the data in developing, implementing and monitoring fishery management programs. Catch and effort statistics are fundamental for assessing the influence of fishing on any stock of fish. The quantities taken, the 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. Accurate and timely catch statistics collected over the range of a species must be used in association with biological studies to perform the stock assessments necessary for monitoring the effectiveness of fishery management planning for optimum yield. Several large pelagic species are now being managed under FMP quota or landings limit systems, which include recreational fishery components. For example, this collection has been the key source of data used to monitor recreational quotas for the harvest of BFT in the Mid-Atlantic and southern New England regions.

This collection, if funding allows full implementation, would provide coast-wide information on quantity, species composition, and size distribution of catch. Such information is not available from any other source. For example, catch distributions and harvested size distributions obtained in this data collection have formed the basis of the FMP developed for tunas, swordfish and sharks of the Atlantic Ocean.

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the information gathered has utility. NMFS 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. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a 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 of other forms of information technology.**

A computer-assisted telephone interview system is used to minimize interview time and ensure accurate recording of responses. LPS Dockside interview forms (both intercept and biological sampling) are scanned using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology for maximum efficiency and data accuracy. The Large Pelagic Telephone Survey utilizes Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology with built-in error and logic checks and skip patterns that both reduce the response burden and improve on data quality. In addition, a Web tool Internet reporting option was added for the Large Pelagic Telephone Survey in an effort to increase response rates.

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

NMFS has the lead Federal responsibility for collection of data from marine recreational fishermen and coordinates informational needs with other agencies. NMFS has also 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. A specialized data collection such as the LPS overlaps to a minor extent with NMFS' more comprehensive Marine Recreational Fishing Statistics Survey (MRFSS) and its related data collections. Such overlap is minimal because the MRFSS is designed to cover marine recreational fishing for all finfish species, including many sites on inland bays and estuaries. Because large pelagic species typically occur further offshore, requiring larger vessels and specialized gear, the participants tend to use specific ports located at points of ocean access. Contacts with anglers who fished for large pelagic species are relatively rare in the MRFSS samples and both the LPS and the MRFSS would contact very few respondents. However, anglers who fish for large pelagic species, but also fish for other 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.

NMFS also requires anglers to report their landings of Atlantic BFT directly via toll-free number, via the Internet, or via landings cards in the states of North Carolina and Maryland for real-time quota monitoring. Although these other data collections overlap to a minor extent with the LPS (i.e., only trips landing BFT are affected), none of them collects information on all the other finfish species caught on large pelagic fishing trips. The LPS is the only survey designed to obtain accurate and precise marine recreational fishery catch information for all large pelagic species. In addition, to the extent overlap occurs (i.e., a person directly reporting BFT also is selected for a dockside or telephone interview), the information is useful to assess compliance

with the direct reporting requirement. Therefore, data from these other programs have been used in a complementary manner along with LPS data.

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

Charter and headboat businesses are frequent respondents due to the high level of fishing effort relative to private recreational vessels. The survey instruments have been restricted in length to minimize response time per interview, and randomized sampling will distribute dockside reporting burdens among individual charter or headboat operators.

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

An annual survey of recreational anglers is required to monitor changing conditions in the fishery and support modifications in fishery regulations for each fishing year. A continuous time series of data is scientifically essential. Without continued data collections the U.S. would not be able to meet essential monitoring and reporting requirements to international treaties that we are party to and domestic management of highly migratory species would be compromised significantly. Failure to conduct these data collections would prevent the Secretary from meeting statutory requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. In addition, NMFS would be unable to implement Recommendation One of its Marine Recreational Fisheries (MRF) Policy with a resulting loss in service and credibility to the MRF constituency. Start up costs in hiring and training of interviewers and in overhauling the site selection frame for biannual surveys would greatly exceed the budgeted amount for the LPS and reduce funds available to collect sufficient interviews to meet statistical objectives.

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

Not Applicable.

**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 March 7, 2011 (76 FR 12340) solicited public comment on this collection. There were no comments.

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

Neither payments nor gifts will be provided to respondents.

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

As stated in the PRA statement, 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 questions of a sensitive nature are requested in this collection of information.

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

The total annual burden for the LPS is estimated at 2,451 hours, for an estimated 21,987 responses by 12,434 unduplicated respondents. Calculations for specific components are as follows:

(a) Large Pelagics Telephone Survey (with Internet option)

Based on the HMS permit list size (i.e., sample frame) and previous year's sampling effort, the estimated target interview sample size for future years is 6,930 for the Northeast and 3,850 for the Southeast. Due to the random selection process some will be contacted more than once and some not at all. Estimates of the number of respondents contacted given this sample size of interviews were determined from 2005 results. Because calls are made on a bi-weekly basis to collect information about a two-week period of fishing activity, it is important that a representative sample be obtained. This requires that prior respondents be eligible for resampling in future weeks. Sampling without replacement of prior contacts would likely result in a biased sample in later weeks.

