



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Electronic Monitoring Systems for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

The Department of Commerce will submit the following information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, on or after the date of publication of this notice. We invite the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. Public comments were previously requested via the Federal Register on October 19, 2022, during a 60-day comment period. This notice allows for an additional 30 days for public comments.

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

Title: Electronic Monitoring Systems for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

OMB Control Number: 0648-0372.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Request: Regular

Number of Respondents: 132

Average Hours Per Response: 4 hours for initial VMS installation; 5 minutes per VMS initial activation checklist; 2 minutes per hail-out/hail-in declaration; 6 hours for initial electronic monitoring installation; 1 hour for camera boom installation; 5 minutes for pelagic longline and greenstick bluefin tuna catch records; 1 minute for dockside review of bluefin tuna catch records; 1 hour for electronic monitoring data retrieval.

Burden Hours: 2,697

Needs and Uses: Vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and other electronic monitoring systems collect important information on fishing effort, catch, and the geographic location of fishing effort and catch for certain sectors of the Atlantic HMS fleet. Data collected through these systems are used in both domestic and international fisheries management, including for law enforcement, stock assessments, and quota management purposes. Atlantic HMS vessels required to use VMS are pelagic longline, bottom longline (directed shark permit holders in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia), and gillnet (directed shark permit holders consistent with the requirements of the Atlantic large whale take reduction plan requirements at 50 CFR 229.39.(h)) vessels. In addition to VMS, pelagic longline vessels are also required to have electronic monitoring systems to monitor catch and account for bluefin tuna interactions, and, when appropriate, monitoring the harvest of shortfin mako sharks.

NMFS Office of Law Enforcement monitors fleet adherence to gear- and time-area restrictions with VMS position location data. Gear restricted areas and time-area closures are important. Atlantic HMS management tools that have been implemented to reduce bycatch of juvenile swordfish, sea turtles, and bluefin tuna, among other species. Electronic monitoring data from the pelagic longline fleet are used by NMFS to accurately monitor bluefin tuna catch by the pelagic longline fleet, to ensure compliance with Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ) limits and requirements, and to ensure that the Longline category bluefin tuna quota is not over-harvested. Additionally, electronic monitoring is used to verify disposition of retained shortfin mako sharks, when retention is allowed, consistent with binding international agreements. VMS reporting of bluefin tuna catch is used to monitor IBQ allocations in real-time.

Atlantic HMS fisheries are managed under the dual authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and the Atlantic Tunas Conservation Act (ATCA). Under the MSA, management measures must be consistent with the National Standards, and fisheries must be managed to maintain optimum yield, rebuild overfished fisheries, and prevent overfishing. Under ATCA, the Secretary of Commerce shall promulgate

regulations, as necessary and appropriate, to implement measures adopted by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

Affected Public: Businesses or other for-profit organizations (vessel owners).

Frequency: VMS reports at the start and end of each trip; VMS set reports at the end of each day of fishing; EM data retrieval after every other trip, unless the hard drive is full after the first trip.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

Legal Authority: Under the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is responsible for management of the Nation's marine fisheries. NMFS must also promulgate regulations, as necessary and appropriate, to carry out obligations the United States (U.S.) undertakes internationally regarding tuna management through the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA, 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*).

This information collection request may be viewed at reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. Find this particular information collection by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review - Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function and entering either the title of the collection or the OMB Control Number 0648-0372.

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