

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Cooperative Game Fish Tagging Report
OMB Control No. 0648-0247

Abstract

This request is for the extension of a current information collection. The cooperative tagging center attempts to determine the migration patterns and other biological information of billfish, tunas, and swordfish. The fish tagging report is provided to the angler with the tags, and he/she fills out the card with the information when a fish is tagged. The card is then mailed back to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) where the data is stored.

Justification

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

The Cooperative Game Fish Tagging Program was initiated in 1971 as part of a comprehensive research program resulting from passage of P.L. 86-359, [Study of migratory game fish](#), and other legislative acts under which the National Marine Fisheries Service operates. The Cooperative Tagging Center (formerly the Cooperative Gamefish Tagging Program) attempts to determine the migratory patterns and other biological information of billfish, tunas, red drum, tarpon, amberjack, cobia, king mackerel, and swordfish by having anglers tag and release their catch.

The Fish Tag Issue Report card is a necessary part of the tagging program. Fishermen volunteer to tag and release their catch. When requested, NMFS provides the volunteers with fish tags for their use when they release their fish. Usually a group of five tags is sent at one time, each attached to a Report card, which is pre-printed with the first and last tag numbers received, and has spaces for the respondent's name, address, date, and club affiliation (if applicable).

When the angler releases a fish, he takes the Fish Tagging Report card with a tag attached, removes the numbered tag, applies the tag to the fish, and then mails the completed card (which has a number matching the tag number) to NMFS.

When a tagged fish is recaptured, the tag has the address of NMFS and a tag number. The person with the tagged fish can mail the tag to NMFS, where information on the fish is recorded and matched with the release data.

2. 1Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

Information on each species is used by NMFS to determine migratory patterns, distance traveled, stock boundaries, age, and growth. These data are necessary input for developing management criteria by regional fishery management councils, states, and NMFS. The tag report cards are necessary to provide tags to the volunteer angler, record when and where the fish was tagged, the species, its estimated length and weight, tag number, and information on the tagger for follow-ups if the tagged fish is recovered. Failure to obtain these data would make management decisions very difficult and would be contrary to the NMFS Marine Recreational Fishing policy objectives.

Anglers are made aware of our tagging program through several forms of media: newspaper and magazine articles, through both [The Billfish Foundation](#) and the [Southeast Fisheries Science Center](#) websites, peer review papers, and by word of mouth. Anglers who wish to obtain tag kits or report recaptured tags can contact the cooperative tagging center via phone at 800-437-3936, via email addressed to tagging@noaa.gov, or via written request sent to:

Cooperative Tagging Center
75 Virginia Beach Dr.
Miami, Fl 33149.

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. NOAA Fisheries will retain control over the information and safeguard 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. 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 collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

No other satisfactory method of obtaining movement information on oceanic pelagic fish has been identified. Although more sophisticated electronic tags exist, their expense prohibits their use in this program. Automated data entry by persons tagging fish isn't practical; the information is best entered at the time of tagging on fishing vessels.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2

No duplication was evident during consultations with other conservation agencies. No similar information is available except what has been developed by this program.

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

Small entities are not involved.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The usefulness of this program would be compromised if the collection of data did not take place on a continual basis. It would be impossible to track trends in fish movement, stock definitions, and growth rates. In addition, a less than annual frequency would have an adverse effect on the voluntary participation rate.

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

This collection is consistent with OMB guidelines, except that reports may be submitted more often than quarterly - whenever tagging takes place.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

A Federal Register Notice, published on January 11, 2021 (86 FR 1940) solicited public comment on this renewal. One public comment was received but was not found to be substantive in nature.

NMFS reached out to several anglers who had submitted Fish Tagging Report Cards in an effort 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. No responses were received.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

Tag release participants receive acknowledgment letters after submitting release data and a tag history letter upon the tag's recapture. Tag recapture participants receive a tag history letter and a Cooperative Tagging Center baseball cap or face buff as a reward.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

Data on names and addresses are included in the [Commerce/NOAA-6, Fishermen's Statistical Data, Privacy Act system of records](#) and are protected as [Privacy Act](#) records. Handling procedures are described in various NOAA Directives.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

No sensitive questions are asked.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

Estimated responses per year: 8,000
 Mean time/response: 2 minutes
 Total hours: 267 (8,000 x 2 minutes/60 minutes).

Information Collection	Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
Tagging Report	45-000	1600	5	8000	0.0333	267	\$15.07	4,024
Totals				8,000		267		\$4,024

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).

These data collections will incur no cost burden on respondents beyond the costs of response time.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Oversight	2 / 2	90000	45		\$ 41,200
Other Federal Positions	2 / 2	90000	45		\$ 41,200
Contractor Cost					
Travel					
Other Costs:					\$ 20,000
TOTAL					\$102,400

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.

We have reduced equipment cost as well as the estimated responses per year, based on an observed reduction in participation.

Information Collection	Respondents		Responses		Burden Hours		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	
Tagging Report	1600	10,000	8,000	10,000	267	333	Reduction in participation and correcting previous administrative error on total # of respondents
Total for Collection	1600	10,000	8,000	10,000	267	333	
Difference	-9,400		-2000		-66		

Information Collection	Labor Costs		Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	
Tagging Report	\$4,024	NA	0	0	Labor costs not previously calculated
Total for Collection	\$4,024	NA	0	0	
Difference	+4,024		0		

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

A summary of tagging effort is produced annually. Data is used in scientific studies and journal articles.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The expiration date will be displayed.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.”

The agency certifies compliance with [5 CFR 1320.9](#) and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#).