

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
NATIONAL SALTWATER ANGLER AND STATE EXEMPTION PROGRAM
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0578**

A. JUSTIFICATION

This request is for revision and extension of a currently approved information collection. The registration fee is \$29.

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

The National Saltwater Angler Registry and State Exemption Program (Registry Program) was established to implement recommendations included in the review of national saltwater angling data collection programs conducted by the National Research Council (NRC) in 2005/2006, and the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act, codified at Section 401(g) of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (MSA), which require the Secretary of Commerce to establish a program to improve recreational fisheries surveys, including establishing a national saltwater angler and for-hire vessel registry, by January 1, 2009. A final rule to adopt regulatory measures to implement the Registry Program (Regulation Identifier Number (RIN) 0648-AW10) was published in the [Federal Register](#) on December 30, 2008, and became effective on January 29, 2009 (50 CFR 600, Subpart P).

The NRC review found that current recreational survey approaches, which rely on random contacts with residents of coastal county households to collect marine recreational fishing effort data, result in significant survey over-coverage since relatively few households contain active anglers, and under-coverage since some anglers do not live in coastal counties or they live in coastal counties but do not have landline telephones. The review advised that over-coverage results in severe sampling inefficiency and that under-coverage may lead to serious bias in the resultant effort estimates since anglers from non-coastal counties are likely to have different effort characteristics than those from coastal counties. To resolve these problems, the NRC Panel recommended the development of, and subsequent sampling from, a comprehensive national saltwater angler register. Such a sampling frame could be developed either by implementing a federal registration requirement or by expanding current state saltwater licenses to include all saltwater anglers

In response to the NRC Panel's findings and recommendations, Congress passed MSA §401(g), which mandates the Secretary of Commerce to establish a program to: 1) improve the quality and accuracy of current estimates of marine recreational fishing catch and effort, 2) to do so in a manner that considers and, to the extent feasible, incorporates the NRC Panel's recommendations, and 3) to establish the program by January 1, 2009. The program was established as the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) upon adoption of the MRIP Implementation Plan in October, 2008. As part of MRIP, MSA §401(g)(1) requires the Secretary to implement a federal requirement for anglers and for-hire vessels to register, and to provide identification and contact information, if they fish in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), for Continental Shelf Resources beyond the EEZ or for anadromous fish (i.e. those fish such as salmon, sturgeon, striped bass and shad which migrate from ocean and coastal waters to estuaries and freshwater rivers to spawn) in any waters. Further, the Secretary is to exempt from

the federal registration requirement those anglers and vessels that are licensed or registered by a state if the state provides sufficient identification and contact information for use in recreational surveys. The resultant federal Registry Program must address both the qualifications and procedures for exempting qualified states' anglers and vessels from the federal registration requirement (see A4 for more details) and the process for federal registration of anglers and vessels that are not exempted.

Accordingly, the Registry Program collects identification and contact information from those anglers and for-hire vessels who are involved in recreational fishing in the US EEZ or for anadromous fish in any waters, unless the anglers or vessels are exempted from the registration requirement. The data that will be collected will include: for anglers – name, address, date of birth, telephone contact information, e-mail address and region(s) of the country in which they fish; for for-hire vessels – owner and operator name, address, date of birth, telephone contact information, e-mail address, vessel name and registration/documentation number and home port or primary operating area. This information is compiled in a national and/or series of regional registries that are used to support surveys of recreational anglers and for-hire vessels to develop estimates of recreational angling effort.

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 data are used continuously by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and those states and regional data collection partnerships that conduct surveys of marine recreational angling. Anglers and for-hire vessel operators are randomly selected from the registries and asked to provide information about recent fishing activity. The identification, date of birth and address information in the registry data base is used to identify the resultant survey record, and to eliminate duplicative registrations that could bias resultant survey data. In the Marine Recreational Information Program Fishing Effort Survey, this information is matched to address samples selected from the U.S. Postal Service Delivery Sequence File (DSF), which enables differential sampling rates between matched (registered) and unmatched addresses and improves the efficiency of sampling. The contact information in the registry data base is utilized to make actual telephone or mail contact for the purpose of interviewing the anglers and for-hire vessel operators.

These survey-based data collection methods are described in separate information collection requests for the Marine Recreational Information Program Fishing Effort Survey and the For-Hire Telephone Survey, which have been previously described and approved pursuant to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control Nos. 0648-0652 and 0648-0709, respectively. The registries are also being used for other OMB-approved angler surveys on a case-by-case basis.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) retains control over the information and safeguards it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Although the information collected is not

expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications. Should NMFS decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

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.

