

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
OBSERVER PROGRAMS' INFORMATION THAT CAN BE GATHERED ONLY
THROUGH QUESTIONS
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0593

This request is for the addition of a pink shrimp bycatch reduction device data collection *observer form* to the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP).

The pink shrimp fishery off the west coast of the United States (U.S.) contributes to a significant amount of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Eulachon and other groundfish bycatch. Many advancements in Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) in this fishery have reduced overall groundfish bycatch. Recent testing of LED light BRDs in the fishery in 2014 have now shown great promise in Eulachon bycatch reduction. Preliminary data suggests that LED light BRDs are very effective in reducing Eulachon bycatch while minimally affecting pink shrimp catch. Due to this success, many pink shrimp fishermen are utilizing these LED BRDs and the observer program has received requests and support from industry to collect more data on these BRDs. The observer program is in a unique position to help validate the effectiveness of these BRDs as we have observers on these vessels collecting species composition data. It would be quite valuable to industry and managers to be able to quantify the effectiveness of these BRDs to reduce bycatch in the fishery, which operates in WA, OR and CA. Staff has worked closely with key personnel involved with this BRD research, at the ODFW Marine Resources Department and at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) NWFSC Marine Habitat Ecology program, to identify the key pieces of information necessary to adequately characterize and evaluate the effectiveness of this new bycatch reduction device. As these useful data pieces are new and not believed to be covered under existing WCGOP PRA clearances, this request is being submitted to begin collecting this data starting April 1, 2015.

This new data form, specifically for the Pink shrimp fishery, contains data fields which can be mostly addressed by the observer. Some fields (such as color of lights if they are not on) may need to be clarified by vessel crew if the observer is unable to address them alone. *Questions to be asked of the crew would be in conjunction with other gear-related questions currently being asked, and are not expected to add burden to the overall observed trip estimate.*

This data would build on existing bycatch reduction device research and development. It would also enable collaborative research between NMFS divisions and state agencies to further develop ESA-listed Eulachon smelt bycatch reduction devices for the Pink shrimp fishery.

The usage of LED lighting to reduce Eulachon smelt bycatch has received overwhelming support in the fleet and has been adopted by most vessels. If collected, this data may also aid the fleet with their Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certifications and increase the value and sustainability of the west coast pink shrimp fishery