

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Recreational Landings and Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports
OMB Control No. 0648-0328

Abstract

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requests the approval of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for a revision and extension of the existing collection of information under OMB Control Number 0648-0328 for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Recreational Landings and Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports. The revision to this information collection package is due to modifications to the HMS reporting requirements that are being implemented by a proposed electronic reporting rulemaking (RIN 0648- BM23) and changes being implemented to the Maryland and North Carolina HMS catch card programs. The proposed electronic reporting rulemaking will modify several information collection requests (ICR), but its only modification to this ICR will be the removal of phone reporting as an option for HMS recreational landings and bluefin tuna catch reports, such that HMS permit holders will be required to use one of the existing electronic reporting options for their catch reports. This ICR is also being modified to reflect the state of Maryland's decision to transfer their state catch card program to an electronic format, and eliminate the requirement to place a fish tag on their catch, which will significantly reduce the time per response. Additionally, the State of North Carolina has decided to discontinue their state catch card program effective in April 2025, which will necessitate HMS permit holders to shift to using the existing Federal reporting options for their HMS catch reports. This ICR has been revised to reflect that shift in reporting burden.

Justification

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.

This request is for revision and extension of a previously approved information collection request (ICR) for Atlantic HMS open access permitted (HMS Angling, HMS Charter/Headboat, and Atlantic Tunas General and Harpoon category) vessels with recreational landings of Atlantic billfish, and swordfish, and bluefin tuna catch and dead discards. The revision to this ICR is due to modifications to the HMS reporting requirements that are being proposed by an electronic reporting rulemaking (RIN 0648- BM23) and changes being implemented to the Maryland and North Carolina HMS catch card programs.

The U.S. Secretary of Commerce is authorized to regulate fisheries for Atlantic HMS under the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (MSA; 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et. seq.*) and [ATCA](#) (16 U.S.C. 971 *et. seq.*), as amended. Under ATCA, the Secretary of Commerce is

required to promulgate regulations as may be necessary and appropriate to implement binding recommendations adopted by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). ICCAT requires the United States to collect biological statistics for research purposes for all HMS (including tunas, swordfish, billfish, and sharks) and establishes annual quotas that limit the overall U.S. bluefin tuna and swordfish catches, and U.S. recreational marlin landings. ICCAT also requires that data be collected on all sources of fishing mortality. ATCA specifically provides the Secretary of Commerce with the authority to “require any commercial or recreational fisherman to obtain a permit from the Secretary and report the quantity of catch of a regulated species” [16 U.S.C. 971(d)(c)(3)(I)]. Domestically, under the authority of the MSA, the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) was developed and implemented to manage Atlantic HMS fisheries and establish the framework for managing the U.S. quotas.

Timely access to recreational bluefin tuna catch data (e.g., landings and dead discards) and swordfish and marlin landings is vital to effectively monitor and manage the U.S. quotas for those species. This collection provides such access so that managers can implement appropriate measures to limit catch or landings as necessary. For example, fishing seasons may be closed when a designated limit is reached. This collection also allows NMFS to report the total catch of bluefin tuna and total landings of swordfish and billfishes annually to ICCAT, consistent with international obligations. Quota overages may require adjustments in future years under domestic regulations or result in penalties including reductions in future annual quota allocations through ICCAT.

This collection also includes mandatory reporting of bluefin tuna that are landed or discarded dead by recreational Angling category and commercial Atlantic Tunas General category, Atlantic Tunas Harpoon category, or HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders (i.e., vessel reporting). NMFS implemented catch reporting by vessels under Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP (HMS FMP) to better account for all sources of bluefin tuna fishing mortality as required by ICCAT. Catch data includes information about bluefin tuna that are caught and discarded dead as well as those that are landed.

Under this collection, fishermen (i.e., HMS vessel permit holders, or those required to hold such permits) in states other than Maryland have the option of using an internet website, or a smartphone app, to report their recreational landings of Atlantic swordfish, white marlin, blue marlin, or sailfish or their commercial or recreational catch of bluefin tuna. Prior to this revision, HMS permit holders also had the option to report their HMS catches via a designated phone line, but this option is being discontinued as part of a proposed electronic reporting rulemaking (RIN 0648- BM23). However, if a fisherman reports recreationally landing a bluefin tuna greater than or equal to 73" in length, NMFS may continue to call to verify reported information.

