

(Responsible Party: Frederick Scharf, Ph.D.), 601 South College Road, Wilmington, NC 28403, proposes to modify Permit No. 23200. The permit, originally issued on January 31, 2020 (85 FR 7978; February 12, 2020), authorizes researchers to conduct scientific research on adult, sub-adult, and juvenile Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon to determine their abundance, distribution, habitat use, and migration dynamics in the coastal rivers and estuaries of North Carolina basins (Cape Fear, Neuse, Tar/Pamlico, Roanoke/Chowan). Researchers may capture Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon using gill nets, trammel nets, or trawls, measure, weigh, mark (PIT, Floy), biologically sample (tissue), anesthetize, acoustically tag, and photograph/video sturgeon prior to release. The permit holder requests authorization to (1) increase the number of adult/subadult Atlantic sturgeon for capture, anesthetize, acoustically tag, mark (PIT, Floy), biologically sample (tissue), measure, weigh, and photograph/video from 20 to 40, annually, in the Cape Fear, Neuse, and Tar/Pamlico River systems, and (2) conduct sampling of Atlantic sturgeon ELS using egg mats and collect up to 100 ELS annually in each authorized system. The permit is valid through January 25, 2025.

*File No. 25864:* The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (Responsible Party, Gregg Poulakis, Ph.D.), Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, 585 Prineville Street, Port Charlotte, FL 33954, requests a permit to take smalltooth sawfish (U.S. Distinct Population Segment) in Florida waters and elsewhere within the species' range. The applicant is proposing to conduct studies, monitoring smalltooth sawfish to develop conservation and protective measures and ensure the species' recovery. Researchers are requesting to capture adult and sub-adult and juvenile animals and then measure, weigh, tag (*i.e.*, internal or external acoustic, satellite, archival, PIT, and rototag), sample (*i.e.*, genetic, blood, muscle biopsy), and photograph prior to release. The applicant also requests to have access to salvaged animals and parts taken throughout the species range and to import and export parts and samples for analysis, archival and future study. The permit would be valid for 10 years from the date of issuance.

Dated: October 6, 2021.

**Julia Harrison,**

*Chief, Permits and Conservation Division,  
Office of Protected Resources, National  
Marine Fisheries Service.*

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## 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; Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Vessel Information Family of Forms

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 April 21, 2021, during a 60-day comment period. This notice allows for an additional 30 days for public comments.

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

*Title:* Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Vessel Information Family of Forms.

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0595.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Request:* Regular (extension of a currently approved collection).

*Number of Respondents:* 225.

*Average Hours per Response:* Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Area Endorsement Application: 60 minutes; Foreign Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Form: 90 minutes; International Maritime Organization (IMO) number application: 30 minutes.

*Total Annual Burden Hours:* 43.

*Needs and Uses:* The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act (WCPFCIA; 16 U.S.C. 6901 *et seq.*) and U.S. implementing regulations (50 CFR 300 Subpart O) authorize that all member States maintain and provide to the Commission on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (Commission or WCPFC) a list of vessels flagged by the member State and (1) authorized by the member State to be used for fishing for highly migratory fish stocks (HMS) on the high seas in the WCPFC Area, or (2) authorized by other States to be used for

fishing for HMS in their areas of jurisdiction in the WCPFC Area, and to maintain and provide for each vessel on that list certain information on its characteristics and its owner and operator.

Vessels in the first category already provide most of the required information under existing laws and regulations. All such vessels must be documented by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) or be state-registered and must hold a valid High Seas Fishing Permit (issued under the authority of the High Seas Fishing Compliance Act (HSFCA)). Under these existing documentation/registration and permitting requirements, the vessel owner or operator must comply with information collection requirements that fulfill most of the needs under the WCPFCIA. This information collection requirement serves to collect the few pieces of information required under the WCPFCIA that are not already collected via existing mechanisms, and a form customized for this category of vessels is used.

