

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Green Sturgeon ESA 4(d) Rule Take Exceptions and Exemptions
OMB Control No. 0648-0613

SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A

Abstract

We request to extend a currently approved information collection for activities involving threatened green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*). In April 2006, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) listed the Southern Distinct Population Segment of North American green sturgeon (hereafter, “Southern DPS”) as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In June 2010, NMFS established protective regulations for the Southern DPS under section 4(d) of the ESA (“ESA 4(d) rule”). The ESA 4(d) rule prohibits “take” of Southern DPS fish, unless the take is covered by an exception or exemption. The ESA defines “take” as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. The ESA 4(d) rule established several exceptions and exemptions for activities including fish rescue and salvage, scientific research, habitat restoration, fisheries, and tribal resource management. To qualify for a 4(d) exception or exemption, entities prepare and submit information to NMFS to show that the proposed activity meets the criteria established in the ESA 4(d) rule. NMFS uses this information to (1) track the number of Southern DPS fish taken as a result of each action; (2) evaluate the effects of each action on the Southern DPS; and (3) determine whether additional protections, exceptions, or exemptions are needed. The information collection is necessary for NMFS to evaluate and minimize effects on the Southern DPS, while still allowing activities to occur.

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.

On April 7, 2006, NMFS listed Southern DPS green sturgeon as a threatened species under the ESA (71 FR 17757). On June 2, 2010, NMFS established protective regulations for the Southern DPS under section 4(d) of the ESA (75 FR 30714; codified in 50 CFR 223.210). The ESA 4(d) rule prohibits the import, export, possession, sale, delivery, carrying, transport, shipment, and receipt in interstate or foreign commerce, or for commercial activity, of Southern DPS fish. It also prohibits the “take” of Southern DPS fish, which the ESA defines as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

The ESA 4(d) rule also establishes several exceptions and exemptions for activities that can be conducted in a way that provides adequate protection for the Southern DPS.

- **Exceptions:** Under the 4(d) exceptions, NMFS allows take of Southern DPS fish for a specific list of activities through a relatively informal coordination process.
- **Exemptions:** Under the 4(d) exemptions, NMFS allows take of Southern DPS fish for activities covered under an ESA 4(d) program established and approved by NMFS through a formal

process.

The information collections described in this extension request are those associated with these 4(d) exceptions and exemptions. Typically, entities obtain take coverage through ESA section 7 consultations or ESA section 10 permits. The 4(d) exceptions and exemptions provide an additional option for entities to obtain ESA coverage for activities that may involve take of Southern DPS green sturgeon.

To qualify for a 4(d) exception or exemption, entities prepare and submit information to NMFS to show that the proposed activity meets the criteria established in the ESA 4(d) rule. NMFS uses this information to: (1) assess the effects of the take on the Southern DPS; (2) determine what category those takes fall under (i.e., excepted, exempted, prohibited); (3) confirm 4(d) exceptions or approve 4(d) exemption programs; and (4) monitor the take of Southern DPS fish through reporting. The information collections described in this extension request are necessary for NMFS to evaluate requests for 4(d) exceptions and exemptions, as well as to monitor the effects on the Southern DPS from activities being carried out under the 4(d) exceptions and exemptions.

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.

To comply with the ESA and the 4(d) rule, entities must obtain take coverage prior to engaging in activities involving take of Southern DPS fish. Take of Southern DPS fish may be covered under a 4(d) exception, a 4(d) exemption, an ESA section 7 incidental take statement (for Federal agency actions), or an ESA section 10 permit (for non-Federal actions). This information collection focuses on the information collections associated with the 4(d) exceptions and exemptions.