Information on registering, and the site for electronic registration is at <https://www.countryfish.noaa.gov/register/>.

All Registry information is collected electronically. Angler and for-hire vessel owners are able to register online only. A registration number is electronically provided and a registration card is available for downloading and printing by, and will be mailed to, the successful registrants.

The information that is collected via the Registry program will not be made available to the public via the Internet or any other means. Because the data to be collected is entirely personal identification, address and contact information, it is not appropriate to make this data available.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The Registry program has been designed to prevent duplication of registration requirements. In order to serve the purpose of supplying identification and contact information for all anglers and for-hire vessels, it is only necessary for an angler or a for-hire vessel to submit that information to a single registry. If the information can be obtained from another source, the federal registration requirement can be waived.

Accordingly, if states can provide complete directories of anglers and/or for-hire vessels from their license or state registry data bases, the states can be granted Exempted State status under the Registry program, and their licensed or registered anglers and/or for-hire vessels are exempted from the federal registration requirement. Anglers who fish only on for-hire vessels are exempt, since the vessels themselves will be registered and surveyed. Also, any for-hire vessel that is required to obtain a NOAA license or permit via the NPS under other fishery management regulations is also exempt from the registry requirement, since the vessel information is in a NOAA database, and can be accessed and added to the registry directory. Similarly, individuals who hold NMFS-issued Highly Migratory Species Angling permits and Main Hawaiian Island Bottomfish permits are also exempt from the registration requirement.

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

The for-hire vessels that are required to register are small entities. Efforts utilized to minimize the burden on these entities include:

- a. minimizing the number of vessels that must register, by eliminating overlapping requirements as noted in response A4 above;
- b. limiting the information that must be submitted to the minimal identification, address and contact information required for a complete registry.

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

If a complete, annual registry of saltwater anglers is not maintained, NMFS will not be able to effectively implement the Fishing Effort Survey (FES). Absent an angler registry, the design feature of the FES that augments address samples with angler registry information would not be possible. This would reduce the efficiency of sampling and consequently increase the variability of survey estimates.

If a complete, annual registry of for-hire fishing vessels is not maintained, NMFS and its partners will not be able to contact vessel owners/operators to secure information about the number, location and timing of fishing trips made by anglers fishing on for-hire vessels, resulting in the inability to estimate catch for this large mode of saltwater fishing.

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

The collection is consistent with 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 December 4, 2017, soliciting public comment. NMFS did not receive any comments.

Feedback on MRIP, including the Registry program and process, is continuously sought on the MRIP website. Since the previous renewal, we have received no feedback indicating the response times used in A 12 below are incorrect, nor feedback that addresses other unresolved issues NMFS intends to retain this feedback mechanism in the current, ongoing website revision.

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

No payments or gifts to respondents are given under this program.

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

Registrants' responses will be kept confidential as required by section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens and [NOAA Administrative Order 216-100](#), Confidentiality of Fisheries Statistics, and will not be released for public use except in aggregate statistical form without identification as to its source. Section 402(b) stipulates that data required to be submitted under an FMP shall be

confidential and shall not be released except to Federal employees and Council staff responsible for FMP monitoring and development or when required under court order.

In addition, the information is subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) in that the information collected is retrievable by identifiable individual. The Registry data is included in COMMERCE/NOAA-19, Permits and Registrations for United States Federally Regulated Fisheries, for which an amended notice was published in the Federal Register on September 15, 2015.

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.

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

Recreational anglers: Pursuant to 50 CFR 600.1410, all states and U.S. territories except Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have executed Memoranda of Agreement with NOAA and have been designated as Exempted States. Anglers who are licensed or registered by Exempted States, or who are residents of Exempted States but are not required to be licensed or registered by such states, are not required to register with NOAA. Also, anglers who are fishing on a for-hire fishing vessel that is in compliance with applicable state and NMFS licensing and permitting requirements are not required to register with NOAA.

There are no anadromous fisheries in the state territorial waters of Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U. S. Virgin Islands. Accordingly, anglers who fish on private (non-for-hire) vessels in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) adjacent to those states/territories are required to register with NOAA, unless those anglers have been licensed or registered by one of the exempted states. Also, anglers who fish anywhere in the EEZ, or for anadromous species, and are required to be licensed or registered by their state of residence, but are not currently licensed or registered by one of the exempted states, are required to register with NOAA. For all of calendar year 2016, a total of 1347 anglers were registered by NOAA.

