

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

A. JUSTIFICATION

This request is for a revision of this information collection.

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

Collection of recreational fisheries catch and effort 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 concluded that existing recreational fishing surveys suffer from inefficiency, potential bias due to under-coverage, and potential bias due to nonresponse (NRC, 2006). NMFS has addressed these concerns by implementing the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) and developing and testing alternative survey designs. Over the past several years, NMFS has tested several alternatives to traditional random digit dial (RDD) telephone survey designs for identifying anglers from the general population and collecting information about recent recreational fishing activity. In addition, NMFS has assessed the sampling and estimation designs for the Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) and identified several improvements that will increase the efficiency and coverage of the survey and ensure that sampling more closely adheres to the principles of probability theory.

This revision is requested to implement survey design improvements that have been developed by MRIP, as well as to eliminate several collections that were either created for short-term testing of alternative designs or will now be covered in other information collections under this OMB Control No. or by state collections. Details about each collection are given in Question 15.

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 on an ongoing basis 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 fish stock. 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.

This revision includes two data collections, the MRIP Fishing Effort Survey (MFES), a mail survey that collects information about fishing effort, and the Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey, which collects information about the numbers and types of fish caught. We plan to evaluate two versions of the MFES questionnaire. The first version (V1) will be clearly identified as a recreational saltwater fishing survey. The second version (V2) will include 3 household-level questions about activities other than recreational saltwater fishing, such as visiting coastal areas and how the household accesses information about the weather. The intent of this evaluation is to maximize responses by both anglers and non-anglers and subsequently minimize the potential for nonresponse error. The questionnaires will be compared in terms of response rates and nonresponse error.

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

MRIP Fishing Effort Survey:

- a) A screener question about recreational fishing activity during the previous 12 months is asked to identify eligible fishing households,
- b) Total number of adults in the household,
- c) Type of household telephone service is used to assess undercoverage of historical RDD telephone surveys,
- d) The type of household unit (rented or owned) is used for nonresponse weighting adjustment and/post-stratification,
- e) An identifier (first name or initials) for each resident in the household is used to distinguish among household respondents,
- f) Demographic information of household residents, including gender, age and ethnicity is used for nonresponse weighting adjustment and/or post-stratification of estimates,
- g) 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,
- h) 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.
- i) Questions about weather and visitation to coastal areas are included to engage non-anglers and potentially reduce nonresponse bias (Version 2).

Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey

- a) Sampling is stratified by fishing mode (i.e. type of fishing activity). This information is collected during the interview to confirm that the intercepted trip is eligible for sampling within the designated primary sampling unit,
- b) A question is asked to identify fishing activity that was part of a fishing tournament because fishing behavior may be very different between tournament and non-tournament fishing trips,
- c) Questions about ocean fishing and distance from shore are asked to determine the general location of fishing activity. The locations correspond to fisheries management jurisdictions,
- d) Fishing behavior and success can be highly variable for different type of fishing gear. The type of fishing gear is collected as a quality control measure and may be used for post-stratification,
- e) The amount of time spent fishing is collected as an alternative measure of fishing pressure and/or effort. This information is often used by data users to calculate catch per effort (catch per hour),
- f) The anticipated amount of additional time to be spent fishing is asked so adjustments can be made to account for sampling incomplete shore fishing trips,
- g) Target species is collected to estimate directed fishing activity,
- h) Several questions are asked to assess the coverage and sampling efficiency of offsite surveys of fishing effort. These include residency information, type of residence (private or group quarters, and mail delivery type),
- i) Information about catch, both available and unavailable for inspection is collected to produce estimates of catch per trip by species.

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, survey results will be used in scientific, management, technical and 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 mail and face-to-face interviews. Survey responses for offsite surveys will be automatically captured through optical character recognition (OCR). Survey response for onsite surveys will be captured either through OCR or computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). This will greatly increase the accuracy and efficiency of data collection.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

NMFS collaborates with state natural resource agencies and regional interstate fisheries commissions on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts to ensure that recreational fisheries data collections are not duplicative. Every five years, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) of the U.S. Department of the Interior conducts the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (OMB Control No. 1018-0088). This survey collects minimal information about annual recreational saltwater fishing activity within the context of additional recreation activities. That survey does not provide the spatial or temporal resolution needed by managers of fishery resources to monitor and manage recreational fisheries landings.

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.

If the survey were conducted less frequently, NMFS and state natural resource agencies would experience difficulty in effectively carrying out their responsibilities to meet statutory, administrative, and other obligations to end overfishing of marine fishery resources. An ongoing survey of recreational anglers is required to monitor changing conditions in the fishery and support modifications in fishery regulations both within fishing seasons and among fishing years. In addition, a continuous time series of data is scientifically essential to assess the impact of recreational fishing on fish stocks.

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 March 9, 2012 (77 FR 14348) 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.

This data collection will include an experiment in the use of small, advance cash incentives to improve unit response to the recreational fishing effort survey. Sampled addresses will be

randomly allocated to incentive treatment groups of \$0, \$1, \$2, and \$5 to test the impact of incentives on response rates and nonresponse error. Incentives will be included only in initial survey mailings. Previous studies have demonstrated gains in cooperation with modest cash incentives (Brick, 2006).

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 burden for MRIP will be 464,868 unduplicated respondents, 590,978 responses and 63,687 hours, a net decrease of 308,537 unduplicated respondents, a net decrease of 362,579 responses, and a net increase of 10,193 hours (total current respondents, responses and hours:783,405, 963,557 and 53,494).

