

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Southeast Region Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and Related Requirements
OMB Control No. 0648-0544

Abstract

The NMFS, Office of Law Enforcement, Southeast Enforcement Division is submitting this request for a revision and an extension of a currently approved information collection. Pursuant to proposed rule 0648-BM98, the changes proposed to this collection are the elimination of the current paper-based “Vessel Monitoring System Mobile Transceiver Unit (MTU) Power-Down Exemption Request for Vessels in the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery” to be replaced with an online form submission. The online form also includes the addition of two data elements; the email address of the submitter, and an option for the submitter to identify themselves as the “permit holder” or “vessel operator”.

Additionally, the change proposes to eliminate the current requirement for vessel owners to submit the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Installation and Activation Certification for the Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico form.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act authorizes the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) to prepare and amend fishery management plans for any fishery in Federal waters under their respective jurisdictions. NMFS and the Gulf Council manage the reef fish fishery in the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) under the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico. NMFS and the South Atlantic Council manage the fishery for rock shrimp in the South Atlantic under the FMP for the Shrimp Fishery in the South Atlantic Region.

The FMPs and the implementing regulations contain several specific management areas where fishing is restricted; enforcement for which is most effectively conducted using VMS technology. The information collected on the soon-to-be-eliminated “Vessel Monitoring System Installation and Activation Certification for the Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico” form provides NMFS assurance that vessels are compliant with the requirements to install and activate an approved VMS unit. The requirement for vessel owners to install a VMS unit properly will remain in regulation, but there is little utility to requiring vessel owners to submit a form attesting to their compliance. Accordingly, we no longer seek to require that documentation. Information collected on the current “Vessel Monitoring System Mobile Transceiver Unit (MTU) Power-Down Exemption Request for Vessels in the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery” form and online “Power Down Exemption Request form” provide information that allows NMFS to exempt a vessel from the VMS reporting requirement under specific criteria.

Information collected in fishing activity declarations is used to identify fishing activities, necessary for law enforcement operational planning, so law enforcement will know in real time, with what fishing activities the vessels are engaged.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) authorizes the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) to prepare and amend fishery management plans (FMPs) for any fishery in federal waters under their respective jurisdictions. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the Gulf Council manage the reef fish fishery in the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) under the Reef Fish FMP. NMFS and the South Atlantic Council manage the fishery for rock shrimp in the South Atlantic under the Shrimp FMP.

Owners and operators of federally permitted Gulf reef fish and South Atlantic rock shrimp vessels must have installed and use a functional, NMFS approved satellite-linked vessel monitoring system (VMS) unit on their vessels. NMFS requires specific types of data submissions and agency notifications through VMS. In addition, NMFS requires a functional VMS unit on the vessel to renew a Gulf reef fish permit. VMS regulations applicable to the Gulf reef fish fishery and South Atlantic rock shrimp fishery may be found at 50 CFR § 622.28 and §622.205, respectively. The FMPs contain several area-specific regulations where fishing is restricted or prohibited in order to protect habitat or spawning aggregations, or to control fishing pressure. Unlike size, bag, and trip limits, where the catch can be monitored on shore when a vessel returns to port, area restrictions require at-sea enforcement. However, at-sea enforcement of offshore area restrictions is difficult due to the distance from shore and the limited number of patrol vessels, resulting in a need to improve enforceability of area fishing restrictions through remote sensing methods. In addition, all fishing gears are subject to some area fishing restrictions. Because of the sizes of these areas and the distances from shore, the effectiveness of enforcement through over flights and at-sea interception is limited. An electronic VMS allows a more effective means to monitor vessels for intrusions into restricted areas. As a further aid to law enforcement officials, prior to departure for each trip, each vessel owner or operator must report their planned fishing activity, and the gear on board the vessel.

The VMS provides effort data and significantly aids in enforcement of areas closed to fishing. To fish for or possess Gulf reef fish or South Atlantic rock shrimp in or from the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), a vessel owner or operator subject to the requirements for a VMS must allow NMFS, the United States Coast Guard (USCG), and their authorized officers and designees, access to the vessel's position data obtained from the VMS. Installation and Activation forms provide assurance to data integrity, and power down exemption data provides flexibility to industry while giving Law Enforcement tools to ensure data for fishing activity is collected

The requirements for these data collections are specified as follows:

- Position Data collection: VMS regulations applicable to the Gulf reef fish fishery is listed in 50 CFR 622.28, VMS regulations applicable to the South Atlantic rock shrimp fishery are listed here: 50 CFR 622.224(b)(1)(i)(C), 50 CFR 622.205
- Collection of fishing trip declaration data: 50 CFR §§ 622.28(e)
- Installation and Activation Certification: VMS regulations applicable to the South Atlantic rock shrimp fishery may be found at 50 CFR §622.205.
- Power Down Exemption data: 50 CFR § 622.28(d)

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.

