

**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; Southeast Region Family of Forms**

**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 to assess the impact of 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 by 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 "0648-0016" 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 Rich Malinowski, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Sustainable Fisheries Division, 263 13th Avenue S, St. Petersburg, Florida, 33701, phone: (727) 824-5305, email: [rich.malinowski@noaa.gov](mailto:rich.malinowski@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****I. Abstract**

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

Participants in most federally managed fisheries in the NMFS Southeast Region are currently required to keep and submit catch and effort logbooks from their fishing trips. A subset of fishermen on these vessels also provides information on the species and quantities of fish, shellfish, marine turtles, and marine mammals that are

caught and discarded or have interacted with the fishing gear. A subset of fishermen on these vessels also provides information about dockside prices, trip operating costs, and annual fixed costs. An intercept survey for vessels with Federal charter vessel/headboat permits is designed to support and validate the electronic logbooks.

The data are used for scientific analyses that support critical conservation and management decisions made by national and international fishery management organizations. Interaction reports are needed for fishery management planning and to help protect endangered species and marine mammals. Price and cost data will be used in analyses of the economic effects of proposed and existing regulations.

Regulatory Amendment 29 effective July 15, 2020 would require at least one descending device to be on board and ready for use on commercial, for-hire, and private recreational vessels while fishing for or possessing snapper-grouper species in the South Atlantic. Most recently the Descend Act was passed, which added a new section 321 to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. This requires commercial and recreational fishermen to possess a venting tool or descending device that is rigged and ready for use when fishing for reef fish in the Gulf of Mexico Exclusive Economic Zone.

Descending devices increase survivability from barotrauma, which is injury caused by internal gas expansion when reeled up from depth. In addition to being asked to report the number of fish released respondents would be asked to report the method used to release fish as part of their current logbook submissions. The purpose of asking respondents to distinguish between fish releases without descending devices, fish released with gas bladders vented, and fish released with descending devices is to provide data needed by NMFS to accurately account for fishing mortality when performing stock assessments.

**II. Method of Collection**

The information is submitted on paper forms and electronic transmissions. Logbooks are completed daily and submitted on either a per trip, weekly, or monthly basis, depending on the fishery. Fixed costs are submitted on an annual basis. Other information is submitted on a per trip basis.

For the proposed intercept survey, information would be collected through in-person interviews at verified landing locations.

**III. Data**

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0016.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Review:* Regular submission—extension and revision of a current information collection.

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

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 6,867.

*Estimated Time per Response:* Annual fixed-cost report, 45 minutes; discard logbook, 15 minutes; headboat, charter vessel, golden crab, reef fish-mackerel, economic cost per trip, wreckfish, 10 minutes; no-fishing report for golden crab, reef fish-mackerel, charter vessels, and wreckfish, 2 minutes; installation of a vessel monitoring unit, 5 hours; landing location request and power-down exemption request, 5 minutes; trip declaration, 2 minutes; and proposed intercept survey, 15 minutes.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 69,431.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$1,816,314 in record-keeping or reporting cost.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Mandatory.

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

**IV. Request for Comments**

NMFS is soliciting public comments 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 the time and cost burden estimates 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. NMFS will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this information collection request. 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, NMFS cannot guarantee that will occur.

**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

[RTID 0648-XB500]

#### Endangered Species; File Nos. 25870, 19641, 20528, 23200, and 25864

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

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of applications for permits and permit modifications.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that four applicants have applied in due form for permits or permit modifications for scientific research to take Atlantic (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*) and shortnose (*A. brevirostrum*) sturgeon, and one researcher has applied for a permit to take smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) for purposes of scientific research.

**DATES:** Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before November 12, 2021.

**ADDRESSES:** The applications and related documents are available for review by selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the Features box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting the appropriate File No. from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov).

