

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION AND
REPORTING OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0323

This request seeks to make a minor change to the previously-approved information collection covering the collection of fisheries data from Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) tournament operators (OMB Control No. 0648-0323). Tournament operators must register their Atlantic HMS tournament with NMFS no less than four weeks in advance of a tournament. If selected for reporting, tournament operators must also report the fishing effort and landings in the tournament to NMFS within 7 days of the conclusion of the tournament (50 CFR 635.5(d)).

Atlantic HMS tournament registration and reporting is important for the management of swordfish, billfishes, tunas, and sharks, because it characterizes a portion of the recreational fishing effort on these species, including location and targeted species, and provides catch and landings data that are used for stock assessments and quota monitoring. Currently, tournament operators are required to register tournaments and to report tournament results on a NMFS form for data standardization purposes. Electronically-fillable (PDF) tournament registration and reporting forms are available for public printing from the HMS tournaments web site at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/compliance/tournaments/index.htm>. The forms are also available via e-mail, mail, or fax upon request. The completed registration forms may be e-mailed, faxed, or mailed back to NMFS.

Collaboration between the HMS Management Division and Southeast Fisheries Science Center has created a new online method for tournament registration and reporting. The Atlantic Tournament Registration and Reporting (ATR) system would allow electronic registration and reporting and emailed confirmation that NMFS has reviewed the registration application or reporting information and determined it is complete. Online registration would provide another, easy option for tournament registration and reporting along with the existing options of mailing, e-mailing, and faxing.

Data fields entered online would be the same as in the existing paper tournament registration and reporting forms. Atlantic HMS tournament operators who return to the ATR system would have appropriate, previously existing information (such as user information and tournament data) for their tournament auto-filled in the online form to make registration and reporting easier and quicker. Some other data fields would have drop-down menus available.

The reporting burden would not change.