

**Project Title:** Cooperative Shark Tagging Program

**Program Office Sponsoring or Conducting this CSC Project:** NMFS /NEFSC/ Population Biology Branch, Apex Predators Program

**Authority for this CSC Project:** MSA and CCSA

**Purpose of this CSC Project:** This program is the oldest NMFS citizen science program and has allowed us to collect large amounts of data we would not have had access to without extraordinary research costs due to the highly migratory nature of shark species crossing domestic and international boundaries. This program provides updates to essential fish habitat (EFH) designations for managed shark species (and provided the basis for the original EFH designations) and has also been used to define stock structure, document longevity, and validate age and growth in several shark species, all information essential for stock assessment and effective management to prevent overfishing and ensure sustainable fisheries under the MSA.

**Type(s) of Information Collected and From Whom It Is Collected:** Information is collected from two groups: our volunteer taggers and anglers that capture tagged sharks. Commercial and recreational anglers and survey biologists that encounter sharks during their fishing operations can register to volunteer under our program to tag and release the shark catch they do not want to retain. Volunteer taggers must provide their name, address, phone number, and email. They must also provide information on the sharks they tag: shark tag number, shark species, and date and location of the tagging event. Other information collected but not required are the species' sex and size (weight and/or length), gear type used, any photos taken of the species, and condition of the shark at release. Anglers that capture a tagged shark provide the same information as the volunteer taggers. In addition to this contact and shark information, if an angler captures a tag with a monetary reward and wants the reward, then a social security number is required.

**Use of the Information:** The contact information is required from volunteer taggers so that we can supply them with tags, follow up if we have questions about a tagged shark, and provide them with a report about a shark they tagged when it is recaptured. Contact information is required from anglers that recapture sharks, which can also already be a registered volunteer participant, so that we can follow up if we have questions about the recaptured shark, send them a report about the shark they recaptured, and send them a reward for reporting the recapture. If the recaptured shark had a tag with a monetary reward then a social security number is needed from the angler for tax purposes if they want the monetary reward. The angler can opt to take a program hat instead of the monetary reward if they do not want to supply their social security number. Reports on tagged and recaptured sharks provide information to support management on distribution, migration, stock structure, age and growth, and longevity. Any photos provided are used to confirm species identification.

**Method(s) of Information Collection:** Contact information is collected over the phone or through email. Social security numbers are only collected over the phone. Tagged sharks are reported by email or regular mail using a prepaid postcard. Recaptured sharks are reported

through our toll-free number reported on the tag, our email (sharkrecap@noaa.gov) or online form (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/form/tagged-shark-recapture-form>).

**Affected Public:** Individuals.

**Estimated Average Annual Number of Participants:** 500

**Estimated Average Annual Number of Responses per Participant:** 8.00

**Estimated Average Minutes per Response:** 11.25

**Estimated Average Annual Burden Hours:** 750

**Estimated Total Annual Cost to Participants in this CSC Project:** \$0

**Estimated Average Annual Costs to the Federal Government:** \$185,934

**Estimated Average Annual Number of Federal Government Employees (FTEs):** 0.25

**Recruitment and Retention Methods for Voluntary Participants (SSA item 1):** Our program has been around for many years and the majority of our “recruitment” is word of mouth. We do publish our tagging information periodically and provide information about our tagging program online and at sport fishing events and fishing gear expos when we are able to attend. Our program is opportunistic in that we provide tags for anglers to use during their normal fishing activities. If an angler stops fishing, and therefore tagging, we do not interfere. To help ensure we receive information for tagged sharks that are captured, we provide clear reporting information on the tag including a toll free number and the offer of a reward.

**Gifts or Payments (SSA Item 9):** We do not provide gifts or payments to our volunteer taggers. However, an angler who captures a tagged shark will be offered a program hat for reporting the recapture. Additionally, a limited number of tags used during a research study offer a monetary reward for reporting the recapture. An angler who captures a tag with a monetary reward, reports the recapture, and wants the reward, will provide his/her social security number and will receive a reward for the amount offered on the tag, either \$20 or \$100.

**Annual and Multi-Year Schedules (SSA Item 16):** This is an ongoing project with no set terminal year. Tags are provided to our volunteers and recapture information is collected year round. Recapture reports are provided to the volunteer tagger and the person that recaptured the shark upon completion of processing the recapture information. Species data are summarized for individual stock status reports or stock assessments as needed. General information about the tagging program is reported annually for inclusion in the Shark Finning Report to Congress and the United States Research Report to the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization.

**Display OMB Control No. and Expiration Date (SSA Item 17):** This information will be incorporated into the email and paperwork correspondence we have with new volunteer participants and individuals reporting recaptures of tagged sharks.

**Statistical Methods:** This CSC project will not employ statistical methods.

**Approval for Pretesting:** This CSC project will not require additional pretesting with more than nine members of the public.

**Supplemental Documents:** The four supplemental documents for this CSC project are as follows:

1. A Cooperative Shark Tagging Program Booklet, which aids in the recruitment of voluntary participants, explains how to tag sharks and includes the data form returned by those who tag sharks
2. A Tagged Shark Recapture Form with instructions
3. A report on Shark Research in the Northeast, which, among other things, aids in the recruitment of voluntary participants
4. A report “Distributions and Movements of Atlantic Shark Species: A 52-Year Retrospective Atlas of Mark and Recapture Data”, which summarizes the shark tagging and tag recovery efforts of thousands of participants fishing for sharks with a variety of gear types

**CERTIFICATION:** I certify the following are true.

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The collection will not include highly influential scientific information, which is information NOAA or OMB determines: (i) could have a potential impact of more than \$500 million in any year, or (ii) is novel, controversial, or precedent setting or has significant interagency interest.
5. The collection complies with 5 CFR 1320.9 and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3).
6. The collection will provide qualitative and quantitative data that help inform scientific research and monitoring, validate models or tools, support STEM learning, and enhance the quantity and quality of data collected to support NOAA’s mission.

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