These data collection systems are in place for states along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico and the U.S. territories in the Caribbean. However, when a fish was landed in Maryland or North Carolina, state reporting stations were used to submit a state landings report (catch card) and obtain a fish tag. This ICR is being revised to reflect the fact that the State of Maryland will be transferring their state HMS catch reporting system from a paper-based catch card system to an electronic reporting system and will be eliminating the requirement for fish tags. Additionally, the State of North Carolina has announced their intention to discontinue their state HMS catch

card program entirely in April 2025, thus necessitating HMS permit holders in that state to transition to reporting their HMS catches via the existing federal reporting systems managed by NMFS. The associated burden estimates included within this ICR have been adjusted to reflect these changes. The State of Maryland reports these landings to NMFS on a bi-weekly (during the bluefin tuna season, June-October) basis, and submit final, complete, annual summary reports at the end of the year. The State of Maryland also requires landings of sharks to be reported via the Maryland landing system; this aspect of the collection is voluntary under Federal regulations.

In addition to changes highlighted above, the proposed electronic reporting rulemaking (RIN 0648-BM23) will also be modifying and expanding the logbook reporting requirements for HMS Charter/Headboat and Atlantic Tunas General and Harpoon category vessels, and mandating the use of electronic reporting platforms for all Atlantic HMS logbook-reporting programs (OMB Control No. 0648-0371). In the interest of reducing duplicate reporting burden, and advancing NMFS's One-Stop Reporting initiative, all electronic HMS logbooks will be designed to collect the data required to meet the bluefin tuna, billfish, and swordfish catch reporting requirements described in this ICR. However, at this time, we have elected to continue including reporting burden estimates for HMS Charter/Headboat and Atlantic Tunas General and Harpoon category permit holders within this ICR to ensure continued coverage for these catch reporting requirements while the agency implements and transitions these categories to regular logbook reporting. Failure to provide for a transition period between these reporting programs would undermine the agency's ability to successfully monitor the quotas and landings limits for the associated species, and hamper our ability to meet international reporting requirements and obligations to ICCAT.

2. 1 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.

This information collection applies to all recreational fishermen that land billfishes or swordfish along the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean; recreational fishermen that land sharks in the State of Maryland; and commercial or recreational fishermen who catch bluefin tuna with handgear. NMFS requires a report for each landing (i.e., individual fish) of billfish or swordfish from recreational fishermen, and a report for each bluefin tuna caught and landed or discarded dead by Angling category (recreational), General category, Harpoon category, and Charter/Headboat permitted fishermen.

NMFS uses the information collected to monitor and manage domestic fisheries and quotas for swordfish, bluefin tuna, sharks, and billfishes to comply with ICCAT limits and annual reporting requirements, and domestic law. NMFS also uses the information in stock assessments or in scientific studies as appropriate. Other states and agencies, including fishery management councils and interstate fishery management commissions, may use the data to coordinate with other fishery management programs. The information is also valuable for determining the geographic distribution of the catch and recreational landings of these species, which is an element of NMFS' domestic fishery management.

In lieu of the Federal collection above, for recreational landings of swordfish, billfishes, bluefin

tuna, and sharks in the State of Maryland, the angler must instead meet state requirements. Historically, these state requirements require the angler to complete a catch card at a state reporting station and affix a state tag to the landed fish. The program is in the process of transitioning to an electronic reporting program and will discontinue the use of landings tags. The state catch report requests the information identified below. The State of Maryland then summarizes this information and reports it to NMFS on a bi-weekly (June-October) basis. A complete summary report is presented annually to NMFS by the State.

The following information is collected on the Maryland catch cards:

Date is necessary for verification of landings information and for use in scientific studies of stock movements and domestic policy development. Species is necessary to categorize and account for the landing appropriately. Vessel name, registration # (state ID), permit holder's name, and Atlantic HMS Permit number (including Atlantic Tunas permit number) are necessary to verify that the angler has valid permits (state fishing license and HMS vessel permit), and to identify any fraudulent reporting. The permit holder's name, phone number, vessel name, and vessel identification number are collected with purchase and renewal of HMS vessel permits (OMB 0648-0327), and can be compared to the information entered on the catch card. Type of trip (private, charter, or headboat) is necessary to characterize the fishery for the development and analysis of regulatory actions. Was the fish caught during a tournament and tournament name are necessary to identify fish that would/should have already been reported through the tournament reporting collection (OMB 0648-0323) and avoid double counting. Fish size (length and/or weight) and, for sharks, sex, is necessary for use in scientific studies of stock life history (e.g., reproductive potential).

