

**1 SUPPORTING STATEMENT A
FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION**

**NORTHEAST REGION HUNTER PARTICIPATION SURVEYS
OMB Control Number 1018-New**

Terms of Clearance: This is a request for a new OMB control number.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has overall Federal responsibility for managing the Nation's fish and wildlife resources. Part of the Service's mission is to provide the public with wildlife-based outdoor recreation opportunities on National Wildlife Refuges, National Fish Hatcheries, and other Service lands (collectively, refuges). These outdoor recreation opportunities include hunting, which is an important opportunity for people to connect with nature, harvest food, and assist the Service in managing wildlife populations.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act (The Act; 16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.) stipulates that refuges undergo a comprehensive conservation planning process that, among other things, must look at the compatibility of wildlife-dependent recreation (including hunting) on refuges. We will use the information from the proposed survey effort to inform planning on refuges as mandated by The Act.

Hunting on refuges is regulated by both State and Federal laws as well as through refuge-specific regulations. These refuge-specific regulations are made in accordance with hunt plans required to be developed for each refuge. These hunt plans outline things such as refuge-specific bag limits, season dates, areas open and closed to hunting, allowed hunting time, etc. The hunt plans are an important tool that refuges use to manage harvest, safety, and visitor experience. Creating hunt plans relies on sound biological and social data. Understanding hunter experience, preference, and harvest helps refuge managers and planners tailor hunt plans to suit biological and visitor objectives and maintain a safe environment for hunters and non-hunting visitors.

We consulted with regional leadership staff from the Service's Northeast Region and refuge staff in the development of the proposed surveys. This interdisciplinary team identified data gaps needed to help inform future hunt plan development, identify safety concerns that need attention, and better understand hunter preference in order to improve visitor experience. The region, in consultation with the Service's Human Dimension Branch Survey, developed the surveys. This effort identified critical data necessary for the management of hunting on refuges and revising and creating future hunt plans.

2. Indicate 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. Be specific. If this collection is a form or a questionnaire, every question needs to be justified.

This information collection is for two survey instruments:

Form 3-2557, Hunter Participation Survey – The survey’s purpose is to learn more about big game, small game, migratory bird, and upland game hunters and their overall experience hunting on national wildlife refuges and hatcheries. The survey includes questions about species harvested, methods for managing hunter numbers, safety concerns, hunter regulations, user conflicts, satisfaction, and motivations for hunting.

Form 3-2558, Spring Turkey Hunter Participation Survey – The survey’s purpose is to learn more about spring turkey hunters and their overall experience hunting on national wildlife refuges and hatcheries. The survey includes questions about species harvested, methods for managing hunter numbers, safety concerns, hunter regulations, user conflicts, satisfaction, and motivations for hunting.

Information from this collection will be used in the following primary ways:

- To inform the development or refinement of future refuge hunt plans or change the procedures for conducting hunting permit drawings or accepting applications, by providing information on hunter experience, preferences, harvest, and safety concerns to refuge managers and planners.
- To identify safety concerns that should be addressed outside of the hunt plan revision cycle.
- To identify refuge hunter preferences that can be addressed outside of the hunt plan revision cycle, in order to improve hunter experience and provide positive wildlife-based recreation experiences.

This survey will be conducted on an ongoing basis in order to track changes over time. Because this information is used to guide refuge management and planning efforts, it is important for the Service to understand the impact of management activities on refuge users. A longitudinal survey effort is necessary to track responses to changes in management.

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 and specifically how this collection meets GPEA requirements.

Survey data collection will be conducted online via Qualtrics, a Service-approved and FedRAMP certified survey software platform. This data collection method reduces burden on staff to collect and summarize survey responses as opposed to mail or in-person data collection techniques. Online surveys also represent significant cost savings over mail-based surveys as there is no need for postage, printing, and staff time needed to manually enter data from returned surveys.

Survey respondents will be directed to take the survey in a number of ways based on the options that are feasible for participating refuges. These methods include providing hunters who registered to hunt on the refuge with:

- a link to the survey sent via email after the hunting season,
- a link to the survey at refuge game harvest check stations,

- a link to the survey posted on hunter information signs at the refuge

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 Item 2 above.

There are no other region-wide efforts to collect this sort of harvest and social data from refuge hunters. The current Hunter Harvest Report (FWS Form 3-2362) only includes questions related to harvested species and hunter information. It does not ask any questions related to hunter experience and satisfaction, methods for managing hunter numbers, safety concerns, hunter regulations, user conflicts, and motivations for hunting.

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

This survey does not impact small businesses or other small entities.

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.