Item #	Requirement	Statute	Regulation	Needs and Uses
1	Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Installation and Activation Certification For the South Atlantic Rock Shrimp Fishery		50 CFR 622.205(b)	Used by the public to verify installation of their required unit. Used by the NMFS to confirm that the unit was properly installed, necessary to ensure data reliability.
2	The owner or operator of the vessel applies for and obtains a valid letter of exemption from NMFS OLE VMS personnel as specified in the NOAA Enforcement Vessel Monitoring System Requirements for the Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico.		50 CFR 622.374(b)(5)(iv)(D)	Used by the public to request authorization to turn off their VMS unit Used by NMFS to track vessels authorized to turn off their VMS units—without know who is authorized to turn off their unit, we cannot identify unauthorized powerdowns.

Use of VMS by commercial Reef Fish vessels and South Atlantic Rock Shrimp vessels provides several important functions. Specifically, the FMPs contain several area-specific regulations where fishing is restricted or prohibited in order to protect habitat or spawning aggregations, or to control fishing pressure. Unlike size, bag, and trip limits, where the catch can be monitored on shore when a vessel returns to port, area restrictions require at-sea enforcement. However, at-sea enforcement of offshore area restrictions is difficult due to the distance from shore and the limited number of patrol vessels, resulting in a need to improve enforceability of area fishing restrictions through remote sensing methods. In addition, all fishing gears are subject to some area fishing restrictions. Because of the sizes of these areas and the distances from shore, the effectiveness of enforcement through over flights and at-sea interception is limited. An electronic VMS allows a more effective means to monitor vessels for intrusions into restricted areas. Utilizing VMS provides effort data and significantly aids in enforcement of areas closed to fishing.

As a further aid to law enforcement officials, prior to departure for each fishing trip, each commercial reef fish vessel owner or operator must submit a “declaration” that details declare report their planned fishing activity, and the gear on board the vessel.

Every federally permitted commercial Reef Fish vessel is required to have a VMS unit on and properly functioning at all times, even when docked, 7 days a week for 24 hours a day, and transmit once per hour unless the vessel has an approved power down exemption (PDE). The Power Down Exemption (PDE) request is required only from commercial Reef fish vessels wishing to turn off their VMS. The form is available via online application or hardcopy form. To submit a PDE request online, vessel owners access this website: https://grunt.sefsc.noaa.gov/apex/fer/r/fer_forms/power-down-request. A qualified marine electrician must install the VMS hardware on vessels with Reef fish vessels.

Information collected on the online PDE request form “Vessel Monitoring System Mobile Transceiver Unit (MTU) Power-Down Exemption Request for Vessels in the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery” form provides information that allows NMFS to exempt a vessel from their VMS reporting requirement under specific criteria. The data collected via the online Power Down Exemption Request form is the same as on the existing paper format, with the planned addition of submitter email address and a

checkbox to allow the user to identify themselves as either the vessel owner or operator. The addition of email address collection is to allow NMFS to send confirmation of the PDE approval to the requester's email address, and the identification of the requester as either the vessel owner or vessel operator is because the regulations limit PDE submission to only those two roles.

Similarly, vessels with a valid federal South Atlantic Rock Shrimp permit are required to have an on and properly functioning VMS unit whenever the vessel is on a trip in the South Atlantic. The VMS must transmit once per hour unless the vessel has entered a NMFS defined area in which case the VMS unit reporting rate will be increased to once every 5 minutes. If the vessel departs the area, the VMS unit reporting rate will resume transmitting once per hour.

