

East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone 301-713-2347).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Abstract

Under the proposed information requirement, vessels fishing for Atlantic highly migratory species (HMS) with pelagic longline gear on board would be required to install and operate a vessel monitoring system (VMS). On May 28, 1999, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued a regulation, 50 CFR 635.69(a), requiring all commercial pelagic longline vessels fishing for Atlantic HMS to install a NMFS-approved VMS.

The Bluewater Fisherman's Association filed a lawsuit challenging the VMS requirement, and the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia remanded the regulation to the Secretary of Commerce for further consideration. On August 29, 2001 NMFS submitted a reconsideration memorandum to the court analyzing alternatives to and reaffirming the need for fleetwide implementation of VMS in the Atlantic pelagic longline fishery. On October 15, 2002, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia issued a final order that denied plaintiff's objections to the VMS regulation. Based on this ruling, NMFS is seeking to reinstate OMB approval for this information collection as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

If approved, automatic position reports would be submitted on an hourly basis whenever the vessel is at sea. The information would aid in the enforcement of fishery regulations and could allow for delayed offloading after a closure.

Vessel operators would also be required to follow an equipment installation checklist and submit it to NMFS. The checklist provides information on the hardware and communications service selected by each vessel. NMFS would use the returned checklists to ensure that position reports are received and to aid NMFS in troubleshooting problems.

##### II. Method of Collection

Checklists would be submitted in paper form. Position reports would be automatically sent electronically by the vessel monitoring system units.

##### III. Data

OMB Number: 0648-0372.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission.

Affected Public: Business and other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 320.

*Estimated Time Per Response:* 4 hours for installation of equipment; 2 hours for annual maintenance of the equipment (beginning in the second year); 0.033 seconds per automated position report from the automated equipment; and 5 minutes to complete and return a one-time installation checklist.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 1,101.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$654,423.

##### IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: November 8, 2002.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

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#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

##### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 102902A]

##### Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Advisory Panel Meetings.

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

**ACTION:** Notification of Advisory Panel meetings.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS will hold joint meetings of the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel (HMS AP) and the Atlantic Billfish Advisory Panel (Billfish AP), February 10 through 12, 2003, in Silver Spring, MD. The intent of these meetings is to consider

alternatives for the conservation and management of highly migratory species.

**DATES:** The joint HMS-Billfish AP meetings will be held from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, February 10; from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11; and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, February 12, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** The AP meetings will be held in the Holiday Inn, 8777 Georgia Ave. (Rt. 97), Silver Spring, MD 20910. Phone: 301-589-0800.

An agenda and materials related to the AP meeting will be available after January 2, 2003. Please contact Carol Douglas or Othel Freeman, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, 301-713-2347, for meeting logistics or materials.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Ronald G. Rinaldo, 301-713-2347.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The actions to be discussed by the APs are necessary to address requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and to implement recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas as required by the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act, for the conservation and management of highly migratory species.

##### Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Dr. Rinaldo (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) at least 7 days prior to the meetings.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 961 *et seq.*, and 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: November 8, 2002.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

##### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 111202C]

##### Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Meeting

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