

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION VESSEL AND
GEAR IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0360**

A. JUSTIFICATION

This request is for revision and extension of a current information collection. Requirements for vessels in new permit programs have been added.

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

The success of fisheries management programs depends significantly on regulatory compliance. The vessel identification requirement is essential to facilitate enforcement. The ability to link fishing or other activity to the vessel owner or operator is crucial to enforcement of the regulations issued under the authority of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (MSA) to govern domestic and foreign fishing in the Pacific Islands region and under authority of laws implementing international treaties. Similarly, the regulations require that certain fishing gear in federally regulated Pacific Islands pelagic longline fisheries and Pacific Islands coral reef ecosystem fisheries be marked with the vessel's official number. The marking of gear is crucial to enforcement and valuable in actions concerning damage, loss, and civil proceedings.

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.

Vessel Identification

In the domestic Pacific Islands Region fisheries, regulated under [50 CFR Part 665](#), the vessel's official number or international radio call sign (IRCS) is required to be displayed on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and on an appropriate weather deck. The number identifies each vessel and should be visible at distances at sea and in the air. The requirements affect Pacific Islands pelagic longline vessels, pelagic troll and handline vessels, pelagic squid jig vessels, crustacean (lobster and deepwater shrimp) fishing vessels, bottomfish fishing vessels, precious coral fishing vessels, coral reef ecosystem fishing vessels, and non-commercial fishing vessels fishing in the Rose Atoll, Marianas Trench, and Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monuments. Hawaii and Northern Mariana Islands bottomfish vessels in compliance with state/territory registration and marking requirements are exempt. Regulations in 50 CFR Part 665.16 specify the requirements for the vessel identification.

Domestic fishing vessels used to fish for highly migratory species on the high seas in the Western and Central Pacific Convention (WCPFC) Area with a WCPFC Area Endorsement, or

required to have an Area Endorsement, must be marked with their IRCS number on both sides of the hull or superstructure and on a weather deck. Most of the Pacific Islands pelagic longline and south Pacific tuna purse seine vessels would be subject to this requirement as well as other domestic vessels fishing on the high seas, per 50 CFR Part 300, Subpart O. The identification numbers must meet size and color requirements specified in regulations in 50 CFR Part 300.

In the South Pacific tuna purse seine fishery regulated under 50 CFR Part 300 Subpart D, the IRCS number must be painted on both sides of the hull or superstructure and on the deck as specified in 50 CFR Part 300. The IRCS number also must be painted on the side of any auxiliary equipment such as skiffs and helicopters.

The identification number provides law enforcement personnel with a means to monitor fishing, at-sea processing, and other related activities, to ascertain whether the vessel's observed activities are in accordance with those authorized for that vessel. The identifying number is used by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and other marine agencies in issuing citations, prosecutions, and other enforcement actions. Vessels that qualify for particular fisheries are readily identified, and this allows for more cost-effective enforcement. Cooperating fishermen also use the number to report suspicious activities that they observe. Regulation-compliant fishermen ultimately benefit as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred and more burdensome regulations are avoided.

Gear Identification

Under 50 CFR Part 665.804, the operator of each federally permitted pelagic longline vessel must ensure that the official number of the vessel is affixed to every longline buoy and float, including each buoy and float that is attached to a radar reflector, radio antenna, or flag marker, whether attached to a deployed buoy or possessed on board the vessel. Vessels fishing in coral reef ecosystem fisheries under 50 CFR Parts 665.128, 665.228, 665.246, 665.428, and 665.628, must mark traps and floats on board the vessel or deployed with the vessel's official number.

The regulations further specify how the gear is to be marked, (*e.g.*, the location and legibility of the marking). Gear that is not properly marked is considered unclaimed or abandoned property that may be confiscated. The identifying number on fishing gear is used by NMFS, the USCG and other enforcement agencies in issuing gear violations, prosecutions, and determining that longlines/traps are not illegally placed. Marked gear allows NMFS and the USCG to more readily enforce gear violations, thus allowing for more cost-effective enforcement. Cooperating fishermen also use the marking to report placement of occurrence of gear in unauthorized areas. Regulation-compliant fishermen ultimately benefit as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred and more burdensome regulations are avoided.

Although the information collected (vessel and gear identification numbers) is not confidential, it will not be disseminated to the public. There is no reason for doing so. The information is strictly for enforcement purpose or use by NMFS internally in situations involving damage, loss, and civil proceedings.

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 requirement that each vessel display an identification number on its deckhouse or hull, and its weather deck, does not lend itself to collection of information technology. Transponders and vessel monitoring system units are comparatively expensive and their signals cannot be accessed directly by the USCG in the air or by its vessels at this time. Similarly, gear identification does not lend itself to collection of information technology. No other technology appears to be less costly and still capable of providing the necessary information to support enforcement.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

There is no duplication with other collections.

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

Most of the vessels are categorized as small businesses. The collection of information will not have a significant impact on these small businesses, and no special modifications of the requirements were considered necessary to accommodate the needs of these small businesses.

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

The NMFS and USCG could not enforce the fisheries management measures if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

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

No special circumstances require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the OMB guidelines.

8. Provide a copy of 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 notice soliciting comments was published in the Federal Register on May 27, 2014 (79 FR 30086). No comments were received.