Vessels in the second category already provide information as part of the USCG documentation or State registration processes, but such vessels do not need to hold High Seas Fishing Permits (unless they also fish on the high seas), so they will not necessarily be submitting the information collected via that permitting process. This information collection requirement serves to collect the pieces of information required under the WCPFCIA that are not already collected via existing mechanisms, and a form customized for this category of vessels is used.

Under a 2013 Commission decision, an additional piece of information that the United States must provide to the Commission for both categories of vessels (but only for those whose tonnage is at least 100 gross register tons (GRT) or 100 gross tons (GT)) is the vessel's IMO number. An IMO number, also known as an IMO ship identification number, is a unique number issued for a ship or vessel under the ship identification number scheme established by the International Maritime Organization. Once issued, an IMO number will remain with the vessel for its life, regardless of changes to the vessel's name, flag, ownership, or other attributes. This information collection requirement serves to collect information based on a decision of the Commission made under Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2013-10, which requires each member of the Commission to ensure that IMO numbers are issued for the two above

listed categories of vessels. To satisfy this WCPFC requirement, NMFS requires that the owner of each subject vessel request and obtain an IMO number, which they can do by submitting certain information about the vessel and its ownership and management to the administrator of the IMO ship identification number scheme, which is a private third party not associated with the United States government or any other government. Although NMFS does not collect this information directly, the requirement to submit the information to the third party is covered by this information collection.

**Affected Public:** Business or other for-profit organizations; individuals or households.

**Frequency:** The information included in both the *WCPFC Area Endorsement application* and *Foreign EEZ form* is collected once every five years. The information collected to obtain an IMO number is a one-time collection.

**Respondent's Obligation:** Mandatory.

**Legal Authority:** WCPFCIA; 16 U.S.C. 6901 *et seq.*

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 0648–0595.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

*Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.*

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## 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; North Pacific Observer Program

**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 December 13, 2021.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at [Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov](mailto:Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov). Please reference OMB Control Number 0648–0318 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 Gabrielle Aberle, 907–586–7228.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Abstract

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Regional Office, is requesting renewal of a currently approved information collection that contains requirements for the North Pacific Observer Program (Observer Program). A slight revision is requested to change the title of the collection from "Alaska Observer Program" to "North Pacific Observer Program."

Section 313 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1862) authorizes the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), in consultation with NMFS, to prepare a fishery research plan for the purpose of stationing observers and electronic monitoring

(EM) systems to collect data necessary for the conservation, management, and scientific understanding of the commercial groundfish and Pacific halibut fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) management areas. The Observer Program is implemented by regulations at subpart E of 50 CFR part 679, which authorize the deployment of observers and EM to collect information necessary for the conservation and management of the BSAI and GOA groundfish and halibut fisheries. Under the Observer Program, observers and EM systems collect fishery-dependent information used to estimate total catch and interactions with protected species. Managers use this data to manage groundfish and prohibited species catch within established limits and to document and reduce fishery interactions with protected species. Scientists use this data to assess fish stocks, provide data for fisheries and ecosystem research and fishing fleet behavior, assess marine mammal interactions with fishing gear, and characterize fishing impacts on habitat.

All vessels and processors that participate in federally managed or parallel groundfish and halibut fisheries off Alaska (except catcher vessels delivering unsorted codends to a mothership) are subject to Observer Program requirements and assigned to one of two categories: (1) The full observer coverage category, where vessels and processors obtain observer coverage by contracting directly with observer providers; or (2) the partial coverage category, where NMFS, in consultation with the Council determines when and where observer coverage is needed. Some vessels and processors may be in full coverage for part of the year and partial coverage at other times of the year depending on the observer coverage requirements for specific fisheries. Funds for deploying observers on vessels in the partial coverage category are provided through a system of fees based on the gross ex-vessel value of retained groundfish and halibut. This observer fee is assessed on all landings by vessels that are not otherwise in full coverage. The observer fee is approved under OMB Control Number 0648–0711.

Information in this collection is submitted by observer provider companies and owners and operators of vessels and processors subject to Observer Program requirements. Information submitted by owners and operators includes information on owner identification, vessels, observer coverage category, deck safety, the EM system, fishing trips, and fishing