

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
WEST COAST REGION GEAR IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS  
OMB CONTROL NO: 0648-0352**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

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

This submission requests revision and extension of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval for gear-marking requirements in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery. Due to a change of region name, this information collection is now titled: West Coast Region Gear Identification Requirements rather than Northwest Region Gear Identification Requirements.

Gear identification requirements are necessary to help ensure the success of fisheries management programs by facilitating fisheries law enforcement efforts. Gear marking is also valuable in actions concerning gear damage, loss, and civil proceedings. The ability to link fishing gear to the vessel owner or operator is crucial to enforcement of regulations issued under the authority of the [Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#). Fixed-gear marking requirements are set forth in the regulations implementing the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fisheries Management Plan at 50 CFR [660.219](#) and [660.319](#). Gear-marking requirements specify that each type of fixed-gear must be marked with the owner's identifying number.

**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 regulations specify that fishing gear must be marked with the vessel's official number, federal permit or tag number, or some other specified form of identification. Law enforcement personnel rely on this information to assure compliance with fisheries management regulations. Gear that is not properly identified is considered a violation of Federal regulations and is confiscated. The identifying marks on fishing gear is used by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), United States Coast Guard (USCG), and other marine agencies in issuing violations, prosecutions, and other enforcement actions. Gear marking also helps ensure that a vessel harvests fish only from its own traps/pots/other gear and that traps/pots/other gears are not illegally placed. Properly marked fishing gear facilitates prosecution of gear violations, and enhances cost-effective enforcement. Cooperating fishers also use the gear markings to report placement or occurrence of gear in unauthorized areas. Regulation-compliant fishermen ultimately benefit, as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred and more burdensome regulations are avoided.

The information collected will not be disseminated to the public; as it consists solely of identification on gear, it is not submitted to NMFS.

**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 fixed gear be marked with an identifying number does not lend itself to technology.

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

Existing Federal and State requirements have been reviewed to ensure that there is no duplication of requirements.

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

Although nearly all vessels in the respective fisheries are categorized as small businesses, the collection of information will not have a significant economic impact or burden on small businesses in terms of time and resources. Therefore, no special modifications of the requirements were considered necessary.

**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 would not be able to enforce the fishery management measures if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently. The numbers must periodically be maintained to remain legible.

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

This collection is consistent 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 Federal Register Notice published on December 17, 2014 (79 FR 75130) solicited public comment. No comments were received.

NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division (SFD) staff contacted fishing participants and representatives from various groundfish fishery sectors during the fall of 2014 to determine the duration of annual burden estimates for gear requirements. Fishing participants from various gear types were contacted to provide input to NMFS staff, which helped to refine the estimates provided in this request. Captains and vessel owners contacted included participants in the

Dungeness crab fishery, a sablefish limited entry longline vessel captain, a bottom and non-whiting midwater trawl vessel owner/captain, and an at-sea whiting catcher-processor. All representatives stated that vessel and gear requirements markings last an average of five years.

Consultation outside the agency is assured by the Pacific Coast Groundfish regulatory process, set forth in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and implementing regulations (Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan and 50 CFR 660, Subpart G).

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

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents.

**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, as 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 is no information of a sensitive nature in this collection.

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

The estimated potential total number of vessels affected is 1,125. Under closer investigation of vessels participating in fisheries, which require active gear markings, and further investigating vessels that have a reported landing utilizing a PacFin data source, the estimated total number of probable vessels affected is 685. The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) maintains the PacFin database. This database is populated by fish ticket landing receipts and includes data fields for gear information and other data fields (e.g., species landings, revenue, etc.). California, Oregon, and Washington state biologists reconcile their state fish ticket information and submit to the PacFin database. There are three types of groundfish vessels, which use the types of gear (longline, trap or pot, set net and stationary hook-and-line gear, including commercial vertical hook-and-line gear) that must be marked. Some vessels had a unique number of markings required because of variation in the gear, while some vessels participating in other gear types may not require active gear markings. Estimating the total number of marks in the fleet as 11,484 and 15 minutes per marking, the burden is estimated to be 2,871 hours (please refer to Table 1 for details). SFD staff recently consulted with various groundfish vessel captains participating in various groundfish pot, longline, midwater trawl, bottom trawl fisheries, and determined that gear markings have a five-year life span. **Therefore, the estimated annualized responses are 2,297 and burden is 574.**

Labor costs in the fishing industry are estimated at \$18.79 per hour, utilizing labor estimates provided via Washington State Employment Security Department reports ([fortress.wa.gov](http://fortress.wa.gov)) for occupation title "Painters, Construction, and Maintenance." Eighteen dollars and seventy nine cents per hour multiplied by 2,871 burden hours equals approximately \$53,887 (vertical hook

and line gear require slightly fewer buoys (and therefore slightly fewer markings, making this an approximate figure), annualized to \$10,774.

**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).**

The materials needed are paint and a paintbrush, or permanent ink applicator, and possibly a stencil. With most traps or pots, marking is done by means of a commercially available plastic tag that is fastened to the trap/pot by thin strands of wire and this tag number identifies the owner of the trap/pot. The total number of marks in the fleet is estimated at 11,484 (please refer to Table 1 for details), and the average cost per marking is approximately \$0.25. Therefore, the total five-year cost burden is \$2,871, **annualized to \$574 per year.**

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

There would be no Federal cost associated with this collection because marking verification would be included as part of enforcement actions and no information is received to process.

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

**Adjustments:**

Open access fishery values were updated to reflect most recent participation levels. SFD staff consulted with various groundfish vessel captains participating in various groundfish pot, longline, midwater trawl, bottom trawl fisheries, and determined that gear markings have a five-year life span. Previous estimates assumed gear markings to be required annually.

Therefore, burden and cost estimates for this requirement are reduced from previous estimates due to revised recent participation estimates and new understanding of the life span of gear markings.

**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.**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

## B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.

**Table 1. 2014 Estimates for Fixed-Gear Marking Burden in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery.**

Note: Figures in this table are not annualized.

2014 Gear marking burden estimates	OPEN ACCESS				Limited Entry			Total Fleet	Highest potential amount of total fleet respondents
	Longline	Vertical Hook & Line	Pot **	Set Net	Longline	Pot	IFQ gear switching		
Number of Vessels	294	44	111	14	177	25	20	685	1,125
Number of Strings *	10	5	5	3	10	5	10		
Number of Buoys per String	2	1	2	2	2	2	2		
Number of Markings per Vessel	20	5	10	6	20	10	20		
Total Number of Markings per Fleet	5,880	220	1,110	84	3,540	250	400	11,484	
Total Burden Hours @ 0.25 hrs per Marking	1,470	55	277.5	21	885	62.5	100	2,871	
Total Material Costs @ \$0.25 per Marking	\$1,470	\$55	\$278	\$21	\$885	\$63	\$100	\$2,871	
* Best estimates.									
** Assumes a string of pots is set by smaller open access vessels, though pots may also be individually set.									
<b>Additional background notes for estimate calculations:</b> (1) Assumes all are small businesses; (2) As some vessels may participate in both limited entry and open access, the burden may be slightly overestimated; (3) OA values utilize 2013 values, LE values utilize 2014 permit information; (4) Assumes gear markings need to be conducted once every five years.									