

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
NOAA FISHERIES GREATER ATLANTIC REGION VESSEL IDENTIFICATION  
REQUIREMENTS  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0350**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

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

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requests the approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of an extension of the existing collection of information under OMB Control Number 0648-0350 for Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Requirements. *The information collection title is being changed to NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Requirements.*

Regulations at [50 CFR parts 648.8](#) and [697.8](#) require that vessels over 25 ft in registered length with Federal permits to fish in the Greater Atlantic region display the vessel's name and official number. The success of fisheries management programs depends upon regulatory compliance. The vessel identification requirement, which is required of all Federally permitted fishing vessels in the Greater Atlantic region, is essential to facilitate enforcement. The ability to link fishing or other activities to a vessel owner or operator is crucial to the enforcement of regulations issued under the authority of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act](#) (Magnuson-Stevens Act). When this information is clearly displayed, it enables enforcement personnel to easily identify Federal permit holders while engaged in fishing.

**2. 1Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. 1If 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.**

No information is submitted directly to NMFS, or to the public, as a result of this collection. Vessel identification information must be affixed to the vessel in the designated locations, as specified in the regulations, so as to be visible from enforcement vessels and aircraft. This identification allows law enforcement personnel, including U.S. Coast Guard, NMFS Office of Law Enforcement, and state enforcement agency marine patrols, to ascertain whether the vessel's observed activities coincide with those authorized for that vessel. Concerned fishermen also use the identification number to report suspicious activities that they observe on the water. Fishermen ultimately benefit from this requirement as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred, which reduces the need for more restrictive fishing regulations. All characters used in vessel identification (e.g., Federal permit number, the vessel's official number) are considered public information.

**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 identification requirements facilitate the visual identification of fishing vessels. Although technologies have been developed to electronically identify and monitor vessels, this required form of vessel identification is indispensable. The visual collection of the vessel identification characters by the public and law enforcement personnel may involve binoculars, plain sight, or other sight enhancement technologies.

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

There is no duplication of this requirement with other collections by NMFS. However, the U.S. Coast Guard and state regulatory agencies may require the same identification of vessel name and official number. These requirements are complementary and do not create any additional nor duplicative requirements on the respondents.

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

Nearly all commercial fishing vessels subject to this information collection are categorized as small businesses. However, it is not anticipated that the information collection will have any significant impact on the operations 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.**

If commercial fishing vessels were not identifiable by the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Coast Guard, or any other cooperating enforcement agency the ability to enforce fishery regulations would be significantly impaired. The requirements of this collection are only repeated once the identification markings become illegible.

**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 was published on July 12, 2017, (82 FR 32175) soliciting public comments. The comment period closed on September 11, 2017. No comments were received.

In addition, the Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator announced the open comment period at the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting on August 10, 2017. The announcement included a summary of the information collection included in this renewal and encouraged affected parties to review the *Federal Register* Notice and submit comments. The full comment period was announced, with the deadline for comment submission made clear. The same information that was presented by the Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator was also available in physical form as a handout included with the meeting materials at the aforementioned Council meetings. No comments were received. The status reports containing the information are included as supplementary documents.

**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 as a part of this collection.

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

Vessel identification is not considered confidential information and thus no confidentiality is provided.

**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.**

No sensitive questions are asked as part of this collection.

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

The regulations state that the vessel’s name must be affixed to the port and starboard sides of the bow and, if possible, on its stern. The official number must be displayed on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and on an appropriate weather deck so as to be clearly visible from enforcement vessels and aircraft. It is estimated that each vessel will require 45 minutes to apply (paint) this official information. Each vessel is expected to need repainting of identification information on an annual basis. Table 1 provides a summary of annual burden for vessel identification. **The total estimated burden for this collection is approximately 2,749 hours, annually (45 minutes x 3,665 vessels).**

**Table 1. Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Burden Table**

Number of Entities	Items per Entity	Total Number of Items	Cost of Materials per Vessel	Response Time (Hours)	Total Burden (Hours)	Cost to Government	Cost to Public
3,665	1	3,665	\$10	0.75	2748.75	\$0	\$36,650

**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 cost to respondents is minimal. Materials needed are paint and paintbrush, and possibly a stencil. Annual costs are estimated to be \$10 per respondent to purchase paint or other materials for repainting. Given natural weathering of the paint, it is estimated that the repainting process for vessel identification will need to be repeated on an annual basis. **This action affects a total of 3,665 entities, thus the annual cost burden to respondents is estimated at \$36,650.00 (3,665 x \$10).** Table 1 provides a summary of annual costs for vessel identification.

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

There are no costs to the Federal government associated with the requirement to identify vessels.

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

Changes reflect the most current information regarding the number of relevant vessels (respondents) estimated for the next three years. The average number of respondents per year was reduced by only 10, due to the current number of permitted vessels currently listed in the permit database that are greater than or equal to 25 feet in overall length, creating very minimal adjustments to burden estimates. The total number of respondents is now estimated to be 3,665 entities per year, down from 3,675 in the previous collection. As a result of this decrease, this extension is predicted to have an annual reduction of 7.5 burden hours and \$100 cost compared to the previous collection. All differences in burden are due to this minor adjustment and not to a program change.

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

No results from this publication will be 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.**

No forms are used in this information collection.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.**

There are no exceptions.

**B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS**

This collection does not employ statistical methods.