

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
INTERNATIONAL BILLFISH ANGLER SURVEY  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0020**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

This request is for an extension of this information collection.

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

This Angler Survey began in 1969 and is an integral part of the Billfish Research Program (Billfish Program) at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC). The Angler Survey tracks recreational angler fishing catch and effort for Istiophorid billfish in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The Angler Survey serves as an outreach tool by generating collaboration between Government and the public. Results are presented in an outreach Newsletter. Additionally, the data can be used by scientists and fishery managers to assist with assessing the status of billfish stocks. This survey is intended for anglers cooperating in the Billfish Program and is entirely voluntary. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) collects fishing catch and effort information for most domestic and foreign fisheries, as part of Fishery Management Plans whose development is authorized by the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (MSA), 16 USC 1851 et seq. Study of migratory gamefish that spend at least part of their life in United States (U.S.) waters is also authorized under [16 USC 760e](#).

**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 NOAA Information Quality Guidelines.**

This survey is conducted annually to track catch per unit of effort (CPUE) trends in the recreational fishery for Istiophorid billfish. The Angler Survey respondent card asks for the number of fishing days the angler expended, number and kind of billfish caught and the location fished in the preceding year. Data are available to stock assessment biologists to investigate the health and stock condition of billfish resources throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Specifically, these data are used to track changing trends in recreational fishing effort in key areas throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Data is presented in the Billfish Newsletter. The Billfish Newsletter is an annual publication providing a summary of the Angler Survey and other Program results to the billfish angling community and is the primary outreach instrument to Program participants. Current and past issues of the Billfish Newsletter are available on the SWFSC's Billfish Program webpage (<http://swfsc.noaa.gov/frd-billfish.aspx>).

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. NMFS will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (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 or other forms of information technology.**

Collection of Angler Survey data does not utilize electronic or automated technology at this time. Surveys (paper forms) are sent to participants in December of each year and can also be accessed on the SWFSC's Billfish Program Web page: <http://swfsc.noaa.gov/frd-billfish.aspx>. Additionally, recipients requesting electronic copies are e-mailed surveys. Responses are entered into a data base as received. We are in the process of developing a web-based submission page and will ideally have that in place by December 2013.

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

The SWFSC's Angler Survey is the only study tracking billfish angling CPUE by domestic and international anglers in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The Angler Survey is unique to the billfish angling community and is not duplicated elsewhere.

NMFS collects fishing effort data for most commercial and recreational fisheries. The Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS) conducts telephone and dock survey data to track general recreational fishing effort within the U.S. The MRFSS does not identify fishing effort for the large, migratory billfish (Istiophorid) throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans. There are no known foreign agencies duplicating this effort. The SWFSC staff attends billfish related research conferences where knowledge about similar, repetitive surveys would be available, if there were any.

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

The survey deals with individual anglers cooperating in the Angler Survey and does not impact any business entity.

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

Data collected by the Angler Survey is reported by the public and are disseminate to the public through outreach tools. In additions, the time-series data can be used to track the status of billfish stocks, biomass and trends in CPUE. A break or disruption in the Angler Survey time line would jeopardize the SWFSC's ability to examine long-term trends. Moreover, this time-series data can be used to provide accurate management advice and recommendations to domestic fishery managers and to the State Department dealing with international fishery treaties.

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

This survey is consistent with all 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 11, 2012 (77 FR 27715) solicited public comments. No comments were received.

The Billfish Newsletter is the primary tool currently used to present the results of the Survey. The Newsletter includes the authors contact information. Several emails have been received in response to previous Newsletters. The majority of responses are positive comments. Anglers are pleased to see their contributions to the Survey are recorded and presented to the general public. Occasionally, an email will include questions for clarification of the results. However, we have not received any negative comments regarding the goals of the Survey and how we are using the data to inform and involve our constituents.

In addition, conversations with anglers concerning the Survey are initiated at outreach events including the Day at the Docks and the Fred Hall Show. The Billfish Newsletter is handed out along with other outreach information. Comments regarding the Newsletter have all been positive. For example, people are interested to see where people are reporting catch and how it changes over the years. An example of this includes “How interesting to see species A has not been reported caught in location B in the last two years”. Additionally, constituents enjoy seeing their name in the Newsletter as contributors to the Billfish Tagging Program. Comments include “We are pleased to see so many tags released out of location C, we visit location D and would be happy to bring some tags to increase the tagging effort in that area”. The Newsletter creates a bridge between the scientists and the anglers and allows for further collaboration and discussion.

Overall, the public has indicated that they are satisfied with the methods we are using to collect the data and disseminate the results in the Newsletter.

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

No rewards or offerings of any kind are available or offered to the respondents.

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

Angler Survey data and results are not 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.**

This Angler Survey is entirely a recreational fishing query to examine angler catch and effort. There are no "sensitive" questions.

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

The burden to complete the Angler Survey respondent card is about 5 minutes per response. Our active mailing list varies from 2,000 to 2,800 participants. The number of respondents varies year to year, but in recent years we have received close to 1000 responses annually. Total annual burden is estimated at roughly 83 hours ( $1000 \times 5/60 = 83$ ). Also see Part B, Question 1.

**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).**

Postage is paid by the SWFSC if the survey responses are mailed from within the U.S. For those respondents mailing from foreign countries, there is only the cost of foreign postage, and that is estimated at U.S. \$2.00 or less based on 2012 postage rates from the 3 foreign countries with the most survey respondents. Based on roughly 42 respondents per year (21% of 220); (10% of respondent universe (2,200) is the foreign respondent universe (220), of which 21% normally reply), the estimated total yearly postage would be \$92.

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

Annual cost to conduct the survey is approximately \$4,000. This includes printing, postage, and return postage when mailed in the U.S. This figure is based on actual expenses averaged over the last two years. This includes the in-house cost of staff (1 GS-9 and 1 GS-12) to order the printing, print the mailing labels, and mail the post cards, and enter respondent data into the data base.

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

There are no program changes or adjustments.

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

The Angler Survey is conducted once per calendar year, with completion scheduled by May of the following year. The Billfish Newsletter is the outreach method by which the SWFSC provides feedback to the recreational fishing community and is written for cooperating anglers participating in the Angler Survey and for the volunteers who conduct tag and release fishing for billfish. Content varies annually but always includes angling effort by area and species captured, reported catches, results from billfish tagging and general interest articles directed to the billfish angler. This peer-reviewed newsletter is approved for release by the SWFSC's Director. More

robust analyses will be conducted in support of fishery management and are reported in in-house reports, peer-reviewed scientific publications, and in Fishery Management Plans.

**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.