To be covered under a 4(d) exception or exemption, entities must meet specific criteria and reporting requirements as specified in the ESA 4(d) rule. NMFS requests specific information to ensure that proposed activities qualify under the 4(d) exceptions or exemptions. NMFS uses this information to: (1) evaluate the effects of each action on the Southern DPS; (2) confirm or approve requests for exceptions or exemptions; (3) track the number of Southern DPS fish taken as a result of each action; and (4) evaluate the effectiveness of protective measures and determine whether additional protections are needed or whether additional exceptions may be warranted. NMFS designed the criteria to ensure that activities and programs meeting the 4(d) exception or exemption criteria would adequately limit effects on threatened Southern DPS fish and would not appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery of the Southern DPS.

Below, we describe the information collections for the three types of 4(d) exceptions:

- (1) Exception for Federal, state, or private-sponsored research or monitoring activities:** The take prohibitions do not apply to certain research and monitoring activities that comply with required state reviews or permits and ESA section 7 requirements (if funded, permitted, or carried out by a Federal agency); are directed at the Southern DPS and not incidental to research or monitoring of another species; do not involve lethal take of Southern DPS fish; do not involve take of live mature adults within the California Central Valley during the spawning season (from March through June); do not involve the removal of any life stage of the Southern DPS from the wild for more than 60 minutes; and do not involve take associated with artificial spawning or enhancement activities for the Southern DPS.

- a. Respondents include local, state, and federal agencies; tribes; non-governmental organizations; academic researchers; and private organizations. The information may be submitted electronically or by mail.
- b. Entities are asked to provide the following to NMFS at least 60 days prior to the start of the research or monitoring activities: a description of the study objectives and justification; a summary of the study design and methodology; estimates of the total non-lethal take of Southern DPS fish anticipated; estimates of incidental take of other ESA listed species anticipated and proof of ESA coverage for those takes from NMFS or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); identification of funding sources; and a point of contact.
- c. Reporting requirements: If NMFS confirms that the activities meet the exception criteria, then the entity is to submit reports to NMFS on a schedule to be determined by NMFS staff. Reports are to include the total number of Southern DPS fish and any other ESA-listed species taken, evidence to support that take was non-lethal, and a summary of the project results.
- d. An example of non-lethal take would be capturing and tagging green sturgeon with PIT tags, external spaghetti tags, or internal and/or external acoustic tags, to track fish migrations. Evidence to support the claim that the take was non-lethal would include describing the methods used and their effects, measures implemented to reduce any negative effects, and post-release monitoring results.

(2) **Exception for emergency fish rescue and salvage activities:** The take prohibitions do not apply to emergency fish rescue and salvage activities that benefit the Southern DPS, comply with required state or other Federal reviews or permits, and are carried out by an employee or designee of NMFS or the USFWS, any Federal land management agency, or California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), or Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG).

- a. Respondents include state and federal agencies. Reports may be submitted electronically or by mail.
- b. Within 10 days after conducting the emergency rescue and/or salvage activities, those carrying out the activity are to submit a report to NMFS that includes, at a minimum, the number and status of green sturgeon handled, the location of the rescue and/or salvage operations, and the potential cause(s) of the emergency situation.

(3) **Exception for habitat restoration activities:** The take prohibitions do not apply to certain habitat restoration activities that aim to re-establish self-sustaining habitats for the Southern DPS and that comply with required state and Federal reviews and permits, including ESA section 7 requirements where applicable.

- a. Respondents include local, state, and federal agencies; tribes; non-governmental organizations; academic researchers; and private organizations. Information may be submitted electronically or by mail.

- b. At least 60 days prior to the start of restoration activities, entities are to provide a detailed description of the restoration activity to NMFS including: the geographic area affected; when activities will occur; how they will be conducted; an estimate of the level of take of Southern DPS fish that may occur and how that estimate was made; the severity of direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the activities on the Southern DPS; methods to be used to ensure that the likelihood of survival or recovery of the Southern DPS is not reduced; a plan for minimizing and mitigating any adverse effects on Southern DPS spawning or rearing habitat; a plan for effective monitoring and adaptive management; identification of funding sources; evidence that all state and federal regulatory requirements have been met; a pledge to use best available science and technology when conducting restoration activities; and a point of contact.
- c. Reporting requirements: If NMFS confirms that the activities meet the exception criteria, then the entity is to submit progress reports on a schedule to be determined by NMFS staff. The reports would include the total number of Southern DPS fish taken, whether the take was lethal or non-lethal, a summary of the project status, and a description of any changes in the methods used.