Recreational fishermen that land swordfish or billfish in a state other than Maryland, including the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, or recreational fishermen or commercial General or Harpoon category or HMS Charter/Headboat category fishermen that catch bluefin tuna in any state or federal waters must report their catch/landing via internet or smartphone app. If a recreationally-caught bluefin tuna greater than or equal to 73" is landed and reported, a follow-up call may be made by NMFS staff to the respondent to verify the submitted data.

In addition to the same information collected by the Maryland catch cards that is itemized above, the following information is also collected for bluefin tuna, swordfish, and billfish through the online reporting, and smartphone app systems: trip departure date and time; port and state of departure; trip end date and time; port and state of landing; fishing technique (deep drop, drift, troll, kite, or other); bait type (live, dead, lure, combination, or other); hook type ("J" hook or circle hook); approximate time hooked; approximate fight time; and number of releases for each species. Responses to each of these items provide trip and fishery-specific information for social, economic, and biological analyses, thereby enhancing NMFS' ability to gauge the impacts of regulations and demonstrate compliance with international requirements.

The information collected is disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. Please see Question 16 for more information on data dissemination and use. NMFS will retain control over personal information such as the angler's name and address and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with legal requirements and NOAA policy for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. The

information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a 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.

1This information collection is highly automated. Fishermen reporting recreational bluefin tuna, swordfish, or billfish in States other than Maryland, including the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, or reporting commercial bluefin tuna catch have the choice of reporting online, or with a mobile smartphone app. For-hire captains with federal electronic logbook reporting requirements can now also report their HMS catch via their logbook reports if they are using the SAFIS eTrips Mobile or Online systems. Maryland recreational catch cards are currently submitted in hard copy, but the State is in the process of transferring the program to an electronic reporting platform. The summary reports are electronically transmitted from the State to NMFS.

The landings report website (www.hmspermits.noaa.gov) is also used by NMFS to disseminate important regulatory information to fishermen, such as inseason fishery actions (e.g., fishery closures).

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.

This collection minimizes duplication or overlap with other information collections. 1NMFS is the Federal agency responsible for marine fisheries data collection and the management of Atlantic HMS fisheries. See Question 1 above for a detailed description on how NMFS coordinates with the Maryland catch card program. Further, as described in Question 2 of this Supporting Statement, reports ask if the fish were caught in a fishing tournament and, if so, what tournament. These questions are included to allow NMFS to identify fish that may have already been reported by a tournament operator through HMS tournament reporting (OMB 0648-0323). As described in question 3, NMFS has further worked to reduce duplicate reporting burden by collaborating with the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) to integrate HMS catch reporting into their SAFIS eTrips system which is commonly used for electronic for-hire logbook reporting. The agency is currently working to integrate HMS catch reporting into two other applications commonly used for electronic for-hire logbook reporting, GARFO's Fish Online and Bluefin Data's VESL program. As described in Question 1, the rulemaking revising this ICR will also be implementing electronic logbook reporting (OMB 0648-0371) for three of the permit categories with reporting requirements under this ICR. By integrating HMS catch reporting into the major platforms used to submit electronic logbook reports, NMFS will provide HMS permit holders with multiple options that will allow them to meet both requirements with a single report.

NMFS exercises a high degree of internal coordination between this collection and two other

long-term information collections from recreational fishermen: the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP fishing effort survey, OMB 0648-0652, and MRIP Access Point Intercept Survey, OMB 0648-0659) and the Large Pelagics Survey (LPS, OMB 0648-0380). MRIP is a general (dockside, telephone, and mail) survey of anglers fishing for all species, including HMS (tuna, billfish, swordfish, and sharks). MRIP sample sizes are typically too small to provide the catch estimate precision needed to manage many HMS fisheries. HMS anglers are specifically targeted by the LPS, which produces more precise estimates of HMS catch than the general MRIP survey, but not precise enough to replace the exact counts of the targeted HMS species, nor could it do so within 24 hours of landing. The HMS recreational reporting program overlaps with these surveys only minimally on the small percent of surveyed trips that resulted in bluefin tuna, billfish, or swordfish being landed. To the extent that overlap occurs (e.g., a person reporting via catch card or directly to NMFS is also selected for a dockside, mail, or telephone interview), the information is useful to assess compliance with the mandatory reporting requirement.

Bluefin tuna survey data and HMS recreational landings data are used for different purposes by fishery managers and stock assessment scientists. For billfish landings, several data sources are combined (MRIP, LPS, catch cards, tournament reports, and recreational (non-catch card) landings reports) but protocols are in place to identify double counting across programs. Therefore, data collected from other recreational programs are mostly used in a complementary manner along with HMS catch card and recreational reporting data.