The Fishing Effort Survey will be completed by approximately 223,992 respondents (223,992*10 minutes/60 minutes = 37,332 hours). The Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey will be completed by approximately 111,000 respondents (111,000*4.5 minutes/60 minutes = 8,325).

Total burden attributable to this revision will be approximately 45,657 hours, determined as follows:

Activity	# Respondents	# Responses	Minutes / activity	Total Hours
MRIP Fishing Effort Survey	223,992	223,992	10.0	37,332
Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey	111,000	111,000	4.5	8,325
Total	334,992	334,992		45,657

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 \$3,700,000: \$2,500,000 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 decrease of 308,537 unduplicated respondents, net decrease of 372,579 responses and net increase of 10,193 hours is the result of the following program changes:

- 1) Implementing the Recreational Fishing Mail Survey resulted in an increase of 223,992 respondents and responses and 37,332 hours.
- 2) Implementing a revised Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey resulted in an increase of 111,000 respondents and responses and 8,325 hours

(These two changes total 334,992 new respondents and responses and 45,657 new hours).

Decreases (eliminated information collections) for 3) through 8) below total 189,040 respondents, 241,840 responses and 18,039 hours.

- 3) The previously approved Intercept Interviews will be replaced by the revised Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey. ***Eliminating the previously approved Intercept Interviews resulted in a decrease of 153,000 respondents, 168,300 responses and 11,858 hours.***
- 4) Longitudinal Sampling was tested as an alternative for collecting recreational fishing effort data. This testing has been completed and is no longer required. ***Eliminating Longitudinal Sampling resulted in a decrease of 37,500 responses and 4,375 hours (respondents were same respondents as for Coastal Household Telephone Survey, see below).***
- 5) NMFS conducted Directory Frame Telephone Surveys of licensed marine recreational anglers in WA, OR and CA. These surveys are now being conducted by state natural resource agencies in these states. ***Eliminating Directory Frame Telephone Surveys of licensed marine recreational anglers resulted in a decrease of 16,000 respondents and responses and 800 hours.***
- 6) The New Screener/Recruiter Questionnaire was used to recruit a panel of anglers from which to collect recreational fishing data. Recruitment for the panel has been completed. ***Eliminating the New Screener/Recruiter Questionnaire (Angler Diary Recruitment Screening Questionnaire) resulted in a decrease of 5,040 respondents and responses and 672 hours.***

- 7) Biological data are collected during the course of the Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey. We do not plan to collect biological data through an independent data collection. ***Eliminating Biological Data Collection resulted in a decrease of 10,000 respondents and responses and 167 hours.***
- 8) The vessel directory information is now collected under OMB Control No. 0648-0578, National Saltwater Angler Registry and State Exemption Program. ***Eliminating Vessel Directory Maintenance resulted in a decrease of 5,000 respondents and responses, and 167 hours.***

Total for adjusted collections, 9) through 15): 99,376 respondents, 99,761 responses and 4,110 hours.

- 9) *Adjusting sampling levels¹ for the Coastal Household Telephone Survey resulted in a decrease of 405,687 respondents, 421,062 responses and 10,730 hours, leaving 76,667 respondents, 76,667 responses and 1,917 hours.*
- 10) *Adjusting the sampling levels of the North Carolina Angler Directory Survey resulted in a decrease of 2,500 respondents and responses and 181 hours, leaving 1,250 respondents, 1,250 responses and 91 hours.*
- 11) *Adjusting the sampling levels of the Gulf of Mexico Subregion Survey resulted in a decrease of 5,797 respondents, 5,797 responses and 359 hours, leaving 2,899 respondents, 2,899 responses and 180 hours.*
- 12) *Adjusting the sampling levels of the New Angler Diary (Saltwater Angler Diary) resulted in a decrease of 1,225 respondents, 14,700 responses and 2,450 hours, leaving 35 respondents, 420 responses and 70 hours.*
- 13) *Adjusting the sampling levels of the ABS Household Screener resulted in a decrease of 26,267 respondents and responses and 2,245 hours, leaving 13,133 respondents, 13,133 responses and 1,122 hours.*
- 14) *Adjusting the sampling levels of the Angler Questionnaires for ABS and Licensed Angler List sample resulted in a decrease of 10,651 respondents and responses and 1,449 hours, leaving 5,325 respondents, 5,325 responses and 724 hours.*
- 15) *Adjusting the sampling levels of the Sea Turtle Questionnaire resulted in a decrease of 133 respondents and responses and 11 hours, leaving 67 respondents, 67 responses and 6 hours.*

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

- 1) For-hire Telephone Survey: 8,500 respondents, 44,200 responses and 5,157 hours.
- 2) Economic Surveys of For-hire Businesses: (no add'l respondents), 1,125 responses and 2,108 hours.
- 3) Economic Telephone Surveys: 22,000 respondents, 60,500 responses and 5,255 hours.
- 4) Follow-up Economic Mail Survey: (no add'l respondents), 50,400 responses and 1,400 hours.

¹ Data collections with adjusted sampling levels (8-14) will be phased out or completed after 2013. Subsequently, sampling levels for these data collections have been adjusted by annualizing previously approved sample sizes and burden hours for a single year of data collection over a three-year approval period.

Totals for these unchanged information collections: 30,500 respondents, 156,225 responses and 13,920 hours.

Adding totals for 9-15 and 1-4 above: 129,876 respondents, 255,986 responses and 18,030 hours.

Adding these totals to the numbers for the two new collections (334,992 new respondents and responses and 45,657 new hours) yields a new total of 464,868 unduplicated respondents, 590,978 responses and 63,687 hours.

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 site 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.