

**NON-SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REQUEST
SOUTHWEST REGION VESSEL IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0361**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is proposing regulations under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to revise vessel marking requirements for commercial fishing vessels that fish for highly migratory species (HMS) off, or land HMS in, the States of California, Oregon, and Washington. The intent of the proposed action is to bring the existing vessel identification requirements at 50 CFR 660.704 [general HMS fisheries regulations under a fishery management plan] and 300.173 [regulations governing fishing under the United States (U.S.) - Canada Albacore Treaty] into conformity with the binding vessel identification requirements adopted by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and implemented by NMFS at 50 CFR 300.217 for U.S. fishing vessels fishing in the WCPFC Convention Area (75 FR 3335 and 3416, January 21, 2010). This action is largely supported by the U.S. fishing industry. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) was briefed on this issue at their September 2008 meeting; in a letter dated November 20, 2008, the Council formally recommended that NMFS revise regulations accordingly.

Specifically, current regulations would be amended so each vessel that fishes on the high seas in the WCPFC Convention Area must display its International Telecommunication Union Radio Call Sign (IRCS) or, if an IRCS has not been assigned, the vessel's official number, preceded by the characters "USA—," in order to comply with the international requirements at 50 CFR 300.14 and 300.217. The new requirements would also include detailed technical specifications such as minimum size requirements for the vessel identification markings. U.S. pelagic vessels that fish only within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone or on the high seas outside of the WCPFC Convention Area (e.g., in the eastern Pacific Ocean) would have the option to display either the international high seas markings, or maintain markings pursuant to existing requirements at 50 CFR 660.704 and 300.173. This is the same approach taken by NMFS to amend the domestic regulations at 50 CFR 665.16 for U.S. vessels based in the western and central Pacific Ocean.

It is estimated that at a maximum 125 vessel owners would be required *or* would choose to change their vessel markings (estimate based on the current number of active U.S. west coast-based vessels targeting HMS on the high seas that have the potential to fish in the WCPFC Convention Area). However, it is highly likely that a much smaller number of vessel owners will actually change their markings because in the past seven years fewer than 30 U.S. west coast-based vessels have fished in the WCPFC Convention Area. Despite this, some vessels may opt to change their markings to conform to international standards and be prepared to fish in the WCPFC Convention Area should fishing conditions and practices change in the future.

Only this subset of an estimated 125 vessels (out of a total of 1,330 respondents) is likely to change their vessel markings, so there will not be a change in the estimated number of respondents. There would be a change in the burden hours and cost estimates because it is estimated that the estimates of total time and the cost burden would be increased because the vessel identification markings required for a WCPFC Area Endorsement are larger (in height and width) than those previously required and would take longer to repaint. Previously, the burden

was estimated to be 45 minutes per vessel; with these new requirements the burden is estimated to be 1 hour, 30 minutes per vessel for 125 of the respondents. It is likely that the majority, if not all, of the 125 vessels would be troll and pole-and-line vessels and participants in the U.S. - Canada Albacore Treaty.

Additional burden: $125 \times 45 \text{ minutes} = 94 \text{ hours}$; new total burden for this information collection: 1,099 (previously 1,005).

Additional cost: $125 \times \$9 = \$1,125$; new total cost is \$13,095 (previously 11,970).