

and Nantucket Lightship at § 648.58(c). It would also exempt participating vessels from the Atlantic sea scallop observer program requirements at § 648.11(g) and from possession limits and minimum size requirements specified in 50 CFR part 648, subsections B and D through O, for sampling purposes only. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

Four vessels would conduct scallop dredging in October 2015-April 2016, on four 7-day trips, for a total of 28 DAS. Each trip would complete approximately 50 tows per trip for an overall total of 200 tows for the project. Trips would take place in the open areas of southern New England and Georges Bank as well as in Georges Bank scallop access areas that are closed. Trips would be centralized around areas with high yellowtail and winter flounder bycatch and in areas that contain a wide range of scallop sizes to examine changes in size selectivity due to dredge design and wire scope.

All tows would be conducted in tandem using one TDD and one LPD for a duration of 60 minutes with a tow speed range of 4–5.5 knots. Both dredges would be 15 feet (4.57 meters) in width using 4-inch (10.16 cm) rings, and would be rigged with a 7-row apron, and twine top hanging ratio of 2:1. Both dredges would be equipped with a regulation turtle chain mat for any tows west of 71° W. longitude. The LPD dredge in comparison to the TDD dredge has a reduced frame angle from 45° to 22.5°, an extended shoe from 15 inches (38.10 cm) to 22 inches (55.88 cm), and a reduced frame height from 15 inches (38.10) to 9.5 inches (24.13 cm). Each tow pair would be conducted in a straight line varying between long (4:1) and short (3:1) scope ratios in an AB-BA alternating pattern. Scope is the ratio of deployed towing cable to ocean depth.

To film finfish interactions, both dredge frames would have an underwater camera attached to the outer frame bars facing the depressor plate. Each interaction would be recorded using Observer XT computer software and would fall into three categories: Horizontal escape where the fish swims perpendicular to the dredge; vertical escape where the fish swims over the frame; and overcome/capture where the fish passes under the cutting bar or through the openings between the depressor plate and cutting bar. Filming will help test the hypothesis that the LPD frame aids in flatfish escapement and reduces interaction time with the

dredge potentially, reducing incidental mortality rates.

For all tows, the sea scallop catch would be counted into baskets and weighed. One basket from each dredge would be randomly selected and the scallops would be measured in 5-mm increments to determine size selectivity. Finfish catch would be sorted by species then counted, weighed, and measured in 1-mm increments. Depending on the volume of scallops and finfish captured, the catch would be subsampled as necessary. No catch would be retained for longer than needed to conduct sampling and no catch would be landed for sale.

PROJECT CATCH ESTIMATES

Species	lbs	mt
Scallops	110,231	50.00
Yellowtail	2,000	0.91
Winter Flounder	500	0.23
Windowpane Flounder ..	3,500	1.59
Monkfish	4,500	2.04
Summer Flounder	150	0.007
Barndoor Skate	500	0.23
NE Skate Complex	75,000	34.02
Atlantic Cod	50	0.02
Haddock	75	0.03
Silver/Offshore Hake	125	0.05
Unclassified hakes	100	0.06

CFF needs these exemptions to allow them to conduct experimental dredge towing without being charged DAS, as well as deploy gear in access areas that are currently closed to scallop fishing. Participating vessels need crew size waivers to accommodate science personnel and possession waivers will enable them to conduct finfish sampling activities.

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.

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

Dated: September 4, 2015.

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

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Reporting Requirements for Commercial Fisheries Authorization Under Section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act

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

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before November 9, 2015.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at Jjessup@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Lisa White, (301) 427–8402 or Lisa.White@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

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

Reporting injury to and/or mortalities of marine mammals is mandated under Section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. This information is required to determine the impacts of commercial fishing on marine mammal populations. This information is also used to categorize commercial fisheries into Categories I, II, or III. Participants in the first two categories must be authorized to take marine mammals, while those in Category III are exempt from that requirement. All categories must report injuries or mortalities on a National Marine Fisheries Service form.

