

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF FLORIDA REEF DIVING AND SNORKELING
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-XXXX**

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

Understanding the economic impacts of reef diving and snorkeling has been a top priority for the coral reef managers of the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program and local business interests in South Florida for a number of years. Local and state partners have been requesting an update or repeat of the 2001 NOAA Coral Reef Survey (OMB# 0648-0410) to improve the understanding of divers' and snorkelers' expenditure patterns and to estimate the economic impact of coral reef related spending by divers and snorkelers. In addition this project supports purpose, goals, and objectives of the [Coral Reef Conservation Act](#) (2000). Results of the survey will be used to inform coastal resource management planning and establish a baseline for outreach and education. The expenditure survey is also expected to provide useful information for local economic and business interests.

The survey will collect coral reef related expenditure information directly from the coral reef user community with a specific focus on scuba divers and snorkelers. Economic impacts will be calculated utilizing the expenditure data collected through the surveys. Economic impact models developed by NMFS economists (and compatible with IMPLAN software) will be used to estimate the impacts of diving and snorkeling on coral reefs on the Florida economy.

2. 1 Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. 1 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 information and economic impacts generated from the survey data will be useful for Federal, state, and local management entities interested in the economic impacts of the use of Florida's reefs. These entities may use the information to examine the consequences of projects, policies, or regulations that may affect reefs – favorably or adversely. The economic estimates generated from the survey will be published and also available to anyone requesting the information. The survey will collect information only on expenditures associated with the respondent's last reef dive or snorkel trip and effort over the past 12 months, and very limited demographic information.

In addition, we will prepare a paper for peer-reviewed publication that describes the outcomes of this survey. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

Q1: screening question to determine if the respondent is eligible to complete the survey - i.e. have they taken a dive or snorkel trip to a Florida reef during the last 12 months.

Q2 – Q3A: establish estimates of diving and snorkeling effort.

Q4 – Q5: determine the percentage of dive and snorkel trips that are taken to artificial reefs and to naturally occurring reefs in Florida.

Q6 – Q10: Questions that will determine which version of the survey the respondent will see. All respondents will receive the expenditure question for durable goods, D1 & D2. However, if respondents took a shore trip that did not involve nights away from home they will only see expenditure questions from E1 and E2.

**Note that E1, E3, E5, E7, E9, and E11 are also used as screener questions so that respondents will only be asked about their expenditures on items they stated they purchased. This reduces the respondent's need to write "0"s for many questions on expenditures and we believe it will help reduce their burden and improve the accuracy of the data they do report.

Q11 – Q12: allow economic impacts to be calculated for county's listed

Q13 – Q15A: very minimal demographic questions including age, gender, and county of residence if a Florida resident.

Q16: track the source of outreach

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 data will be collected via a voluntary survey that respondents will take online. The survey will be programmed to include prompts and skip patterns that are not viable using a mail survey. Further, the opportunistic sampling method that this survey must employ necessitates the use of an online survey. (See Part B for description of the methodology).

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

As mentioned, this is a follow up activity from a previous study conducted 15 years ago. Working with collaborators in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and three county governments, we ascertained that the information this survey will collect does not exist in an updated form, and there was no identification of ongoing efforts to produce the information. A literature review found one study that estimated expenditures and economic impacts from scuba diving certification courses performed in Florida, but this is only a small subset of expenditures associated with diving (and not snorkeling) and, arguably, is not limited to reefs, as diving certification can be used to dive in all marine and fresh water sites in Florida, in other states, and internationally.

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

Not Applicable.

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

As stated above, information produced from previous collections have been deemed important for conservation budgeting and planning in the state of Florida and have benefitted commercial entities dependent on coral reef resources. Continuing to use the data from 15 years ago can result in biased and/or inaccurate economic impact estimates and may impact budget allocations, environmental mitigation and research support for coral reef management.

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

The most cost-efficient method (and likely the only method) to implement a large-scale expenditure survey targeting SCUBA divers and snorkelers of coral reefs in South Florida is through a non-random, opportunistic sampling method. A sampling frame for this population does not exist, and constructing a frame would be prohibitively expensive, if even possible. Therefore the survey will be programmed online and hosted on a specific website, and the link to the survey will be broadly distributed via a number of entities associated with the diving and snorkeling industry in Florida. The survey will be 2 pages long and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.

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 record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice ‘*Economic Impacts of Diving and Snorkeling Expenditures in Southern Florida*’ was published on Friday January 22, 2016 (81 FR 3782), soliciting public comment. No comments were received

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

No payments or gifts are made.

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

As stated on the survey instrument, all data collected is anonymous and will not be released for public use except in aggregate statistical form. Further, the survey is electronic and is distributed through opportunistic sampling methods, which do not require the respondent to fill out their name or any other identifying 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 questions of a sensitive nature.

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

The proposed collection will require approximately 333 burden hours (2,000 estimated respondents at 10 minutes per response).

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 Question 12 above).

There are no start-up, capital, or maintenance costs associated with this collection. No new or specialized equipment is needed to respond to this collection. There is no recordkeeping/reporting cost, as the survey will be conducted online.

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

The duration of this survey will be for approximately 6 months; thus, the annualized cost is the one-time cost of the survey. The total estimated Cost to Government is \$13,500. Of that amount \$10,000 will be used to program and host the survey and maintain survey responses, \$2,500 will be used to print and mail postcards containing the survey website to registered Florida boaters, and \$1,000 will be used to print and mail postcards for six southern Florida dive shops to distribute to clients. All analysis and reporting will be done as part of the regular duties of NMFS and NOAA economists.

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

This is a new submission.

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

All results will be entered in a database using standard quality assurance/quality control procedures in survey research. Economists from NOAA Fisheries will analyze the data using standard software (e.g. SAS and IMPLAN) and standard statistical procedures that are appropriate for survey data. Results from this collection may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications, and would follow prescribed statistical tabulations and summary table formats. Data will be available to the general public on request in summary form only.

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.

Not Applicable.