

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
INTERNATIONAL BILLFISH ANGLER SURVEY  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0020**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

This request is for an extension of this information collection.

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

The SWFSC Angler Survey began in 1969 and is an integral part of the Billfish Research Program (Billfish Program) at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC). The Angler Survey tracks recreational angler fishing catch and effort for Istiophorid billfish across the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The Angler Survey also serves as an outreach tool by generating collaboration between Government and the public. Survey entries are entirely voluntary and results are shared with anglers around the world.

Results are presented to the public in an annual Newsletter that is available both in hard copy and electronically on the SWFSC website. The Newsletter goes out to thousands of anglers and is one of the most valuable outreach tools at the SWFSC. In addition, Survey data are available to scientists and fishery managers to assist with assessing the status of billfish stocks. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) collects these fishing catch and effort data for most domestic and foreign fisheries, as part of Fishery Management Plans whose development is authorized by the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (MSA), 16 USC 1851 et seq. Study of migratory gamefish that spend at least part of their life in United States (U.S.) waters is also authorized under [16 USC 760e](#).

**2. Explain 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 applicable NOAA Information Quality Guidelines.**

This survey is conducted annually to track catch per unit of effort (CPUE) trends in the recreational fishery for Istiophorid billfish. Cooperative anglers participating with the SWFSC International Billfish Tagging Program are sent an electronic Survey PDF. Angler Surveys are available on the SWFSC website as well. The Angler Survey respondent card asks for the number of fishing days per locations fished and the number and kind of billfish caught during the preceding year. These data are used to track changing trends in recreational fishing effort in key areas throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Data is presented in the Billfish Newsletter. The Billfish Newsletter is an annual publication providing a summary of the Angler Survey and other Program results to the billfish angling community and is the primary outreach instrument to Program participants. Current and past issues of the Billfish Newsletter are available on the SWFSC's Billfish Program webpage (<http://swfsc.noaa.gov/FRD-billfish/>). Data are also available to stock assessment biologists to investigate the health and stock condition of billfish resources throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. NMFS will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (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. 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.

**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.**

Surveys (electronic fillable PDF) are emailed to participants in December of each year and can also be accessed on the SWFSC's Billfish Program webpage: <http://swfsc.noaa.gov/FRD-billfish/>. Additionally, recipients requesting electronic copies are emailed surveys. Those surveys can be completed electronically or printed and completed by hand, and returned by email or postal service. Responses are entered into a database as received.

Electronic collection of the Survey results is a goal at the SWFSC. We are currently developing a mobile application and associated web page that will be utilized to collect this information along with tag and release of highly migratory species. The first version is in the testing phase and we are working towards a more automated process.

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

The SWFSC's Angler Survey is the only study tracking billfish angling CPUE by domestic and international anglers across the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The Angler Survey is unique to the billfish angling community and is not duplicated elsewhere.

NMFS collects fishing effort data for most commercial and recreational fisheries. The Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS) conducts telephone and dock survey data to track general recreational fishing effort within the U.S. The MRFSS does not identify fishing effort for the large, migratory billfish (Istiophoridae) throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans. There are no known foreign agencies duplicating this effort. The SWFSC staff attends billfish-related research conferences where knowledge about similar, repetitive surveys would be available, if there were any.

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

The survey deals with individual anglers cooperating in the Angler Survey and does not impact any business entity.

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

Data collected by the Angler Survey are reported by the public and are disseminated to the public through outreach tools. In additions, the time-series data can be used to track the status of billfish stocks, biomass, and trends in CPUE. A break or disruption in the Angler Survey timeline would jeopardize the SWFSC’s ability to examine long-term trends. Moreover, this time-series data can be used to provide accurate management advice and recommendations to domestic fishery managers and to the State Department dealing with international fishery treaties.

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

This Survey is consistent with all 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 (83 FR 57453) published on November 15, 2018, solicited public comments. Two non-substantive comments were received via email, stating the “survey is an attempt to get license money and to get more tax dollars from the general public” and that “a billfish survey isn’t needed until 15 years have passed...American citizens who are working should not be paying taxes so that the hobbyists can have more hobbies”.

Conversations with anglers concerning the Survey are initiated at outreach events and indicate that they are satisfied with the methods we are using to collect the data and disseminating the results in the Newsletter. At the 2018 Day at the Docks (San Diego, CA.), and the 2018 Fred Hall Fishing Show (Del Mar, CA.), Survey cards were handed out and also discussed with current cooperative anglers. Anglers had positive remarks about the Survey and the results that are presented in the SWFSC’s Newsletter. Additionally, anglers agreed that the burden was in agreement with our estimates. However, no formal or written comments have been received.

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

Response to the Angler Survey is completely voluntary. No rewards or offerings of any kind are available or offered to the respondents.

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

Angler Survey data and results are not confidential.

**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.**

This Angler Survey is entirely a recreational fishing query to examine angler catch and effort. There are no "sensitive" questions.

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

The burden to complete the Angler Survey respondent card is about 5 minutes per response. Our active mailing list varies from 1,000 to 2,500 participants. The number of respondents varies year to year, but in recent years we have received close to 600 responses annually. Total annual burden is estimated at roughly 50 hours (600 responses x 5 minutes /60 minutes/hour = 50 hours). Also see Part B, Question 1.

**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).**

Surveys have switched from paper and mail-based to electronic delivery, so total annual cost burden is \$0.

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

Annual cost to conduct the survey is approximately \$4000. This includes the in-house cost of staff to email and then enter respondent data into the data base.

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

This is an adjustment in the number of respondents from 500 to 600. This increase was primarily a result of e-mailing a fillable survey to participants who provided their e-mail address; this was especially true for foreign and institutional constituents. The increase of 100 respondents accounted for an 8-hour increase in the annual time burden. The total cost burden to respondents decreased from \$60 to \$0 as a result of a switch from paper and mail-based delivery to electronic delivery.

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

The Angler Survey is conducted on a calendar year with completion scheduled by May of the following year. The Billfish Newsletter is the outreach method by which the SWFSC provides feedback to the recreational fishing community and is written for cooperating anglers participating in the Angler Survey and for the volunteers who conduct tag and release fishing for billfish. Content varies annually but always includes angling effort by area and species captured, reported catches, results from billfish tagging, and general interest articles directed to the billfish angler. This peer-reviewed newsletter is approved for release by the SWFSC's Director.

**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.