

Smith, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Fisheries Statistics Division, 4700 Avenue U, Galveston, TX 77551, 409-210-1817, or [rebecca.smith@noaa.gov](mailto:rebecca.smith@noaa.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Abstract

This request is for an extension of a current information collection.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) authorizes the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) to prepare and amend fishery management plans for any fishery in waters under its jurisdiction. NMFS manages the commercial shrimp fishery in Federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) under the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf. The electronic logbook (ELB) regulations for the Gulf shrimp fishery may be found at 50 CFR 622.51(a)(2). The ELB is a device that records the position of the vessel every ten minutes. The tracks of the vessels can be examined to determine when and where shrimp trawling is occurring.

As of May 1, 2023, there are approximately 1,319 valid or renewable Federal permits to commercially harvest shrimp from the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the Gulf. Monitoring shrimp vessels, operating together with many other fishing vessels of differing sizes, gears types used, and fishing capabilities, is made even more challenging by seasonal variability in shrimp abundance and price, and the broad geographic distribution of the fleet. ELBs provide a precise means of estimating the amount of shrimp fishing effort. Using ELBs to estimate fishing effort serves an important role to help estimate bycatch in the Gulf shrimp fleet.

##### II. Method of Collection

The ELB unit automatically collects fishing effort data on a Secure Digital (SD) card. Twice per year the NMFS Galveston Laboratory mails replacement SD cards to the permit holders. The card in the ELB unit must be removed by the shrimper and mailed to the NMFS Galveston Laboratory, and replaced in the unit by the newly one received.

##### III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0543.  
Form Number(s): None.

*Type of Review:* Regular submission (extension of a current information collection).

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

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 1,319.

*Estimated Time per Response:* 2 hours.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 2,638.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$0 in recordkeeping or reporting costs.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Required.

*Legal Authority:* Fishing Regulation 50 CFR 622.51(a)(2).

##### 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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#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

##### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD075]

##### Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit application contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. The Exempted Fishing Permit would allow commercial fishing vessels to fish outside fishery regulations in support of research conducted by the applicant. Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed Exempted Fishing Permits.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before June 26, 2023.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit written comments by the following method:

- *Email:* [nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov). Include in the subject line "CFRF Ventless Trap EFP."

##### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Laura Deighan, Fishery Management Specialist, [Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov](mailto:Laura.Deighan@noaa.gov), (978) 281-9184.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation submitted a complete application for an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) to conduct commercial fishing activities that the regulations would otherwise restrict. The EFP would continue to provide distribution, abundance, and biological data on juvenile lobsters and Jonah crabs from times and areas with low coverage from traditional surveys. This EFP would exempt the participating vessels from the following Federal regulations:

TABLE 1—REQUESTED EXEMPTIONS

Citation	Regulation	Need for exemption
50 CFR 697.21(c) .....	Gear specification requirements .....	To allow for closed escape vents and smaller trap mesh and entrance heads.
§ 697.19 .....	Trap limit requirements .....	To allow for 3 additional traps per fishing vessel, for a total of 66 additional traps.
§ 697.19(j) .....	Trap tag requirements .....	To allow for the use of untagged traps (though each modified trap will have the participating fisherman's identification attached).
§ 697.20(a), (d), (g), and (h)(1) and (2).	Possession restrictions .....	To allow for onboard biological sampling of undersized, v-notched, and egg-bearing lobsters and undersized and egg-bearing Jonah crabs and retention of up to 300 legal and sublegal Jonah crabs per month for a molting study.

This project would continue an ongoing effort to collect data on juvenile lobster and Jonah crab abundance and distribution in areas and times of the year with low or no coverage by traditional surveys. To date, this project has collected data from over 200,000 lobsters and 120,000 Jonah crabs. The current EFP will expire on June 30, 2023. The EFP under consideration would authorize research trips from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

The project would include 5 inshore vessels (Lobster Management Area 2) and 17 offshore vessels (Lobster Management Areas 1 and 3) and may include an additional vessel to increase the offshore coverage (Lobster Management Areas 4 and 5). Each vessel would fish with 3 modified, ventless traps designed to capture juvenile lobsters, totaling up to 69 modified traps. The modified traps would adhere to the standard coast-wide survey gear for lobster and Jonah crab set by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and would be fished with standard Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan-compliant trawls. The traps would remain in the water for up to 12 months and be hauled every 7 days by the inshore vessels and every 10 days by the offshore vessels.

This study would take place during the regular fishing activity of the participating vessels, but catch from modified traps would remain separate from that of standard gear. Operators would collect data on size, sex, presence of eggs, and shell hardness for lobsters and Jonah crabs and v-notch and shell disease for lobsters. In addition to onboard sampling, 3 inshore and 3 offshore vessels would retain up to 50 Jonah crabs per month each, for a total of up to 300 crabs per month, for a molting study. Operators would return all other specimens from modified gear to the ocean once sampling is complete.

The study is designed to inform management by addressing questions about changing reproduction and recruitment dynamics of lobster and to

develop a foundation of knowledge for the data-deficient Jonah crab fishery. The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation would share data with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management every six months.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing at <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/information-technology/foia-reading-room> without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter “anonymous” as the signature if you wish to remain anonymous).

*Authority:* 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: June 5, 2023.

**Jennifer M. Wallace,**  
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.  
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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XC962]

#### Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to the Falls Bridge Replacement Project in Blue Hill, Maine

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; request for comments on proposed renewal incidental harassment authorization (IHA).

**SUMMARY:** NMFS received a request from the Maine Department of Transportation (MEDOT) for the renewal of their currently active incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to take marine mammals incidental to Falls Bridge Replacement Project in Blue Hill, Maine. These activities consist of activities that are covered by the current authorization but will not be completed prior to its expiration. Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act, prior to issuing the currently active IHA, NMFS requested comments on both the proposed IHA and the potential for renewing the initial authorization if certain requirements were satisfied. The renewal requirements have been satisfied, and NMFS is now providing an additional 15-day comment period to allow for any additional comments on the proposed renewal not previously provided during the initial 30-day comment period.

**DATES:** Comments and information must be received no later than June 26, 2023.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, and should be submitted via email to [ITP.harlacher@noaa.gov](mailto:ITP.harlacher@noaa.gov).