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

All of the respondents are considered small entities. The collection is not expected to have a significant impact on them. Minimizing reporting burden on the public was one of the primary reasons for use of electronic reporting in this program. All reporting options (internet, smartphone app) are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No costs are associated with reporting on the internet or using the smartphone app. Reporting requires a minimal investment of time, is cost-free for the public, and can be performed at any public internet access site. The Maryland catch card program currently has reporting stations conveniently located in areas where these species are landed and will be transitioning to an electronic reporting platform that will be available for use anywhere and at any time of day.

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.

If the bluefin tuna catch portion of this collection were not conducted, NMFS would not be able to effectively monitor the amount of bluefin tuna landings and interactions, which are essential to keeping catch within the specified quotas. It is also essential for achieving domestic management objectives, including the goal of the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP and its amendments to better account for all sources of bluefin tuna fishing mortality.

If this entire information collection were not conducted, or were conducted less frequently, the United States could exceed quotas and be subject to ICCAT penalties, including reduction of the

nation's allocated catch quota, the potential imposition of trade restrictions, and other sanctions.

The stock assessments for these species, which provide the basis for domestic and international management decisions, would be less accurate without this information, since approximately 50 percent of the western Atlantic bluefin tuna quota and 30 percent of North Atlantic swordfish quota is allocated to the United States. Without close monitoring of these fisheries, the conservation and management objectives of MSA and ATCA could be jeopardized. Furthermore, it would be difficult for the United States to formulate domestic policy consistent with the MSA, which must be based on the best available scientific and socio-economic data. The information gathered in this collection is essential for NMFS in its preparation of documents such as Regulatory Impact Reviews and Environmental Impact Statements, as required under the MSA, National Environmental Protection Act, and other applicable laws during the formulation of domestic policy. Please also see the Question 7 of this Supporting Statement.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

OMB guidelines state that respondents should not be required to report information more often than quarterly. ¹The State of Maryland reports bi-weekly rather than quarterly. This frequency is a necessary component of a responsive management program. Each individual catch and/or landing must be reported, and if reports are not immediately accounted for, enforcement of this requirement would be difficult. Moreover, reports are needed on a per-trip basis to reduce the potential for recall bias and to prevent a build-up of backlogged reports. Frequent reports of state data are required to implement a responsive management program. Without frequent landings reports, NMFS would not be able to monitor seasonal harvest in a timely manner, and might be required to close seasons early to avoid excess harvest, or risk overharvesting ICCAT quotas, both of which could unnecessarily penalize U.S. fishermen.

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.

NMFS published a proposed rule (RIN 0648-BM23) in the *Federal Register* on September 6, 2024. Any comments received in response to this proposed rule will be addressed in the Supporting Statement submitted with the final rule package.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

¹No payments or gifts will be provided 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 in the Paperwork Reduction Act statements available for review on all electronic reporting venues and forms for this collection, it is NOAA policy to preserve the confidentiality of information submitted under this reporting requirement, except that NMFS may release such information in aggregate or summary form, such that individual identifiers are not disclosed ([NAO 216-100](#)). Information such as the number of registered tournaments, the species that they targeted, and the states in which they occurred is provided in the annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report, in FMP regulatory amendments, and in supporting documents made available to the public upon request. All other information submitted under this reporting requirement remains confidential, or is released only in aggregate or summary form such that individual identifiers (e.g., tournament operator’s name, phone number, postal address, and e-mail address) are not disclosed.

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.

1This collection does not include questions of a sensitive nature.

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

COMMERCIAL CATCH (bluefin tuna only)

All commercial bluefin tuna caught (e.g., landed or discarded dead) with handgear must be reported to NMFS. Potential respondents include the universe of individuals with HMS permits in the General category, Harpoon category, or Charter/Headboat category with a Commercial Sale Endorsement (Table 1).

Table 1. Universe of commercial HMS permit holders that would be required to report if they caught a bluefin tuna.

Permit Category	Number of Permit Holders in 2023
General	2,154
Harpoon	37
Charter/Headboat with commercial sale endorsement	2,006
TOTAL	4,197

Table 2 compares dealer landings data, which is an accurate census of total commercial bluefin tuna landings, with vessel reported landings data obtained under this information collection. Charter/Headboat and General category permit holder data were combined since landings are attributed to the same subquota. The requirement to report commercially landed bluefin tuna went into effect in 2015, and at the time of the 2016 renewal, compliance among the General category fishery was very low at around 14 percent. By the time this Information Collection Review (ICR) was renewed in 2019, compliance had increased another 50 percent to over 65 percent. Since then, compliance rates have remained stable, with the overall compliance rate currently sitting at approximately 69 percent (Table 2).

