

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Implementation of Vessel Speed Restrictions to Reduce the Threat of Ship Collisions with North
Atlantic Right Whales
OMB Control No. 0648-0580

SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART B

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.

We are not employing any statistical sampling methods in this collection.

Appendix A. (Table 1, page 72) of NOAA Fisheries' North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Speed Rule Assessment reports that the number of unique vessels over 65 feet in length that traveled through active Speed Management Areas. Between 2014-2019, the universe of potential respondents for this whole collection ranged annually from 3,688-4,247. AIS data from recent years (2020-2023), shows similar numbers of unique regulated vessels >65 ft that transited in active SMAs annually, with a slight increase in recent years, with a total of 4,818 unique vessels in 2022-2023, 4,746 unique vessels in 2021-2022, and 4,417 unique vessels in 2019-2020. Most of the increase is attributable to additional pleasure vessels, sailing vessels, pilot vessels, and underdetermined vessels in comparison to 2014-2018 period.

The table below, from the Speed Rule Assessment, indicates the number of vessels per vessel category as reported in our AIS information. Based on this data, we calculated the potential respondent universe for our two target populations for the survey and focus group efforts requested in this PRA collection. As noted in our North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Speed Assessment, AIS is not required for pleasure vessels. However, a number of vessel owners choose to carry AIS and based on this data we documented a high of 292 unique pleasure vessels >65 ft that transited active SMAs during the 2017-2018 season. Additionally, we documented 765 pleasure vessels (>65 ft) that transited SMAs during inactive periods. It remains unclear how many vessels from these two periods are the same vessels. This has increased in recent years, and for example in the 2021-2022 season, a total of 413 unique pleasure vessels >65 ft that transited in active SMAs. Given that most pleasure vessels do not carry AIS tracking equipment these figures are considered an underestimate of the total number of pleasure vessels transiting SMAs. Based on USCG recreational vessel registration data along the east coast (ME to FL) there are 3,871 motorized (non-sailing) vessels >65ft in length and 35,608 motorized (non-sailing) vessels 40-65 ft in length registered in states adjacent to or near SMAs. A range between these numbers represents a better estimate of the likely universe of pleasure vessels that may transit active SMAs. To calculate the respondent universe of large ocean-going vessels, which are required to carry AIS, we used the annual totals for all vessel types that might fall under this category, which included Tanker, Bulk

Carrier, Container, Ro-Ro, General Cargo, Work Vessel, Research, Undetermined, Other, and Other Cargo. This potential respondent universe ranged annually from 2,745 to 2,850.

	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Tanker	743	707	730	686	671
Bulk Carrier	704	742	651	606	700
Container	549	555	535	598	601
Ro-Ro	331	320	315	302	304
General Cargo	307	327	367	386	391
Passenger (Cruise)	38	42	35	38	37
Fishing	487	530	533	451	187
Towing/Pushing	330	355	339	332	338
Pleasure	267	292	241	238	192
Sailing	83	89	97	76	78
Other Passenger	50	56	55	49	26
Dredging	24	27	23	18	19
Work Vessel	46	37	32	29	26
Research	19	22	16	23	22
Pilot	5	4	4	5	3
Pollution Control	3	2	4	3	3
Undetermined	73	86	74	73	55
Other	56	52	49	41	33
Other Cargo	2	2	0	1	2
Total Number	4117	4247	4100	3955	3688

The previous information collection approvals include logbook entries, which are required of vessels that employ a safety deviation from the mandatory speed restrictions. The number of respondents needing to use this exception was estimated at 3,263 annually, per the previously approved collections.

The specific method of sampling for the pleasure vessels/large yachts target population will begin by gathering any publicly available mariner owner/operator information (e.g., email or phone number) by contacting local boating businesses, yacht clubs, and harbor masters to solicit boater interest and contact information for boaters who operate in portions of the north Atlantic right whale migration route, specifically in the SMAs or areas known to become DMAs. We will then create a database of potential respondents that includes all contact information collected. To administer the electronic survey, each person in the database will be contacted and invited to participate. We anticipate that all respondents in this group will have access to electronic devices that will allow them to participate since as of 2021, 85% of Americans owned a smart phone and 75% own a computer (Pew Research Center 2020). Additionally, we anticipate that those in our target population will have high annual incomes (due to the high expenses related to owning and operating a pleasure vessel) and Americans with higher incomes are very likely to own a smartphone (96% of Americans with annual incomes of \$75,000 or higher own a smartphone in 2021) (Pew Research Center 2020). Additionally, accessibility to internet access has increased for vessels, including satellite access, through companies such as Starlink. It is expected that options for offshore internet and/or cellular access will continue to increase.