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). Please include the appropriate File No. 25870, 19641-05, 20528-08, 23200-04, and 25864 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a similar written request via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on the requested application would be appropriate.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Malcolm Mohead or Erin Markin, (301) 427-8401.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The subject permits and permit modifications are requested under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

*File No. 25870:* Harold M. Brundage, Environmental Research and Consulting, Inc., 325 Market Street, Lewes, DE 19958, requests a permit to conduct scientific research on Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon in freshwater and estuary areas of the Delaware River. Research objectives include study of abundance, recruitment, temporal-spatial distributions, reproduction, and habitat use in the lower non-tidal Delaware River, tidal Delaware River, and Delaware Bay. Up to 100 adult/sub-adult and 230 juvenile shortnose sturgeon and 100 adult/sub-adult and 230 juvenile Atlantic sturgeon would be captured by gill net or trawl, measured, weighed, biologically sampled (tissue), marked (passive integrated transponder (PIT) and Floy/T-bar tags), and photographed/videoed, annually, prior to release. Sub-sets of Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon may be anesthetized and implanted with acoustic transmitters or tethered in a nylon sock for hydro-acoustic testing. The researcher anticipates a total of one incidental mortality of each sturgeon species annually. The permit would be valid for up to 10 years from the date of issuance.

*File No. 19641-05:* The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (Tom Savoy, Responsible Party), P.O. Box 719, Old Lyme, CT 06371, requests a modification to Permit No. 19641-02. The subject modification to Permit No. 19641-02, issued on June 16, 2020 (85 FR 43820; July 20, 2020) authorizes researchers to determine the presence, status, health, habitat use, and movements of adult, sub-adult, and juvenile Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon in the Connecticut River. Researchers may capture sturgeon using gill nets and trawls, measure, weigh, PIT tag, tissue sample, anesthetize, acoustically tag, fin ray sample, gastric lavage, and photograph individuals prior to release. Early life stages (ELS) of both Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon may be lethally sampled to document the occurrence of spawning in the river. During research activities, unintentional mortality of up to one juvenile and adult/sub-adult life stage of each species may occur, annually. Due to an rapidly expanding population of shortnose sturgeon documented in the Connecticut River,

the Permit Holder requests authorization to increase take numbers authorized for capture and recapture (*i.e.*, from 500 to 1,000) of adult and sub-adult shortnose sturgeon, annually. The permit is valid through March 31, 2027.

*File No. 20528-08:* The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (Responsible Party: Bill Post), 217 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, SC 29412, proposes to modify Permit No. 20528-02. The subject modification to Permit No. 20528-02, issued on May 28, 2020 (85 FR 35637; June 11, 2020), authorizes researchers to conduct research on Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon to determine their presence, status, health, habitat use, and movements in South Carolina waters. Researchers may use gill nets to capture Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon to measure, weigh, PIT tag, tissue sample, acoustically tag, fin ray sample, gonad biopsy, and photograph prior to release. Early life stages of each species may be lethally sampled to document occurrence of spawning in systems. Up to two sturgeon of each species may unintentionally die annually during sampling activities. The permit holder requests authorization to (1) add the objective to perform enhancement activities that include the capture and transport of 20 adult shortnose sturgeon from the Cooper River to the Santee River, annually; (2) increase the number of adult/subadult shortnose sturgeon for capture, mark (dart, PIT), biologically sample (tissue), measure, and weigh from 35 to 200 annually in the Cooper River; (3) increase the annual number of adult/subadult and juvenile Atlantic sturgeon from 20 to 100 and 60 to 150, respectively, for capture, mark (dart, PIT), biologically sample(tissue), measure, and weigh in the Santee River; (4) increase the annual number of adult/subadult and juvenile shortnose sturgeon from 15 to 200 and 15 to 150, respectively, for capture, mark (dart, PIT), biologically sample(tissue), measure, and weigh in the Santee River; (5) increase the annual number of adult/subadult and juvenile shortnose sturgeon from 75 to 200 and 5 to 150, respectively, for capture, mark (PIT), biologically sample(tissue), measure, and weigh in Lakes Moultrie and Marion and associated tributaries; and (6) increase the annual number of juvenile Atlantic sturgeon for capture, anesthetize, acoustically tag, biologically sample (tissue), weigh, measure, and photograph/video from 10 to 20, annually, in the Winyah Bay system. The permit is valid through March 31, 2027.

*File No. 23200-04:* The University of North Carolina, Wilmington