II. Method of Collection

Respondents have a choice of either electronic or paper forms. Methods of submittal include online forms, email of electronic or scanned forms, and mail

and facsimile transmission of paper forms.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648–0292.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of currently approved collection).

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

Estimated Number of Respondents: 200.

Estimated Time per Response: 15 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 50.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$0 in recordkeeping/reporting costs and application fees.

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: September 3, 2015.

Sarah Brabson,

NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XE102

Schedules for Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops and Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops

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

ACTION: Notice of public workshops.

SUMMARY: Free Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops and Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops will be held in October, November, and December of 2015. Certain fishermen and shark dealers are required to attend a workshop to meet regulatory requirements and to maintain valid permits. Specifically, the Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop is mandatory for all federally permitted Atlantic shark dealers. The Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop is mandatory for vessel owners and operators who use bottom longline, pelagic longline, or gillnet gear, and who have also been issued shark or swordfish limited access permits. Additional free workshops will be conducted during 2016 and will be announced in a future notice.

DATES: The Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops will be held on October 8, November 12, and December 3, 2015.

The Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops will be held on October 7, October 21, November 4, November 18, December 2, and December 16, 2015.

See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for further details.

ADDRESSES: The Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops will be held in Somerville, MA; Mount Pleasant, SC; and Largo, FL.

The Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops will be held in Panama City, FL; Warwick, RI; Wilmington, NC; Largo, FL; Kenner, LA; and Ronkonkoma, NY.

See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for further details on workshop locations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rick Pearson by phone: (727) 824–5399, or by fax: (727) 824–5398.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The workshop schedules, registration information, and a list of frequently asked questions regarding these workshops are posted on the Internet at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/workshops/>.

Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops

Since January 1, 2008, Atlantic shark dealers have been prohibited from receiving, purchasing, trading, or bartering for Atlantic sharks unless a valid Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop certificate is on the premises of each business listed under the shark dealer permit that first receives Atlantic sharks (71 FR 58057; October 2, 2006). Dealers who attend and successfully complete a workshop are issued a certificate for each place of business that

is permitted to receive sharks. These certificate(s) are valid for 3 years. Approximately 113 free Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops have been conducted since January 2007.

Currently, permitted dealers may send a proxy to an Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop. However, if a dealer opts to send a proxy, the dealer must designate a proxy for each place of business covered by the dealer's permit which first receives Atlantic sharks. Only one certificate will be issued to each proxy. A proxy must be a person who is currently employed by a place of business covered by the dealer's permit; is a primary participant in the identification, weighing, and/or first receipt of fish as they are offloaded from a vessel; and who fills out dealer reports. Atlantic shark dealers are prohibited from renewing a Federal shark dealer permit unless a valid Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop certificate for each business location that first receives Atlantic sharks has been submitted with the permit renewal application. Additionally, trucks or other conveyances that are extensions of a dealer's place of business must possess a copy of a valid dealer or proxy Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop certificate.

Workshop Dates, Times, and Locations

1. October 8, 2015, 12 p.m.–4 p.m., La Quinta Inn, 23 Cummings Street, Somerville, MA 02145.
2. November 12, 2015, 12 p.m.–4 p.m., Hampton Inn, 1104 Isle of Palms Connector, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464.
3. December 3, 2015, 12 p.m.–4 p.m., Hampton Inn, 100 East Bay Drive, Largo, FL 33770.

Registration

To register for a scheduled Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop, please contact Eric Sander at esander@peoplepc.com or at (386) 852–8588.

Registration Materials

To ensure that workshop certificates are linked to the correct permits, participants will need to bring the following specific items to the workshop:

- Atlantic shark dealer permit holders must bring proof that the attendee is an owner or agent of the business (such as articles of incorporation), a copy of the applicable permit, and proof of identification.
- Atlantic shark dealer proxies must bring documentation from the permitted dealer acknowledging that the proxy is attending the workshop on behalf of the permitted Atlantic shark dealer for a specific business location, a copy of the