We aim to collect 500 surveys from the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Region (Maine to Virginia) and 500 surveys from the Southeast Region (North Carolina to Florida) to ensure that we capture diverse and

myriad views, while accounting for the fact that we may receive responses from boaters who do not qualify as respondents for our target population. The initial survey, completed by Azura, Consulting LLC, received 79 full responses from all regions: 29 from the Northeast, 19 from the Mid-Atlantic, and 31 from the Southeast region.

The specific method of sampling for large ocean-going vessels target population will be done by distributing invitations to commercial vessel operators to participate in a single focus group. Participation in a focus group will only be open to current commercial vessel operators who have transited through SMAs and/or DMAs at least once. NMFS staff indicated that responses from commercial operators might be more nuanced regarding ability to comply, based on previous engagements with this audience segment at port meetings. Due to these nuances, NOAA NMFS believes that focus groups are the most effective method for reaching this target population. It is understood that focus groups will not allow for a statistically representative sample population of ocean-going vessels, however because we are not employing statistical analysis we feel that the benefits of the nuanced, detailed, and specific information generated from the focus groups is worthwhile and necessary. We plan to conduct 8 focus groups of 5-8 members each in 8 locations near the Seasonal Management Areas (SMAs). Although there are 10 SMAs, 3 of these are located off Massachusetts, so we believe that we can target users of these SMAs by conducting one focus group in Boston. The other anticipated focus group locations are as follows: Narragansett, Rhode Island; Cape May, New Jersey or Wilmington, Delaware; Norfolk, Virginia; Morehead City/Beaufort, North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; and Jacksonville, Florida.

We anticipate a response rate of approximately 80%, based on average online survey response rates and the measures we have taken to boost the response rate (Saleh et al. 2017). On average, online surveys garner a response rate of approximately 20-39%. Under the initial survey conducted by Azura Consulting LLC in 2022, a total of 94 percent of people who clicked on the survey link began the survey although not all surveys were finished. Given that the online survey was distributed broadly using electronic fliers, a QR code, a survey link and/or an infographic, the actual response rate is unknown, therefore we still anticipate an approximate 80% response rate. This initial survey was disseminated in 2022, and was open for 179 days, from January 10, 2022, until July 7, 2022. The online survey was distributed using electronic fliers, a QR code, a survey link, and/or an infographic. All or some of these materials were sent to individuals who participate in boating activities (for work or leisure), businesses, and organizations related to boating, social media, and websites. Under the initial phase of the survey, a total of 166 total responses were received. The information collected will help us to improve the effectiveness of the programs in place, and recognize where additional outreach is needed. We hope to disseminate additional surveys in the upcoming years.

We have designed our survey to be relatively short (less than 20 minutes to complete), use clear and simple language, and selected question types that are less mentally taxing. Each individual contacted is believed to have an interest in the results of this study, and therefore could have a strong motivation for participating. Additionally, the following tactics to increase response rate will be used: phone calls and emails to potential surveyors found via research of local/regional charters, businesses, retailers, yacht clubs, and other organizations who may have boat operators who meet the criteria for this survey and dissemination of survey information and the survey link via social media posts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), online newsletters, online forums, and printed posters/handouts.

We intend to address and reduce potential response bias for both target populations by using the following strategies: ensure all participants know that their answers/input will be anonymous, distribute surveys and focus group invitations across multiple and diverse platforms, keep surveys and focus groups as brief as possible, and communicate with participants the possible ways their input will be used.

Copies of correspondence include: email and phone call transcript (Supplemental Information A), and survey flyer. Copies of all correspondence are included with this submission.