Table 2. Compliance with reporting requirements for landed fish during 2020.

Quota Category	Dealer Reports		Vessel Reports		% Compliance	
	No. of Bluefin Reported	No. of Fishermen	No. of Bluefin Reported	No. of Fishermen	% Fish Reported	% Fishermen Reporting
General	4,505	1,055	2,990	686	66.4	65.0
Harpoon	547	23	503	18	92.0	78.3
TOTAL	5,052	1,078	3,493	704	69.1	65.3

NMFS assumes that the reporting compliance for landed fish was the same for discarded fish, and estimated the number of reports for discarded fish by adding a 35% increase to the number of General category reports and 10% to the number of Harpoon category reports for discarded fish (Table 3).

Table 3. Estimated number of discarded fish estimated to be reported for each category. General and Charter/Headboat reported numbers were increased by 31 percent to account for under-reporting.

Permit Category	Dead Discards	
	Reported	Estimated
General & Charter/Headboat	21	28
Harpoon	0	0
TOTAL	21	28

Table 4 includes landings and estimated discards for each category for 2020. Landings numbers from 2020 were used to estimate potential burden instead of 2022 figures, as nearly 500 more bluefin tuna were landed in 2020. The number of landings and number of dead discards are added for each category to give the total number of responses. Reporting of most bluefin tuna caught by commercial handgear is expected to take approximately 5 minutes per report, whether completed via internet smartphone app. Catch for each category was added and multiplied by the 5 minutes it takes to complete a report for each fish, for an estimated total reporting burden of **5,080 responses and 423 hours**, affecting a total of potentially **4,595 permit holders (Table 1)**. However, in 2020 only **1,078 permit holders** successfully landed bluefin tuna commercially.

Table 4. Calculation of number of responses and reporting burden (hours) based on actual number of bluefin tuna landings and estimated numbers of dead discards.

Permit Category	Number of Bluefin Tuna Landed in 2020	Estimated Number of Bluefin Discarded Dead 2020	Projected Total Annual Catch (Number of Fish Landed + Number Discarded Dead) = Total Responses	Total Amount of Time (hrs) (5 mins per response / 60 min/ hour)
General & Charter/Headboat	4,505	28	4,533	378
Harpoon	547	0	547	46
TOTAL	5,052	28	5,080	423

RECREATIONAL CATCH

1Reporting of most recreationally caught (e.g., landed or discarded dead) bluefin tuna and/or landed swordfish and billfish is expected to take approximately 5 minutes per report, whether completed via internet or smartphone app. In the State of Maryland, filling out an electronic landing report is also expected to take approximately 5 minutes. Call-back verification for bluefin tuna greater than or equal to 73" is also expected to take approximately 5 minutes per landing. The number of respondents is calculated separately for bluefin tuna and billfish/swordfish. Numbers of respondents for all species landings in Maryland are calculated separately from all other states. Previous ICR also calculated responses for North Carolina separately, but with the state discontinuing their HMS catch card program effective in April 2025, this ICR will now count those reports with the rest of the states.

Bluefin Tuna

Recreational landings of bluefin tuna from 2000-2023 for the State of Maryland are given in Table 1. Each landing represents a single response as recorded via each State’s tag and report program. The year with the greatest number of landings (responses) in total for these states was 2001, and landings have been much lower since 2009 reflecting changes in the management of the recreational bluefin tuna fishery. NMFS used the data from 2018 for Maryland as proxies to provide a reasonable margin, which gives an estimated total of **807 potential responses**. This margin should account for any additional changes in future years.

$$(807 \text{ responses} \times 5 \text{ minutes/response}) \div 60 \text{ minutes/hour} = \mathbf{68 \text{ hours}}$$

The total number of bluefin tuna that could be landed or discarded dead based on the ICCAT-recommended U.S. quota is estimated to be 10,691 fish. This estimate is based upon weights of fish within the various bluefin tuna size classes using previous years’ landings data. Subtracting the adjusted total potential responses for the State of Maryland (807) from the U.S. quota, the total number of bluefin tuna that could be landed or discarded dead in other states is estimated to be 9,884 fish.

$$\text{Total U.S. Quota} - (\text{MD landings}) = \text{Catch (landings + dead discards) for all other states}$$

$$10,691 - 807 = 9,884$$

Table 5. Annual recreational landings of bluefin tuna in the Maryland catch card program (2000 – 2022).

