

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
WEST COAST REGION HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES
VESSEL IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0361**

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

This request is for extension of this information collection *West Coast Region Highly Migratory Species Vessel Identification Requirements*.

The success of fisheries management programs depends significantly on tracking catch and effort of participants as well as their history of regulatory compliance. The vessel identification requirement is essential to facilitate these objectives. The ability to link fishing or other activity to the vessel owner or operator is crucial to enforcement of the regulations issued under the authority of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) to govern domestic and foreign fishing, and under authority of laws implementing international treaties.

In accordance with section 50 CFR Part 660.704, official vessel numbers must be of a specific size and format and located at specified locations. The official number must be affixed to each vessel in block Arabic numerals at least 10 inches (25.40 centimeters) in height for vessels more than 25 feet (7.62 meters) but equal to or less than 65 feet (19.81 meters) in length; and 18 inches (45.72 centimeters) in height for vessels longer than 65 feet (19.81 meters) in length. Markings must be legible and of a color that contrasts with the background. The display of the identifying number aids in fishery law enforcement.

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.

In the domestic West Coast Region fisheries regulated under [50 CFR Part 660](#), the vessel's official number, United State Coast Guard (USCG) documentation or state registration number, is required to be displayed on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and on an appropriate weather deck. The number identifies each vessel and should be visible at distances at sea and in the air. The requirements affect United States (U.S.) vessels participating in the West Coast Highly Migratory Species (HMS) fisheries and West Coast coastal pelagic fishing vessels, with the exception of HMS Charter Recreational Vessels for which an exemption was granted and became effective September 5, 2007^a. Charter vessels are no longer bound by the vessel marking requirements under consideration.

^a Copy of the final rule for this exemption can be found at 72FR43563

The identification number provides law enforcement personnel with a means to monitor fishing, at-sea processing, and other related activities, in order to ascertain whether the vessel's observed activities are in accordance with those authorized for that vessel. The identifying number is used by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the USCG, and other marine agencies in issuing citations, prosecutions, and other enforcement actions. Vessels that qualify for specific fisheries are easily identified, and this allows for more cost-effective enforcement. Cooperating fishermen also use this number to report suspicious activities that they observe. Regulation-compliant fishermen ultimately benefit as unauthorized and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is deterred and more burdensome regulations are avoided.

Although the information collected (vessel identification number) is not confidential, it will not be disseminated to the public. The information is strictly for enforcement purpose or used internally by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries in situations involving damage, loss, and civil proceedings.

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 each vessel display an identification number on its deckhouse or hull, and its weather deck, does not lend itself to collection via forms of information technology. Transponders and vessel monitoring system units are comparatively expensive and their signals cannot be accessed directly by the USCG in the air or by its vessels at this time. No other technology appears to be less costly and still capable of providing the necessary information to support enforcement.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

There is no duplication with other collections. The USCG requires that the name of the vessel be marked on its hull, and this requirement fulfills the USCG requirement.

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

All of the vessels are categorized as small businesses. The collection of information will not have a significant impact on these small businesses, and no special modifications of the requirements were considered necessary to accommodate the needs of these small businesses.

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

NMFS and the USCG could not enforce the fisheries management measures if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

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

No special circumstances require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the OMB guidelines.

8. Provide information on 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 (FRN) published on July 12, 2017 (82 FR 32174) solicited public comment.

NMFS asked for comments from Pacific Highly Migratory Species Permit holders. 21 public comments were received in regards to this request: 17 were “no comment” and 4 were comments regarding the requirement to have vessel markings visible to enforcement (all had been asked the same list of questions from the FRN).

Comments were made stating that the requirements were acceptable and had a low impact on commercial fishing operations and provide valuable information related to vessel transport. Another comment was made that the vessel numbers were too big which made them difficult to apply with vinyl, but that they do not take longer to apply than the estimated time burden. No adjustments were made to burden calculations based on these comments.

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

No payments or gifts are provided.

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 provided. 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 are no sensitive questions.

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

The estimated total number of vessels affected is approximately 1700, which includes purse seine, troll/baitboat, hook-and-line, drift gillnet, and harpoon fishing vessels. For all but the purse seine vessels, the burden is estimated at 45 minutes each (15 minutes for each of three locations on the vessel). For the purse seine vessels, the burden is estimated at 1 hour and fifteen minutes (15 minutes for each of three locations on the vessel plus 15 minutes each for one skiff and one helicopter). The total estimated burden for painting every two years is:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} 1,675 \text{ vessels} \times 45 \text{ minutes} & = & 1,256.25 \text{ hours} \\ 25 \text{ vessels} \times 1 \text{ hour, } 15 \text{ minutes} & = & \underline{31.25 \text{ hours}} \\ & & 1,287.5 \text{ (1,288) hours} \end{array}$$

Annualized Total = 643.75 hours (644).

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).

The only cost to respondents is the cost of the paint or vinyl lettering to apply the vessel's official number or to re-apply the official number if part of routine maintenance. If paint is used, it is assumed the vessel is equipped with paint brushes. Vinyl lettering varies per manufacturing companies. It is estimated that each official number is \$16.

$$\begin{array}{l} 1,675 \text{ Vessels} \times \$16 \text{ (2)} = \$53,600 \\ 25 \text{ Vessels} \times \$16 \text{ (3)} = \$1,200 \end{array}$$

The estimated annual cost would be \$27,400 (\$54,800 / 2 years).

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

There is no cost to the Federal government.

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

Adjustments: The 2014 collection accounted for the cost of markings on only one side of the vessel. This collection is accounting for the cost of two sides and an additional cost for the third marking of purse seine vessels. In addition, the average cost for vessel markings

increased from \$9 to \$16. The new average applies to prices in vinyl lettering and paint. Cost estimates were re-calculated to reflect the addition of vessel markings.

There are 19 more purse seine vessels affected by this requirement than there were in 2014. Accounting for the increase in purse seine vessels and accounting for all required vessel markings, there is an increase in estimated annual costs from \$7,650 to \$27,400.

In addition, the burden from additional purse seine vessels increased the total from 639 hours to 644 hours.

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 identified.

There are no exceptions.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection of information does not employ statistical methods.