

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
MRIP FISHING EFFORT SURVEY (FES)
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0652

The MRIP Fishing Effort Survey (FES) is a household mail survey that collects information about recreational saltwater fishing activity. Specifically, the survey estimates annual fishing participation (number of individuals who participate in recreational saltwater fishing), as well as fishing effort (number of angler trips) for two-month reference waves. We propose minor modifications to the survey instrument to, 1) increase response to the survey by non-anglers; 2) differentiate between saltwater and freshwater fishing; 3) provide more specific instructions to define the scope of the survey; and 4) minimize reporting for time periods that are not included in analysis. These changes will not result in a change in estimated respondent burden or cost.

Specific changes are as follows:

- 1) Question 3: “In your area, how often do the advanced warnings you get for severe weather events allow you enough time to prepare properly: All of the time, some of the time, rarely, never?” This question was added to encourage response to the survey by non-anglers, which will minimize the potential for nonresponse bias. Given the geographic scope of the survey (coastal states), we believe this question will engage a broad audience, including both anglers and non-anglers.
- 2) Question 5 and Question 6: “During the past 12 months, has anyone in this household been freshwater fishing in <merge state>?” and “During the past 12 months, has anyone in this household been saltwater fishing in <merge state>?” These questions are asked to differentiate between saltwater and freshwater fishing. Questions 15 and 16 ask specifically about saltwater fishing activity, so we want to highlight different types of fishing activity before those questions are asked. Distinguishing between freshwater fishing and saltwater fishing will minimize the reporting of out-of-scope trips (e.g., freshwater fishing trips) in Questions 15 and 16.
- 3) Question 9: “How long have you lived at this address: 1 year or less, less than 5 years but more than 1 year, 5 years or more?” This question provides an additional non-fishing question to engage non-anglers, and survey responses can be used to adjust survey weights, for example, by post-stratifying response distributions to population control totals. This will ensure that survey data represent the target population.
- 4) Question 15 and Question 16: We provided additional instructions and definitions to highlight the scope of the questions, which will minimize reporting of out-of-scope fishing activity, such as freshwater fishing and fishing in other states. We also limited the reference periods to the two discreet periods for which we produce estimates, the two-month reference wave (e.g., January and February 2015) and the last 12 months, and we provided an “opt-out” check box for non-anglers. These changes will simplify the respondent task and minimize reporting error.