In addition, comments were solicited from seven members of the public, including affected fishermen. Three comments were received.

A Hawaii Department of Aquatic Resources employee commented: One positive aspect of this vessel ID marking requirement is the inclusion of identifying the vessel's fishing gears for enforcement purposes. Is this a one-time registration or a periodic renewal procedure? No other comments.

Response: The requirement is to maintain the markings, to address fading or numbers change. Also replacement gear would have to be marked.

A Hawaii longline fishing vessel owner commented: The vessel marking requirement is a waste of time for vessel owners and operators. I preferred the previous requirement to display the USCG vessel documentation number on the vessel and hull.

Response: The comment regarding this preference for the vessel number marking was noted.

A Hawaii longline fishing vessel owner commented: Hawaii longline vessel owners have become accustomed to the marking requirement and have complied. But the burden is grossly underestimated; it would take 8-10 hours to mark all gear and paint the call signs on the vessel. But if the current method works well in gathering the necessary information, no changes need to be made.

Response: The current estimate in this document of gear and vessel marking is consistent with the commenter's estimate. We estimate that it would take about 10.75 hours to mark the gear and the vessel on an average Hawaii longline vessel.

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

No payments or gifts are provided.

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

There is no assurance of confidentiality provided. This is public information.

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.

There are no sensitive questions.

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

The estimated total number of vessels requiring marking is 344 (228 western Pacific pelagic longline vessels, 10 Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIA) pelagic troll & handline vessels, 2 Pacific Islands pelagic squid jig vessels, 15 western Pacific bottomfishing vessels, 5 western Pacific lobster vessels, 5 western Pacific deepwater shrimp vessel, 2 western Pacific precious coral fishing vessels, 2 western Pacific coral reef ecosystem fishing vessels, 40 South Pacific tuna purse seine fishing vessels, and 35 Marine National Monument non-commercial fishing vessels). For all but the purse seine vessels, the burden is estimated at 45 minutes each (15 minutes for each of three locations on the vessel). For the purse seine vessels, the burden is estimated at 1 hour and 15 minutes (15 minutes for each of three locations on the vessel plus 15 minutes each for one skiff and one helicopter). **304 vessels x 45 minutes/60 minutes + 40 vessels x 75 minutes/60 minutes = 228 + 50 hours = 278 hours.**

Also, longline and western Pacific coral reef fishing gear are required to be marked: Hawaii longline vessels have 120 gear markings on average, American Samoa vessels have 80 on average, Western Pacific general longline have 100, and western Pacific coral reef vessels have 5. Each gear marking is estimated to take 5 minutes.

The total estimated burden per the table below is: **344 respondents**, 344 vessels plus 24,890 pieces of gear = **25,234 responses**; **total hours: 278 plus 2,074 = 2,352.**

Permit	Vessel ID			Gear ID				TOTALS
	Vessels	Unit Time (min)	Total ID Hours	Avg Gear	Total Gear	Unit time (min)	Gear Hours	
Hawaii Longline	164	45	123	120	19680	5	1640.00	
Am. Samoa Longline	60	45	45	80	4800	5	400.00	
WP General Longline	4	45	3	100	400	5	33.33 (33)	
PRIA Troll & Handline	10	45	7.5	NA				
PI Pelagic Squid Jig	2	45	1.5	NA				
WP Lobster	5	45	3.75	NA				
WP Deepwater Shrimp	5	45	3.75	NA				
WP Bottomfish	15	45	11.25	NA				
WP Precious Coral	2	45	1.5	NA				
WP Coral Reef Ecosystem	2	45	1.5	5	10	5	0.83 (1)	
SPTT Purse Seiners	40	75	50	NA				
Rose Atoll MNM Non-comm	10	45	7.5	NA				
Marianas Trench MNM Non-comm	10	45	7.5	NA				
PRIA MNM Non-comm	15	45	11.25	NA				
RESPONSES	344				24890			25234
HOURS			278				2074	2352

The WCPFC Area Endorsement vessel identification requirement is covered by compliance with western Pacific and SPTT purse seine fishing vessel identification requirements.

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 Questions 12 above).

The only cost to respondents is the cost of the paint to apply the vessel's official number or call sign and gear markings. It is assumed the vessel has paint brushes. The estimated cost per vessel for both vessel and gear marking would be \$175. The estimated cost for vessel marking only would be \$100.

Vessel and gear marking:	230 vessels x \$175 = \$40,250
Vessel marking only:	114 vessels x \$100 = \$11,400
	Total = \$51,650

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

There is no cost to the Federal government.

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

Program Changes: New permit programs (Rose Atoll MNM, Marianas Trench MNM, and PRIA MNM non-commercial permits) were added, resulting in an estimated 30 additional vessels and 27 additional burden hours. Costs for vessel marking for these vessels is \$3,000.

Adjustments: Adjustments were made to number of vessels and burden hours in previously established fisheries, resulting in 15 additional vessels and 11 additional burden hours. In addition, estimates for gear marking burden were changed, resulting in increased burden of 1,204.

Estimated annualized costs were adjusted for higher costs of supplies, adding \$2,750.

Correction: Previous vessel costs were shown as a little over \$1 per vessel. Corrected costs account for an increase of \$1,650.

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

No results are published.

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 identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-I.

There are no exceptions.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection of information does not employ statistical methods.