Below, we describe the information collections for the three types of 4(d) exemptions:

(1) **Exemption for Fishery Management and Evaluation Plans (FMEP):** Commercial and recreational fisheries activities would not be subject to the take prohibitions if conducted under a NMFS-approved FMEP. Green sturgeon are caught as bycatch in fisheries targeting other species, such as white sturgeon, salmon, and California halibut. To qualify for the exemption, fishery management agencies would submit an FMEP to NMFS. NMFS would evaluate the plan based on its completeness and potential effects on the Southern DPS. NMFS may approve or return the plan to the agency for revision. New or amended FMEPs would be published in the Federal Register for public comment prior to approval by NMFS. Decisions to withdraw approval for an FMEP would also be published in the Federal Register and subject to public comment. Fishery management agencies seeking take coverage under an FMEP would be required to submit in writing to NMFS:

- a. An FMEP that prohibits the retention of green sturgeon; sets maximum bycatch levels for green sturgeon; provides a biologically-based rationale demonstrating how the plan will protect the Southern DPS; establishes plans for monitoring and evaluation, enforcement, and education; and provides a timeframe for FMEP implementation. NMFS will use this information to evaluate the potential impacts of the plan on the Southern DPS.
- b. If NMFS approves the FMEP, the entity must submit biannual reports to NMFS, including the number of green sturgeon taken in the fishery and an evaluation and summary of the effectiveness of the FMEP. NMFS will use the reports to evaluate the FMEPs and recommend changes to improve their effectiveness.
- c. Fishery management agencies include CDFW, ODFW, WDFW, and ADFG. FMEPs and reports may be submitted electronically or by mail.

(2) **Exemption for Tribal Resource Management Plans (Tribal Plan):** Fishery harvest or other activities conducted by a tribe, tribal member, tribal permittee, tribal employee, or tribal agent would not be subject to the take prohibitions if conducted in compliance with an approved Tribal Plan. A Tribal Plan may be developed by one tribe or jointly with other tribes and may vary in

content. The Secretary of Commerce would consult with the tribe(s) on a government-to-government basis to provide technical assistance during development of a Tribal Plan. The tribe(s) would prepare a plan addressing fishery harvest or other activities and submit it to NMFS. NMFS would evaluate the plan based on its completeness and potential impact on the Southern DPS. Approval would also be contingent on a determination by the Secretary of Commerce that the Tribal Plan would not appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival or recovery of the Southern DPS. NMFS may approve the plan or return the plan to the tribe(s) for revision. New or amended Tribal Plans and the Secretary's determination on the plans would be published in the Federal Register for public comment prior to approval. Tribal Plans may be submitted to NMFS electronically or by mail.

- (3) **Exemption for State-sponsored scientific research or monitoring programs:** Scientific research or monitoring activities involving incidental or direct take of listed species are typically authorized under ESA section 7 or 10. Establishment of state-sponsored scientific research programs between state fishery management agencies and NMFS provides an additional method for researchers to obtain take authorization. The programs cover research and monitoring projects involving Southern DPS fish that are conducted, overseen, or coordinated by the state fishery management agency (i.e., CDFW, ODFW, WDFW, or ADFG). Such programs help streamline the process for researchers, state agencies, and NMFS by allowing the state agencies to maintain primary responsibility for coordination and oversight of research activities. Each year, researchers are required to submit research applications to the state fishery management agency. These agencies evaluate and determine which projects are eligible for inclusion under the program and then transmit approved applications to NMFS for review and approval. Researchers are not required to apply for a separate permit from NMFS. NMFS works with the state agencies to ensure authorized research involving listed Southern DPS fish is both coordinated and conducted in a manner that is adequately protective of the Southern DPS.
- a. Respondents include the following state agencies: CDFW, ODFW, WDFW, and ADFG. Information may be submitted electronically.
 - b. Under state-sponsored scientific research programs, the state agency is required to provide for NMFS' review and approval a list of all scientific research activities involving Southern DPS fish for the coming year. For each project, the state agency must provide an estimate of the total direct or indirect take of Southern DPS fish anticipated, a description of the study design and methodology, justification for take of Southern DPS fish and the techniques to be employed, and a point of contact.
 - c. Reporting requirements: Under approved state-sponsored scientific research programs, the responsible state agency must submit to NMFS an annual report that includes, for each project, a summary of the number of green sturgeon taken directly or incidentally and a summary of the results of the project. NMFS uses this information to evaluate the effects of the research program on the Southern DPS.