Information Collection	Type of Respondent	# of Respondents/year (a)
Safety deviation logbook entry (previously approved)	Vessel operators needing to use the safety deviation (already approved information collection)	3263
Electronic Survey (previously approved)	Pleasure Vessels/Yachts	1000 (500 from the Northeast and 500 from the Southeast portions of the range) 334 annualized
(500/ Focus Group (previously approved)	Commercial Operators	80 27 annualized

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

- Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,
- Estimation procedure,
- Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,
- Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and
- Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

We will not be conducting any statistical analyses on collected information. The research design that we propose to use borrows from the fields of marketing (i.e., Theory of Planned Behavior) and environmental psychology to encourage responses that can illuminate why people choose to comply or not with speed rules (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002; O’Byrhim and Parsons 2015; Drymon and Scyphers 2017; Acuña-Marrero et al. 2018; Montes et al. 2018). While our data collection instrument differs between the target audiences, the design of each is rooted in this methodology.

Neither target population will employ stratified sampling.

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 data collected will not be used for statistical analyses. The collected data will be inspected, transformed, and grouped in order to inform and improve messaging of educational outreach materials regarding collisions between the North Atlantic Right Whale and vessels. Due to the intended use of the data, we do not rely on a statistically rigorous sample size in order to achieve study goals.

In order to maximize the quality of the data collected, we will employ steps to address potential non-response issues. These include contacting participants prior to distribution of data collection materials

through phone calls and emails to potential surveyors found via research of local/regional charters, businesses, retailers, yacht clubs, and other organizations who may have boat operators who meet the criteria for this survey and dissemination of survey information and the survey link via social media posts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), online newsletters, online forums, and printed posters/handouts.

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.

In the initial survey conducted by Azura Consulting LLC, a total of nine pilot surveys were conducted before the survey was launched to the public. The pilot surveys resulted in minor revisions to survey language and logistics, with no major revisions to the content or questions within the survey. We will use results from the pilot survey and initial survey efforts conducted by Azura, Consulting LLC to refine collections of information, minimize burden, and improve utility, and no new testing is anticipated.

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.

The following individuals have contributed or commented on the study design and/or data collection materials.

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Supplemental Information

A. Copy of email and phone transcript used to contact potential participants.

Large whales are in danger from unintentional boat strikes along the US east coast. Azura is conducting a study to better understand boater knowledge and impressions of programs designed to reduce the likelihood of these collisions. This information will help us to improve the effectiveness of these programs and recognize where additional public outreach is needed. We hope to disseminate the survey during summer 2021.

We are looking for:

1. Individuals interested in taking a pilot survey to test the quality and clarity of the survey. These individuals have currently or in the past have operated a vessel within 20 nautical miles of New York, New York and/or Savannah, Georgia. They don't necessarily need to have operated a vessel 35 feet, but helpful if they have. We would need the following information so that we can disseminate a link to the online survey when available, which should be the last week of April.

- a. Email Address
 - b. Phone Number to text the survey link if they would prefer that to email.
2. Individuals interested in taking the survey who currently or in the past have operated a 35 feet or larger vessel within 20 nautical miles of New York, New York and/or Savannah, Georgia. We would need the following information so that we can disseminate a link to the online survey when it's available:
 - a. Email Address
 - b. Phone Number to text the survey link, if they would prefer that to email.
 3. Businesses and individuals that would be willing to disseminate the survey announcement to people who currently or in the past have operated a 35 feet or larger vessel within 20 nautical miles New York, New York and/or Savannah, Georgia. Here are some possible ways that you can help us get the survey information out to the public.
 - a. Email
 - b. Social Media Posting (e.g., post on your Facebook, Twitter, etc. accounts)
 - c. Phone calls/Personal conversation
 - d. Posters/signs at a place of business

We would need the business or individuals' email address or other contact information so that we can send the survey announcement to them when it's ready to go. We are hoping to reach one thousand boaters who operate in these waters; so, if possible, we would appreciate a rough estimate of the number of people that might be reached by each method you are willing to use. For example, if you agree to post the survey announcement to your business' Facebook page, then please let us know how many followers your page has so we have an idea of how many people may see this announcement.

B. Copy of Survey Flyer



The flyer features a background image of a boat's interior with wooden paneling and a white curved structure. The text is overlaid on a dark teal background.

We care about what you think.

Have you piloted a large pleasure vessel off the east coast of the U.S.? We are looking for participants to help us with a survey on boater knowledge!

To participate, please click the link below or scan the QR code.

www.NOAArightwhalesurvey.com

Your time is precious, so we've created a brief online questions to help us understand interactions between boaters and whales. Your answers can help a larger initiative to prevent collisions between vessels and whales. Information from this survey will help us to improve effectiveness of programs and recognize where additional public outreach is needed.

QR Placeholder

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