Another requirement of the South Atlantic Rock Shrimp fishery is the completion and submission of the statement certifying compliance with the installation and activation checklist. The installation and activation checklist is required from each commercial South Atlantic Rock Shrimp vessel that obtains a VMS unit, at the time the VMS unit is installed. This form provides assurance to NMFS Law Enforcement that the unit was properly installed on the vessel. Only a VMS unit that NMFS has approved for use in the South Atlantic rock shrimp fishery may be used, and the VMS unit must be properly registered and activated with an approved communications provider for the vessel. A qualified marine electrician must install the VMS hardware on South Atlantic Rock Shrimp vessels.

Additionally, when installing and activating the NMFS-approved VMS unit, the South Atlantic Rock Shrimp vessel owner or operator must: (1) follow procedures indicated on the VMS Installation and Activation Certification checklist for the applicable fishery; (2) submit a statement certifying compliance with the checklist, as prescribed on the checklist; and (3) submit a vendor-completed installation certification checklist. These materials are available from and must be submitted to the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), Southeast Region, St. Petersburg, FL 33701; phone (800) 758-4833 or (727) 824-5347.

NMFS will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Although the information collected is not expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications. Should NMFS decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to Section 515 of Public Law 106-554.

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.

Position Reports

The VMS transmits all position reports electronically and submits the reports automatically when the unit is powered up.

Position data is sent automatically by the VMS units at a frequency of one transmission per an hour, unless the vessel has entered a NMFS-defined buffer zone of one nautical mile around areas with fishing

restrictions. Specifically, a vessel with a valid commercial vessel permit for rock shrimp that possesses rock shrimp that transits Oculina Bank HAPC will increase the position reporting frequency to once every 5 minutes. This report increase happens automatically, and is designed to provide law enforcement with data necessary to enforce HAPC restrictions.

Installation and Activation

The Installation and Activation Checklist for South Atlantic Rock Shrimp is available from NOAA OLE, Southeast Region by calling (800) 758-4833 to request the forms be sent by mail or email.

The agency is looking into options to create an online form for the installation and activation certification, but current budget levels prohibit such development.

Power Down Exemption Requests

The Power Down Exemption may be submitted online through https://grunt.sefsc.noaa.gov/apex/fer/r/fer_forms/power-down-request. Approved PDE requests are provided to the requester automatically and immediately, thus avoiding lengthy postal delivery delays. Requesters may print a screenshot of the online approval, and with the addition of email address data collection, a copy of the approval can be sent via email to the requester.

Trip Declarations

In order for a vessel to fish for or possess Gulf reef fish or South Atlantic rock shrimp in or from the exclusive economic zone (EEZ), prior to departure for each trip, each vessel owner or operator must report their planned fishing activity, and the gear on board the vessel. Fishermen may report changes to fishing activity either via VMS form or through a NMFS call-in system at (888) 219-9228.

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 Question 2

Position data collected by VMS units, power down exemption requests, installation and activation certification documentation, and trip declarations are not collected by any other government dataset.

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

Because all respondents are considered small businesses, separate requirements based on size of business have not been developed. NMFS only requests the minimum data to meet the current and future needs of fisheries management and permitting programs from all applicants.

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.

The VMS units provide vessel characteristic, fishing activity data and enforcement information to increase compliance in the fisheries. The approved VMS provides automatic recording of positions at hourly intervals, and more frequently under certain circumstances, as described in the response to Question 2. A less frequent recording of positions would provide ineffective monitoring and not achieve

the Gulf Council and South Atlantic Councils' intended benefits. Additionally, reporting of fishing activity aids law enforcement in identifying violations of area fishing restrictions depending on the fishermen's declaration of vessel activity.

If Power Down Exemptions requests are not collected that will mean either that there are no allowable situations in which a VMS may be turned off, which would be a significant burden and inconvenience to the industry; or that VMS units can be powered down without submitting a request, which would mean that NMFS has no way to identify unauthorized power downs, making the overall data collection required to support the fishery management ineffective.

NOAA is reviewing the need for the Rock Shrimp VMS installation certification requirement. If this collection is no longer needed, NOAA will submit a separate revision request to remove this requirement.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

VMS position data is collected automatically, every hour, unless otherwise exempted. Collection on a quarterly basis would negate the real-time reporting necessary for enforcement operations.

Powerdown Exemption data is also a real-time collection, designed to allow vessels to be exempt from the hourly position data. Requiring vessels to forecast their power down needs months in advance for a quarterly submission would significantly reduce the flexibility these exemptions provide to the industry.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications 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 describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

A proposed rule is being published concurrent with this information collection package. All comments relative to this information collection that are received in response to the proposed rule will be addressed in the final rule package.

