

Project Title: Salish Sea Young-of-the-Year Rockfish Surveys

Program Office Sponsoring or Conducting this CSC Project: NMFS/WCR/Protected Resources Division, Seattle

Authority for this CSC Project: ESA and CCSA

Purpose of this CSC Project: With this project, the WCR recruits recreational scuba divers to observe and record young-of-the-year (YOY) rockfishes and their habitats and report this information to a shared regional database, which documents the use of nearshore habitats by newly settled rockfish, as called for in the federal Rockfish Recovery Plan.

Type(s) of Information Collected and From Whom It Is Collected: Recreational scuba divers in greater Puget Sound time themselves while searching for young-of-the-year (YOY) rockfish and report encounter rate by morphological class, as well as habitat details and search duration.

Use of the Information: NMFS uses this information to document interannual and seasonal patterns of settlement in nearshore habitats of YOY rockfish, which is an indicator of recruitment strength and population connectivity. A major focus is documentation of “boom years” in which settlement is orders of magnitude above the long-term average.

Method(s) of Information Collection: Scuba divers enter the information on plastic dive slates (i.e., hard copy), which are transcribed to digital format on Google Drive or e-mailed to project lead.

Affected Public: Individual divers who choose to collect data as part of the program. May come from any occupation, but some are State, Local, Tribal, and/or Federal employees and some work for dive shops, aquariums, and other for-profit and not-for-profit entities.

Estimated Average Annual Number of Participants: 20

Estimated Average Annual Number of Responses per Participant: 5

Estimated Average Minutes per Response: 57

Estimated Average Annual Burden Hours: 95

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

Estimated Average Annual Costs to the Federal Government: \$63,619

Estimated Average Annual Number of Federal Government Employees (FTEs): 0.05

Recruitment and Retention Methods for Voluntary Participants (SSA item 1): Divers are recruited from local dive clubs, online message boards, and through in-person and virtual outreach events. Considerable recruitment also occurs by word of mouth among friends and colleagues. Efforts to retain divers include regular quarterly communication, friendly competitions (e.g., most fish seen in a quarter), distribution of stickers and other promotional items of nominal value, and ongoing recruitment events. Project leads also arrange logistics or

group dives, including some from charter vessels, at no cost to participants. This offers divers a chance to see new areas, meet new dive buddies, and strengthen ties with the greater dive community.

Gifts or Payments (SSA Item 9): Education and outreach materials are provided to participants to share with other prospective participants. These include handouts, posters and flyers. Stickers, t-shirts, and other promotional items of nominal value are occasionally distributed.

Annual and Multi-Year Schedules (SSA Item 16): This program has been ongoing since 2015 and will continue as long as valuable data to inform the Rockfish Recovery Plan are being obtained. Diving occurs year-round, but effort is linked to weather, sea state, and other factors that vary considerably across seasons and years. Project leads provide quarterly updates to participants and NMFS staff, as well as a written annual report. On an approximately 5-year interval, a summary report of new findings and interannually variable patterns is produced and published. A manuscript is currently in preparation that describes outreach efforts, engagement strategy, and other components of the program.

Display OMB Control No. and Expiration Date (SSA Item 17): This information will be provided when individuals sign up to participate in this CSC project.

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 are as follows:

1. Pamphlet including an example of a dive slate (data collection form), a survey guide and recruitment information
2. Training presentation describing how survey are conducted
3. Annual report infographic, for 2021
4. A report for 2015-2020
5. The formal sampling protocol

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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