We anticipate that the FMEPs, Tribal Plans, and reports will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. 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. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of](#)

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.

The ESA 4(d) rule does not require any particular method of submission of materials, plans, or reports. For state 4(d) research programs in California, Oregon, and Washington, researchers may submit their research applications online through a NMFS web-based system (currently [APPS¹](#) or Authorizations and Permits for Protected Species). This system is used by NMFS and the state agencies and has helped streamline and standardize the application process for researchers.

Web-based systems have not been developed for the other exceptions or exemptions, but electronic submissions are allowed and encouraged. A summary of the criteria and instructions on how to apply for each exception or exemption is available in the final 4(d) rule and at 50 CFR 223.210. In addition, NMFS created a template that state agencies can request and use to develop an FMEP.

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.

The information collections for the 4(d) exceptions are unique to the ESA 4(d) rule for the Southern DPS. The exemptions for FMEPs, Tribal Plans, and state-sponsored scientific research programs under the ESA 4(d) rule for the Southern DPS were modeled after “limits” established in an ESA 4(d) rule for listed West Coast salmon and steelhead. Thus, the information collections for these exemptions are similar to those required under the ESA 4(d) rule for listed salmon and steelhead. Separate collections are necessary for the Southern DPS, however, because the plans and reports collected for listed salmon and steelhead do not address Southern DPS green sturgeon, and the specific criteria for the plans and reports differ from those under the ESA 4(d) rule for listed salmon and steelhead.

In some cases, Southern DPS green sturgeon have been or may be incorporated into existing programs. For example, NMFS has incorporated Southern DPS green sturgeon into existing state-sponsored scientific research programs developed for listed salmon and steelhead in California, Oregon, and Washington. This reduces the number of additional burden hours required by state fishery management agencies to implement the program for green sturgeon. Researchers with projects under the state research programs may also choose to submit one annual report covering green sturgeon and listed salmon and steelhead, rather than separate reports for each species.

In the absence of the 4(d) exceptions and exemptions, NMFS provides ESA coverage for the take of Southern DPS green sturgeon through ESA section 7 consultations or ESA section 10 permits. The ESA section 7 and section 10 processes have their own specific reporting requirements associated with them.

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

None of these collections would have a significant impact on small entities. Most of the affected entities are state, local, tribal or Federal government entities.

¹ <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

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 NMFS did not conduct the information collection, then NMFS would not be able to provide exceptions or exemptions to the take prohibitions. Entities would need to obtain take coverage under an ESA section 10 permit (for non-Federal agency actions) or an ESA section 7 consultation (for Federal agency actions). In some cases, the 4(d) exceptions and exemptions would provide a more streamlined process and facilitate coordination among the entities and NMFS. In addition, the protective measures implemented under the 4(d) programs may benefit other species.

The information collections under the 4(d) exceptions and exemptions serve several purposes, each of which is vital to NMFS' ability to protect and conserve the Southern DPS. The information collections: (1) inform NMFS of proposed actions that may result in take of Southern DPS fish; (2) allow NMFS to evaluate and provide feedback on the potential effects of actions on the Southern DPS and to determine whether the actions meet criteria under the exceptions or exemptions; and (3) provide NMFS with data and regular updates on the actions. Collecting program information or reports less frequently than described above would hinder NMFS' ability to evaluate the effects of the activities and programs on the Southern DPS and to respond in a timely matter, should changes be needed to provide additional protection for the species.

