



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; Northeast Region Observer Providers Requirements

AGENCY: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of information collection, request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), invites 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. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment preceding submission of the collection to OMB.

DATES: To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before (insert date 60 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER).

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov. Please reference OMB Control Number 0648-0546 in the subject line of your comments. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Travis Ford, Fishery Policy Analyst, 978-281-9233, travis.ford@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This request is for an extension of a currently approved information collection.

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) has the responsibility for the conservation and management of marine fishery resources. Much of this responsibility has been delegated to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Under this stewardship role, the Secretary was given certain regulatory authorities to ensure the most beneficial uses of these resources. One of the regulatory steps taken to carry out the conservation and management objectives is to collect data from users of the resource. Regulations at 50 CFR 648.11(g) require observer service providers to comply with specific requirements in order to operate as an approved provider in the Atlantic sea scallop (scallop) fishery. Observer service providers must comply with the following requirements: submit applications for approval as an observer service provider; formally request observer training by the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program (NEFOP); submit observer deployment reports and biological samples; give notification of whether a vessel must carry an observer within 24 hours of the vessel owner's notification of a prospective trip; maintain an updated contact list of all observers that includes the observer identification number; observer's name mailing address, email address, phone numbers, homeports or fisheries/trip types assigned, and whether or not the observer is "in service." The regulations also require observer service providers submit any outreach materials, such as informational pamphlets, payment notification, and descriptions of observer duties as well as all contracts between the service provider and entities requiring observer services for review to NMFS/NEFOP. Observer service providers also have the option to respond to application denials, and submit a rebuttal in response to a pending removal from the list of approved observer providers.

Regulations at § 648.11(k)(2) require that limited access, limited access general category individual fishing quota, and Northern Gulf of Maine scallop vessels notify NMFS prior to the beginning of a scallop trip to facilitate the deployment of at-sea observers. Previously, vessels either called or email to notify NMFS of an upcoming scallop trip. NMFS will be adding a new

method for notification called the Pre-Trip Notification System (PTNS). The integration of the scallop notification requirement into the PTNS helps standardize observer operations between fisheries and modernize reporting systems. The PTNS is a mobile-friendly website that is more sophisticated and flexible than the aging interactive voice response technology. The change to the PTNS does not affect determination of scallop coverage rates or the compensation analysis. There are no changes to the requirements vessels must abide by if selected to carry an observer, such as equal accommodations, a harassment-free environment, and other safety requirements. This change is not expected to impact the burden response time, but NOAA will continue to monitor use of this new tool, and will update the collection if it results in any burden changes at our next renewal. These requirements allow NMFS/NEFOP to effectively administer the scallop observer program.

II. Method of Collection

The approved observer service providers submit information to NMFS/NEFOP via e-mail, fax, or postal service.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0546.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension and revision of a currently approved information collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organization.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 622.

Estimated Time Per Response: Application for approval of observer service provider, 10 hours; applicant response to denial of application for approval of observer service provider, 10 hours; observer service provider request for observer training, 30 minutes; observer deployment report, 10 minutes; observer availability report, 10 minutes; safety refusal report, 30 minutes; submission of raw observer data, 5 minutes; observer debriefing, 2 hours; biological samples, 5

minutes; rebuttal of pending removal from list of approved observer service providers, 8 hours; vessel request to observer service provider for procurement of a certified observer, 25 minutes; vessel request for waiver of observer coverage requirement, 10 minutes; observer contact list updates, 5 minutes; observer availability updates, 1 minute; service provider material submissions, 30 minutes; service provider contracts, 30 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 6,320.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$60,545.

IV. Request for Comments

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Sheleen Dumas,

*Department PRA Clearance Officer,
Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs,*

Commerce Department.

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