YEAR	MD Landings (Number of Fish)
2000	1,247
2001	4,240
2002	2,329
2003	2,246
2004	3,549
2005	2,308
2006	1,163
2007	1,629
2008	1,271
2009	572
2010	423
2011	430
2012	190
2013	416
2014	372
2015	208
2016	584
2017	366
2018	807
2019	517
2020	10
2021	650
2022	26

The total number of bluefin tuna expected to be landed or discarded dead in all other states is equal to **9,884 responses**.

The number of respondents is estimated to equal the number of fish landed or discarded dead.

$$(9,884 \text{ responses} \times 5 \text{ minutes/response}) \div 60 \text{ minutes/hour} = \mathbf{824 \text{ hours}}$$

During the last three years, approximately 20 respondents have been called annually to verify information for bluefin tuna landed that exceed 73" in length. Verification takes approximately five minutes per response.

$$(20 \text{ responses} \times 5 \text{ minutes/response}) \div 60 \text{ minutes/hour} = \mathbf{2 \text{ hours}}$$

Swordfish and Billfish

Pursuant to ICCAT recommendation, the United States may recreationally harvest up to 250 blue and white marlin (combined) on an annual basis. In most years, the reported number of these fish landed has been significantly less than the 250 limit (**Table 6**); however, to allow for the full 250 marlin landing limit to be reported through this collection, NMFS is calculating burden based on a maximum of 250 marlin landings. Roundscale spearfish are included in the white marlin estimates because they are hard to distinguish from white marlin and landings data are likely a mix of the two species. Sailfish landings data must be reported to ICCAT annually. The United States has an ICCAT-recommended annual quota for swordfish, and a domestic incidental fishery annual quota for swordfish that includes recreational landings.

Table 6. Total and non-tournament recreational landings of billfish by year.

Year	Species									
	Blue Marlin		White Marlin		Roundscale Spearfish		Sailfish		Swordfish	
	Total	Non-Tourn.	Total	Non-Tourn.	Total	Non-Tourn.	Total	Non-Tourn.	Total	Non-Tourn.
2009	44	5	53	6	5	0	140	140	474	389
2010	28	3	72	5	19	0	192	185	331	285
2011	43	3	56	6	7	0	173	166	347	318
2012	63	18	30	7	4	0	184	163	415	386
2013	55	11	49	15	1	0	173	171	279	263
2014	54	5	42	6	2	0	118	113	304	281
2015	63	23	66	20	10	0	114	113	332	315
2016	80	17	60	14	22	1	114	114	500	458
2017	62	17	61	11	6	0	105	104	568	518
2018	90	15	78	27	20	0	98	94	661	619
2019	79	28	75	31	35	2	110	96	1,296	1,234
2020	74	22	95	19	66	0	50	50	940	872
2021	98	36	56	27	21	0	72	66	690	603
2022	100	32	38	14	12	1	84	81	960	848

Based on the recent fishing years that presented the greatest number of non-tournament landings, NMFS anticipates up to 1,419 swordfish and sailfish landings [1,234 swordfish (2019) + 185 sailfish (2010) = 1,419]. In order to ensure that our estimate is slightly higher to allow for a greater number of landings, 10 percent is added, giving an adjusted total of 1,561 potential responses (1,419 x 1.1 = 1,561). Therefore, NMFS estimates that a maximum of **1,811 responses** [(250 blue marlin + white marlin) + (1,561 swordfish + sailfish) = 1,811] could be required to report non-tournament recreational landings of swordfish and billfish.

The greatest number of swordfish and billfish landings reported through Maryland's catch card program came in 2020, with a total of 242 landings (Table 7). Adding 10% to this number equals about 266 potential reports of swordfish and billfish from these States' catch card programs. These 266 reports are subtracted from the total number of reports based on Table 6 to perform the separate burden hour estimate for the reports through the State catch cards:

$$(1,811 - 266 \text{ responses (all states - MDC)}) \times 5 \text{ minutes/response} \div 60 \text{ minutes/hour} = \mathbf{129 \text{ hours}}$$

(266 responses (MD catch cards) × 5 minutes/response) ÷ 60 minutes/hour = **22 hours**

129 hours (all states, excluding MD) + 22 hours (MD catch cards) = **151 hours**

Table 7. Total catch of billfish and swordfish recorded by the Maryland catch card program per year.

Year	MD
2009	82
2010	59
2011	40
2012	28
2013	40
2014	44
2015	51
2016	55
2017	62
2018	54
2019	168
2020	242
2021	88
2022	141

Sharks

The State of Maryland’s catch card program for sharks has been in place for several years now, and NMFS used those data to estimate the number of responses (Table 8).