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

This information collection is consistent with OMB guidelines as follows:

- This information collection does not require respondents to report information to the NMFS more often than quarterly.
- This information collection does not require respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it.
- This information collection does not require respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document.
- This information collection does not require respondents to retain records for more than three years.
- This information collection is not connected with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study.
- This information collection does not require the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB.
- This information collection does not include a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use.

- This information collection does not require respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets or other confidential information.

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 Federal Register Notice published on May 4, 2026 (91 FR 23969) solicited public comments. No public comments were received.

NMFS solicited comments from 36 individuals at state and federal agencies, universities, and environmental consulting companies that have submitted information for 4(d) exceptions and exemptions. NMFS requested their views on the need for and practical utility of the data collected, the accuracy of the burden and frequency of collection, suggestions to minimize the burden, and ways to improve the clarity of instructions and forms. We received comments from two respondents, summarized below:

Comment on the 4(d) exception for emergency fish rescues and salvage:

The respondent stated that the initial fish rescue report took about 12 hours to develop, with subsequent reports taking about 6-8 hours to develop. The respondent stated that the information requested for the reports is appropriate and the instructions were straightforward and easy to understand. The respondent did not have any suggestions to reduce the burden, or to enhance the quality, utility, or clarity, of the information collection.

Comment on the 4(d) exemption for state-sponsored scientific research and monitoring:

The respondent stated that the application process for the state 4(d) research program only takes a few hours initially and less than an hour for annual renewals. The respondent stated that the forms and instructions are clear and easy to understand. The respondent did not have any suggestions to reduce the burden, or to enhance the quality, utility, or clarity, of the information collection.

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

No payments or gifts are associated with the information collections.

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 system of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

There are no assurances of confidentiality associated with these information collections. The information supplied would be a matter of public record.

Consistent with OMB's guidance implementing the Privacy Act of 1974, "an agency record-keeping system on firms it regulates may contain "records" (i.e., personal information) about officers of the firm incident to evaluating the firm's performance. Even though these are clearly "records" under the "control of" an agency, they would not be considered part of a system as defined by the Act unless the

agency accessed them by reference to a personal identifier (name, etc.). That is, if these hypothetical “records” are never retrieved except by reference to company identifier or some other nonpersonal indexing scheme (e.g., type of firm) they are not a part of a system of records.” NOAA believes that this guidance speaks directly to this scenario and suggests that while the information system certainly will collect and maintain personally identifiable information (PII), they are not maintained in a system of records.

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.

No questions of a sensitive nature are included in the information collections.

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)
Scientific research or monitoring exception	Researcher / Biologist	1	1	1	40	40	48	1,920
Scientific research or monitoring exception report	Researcher / Biologist	1	1	1	5	5	48	240
Emergency fish rescue reports	Biologist	1	1	1	20	20	48	960
Habitat restoration exception	Biologist	1	1	1	40	40	48	1,920
Habitat restoration exception report	Biologist	1	1	1	5	5	48	240
FMEP	Biologist	2	1	2	160	320	48	15,360
FMEP report (biannual)	Biologist	2	2	4	20	80	48	3,840
Tribal Plan	Biologist	1	1	1	160	160	48	7,680
State research program	Researcher / Biologist	3	1	3	40	120	48	5,760
Research applications	Researcher / Biologist	25	1	25	40	1,000	48	48,000
Research reports	Researcher / Biologist	25	1	25	5	125	48	6,000
Totals				65		1,915		91,920

The hourly wage rate of \$48 per hour is based on the average mean hourly wage rates from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (<https://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm>, accessed on April 24, 2026) for the following three occupation codes: (See May 2024 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for California; rates are generally representative of hourly wages for California, Oregon, and Washington states)

- 19-1023 Zoologists and Wildlife Biologists: \$43.97 per hour.
- 19-1029 Biological Scientists, All Other: \$58.17 per hour.
- 19-1031 Conservation Scientists: \$42.23 per hour.