The Northeast survey, which includes a non-response follow-up pilot survey of non-respondents, is estimated to take 10 minutes per interview on average. When multiplied by the target sample size (6,930) the result is an estimated 1,155 hours. The Southeast survey, which does not include a non-response follow-up survey, is estimated to take 8 minutes per interview on average. When multiplied by the target sample size (3,850), the annual telephone survey burden would be 513 hours. **Combining the Northeast and Southeast yields an estimated 1,668 hours for 10,780 interviews.**

(b) Large Pelagics Intercept Survey

At full funding, a total of 7,870 dockside interviews will be targeted annually at LPS sites. This includes interviewing in the Northeast, Southeast and Gulf states. On certain days and at certain sites, several intercepts will be obtained during a 2-8 hour assignment. On other days (e.g., bad

weather days late in the season), few or no intercepts will be obtained. The response burden would average 5 minutes per intercept or a total of 656 total hours. In addition, field interviewer performance would be evaluated by validating 10 percent of dockside intercepts via a follow-up telephone call. The 787 calls (1.5 minutes each) would add 20 hours to the annual burden estimate. **Total burden for the dockside survey would be 676 hours annually for 8,657 responses.**

(c) Large Pelagics Biological Survey

Supplemental biological sampling interviews are estimated at 1 minute per intercept because few questions are asked of anglers and length/weight data are obtained directly from the fish. At a sampling level of 1,500 interviews per year (including biological sampling in the Northeast, Southeast and Gulf), **the total annual burden for the supplemental biological sampling is estimated at 25 hours for 1,500 responses.**

(d) Large Pelagics Headboat Survey

All LPS headboat captains will be contacted by phone at the start of each month during the season to establish their schedule for trips targeting large pelagics. An estimated 30 headboat captains in the Northeast and 60 captains in the Southeast and Gulf will be contacted. The Northeast captains will be contacted 5 times each (i.e., once a month from June through October), for a total of 150 calls. Captains in the Southeast and Gulf will be contacted 12 times each (i.e., once a month from January through December), for a total of 720 calls. A total of 870 phone interviews will be conducted with headboat captains. At an estimated 4 minutes per interview, the total burden for headboat telephone interviews is 58 hours.

From the established headboat schedules of large pelagic fishing trips, trips for at-sea sampling will be randomly selected within each state/month strata. The target sample size for at-sea headboat sampling is 180 trips (60 in the Northeast, 120 in the Southeast and Gulf). Captain interviews for this ride-on sampling are estimated at 8 minutes each trip. For 180 trip interviews, the annual burden for ride-on interviews is estimated at 24 hours.

**The total burden (telephone and ride-on interviews) for the headboat survey is estimated at 82 hours per year (58 + 24) for 1,050 responses (870 + 180).**

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents of record keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden 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.**

At a fully funded level, the average annual cost to the Federal government is approximately \$2,205,256, divided as follows: \$1,955,256 in contract award money and \$250,000 in professional staff, overhead and computing costs.

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

Program changes:

1. Elimination of the Highly Migratory Species Characterization Survey results in a reduction of 5,566 unduplicated respondents, 10,000 responses and 2,500 hours.
2. Elimination of the North Carolina Winter BFT Dockside Survey results in a reduction of 1,300 responses and 130 hours.
3. Reduction of the estimated sample size for the Large Pelagics Biological Survey by 1,170 results in a reduction of 19 hours.
4. Addition of a non-response follow-up survey to the Large Pelagics Telephone Survey (Northeast states only) results in an increase of 206 hours, to the combined total for Northeast and Southeast state, to approximate the 100% response previously estimated, so there is no change to the estimated number of responses.

Total net decreases due to program changes: 12,470 responses and 2,443 hours.

Adjustment: Corrections to calculations of responses and response times for the headboat survey resulted in a decrease of 150 responses but no change to burden hours for this survey.

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

All data collected and analyzed will be included in annual catch reports to ICCAT and several documents frequently produced in support of NMFS rulemakings (e.g., Environmental Assessments, Regulatory Impact Reviews, Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Reports). It is also planned that catch summaries will be reprinted in a format available on the web page of the Division of Fisheries Statistics, Office of Science and Technology, National Marine Fisheries Service (<http://www.st.nmfs.gov/stl>). Additional summaries of data may be included in the annual NMFS publication "Fisheries of the United States".

**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.**

NA.

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

NA.