Table 8. The number of sharks reported in Maryland’s catch card survey since it was implemented in 2013.

Year	Number of Sharks
2013	69
2014	87
2015	80
2016	97
2017	116
2018	85
2019	99
2020	77
2021	28
2022	9

Adding 10% to the largest number of sharks landed (2017) will account for potential future increases in numbers, and gives a total of **128 responses**.

$$1.10 \times 116 = 128 \text{ responses}$$

The Maryland catch cards for sharks will take the same amount of time to fill out as catch cards for billfish and bluefin tuna (less than 10 minutes).

(128 responses × 5 minutes/response) ÷ 60 minutes/hour = **11 hours**

Combined State Catch Card Reports

Across all species, NMFS estimates 1,568 total catch card reports will be submitted annually in Maryland (807 bluefin tuna + 266 swordfish and billfish + 128 sharks = 1,201).

State Summary Reports of Recreational Landings

In addition to the reporting burden on the part of anglers, it is expected that the State of Maryland will submit 12 bi-weekly reports (1 hour each) and an annual report (4 hours each) for a total of **13 responses** and **16 hours**.

Total Calculations

Table 9. Estimates number of annual respondents, responses, burden hours, and annual wage costs associated with HMS recreational landings and bluefin tuna catch reports.

Information Collection	Type of Respondent (e.g., Profession)	# of Respondents	Annual # of Responses / Respondent	Total # of Annual Responses	Burden Hrs / Response	Total Annual Burden Hrs	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs
Commercial Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports - General, Harpoon, and Charter/Headboat	Commercial Fishing Captains	1,078	5	5,080	0.083	423	\$29.23	\$12,374.03
Recreational Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports - Other states/territories reported landings and call-backs for fish over 73"	All occupations	9,904	1	9,904	0.083	825	\$31.48	\$25,981.49
Billfish and Swordfish Catch Reports	All occupations	1,545	1	1,545	0.083	129	\$31.48	\$4,053.05
Bluefin Tuna Landing Cards for MD	All occupations	807	1	807	0.083	68	\$31.48	\$2,140.64
MD swordfish and billfish landings reports	All occupations	266	1	266	0.083	22	\$31.48	\$692.56
Maryland Shark Landings Reports	All occupations	128	1	128	0.083	21	\$31.48	\$661.08
MD State Summary Reports	State Government	1	13	13	1.00	13	\$35.17	\$562.72
Totals				17,743		1,501		46,466

If other states pursue implementation of a catch card program, NMFS would continue to work cooperatively with individual states to select the program that best suits the needs of state and Federal fishery managers on a case-by-case basis. NMFS will submit a non-substantive change

request to OMB to correct burden estimates, if and when such changes take place for each state. If other states opt to use catch card programs, their report burden would double (10 minutes per response for catch cards versus 5 minutes per landing for telephone or internet reports), and there would be an increase of 34 hours per state due to the drafting of weekly and annual reports.

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).

1There are no costs in supplies or materials other than the time burden. Costs to states to distribute weekly and annual summary reports are covered in the grants to the states as indicated in Question 14.

Table 10. Estimated annual recordkeeping cost burden to respondents for HMS recreational landings and bluefin tuna catch reports.

Information Collection	# of Respondents	Annual # of Responses / Respondent	Total # of Annual Responses	Cost Burden / Respondent	Total Annual Cost Burden
Commercial Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports - General, Harpoon, and Charter/Headboat	1,078	5	5,080	\$0.00	\$0.00
Recreational Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports - Other states/territories reported landings and call-backs for fish over 73"	9,884	1	9,884	\$0.00	\$0.00
Billfish and Swordfish Catch Reports	1,545	1	1,545	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bluefin Tuna Landing Cards for MD	807	1	807	\$0.00	\$0.00
MD swordfish and billfish landings reports	266	1	266	\$0.00	\$0.00
Maryland Shark Landings Reports	128	1	128	\$0.00	\$0.00
MD State Summary Reports	1	13	13	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTALS			17,723		\$0.00

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.

Annual maintenance costs for the recreational reporting automated program are reimbursed by an administrative cost recovery fee included in Atlantic HMS permit fees, which are collected via the same system. While there will be no cost to the Federal government in the end, the budget breakdown for administration of the system is included in Figure 11.