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

There are no payments or other remunerations to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

As stated on the forms, all data that are submitted are treated as confidential in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1881a, et seq.) and NOAA Administrative Order 216-100.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or 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.

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

Information Collection	Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents/ year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
Annual VMS operation & maintenance	First-line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	858	1	858	2 hours	1,716	\$28.28	\$48,528.48
Installation and Activation / Checklist	First-line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	8	1	8	20 min	3	\$28.28	\$75.51
Physical Installation (purchase, setup, and installation oversight)	First-line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	135	1	135	5 hours	675	\$28.28	\$19,089.00
Power Down Exemption Requests	First-line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	324	1.34	434	3 min	22	\$28.28	\$615.09
Trip Declarations	First-line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	759	16	12,144	1 min	202	\$28.28	\$5,723.87
Totals				13,579		2,618		\$74,031.95

As of December 2023, there are 759 valid or renewable Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish permits and 99 permits for South Atlantic Rock Shrimp (South Atlantic EEZ), totaling 858 permitted vessels. The number of permitted vessels is assumed to also be the total number of respondents (858).

The hourly wage rate of \$28.28 was obtained from <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes451011.htm#st>. Note that fishing is lumped with farming and forestry. BLS does not produce estimates specific to fishing, and certainly not to specific fisheries or sectors thereof.

Annual Operation & Maintenance

The owners and operators of 759 Commercial Reef Fish vessels and 99 South Atlantic Rock Shrimp vessels will be affected by this information collection, and NMFS estimates that all of these vessels would have the burden of up to 2 hours for annual maintenance to their VMS. NMFS estimates a time burden of 1,716 hours for maintenance annually.

Power Down Exemption Requests

Based on the number of Power Down Exemptions submitted in 2021 and 2022, NMFS estimates that approximately 435 VMS power-down exemption requests will be made annually by approximately 324 owners and operators of Gulf reef fish vessels, which will require 3 minutes of burden time per response. The increase in the number of PDEs received in the last two years, as compared with

years prior, is a result of the increased programmatic outreach about the importance of power-down exemption requests. The annual total time burden to request VMS power-down exemptions is estimated to be approximately 21.75 hours (435 submissions x 3 min/submission).

Power Down Exemption (PDE) requests submitted per year

Year	Number of PDEs requests submitted	Number of unique vessels submitting one or more PDE requests
2021	436	293
2022	426	324
Estimate annual future PDE Submissions	435	324

Trip Declarations

Owners and operators of vessels with Gulf reef fish permits are required to notify NMFS at the beginning and end of trips. In 2022 vessels that submitted Trip Declarations submitted an average of 16 declarations. Therefore, NMFS estimates that approximately 12,144 trip declarations using the VMS unit will be made annually by 759 vessels with Gulf Reef fish permits. NMFS estimates that each trip declaration results in a burden of 1 minute to report fishing activity. Therefore, the total burden time for trip declarations is estimated to be 202.4 hours annually (759 vessels x 16 declarations per vessel x 1 min per declaration ÷ 60 min per hour = 202.4 hours).. NMFS does not require trip notifications by owners and operators of South Atlantic rock shrimp vessels (unless the vessel also has a Gulf Reef fish permit).

Collections resulting from Permit Transfers

The South Atlantic rock shrimp fishery is in a limited entry program, which means that NMFS does not issue any new permits. New entrants in the fishery must obtain a permit from an existing permit holder, and transfer it to their vessel. These transfers fall into two categories; transfer of a permit from one vessel to another vessel, and transfer of a permit to a new owner of the same vessel. For both types of transfer, the owner of the vessel receiving South Atlantic rock shrimp permit must submit a VMS Installation and Activation Certification checklist.

Additionally, for both Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish and South Atlantic Rock Shrimp permit transfers, the VMS unit must be properly registered and activated with an approved communications provider for the VMS unit. If the transfer is to a new vessel that does not already have a VMS unit installed, a qualified marine electrician must install a VMS unit on the vessel.

Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish and South Atlantic Rock Shrimp Permit transfers

	2020	2021	2022	Estimated annual future transfers
New Vessel Transfer	102	116	148	135
Gulf Reef Fish	97	111	141	129
Rock Shrimp	5	5	7	6
Same Vessel Transfer	35	32	52	42
Gulf Reef Fish	33	30	50	43
Rock Shrimp	2	2	2	2
Grand Total	137	148	200	180

Installation and Activation Certification and checklists

Based on the number and type of transfer transactions in the last several years, NMFS estimates that 8 South Atlantic Rock Shrimp permit transfers will occur. All transfers of South Atlantic Rock Shrimp permit will require submission of an Installation and Activation certification document. The estimated time burden for this activity is 20 minutes per response. Therefore, the time burden for this activity is 2.67 hours (8 responses x 20 minutes per response ÷ 60 min per hour = 2.67 hours).

Physical installation

Additionally, NMFS estimates that 75% of Gulf Reef Fish or South Atlantic Rock Shrimp permit transfers (~135) will involve transfer of a permit from one vessel to another vessel, which will require the installation of a VMS unit. The time burden for purchase, setup, and installation oversight is estimated at 5 hours per unit. Therefore, the time burden for this activity is 675 hours (135 responses x 5 hours per response = 675 hours). The total time burden associated with the installation and activation of VMS units is 677.67 hours (2.67 hours + 675 hours)

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).

Total VMS operational & maintenance costs

The recurring monthly operation costs associated with submitting 24 positions per day ranged from \$36 to \$54, with \$45 as an estimated average cost per month, or \$520 annually (\$45 x 12 months).

Power Down Exemption Requests

Power Down Exemption (PDE) requests are required only by commercial Reef Fish vessels that desire to turn off their VMS unit. Based on the number of PDEs requested in 2021 and 2022, NMFS estimates that 435 PDEs will be submitted annually. There is no cost to submit a PDE request. $435 \times \$0 = \0 .

Trip Declaration costs

Trip declarations are required from Commercial Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish vessels only (759 vessels). Some vendors include the cost of trip declarations as part of their monthly operation. Other vendors charge as much as an additional \$10 for 6 declarations in a month. NMFS estimates the average cost per trip declaration to be \$0.30. Estimates for the industry are an average of 16 trip declarations per vessel per year, resulting in an average additional cost of \$4.80 per vessel per year for trip declarations.

Physical Installation (Purchase of a VMS unit and physical installation by a qualified marine electrician.)

The initial purchase price of a VMS unit varies by vendor. VMS vendors were contacted as part of this analysis, with responses received from most, but not all. The purchase price for a VMS unit from the vendors who responded ranged from \$1,995 to \$3,195. The estimated average price of a new VMS unit is \$2,764, which annualized over an at least ten-year life span, represents a \$276.4 annual cost.

However, that annual cost does not consider the opportunity for the vessel owner to be reimbursed for up to \$3,100 for the initial purchase of a VMS unit. This reimbursement program is managed out of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission at <https://www.psmfc.org/program/vessel-monitoring-system-reimbursement-program-vms>. Funds are subject to availability, but the program has heretofore been able to reimburse all eligible vessel owners who requested reimbursement for their first-time purchase of an applicable VMS unit. If this reimbursement opportunity is considered, the annualized purchase cost is decreased to between \$0 and \$20, depending on which unit is purchased.

The requirement to hire a qualified marine electrician to install a VMS constitutes a startup cost, which will affect new vessel transfers. NMFS estimates 135 new vessel transfers per year. The average estimated cost to hire a qualified marine electrician is \$375, annualized over 10 years is \$37.50.

\$37.50 (annualized cost of installation by a qualified Marine Electrician)

+ \$20.00 (maximum annualized cost of a new unit, assuming PSMFC reimbursement)

= \$57.50 annualized cost per response.

Submission of Installation and activation forms.

The cost of the activity is the cost to mail the completed document to NFMS, estimated at \$0.66 per each.

There are no additional record keeping is required for these activities.

Information Collection	# of Respondents/ year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Cost Burden / Response (h)	Total Annual Cost Burden (i) = (c) x (h)
Annual operational VMS costs (position transmissions)	858	1	858	\$520	\$446,160
Installation and Activation / Checklist	8	1	8	\$0.66	\$5.28
Physical Installation (Annualized Purchase of a VMS unit + Annualized cost of hiring a marine electrician)	135	1	135	\$37.50 (electrician) \$20.00 (purchase)	\$7,762.50
Power Down Exemption Requests	324	1.3	435	0	0
Trip Declarations	759	16	12,144	\$0.30	\$3,643.2
TOTALS			13,580		\$457,570.98

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.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Oversight	ZA-343 - IV	225,000	50%		112,500
Other Federal Positions	3x ZS-1802 Band V Interval 2	297,000	100%		297,000
Contractor Cost					
Travel					7,000
Other Costs:					
TOTAL					416,500

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.

