



## 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; Surfclam /Ocean Quahog Individual Transfer Quota (ITQ) Administration

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 July 14, 2025, 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:* Surfclam /Ocean Quahog Individual Transfer Quota (ITQ) Administration

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0240.

*Form Number(s):* None

*Type of Request:* Regular submission [extension of a current information collection].

*Number of Respondents:* 180 unique respondents.

*Average Hours Per Response:* ITQ permit application form, review of a pre-filled form for renewing entities, ITQ transfer form, 5 minutes each; 1 hour to complete the ITQ ownership form for new applicants and 30 minutes for the application to shuck Surfclams and ocean quahogs at sea. The requirements under the paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) protocol are based on the number of vessels that land Surfclams or ocean quahogs and the number of trips taken into the area.

*Total Annual Burden Hours:* 194 hours.

*Needs and Uses:* This request is for an extension of a currently approved collection associated with the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Greater Atlantic Region manages these fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Northeastern United States through the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council prepared the FMP pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). The regulations implementing the FMP are specified at 50 CFR part 648.

The recordkeeping and reporting requirements at §§ 648.74, 648.75, and 648.76 form the basis for this collection of information. We request information from surfclam and ocean quahog individual transferable quota (ITQ) permit holders to issue ITQ permits and to process and track requests from permit holders to transfer quota share or cage tags. We also request information from surfclam and ocean quahog ITQ permit holders to track and properly account for surfclam and ocean quahog harvest shucked at sea. Because there is not a standard conversion factor for estimating unshucked product from shucked product, NMFS requires vessels that shuck product at sea to carry a NMFS-approved observer on board the vessel to certify the amount of these clams harvested. This information, upon receipt, results in an efficient and accurate database for management and monitoring of fisheries of the Northeastern U.S. EEZ.

Georges Bank has been closed to the harvest of Surfclams and ocean quahogs since 1990 due to red tide blooms that cause paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). We reopened a portion of the Georges Bank Closed Area starting in 2012 under certain conditions. We request information from surfclam and ocean quahog ITQ permit holders who fish in the reopened area to ensure compliance with the Protocol for Onboard Screening and Dockside Testing in Molluscan Shellfish. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the commercial fishing industry, and NMFS developed the PSP protocol to test and verify that clams harvested from Georges Bank continue

to be safe for human consumption. The National Shellfish Sanitation Program adopted the PSP protocol at the October 2011 Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference.

*Affected Public:* Individuals and Business or other for-profit organizations.

*Frequency:* Frequency varies from collection to collection (e.g., annual, per trip, as requested by the public).

*Respondent's Obligation:* Mandatory.

*Legal Authority:* Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq*, Section 303).

This information collection request may be viewed at [www.reginfo.gov](http://www.reginfo.gov). Follow the instructions to view the 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](http://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 0648-0240.

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Commerce Department.*

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