The Federal share of the Maryland program is funded at a level of **\$47,000 per year**. It should be noted, however, that ancillary data may be collected by dockside staff in conjunction with catch cards (e.g., biological sample materials or dockside intercepts approved under 0648-0380); thus, these costs are not entirely attributable to the landings reports. Similar costs are anticipated for future cooperative catch card programs and the Federal share will depend on the amount and type of services contributed by the states.

Table 11. Estimated costs to the Federal government for administration of HMS recreational landings and bluefin tuna catch reports.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Oversight	ZA-IV	\$160,000	5.8%		\$9,280
Other Federal Positions	ZP-IV	\$150,000	5.0%		\$7,500
Other Federal Positions	ZP-IV	\$135,000	5.8%		\$7,830
Other Federal Positions	ZP-III	\$100,000	5.0%		\$5,000
Other Federal Positions	ZA-V	\$155,000	2.5%		\$3,875
Contractor Cost					\$613,350
Other Costs:					
State Grants for Catch Card Programs					\$84,000
Indirect Costs					\$30,861
FMS Collection Expense					\$97,849
TOTAL					\$859,545

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

Program changes: Program changes included 1) the elimination of the option to report HMS landings by phone, 2) the elimination of the North Carolina catch card program, which will require HMS permit holders in North Carolina to switch to reporting via the federal HMS catch reporting program, and 3) the reduction of the burden hours per response for respondents to the MD Catch Card program from 10 to 5 minutes due to their planned switch to electronic reporting, and the elimination of fish tags.

Program adjustments: The number of fish caught and number of permitted fishermen during recent years is used to estimate future responses and burden. Landings and catch varies from year to year. Additionally, reporting compliance has increased. However, there were no program adjustments to this submission as recent years saw fewer reports than the years used to estimate burden for the last revision.

Table 4. Estimated change or adjustment to annual reporting burden associated with HMS recreational landings and bluefin tuna catch reports.

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	
Commercial Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports - General, Harpoon, and Charter/Headboat	1,078	1,078	5,080	5,080	423	423	No change
Recreational Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports - Other states/territories reported landings and call-backs for fish over 73"	9,904	9,580	9,904	9,580	825	798	NC respondents shifting to federal reporting
Billfish and Swordfish Catch Reports	1,545	1,502	1,545	1,502	129	125	NC respondents shifting to federal reporting
Bluefin Tuna Landing Cards for MD	807	1,131	807	1,131	68	188	NC Catch Card program discontinued
MD swordfish and billfish landings reports	266	309	266	309	22	52	NC Catch Card program discontinued
Maryland Shark Landings Reports	128	128	128	128	21	21	No change
MD State Summary Reports	1	2	13	64	13	70	NC Catch Card program discontinued
Total for Collection	13,729	13,730	17,743	17,794	1,501	1,677	
Difference	-1		-51		-176		

Table 5. Estimated change or adjustment to annual reporting costs associated with HMS recreational landings and bluefin tuna catch reports.

Information Collection	Labor Costs		Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	
Commercial Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports - General, Harpoon, and Charter/Headboat	\$12,374.03	\$11,082.87	\$0.00	\$0.00	Update of hourly labor costs
Recreational Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports - Other states/territories reported landings and call-backs for fish over 73"	\$25,981.49	\$22,361.32	\$0.00	\$0.00	NC respondents shifting to federal reporting; Update of hourly labor costs
Billfish and Swordfish Catch Reports	\$4,053.05	\$3,505.92	\$0.00	\$0.00	NC respondents shifting to federal reporting; Update of hourly labor costs
Bluefin Tuna Landing Cards for MD	\$2,140.64	\$1,904.68	\$0.00	\$0.00	NC Catch Card program discontinued; Update of hourly labor costs
MD swordfish and billfish landings reports	\$692.56	\$616.22	\$0.00	\$0.00	NC Catch Card program discontinued; Update of hourly labor costs

Maryland Shark Landings Reports	\$661.08	\$588.21	\$0.00	\$0.00	Update of hourly labor costs
MD State Summary Reports	\$562.72	\$1,491.70	\$0.00	\$0.00	NC Catch Card program discontinued; Update of hourly labor costs
Total for Collection	\$46,466	\$41,551	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Difference	\$4,915		\$0		

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.

1 Collected information is published in stock assessments, management strategy evaluations, environmental impact statements, environmental assessments, reports to ICCAT, the annual HMS SAFE Report, and regulatory impact reviews. The data are presented in aggregate form, which cannot lead to the identification of individuals.

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.

All forms for this collection will display the OMB Control Number and expiration date.

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\(b\)\(3\)](#).