Presumably, not all anglers who are required to register with NOAA actually do so at present. Outreach and compliance initiatives may result in increasing the number of registrants. Therefore, it is assumed that the number of potential registrants is double the number who registered in 2016, or 2,694. Using this estimate of the number of anglers who would be required to register (not being part of other registries), the estimated potential burden hours are: estimated number of anglers: 2,694 x 3 minutes per registration = 8,082 minutes/60 minutes = 134.7 (135).

For-hire vessels: Pursuant to 50 CFR 600 Subpart P, all states and U.S. territories have been designated as Exempted States for for-hire fishing vessels except Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. For-hire vessels that are licensed/registered by Exempted States or by NOAA Fisheries are not required to register with NOAA.

There are no anadromous fisheries in the state territorial waters of Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U. S. Virgin Islands. Accordingly, only non-exempt for-hire vessels that fish in the EEZ adjacent to those states/territories are required to register with NOAA. In addition, non-exempt for-hire vessels that operate elsewhere in the EEZ, or fish for anadromous species, are required to register with NOAA. In 2016, the number of for-hire vessels that registered with NOAA was 15.

Presumably, not all for-hire vessels that are required to register with NOAA actually do so at present. Outreach and compliance initiatives may result in increasing the number of registrants. Therefore, it is assumed that the number of potential registrants is equal to double the number who registered in 2016, or 30. Using this estimate of the number of for-hire vessels that would be required to register, the estimated potential burden hours are: estimated number of vessels: 30 x 3 minutes per registration = 90 minutes/60 minutes = 1.5 (2) hours.

Total responses: 2694 + 30 = 2,724. Total burden hours = 135 + 2 = 137.

(d) Estimates of annualized labor costs to respondents

The estimate of annualized labor costs to respondents for the hour burden for complying with the annual registration requirement is summarized in the following table, assuming a labor rate equivalent of \$25 per hour.

Category	Maximum Burden Hours	Labor Cost of Burden Hours @\$25
Anglers	135	\$3,375
For-Hire Vessels	2	\$50
Total	137	\$3,425

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).

As of January 1, 2016, an annual registration fee of \$29.00 has been required for registration with NOAA. Total annual cost burden is therefore:

Anglers: 2694 registrants X \$29.00/registration = \$ 78,126
 For-hire Vessels: 30 registrants X \$29.00/registration = \$ 870
Total = \$ 78,996.

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

The annual cost to the Federal government is approximately \$38,623 divided as follows: \$ 26,489 in contractual costs, \$7,105 in personnel costs and \$5,029 distributed (indirect) costs.

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

Program change: As provided in 50 CFR 600, Subpart P, an increase in registration fee to \$29, from \$25, per year was instituted, effective January 1, 2016. For the current registrants, that means a total increase of \$10,896.

Adjustments: Recent declines in registration may reflect lack of enforcement. The estimates in 2015 were for 15,122 responses and 756 hours, compared to 2,724 responses and 137 hours (decrease of 619 hours). This also means a reduction of the previous fee total due to the 12,398 fewer respondents $(-(12,398 \times \$25) = -\$309,950)$.

In 2010, the Marine Recreational Information Program launched a major communications and outreach campaign to support the roll-out of the National Saltwater Angler Registry. Members of MRIP's Communications and Education Team created a web page on the new Registry, which included a series of questions to help anglers determine whether they needed to register with NOAA Fisheries. The Communications and Education Team also developed a series of customized collateral materials including "one-third sheets" and business card hand-outs, and drafted template newsletter articles for partners along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, and in Hawaii and Puerto Rico. Additional outreach efforts included live-read Public Service Announcements (in both English and Spanish) to coastal radio stations. These materials remain available on the NMFS website. Outreach effort has declined in recent years due to focus on securing and using state license data to support sampling programs. We anticipate increasing outreach in the Caribbean, once hurricane recovery has progressed, and in both the Caribbean and Hawaii as the new Fishing Effort Survey (OMB Control No. 0648-0652) is utilized.

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

Neither the angler nor the for-hire vessel registration data 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.

N/A.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

There are no exceptions.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

The registry data collection does not employ statistical methods.