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).

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection. The recordkeeping associated with this information collection involves maintaining electronic copies of the information submitted and is encompassed in the estimated hour burdens summarized under Question 12.

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.

The estimated annualized cost to the Federal Government, summarized in the table below, is based on the estimated time that employees spend to review and evaluate the information collections. For each 4(d) exception, a ZP-III employee would review the submitted information to verify that the activity meets the 4(d) exception criteria, summarize the information for review and approval by a supervisor (ZP-IV employee), and correspond with the respondent. For each 4(d) exemption, additional time would be needed for a ZP-III employee to analyze the submitted information and publish associated Federal Register notices. For each exception and exemption, a ZP-IV supervisor would evaluate the information before approving or disapproving the request.

We used the Commerce Alternative Personnel System (CAPS) Rest of U.S. locality rates to determine the base salary (<https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2026-01/CAPS%20Standard%20Pay%20Tables%202026.pdf>). The Rest of U.S. locality was used since NOAA staff are geographically dispersed. The upper bound for Interval 3 of each Pay Band was used as the base salary and a multiplier of 1.5 was used to calculate the loaded salary.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Oversight	ZP-III	\$174,543	38% (793 hrs)		\$66,326
Other Federal Positions	ZP-IV	\$245,271	3% (58 hrs)		\$7,358
Contractor Cost					
Travel					
Other Costs:					
TOTAL					\$73,684

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	
Scientific research or monitoring exception	1	5	1	5	40	200	Reduced number of respondents from 5 to 1 per year, based on the number over the past 3 years.
Scientific research or monitoring exception report	1	5	1	5	5	25	Reduced number of respondents from 5 to 1 per year, based on the number over the past 3 years.
Emergency fish rescue reports	1	1	1	1	20	20	No change
Habitat restoration exception	1	3	1	3	40	120	Reduced number of respondents from 3 to 1 per year, based on the number over the past 3 years.
Habitat restoration exception report	1	3	1	3	5	15	Reduced number of respondents from 3 to 1 per year, based on the number over the past 3 years.
FMEP	2	2	2	2	320	320	No change
FMEP report (biannual)	2	2	4	4	80	80	No change
Tribal Plan	1	1	1	1	160	160	No change
State research program	3	3	3	3	120	120	No change
Research applications	25	10	25	10	1,000	400	Increased number of respondents from 10 to 25 per year, based on the number over the past 3 years.
Research reports	25	10	25	10	125	50	Increased number of respondents from 10 to 25 per year, based on the number over the past 3 years.
Total for Collection	63	45	65	47	1,915	1,510	
Difference	18		18		405		

The number of respondents for two 4(d) exceptions (scientific research/monitoring and habitat restoration) was reduced based on the number of respondents for these exceptions over the past three years. The number of respondents for research applications and reports was increased from 10 to 25 per year, based on the number of respondents for this exemption over the past three years. These changes resulted in an overall increase in the number of respondents, responses, and burden hours (see table above). There are no changes to the estimated miscellaneous costs.

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.

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. For example, as described above under Question 2, FMEPs and Tribal Plans would be required to be published in the Federal Register for public comment prior to approval by NMFS. NMFS will post approved plans and reports on the NMFS web site. We expect the time schedule to vary for each FMEP and Tribal Plan. The time schedule would include a 30-to-60-day public comment period for the proposed FMEP or Tribal Plan, 90-to-135 days for a consultation under Section 7 of the ESA for NMFS' approval of the FMEP or Tribal Plan, and additional time for internal review and publication of the Federal Register notices. Information collected for the other 4(d) exceptions and exemptions may be used to inform consultations under Section 7 of the ESA and 5-year status review updates for the Southern DPS. These documents are publicly disseminated.

NOAA NMFS West Coast Region 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. 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.

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 agency plans to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all instruments.

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