

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
GULF OF ALASKA ECOSYSTEM INDICATOR SURVEY  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-XXXX**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

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

The Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) is requesting approval for a new collection of information on ecosystem indicators for the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). The goal of this project is to select a short (8-10) list of ecosystem indicators for the GOA that will form the basis of a GOA Report Card and Ecosystem Assessment to include in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) AFSC's Ecosystem Considerations report (<http://access.afsc.noaa.gov/reem/ecoweb/Index.php>). This report is produced annually as part of the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation report for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, established under the authority of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (16 U.S.C 1801 et seq). The format of the new GOA Report Card and Ecosystem Assessment will be similar to those that have been produced in recent years for the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands.

During a workshop in 2010, a group of largely NOAA scientists and some fisheries managers with expertise in the eastern Bering Sea ecosystem selected 10 indicators to best represent trends in productivity in the eastern Bering Sea. In response to a request to increase diversity in the indicator-selection team, a more diverse group including a commercial fisherman and conservation non-governmental organization representative met in a similar workshop format in 2011 to select 8 ecosystem indicators for the Aleutian Islands that best characterized trends in variability throughout the ecosystem. For the GOA, we hope to increase the group size and diversity in GOA expertise of the participants in the indicator selection process by soliciting information individually via an online survey, thus participation will not require travel or funding. The main objective of the survey is to have participants rank the importance of ecosystem indicators among lists of indicators that are presented; the surveys will then be compiled to generate a list of top indicators.

**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.**

The survey will be disseminated to scientists, fishers, and managers with expertise in the Gulf of Alaska. The respondents' individual indicator rankings will be compiled and summarized by AFSC scientists. The information will be used to inform the final ecosystem indicators used to create the new Gulf of Alaska Report Card and Ecosystem Assessment. The primary recipients, considered to be the stakeholders, of the Report Card and Ecosystem Assessment are those involved with the fishery quota-setting process for the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. This includes the Science and Statistical Committee and the regional Plan Teams, which of are composed of mainly federal and state scientists, academics, and other individuals. Additional recipients will include the Advisory Panel, Council, and stock assessment scientists.

The Report Card and Ecosystem Assessment are also made available to the public. We hope that by surveying a greater number of individuals than were involved with indicator selection for the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, the survey results will reflect broader expertise and an 'equal voice' from all participants.

It is anticipated that the information collected will be used to support publicly disseminated information. NOAA AFSC Resource Ecology and Ecosystem Modeling Program 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. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subject to 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.**

Google Forms will be used to create, disseminate, and collect the surveys from participants. Survey Monkey provides a free service for basic surveys. Survey Monkey provides some statistical and summary application of the survey data, but the raw data are also available to be downloaded and analyzed.

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

This is a new survey, so it will not duplicate other efforts. To the best of our knowledge, no other agencies are conducting or have conducted a similar survey.

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

We estimate that approximately half the respondents, or 50, will be classified as small businesses. The survey can be completed at any time that is convenient for the participant and should require no more than 30 minutes.

**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 is not conducted, the Gulf of Alaska Report Card and Assessment will not reflect the formal input of members of the public with Gulf of Alaska ecosystem expertise. The expertise of some non-federal government individuals is extensive, for example through commercial fishing, conservation work, or state government research. The reviewing body from the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council has requested that the input in the indicator selection process represent a broader array of expertise and experience.

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

None.

**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 June 2, 2014 (79 FR 31296) solicited public comments. No substantive comments were received.

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

None.

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

The survey will not be confidential. This will be made clear on the online survey form. The respondents will be asked to submit a description of their Gulf of Alaska ecosystem expertise to aid in our summary statistics.

**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.**

Not Applicable

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

An estimated 70 respondents and responses, with an individual response time of 30 minutes, will result in a total burden of 35 hours.

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).**

There will be no recordkeeping/reporting burden, as the survey will be administered online.

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

We estimate that creating and distributing the survey and summarizing results will take approximately 3 weeks of a ZP-3 research biologist's time at an estimated cost of \$4,819.20 (120 hours \* \$40.16/hr).

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

This is a new information collection.

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

The survey results will be used to select ecosystem indicators to be incorporated into a Gulf of Alaska Report Card and Ecosystem Assessment. The Report Card and Assessment will be published within a government report called the Ecosystem Considerations report. This report is produced annually as part of the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation report for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Later publication may occur in the peer-reviewed literature, in which the process and results of this survey are compared with that from the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands.

**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.