

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES RECREATIONAL LANDINGS AND
BLUEFIN TUNA CATCH REPORTS
OMB CONTROL NUMBER 0648-0328

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management Division manages 42 species of sharks in Federal waters. Sharks play an important biological role as predators in the ocean ecosystem, and the HMS Management Division is currently scoping mechanisms by which to expand shark landings reports. Presently, all shark landings by the commercial sector are required to be reported to NMFS, some biological shark sampling is conducted by NMFS scientists at shark fishing tournaments, and fisheries-independent shark data are collected by NMFS scientists at sea. At this time, anglers are not required to report recreational landings of sharks to NMFS unless they are asked to participate in one of two recreational surveys: the Large Pelagics Survey (OMB Control Number 0648-0380) or a survey under the Marine Recreational Information Program. Given the large number of species and the fact that many sharks look similar to other shark species, NMFS often receives requests for more education and outreach about recreational angling for sharks. NMFS has responded by developing a shark identification placard, which is distributed at shark tournaments and other recreational fishing venues, such as marinas and state catch card reporting stations.

Because surveys cannot sample the entire population of anglers across the whole management area throughout the entire fishing year for all landed sharks, the existing recreational collections do not always include all the information needed for shark stock assessments or other fishery management needs. Nor do these surveys educate the angler about the shark species the angler caught. Catch cards are an effective means of collecting recreational shark landings data and educating the public at the state level, and can be modified slightly to target the species specific to that state. Maryland and North Carolina are currently the only states with mandatory recreational catch card reporting programs for highly migratory fish species. In January of 2013, the state of Maryland added a catch card for sharks to their catch card reporting program (revision of this information collection, 04/29/2013), and implemented a state-wide requirement for anglers to complete a shark catch card upon landing of a shark at the dock. The Maryland shark catch card includes a list of shark species to report and a list of shark species that are prohibited, which further educates the public about shark regulations. The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries has recently added sharks to their existing recreational catch card (example attached). Like Maryland, the card lists the species to report and species that are prohibited, and further includes an image that informs anglers of how to identify the shark's gender.

A final summary for 2013 shark landings from the state of Maryland's catch card program indicated that 69 shark catch cards were completed by anglers throughout the year. Rounding up to about 70 respondents as an estimate for the number of shark landings that would be reported through the North Carolina catch card program (available information indicates that Maryland is a reasonable proxy for North Carolina for shark landings), and a burden of (less than) 10 minutes per catch card completion, an estimated 12 burden hours would have been added to the previously-approved collection burden and responses. However, the number of responses for the

new Maryland shark catch cards was overestimated by approximately 200 in the 2013 revision. Adding 70 more responses to the actual 70 for the Maryland card still results in 130 fewer responses than originally expected, even including the North Carolina cards. Given these adjustments (actual Maryland shark catch card responses and estimated North Carolina responses), the current approved collection's number of responses should decrease by 130 and number of burden hours should decrease by 22.

Because there will be a resubmission of this collection's revision per Final Rule 0648-BC09, finalizing the burden change associated with that rule, we will add this adjustment described above at that time.