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Hunting on refuges is regulated by both State and Federal laws as well as through refuge-specific regulations. These refuge-specific regulations are made in accordance with hunt plans required to be developed for each refuge. The hunt plans are an important tool that refuges use to manage harvest, safety, and visitor experience. Creating hunt plans relies on sound biological and social data. Understanding hunter experience, preference, and harvest helps refuge managers and planners tailor hunt plans to suit biological and visitor objectives and maintain a safe environment for hunters and non-hunting visitors. Without conducting these data collection efforts, our hunt programs won't be able to account for social considerations. This information is critical to being able to provide our visitors with a quality hunting experience as well as meeting our management objectives.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- * requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;
- * requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;
- * requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;
- * requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;
- * in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
- * requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and

- approved by OMB;
- * that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or
 - * requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information, unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

There are no special circumstances that require we conduct the collection in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication 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 in response to the PRA statement associated with the collection over the past three years, and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

Describe 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.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every three years — even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

On February 9, 2023, we published in the *Federal Register* ([88 FR 8448](#)) a notice of our intent to request that OMB approve this information collection. In that notice, we solicited comments for 60 days, ending on April 10, 2023. In an effort to increase public awareness of, and participation in, our public commenting processes associated with information collection requests, the Service also published the *Federal Register* notice on Regulations.gov (Docket No. [FWS-R5-NWRS-2022-0152](#)) to provide the public with an additional method to submit comments (in addition to the typical Info_Coll@fws.gov email and U.S. mail submission methods). We received one anonymous comment in response to that notice which did not address the information collection requirements. Therefore, no response is required to that comment.

We worked with a team of experts beyond just the survey reviewers who specifically request this information. We used the pre-test opportunity to gauge the burden for the collection. We used the burden numbers we obtained from the pre-test to complete this form. Respondents remarked about the quality of the questions and the utility of the information being collected for managers to utilize. They also commented that questions were clear and easy to interpret. We had two Service staff who did not complete the pre-test of the survey after multiple contacts. Due to the internal reliability of respondents, there were no non-response bias concerns.

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

No gifts or payments will be given.

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

We do not provide any assurance of confidentiality. Information provided may be disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or the Privacy Act of 1974.

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 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.

We do not ask questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

- * **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.**
- * **If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens.**
- * **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here.**

We estimate that we will receive **100 annual responses** across both survey instruments totaling **25 annual burden hours (rounded)**. We estimate the annual dollar value of the burden hours is **\$1,062 (rounded)**. Average response time for each information collection was estimated by asking 10 Service employees to complete both surveys as if they were members of the hunting public.

We used Table 1 from the of Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [News Release](#) USDL-22-2307, March 17, 2023, Employer Costs for Employee Compensation—December 2022, to calculate the cost of the total annual burden hours. Table 1 lists the hourly rate for all workers (individuals) as \$42.48, including benefits.

Requirement	Average	Average	Average	Average	Estimated	Hourly	\$ Value of
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	Number of Annual Respondents	Number of Responses Each	Number of Annual Responses	Completion Time per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Rate	Annual Burden Hours
Form 3-2557, "Hunter Participation Survey"							
Individuals	50	1	50	20 mins	17	\$ 42.48	\$ 722.16
Form 3-2558, "Spring Turkey Hunter Participation Survey"							
Individuals	50	1	50	10 mins	8	\$ 42.48	\$ 339.84
Totals:	100		100		25		\$ 1,062.00

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual non-hour cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected in item 12.)

- * The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life) and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information (including filing fees paid for form processing). Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.
- * If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.
- * Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government, or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.

There are no expected total annual non-hour costs to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information (see below for total cost to the Service).

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.

We estimate the annualized Federal cost for this information collection to be **\$26,704 (rounded)**. This includes survey development costs, as well as operation and maintenance costs. Burden hour costs include the creation of the survey lead by three service employees (non-recurring, already expended), the annual project oversight and coordination throughout the region by one Service employee, and data collection and data maintenance by multiple Service

employees at refuge stations. There are no external entity costs, data management fees, or reporting costs. The survey system used for this effort is already owned by the Service, incurring no costs for this effort.

We used Office of Personnel Management Salary Table [2023-HAR](#) to determine the annual wages and multiplied the hourly wage by 1.61 to account for benefits in accordance with BLS News Release [USDL-22-2307](#), March 17, 2023, Employer Costs for Employee Compensation—December 2022.

Task	Grade/Step	2023-HAR Hourly Rate	Fully Burdened Salary (Incl. Benefits)	Number of Positions	Hours per position	Total Costs
Survey Development	GS-13/05	\$ 60.10	\$ 96.76	3	40	\$ 11,611.20
Operation & Maintenance	GS-09/05	34.85	56.11	10	20	11,222.00
Project Oversight & Coordination	GS-13/05	60.10	96.76	1	40	3,870.40
TOTALS:					100	\$ 26,703.60

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments in hour or cost burden.

This is a request for a new control number.

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.

This information will be used for internal reporting and management purposes but there are no plans to write and distribute reports or publications.

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.

We will display the OMB control number and expiration date on the forms.

18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.