

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Recreational Angler Survey of Sea Turtle Interactions
OMB Control No. 0648-0774

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

This study design is a non-probability survey that will rely on a convenience sample of respondents. The sample universe will include any recreational angler who uses a shore-based structure or pier for fishing, and who is actively fishing during a survey period at one of our survey sites. The survey will be implemented differently in each state, based on the total number of shore-based fishing structures available and used by the recreational fishing community. It is anticipated that a maximum of 10 sites will be selected in each state where the survey is implemented. Selection will be based on locations where interactions with turtles are known to occur, and where data are not available on interactions. NOAA will review the NOAA Fishing site registry to identify the scope of local angler fishing sites. We will also review existing stranding and incidental capture data for the given state to determine if there are fishing access sites with known sea turtle interactions. Between 2 and 10 sites will be selected for each state where the survey will be implemented. In considering what sites to prioritize, we will evaluate sites based on the following: 1) those with high reporting rates of incidental captures, 2) those with low reporting rates of incidental captures, and 3) those with a higher number of anglers. Of the sites selected per state, at least half will be sites with high known occurrences of sea turtle interactions, when feasible. Pilot surveys similar to the proposed survey were conducted in Mississippi in 2013 and 2016. The response success rate was 86% (Cook et al. 2020) and 71-80% (unpublished data), respectively. This collection (0648-0774) was approved in 2018, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic and delayed funding, the survey was not implemented.

NOAA has certainty that we will implement this survey in the coming years as we were recently approved to receive funding through Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program. A project titled, “Reducing Sea Turtle Bycatch at Recreational Fishing Sites” has been funded by the Regionwide Trustee Implementation Group (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/996-million-approved-continue-restoring-gulf-wide-resources-impacted-deepwater-horizon>). The project will provide funds to implement angler surveys for up to 2 years in each of the 5 Gulf of Mexico states to better understand co-factors related to shore-based hook and line bycatch of sea turtles.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:

Data will be collected via in-person intercept survey of actively fishing anglers. Two survey administrators will be deployed to each survey site, will complete the survey cover sheet, and will proceed to interview the anglers present during the survey period. Surveys will be conducted primarily during the months of April through October, both during the week and on weekends.

A maximum of 200 surveys per site will be conducted at a maximum of 10 survey sites in each state (maximum of 10 states). The survey locations will be visited on a rotational basis throughout the survey season. Non-responses will be captured on the Survey Cover sheet and will be considered when evaluating the data. NOAA cannot use the response data to estimate population statistics for all angler-turtle interactions, given the survey method. The survey results will be used to qualitatively inform ESA Section 7 Biological Opinions and to inform species recovery and bycatch reduction management efforts.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

The survey will be conducted in person, verbally, and will take less than 10 minutes for each survey, which is anticipated to reduce the nonresponse rate. The number of anglers who decline the survey, and their zip codes, will be recorded and will be accounted for to determine a nonresponse rate. The survey will conclude with information about sea turtles in local waters and fishing practices that can reduce interactions. Cards/flyers/etc. with the local Stranding Hotline number will be distributed and anglers will be asked to report any future incidental captures because medical attention provides the best chance for survival. Outreach notifying the community of the intercept survey will not be conducted since it's not a mail survey and the survey only targets a few locations and a specific audience. Outreach was not conducted prior to the two pilot surveys and the surveys still had great success.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

The survey will not include a specific test, as the intercept survey method has been tested previously by other efforts (Access Point Angler Intercept Survey At-a-Glance efforts, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/recreational-fishing-data/access-point-angler-intercept-survey-glance>).

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s)

who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

First Points of Contact:

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Literature Cited

Cook, M., V. S. Dunch and A. Coleman. 2020. An interview-based approach to assess angler practices and sea turtle captures on Mississippi fishing piers. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 7:655. [doi: 10.3389/fmars.2020.00655](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2020.00655)