Information Collection	Respondents		Responses		Burden Hours		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	
Annual VMS Operation & Maintenance	858	901	858	901	1716	1802	South Atlantic Rock Shrimp and Gulf Reef Fish permits are under a limited entry program, and as such, no <i>new</i> permits are issued, and some attrition to the industry occurs every year. The reduced number of respondents reflects that attrition.
Installation & Activation / Checklist (Reef Fish)	0	145	0	145	0	593.3	The proposed amendment would eliminate the Installation and Activation Certification /Checklist requirement for the Gulf of Mexico Reef fish vessels, which were the majority of respondents.
Installation & Activation / Checklist	8	0	8	0	3	0	This IC previously combined the Installation & Activation / Checklist with the Purchase and Physical Installation of a VMS. This IC is being broken out for increased granularity.
Physical Installation (purchase, set up, & installation oversight)	135	0	135	0	675	0	The burden for purchase of a VMS unit and overseeing the work of a Marine Electrician were not considered independent of the Installation & Activation / Checklist in years past. The time burden for Marine electrician oversight is combined with the time burden of purchasing a new VMS unit, which are collectively estimated to be 5 hours per respondent
Power Down Exemption Requests	324	150	435	150	22	12.5	The increase in annual Power Down Exemption requests is thought to be a consequence of NMFS' increased outreach to participants, advising of the requirement to submit a Power Down Exemption request before turning off their VMS unit. Additionally, the switch from paper-based submissions to electronic submissions has reduced the time per response from 5 minutes to 3 minutes.
Trip Declarations	759	824	12144	13184	202	219.7	The reduction of the number of vessels with Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish permits, through attrition, reduces the number of declarations expected to be submitted by the fishery.
Total for Collection	2084	2020	13580	14380	2618	2627.5	
Difference	64		-800		-9.50		

Information Collection	Labor Costs		Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	
Annual VMS Operation & Maintenance	\$ 48,528.48	\$ 47,140.32	\$ 446,160.00	\$ 468,520.00	The reduced number of respondents results in a reduction of the labor and miscellaneous costs.
Installation & Activation / Checklist	\$ -	\$ 15,520.73	\$ -	\$ 45,515.50	This IC was broken up to provide increased granularity.
Installation & Activation / Checklist	\$ 75.51	\$ -	\$ 5.28	\$ -	Commercial reef vessels will no longer be required to submit this report, which significantly reduces the number of respondents. The miscellaneous costs represent postage charges.
Physical Installation (purchase, set up, & installation oversight)	\$ 19,089.00		\$ 7,762.50	\$ -	The miscellaneous cost is the annualized purchase cost of a new VMS unit (\$20) plus payment to the marine electrician (\$37.50).
Power Down Exemption Requests	\$ 615.09	\$ 327.00	\$ -	\$ -	
Trip Declarations	\$ 5,723.87	\$ 5,747.35	\$ 3,643.20	\$ 3,955.20	The reduced number of respondents results in a reduction of the labor and miscellaneous costs.
Total for Collection	\$ 74,031.95	\$ 68,735.40	\$ 457,570.98	\$ 517,990.70	
Difference	\$ 5,296.55		\$ (60,419.72)		

Pursuant to proposed rule 0648-BM98 the changes proposed to this collection are the elimination of the current paper-based “Vessel Monitoring System Mobile Transceiver Unit (MTU) Power-Down Exemption Request for Vessels in the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery” to be replaced with an online form submission. The online form also includes the addition of two data elements; the email address of the submitter, and an option for the submitter to identify themselves as the “permit holder” or “vessel operator”.

Additionally, the change proposes to eliminate the current requirement for vessel owners to submit the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Installation and Activation Certification for the Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico form.

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.

The results from this collection are not planned for statistical publication.

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.

The expiration date will be displayed on the power down form. The other information collections do not have forms associated.

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

The agency certifies compliance with 5 CFR 1320.9 and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3).