

tracking systems or Inmarsat Communication Units for onboard communications with the National Marine Fisheries Service. The primary purpose of such equipment is to communicate the vessel's location or, in the case of Inmarsat Communication Units, communicate harvest information collected by observers aboard the vessel. The installation time of the monitoring and/or communication equipment is measured as well as the estimated transmission times for communication.

II. Method of Collection

Real-time vessel location information is collected by querying the transponders and vessel monitoring system units on board the fishing vessels and/or at-sea processing vessels. This method of collection obviates the need for a more costly and problematic requirement that vessel operators report vessel location. Other information on harvest is electronically communicated by NMFS observers on-board fishing vessels. Net-sounder devices are also used to collect data on certain trawl gear.

III. Data

OMB Number: 0648-0307.

Form Number: N/A.

Type of Review: Regular Submission.

Affected Public: Owners and operators of fishing vessels and at-sea processing vessels.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 861 (150 multispecies vessels, 250 scallop vessels, 190 groundfish at-sea processing vessels, 100 groundfish trawlers around Kodiak, 165 pelagics vessels, and 6 crustaceans vessels)

Estimated Time Per Response: This varies with type of equipment and requirement. Upon installation, vessel monitoring or transponder systems automatically transmit date, which takes about 5 seconds. For requirements to transmit data on Inmarsat communications units, transmissions take about 10 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 9,642.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$1,408,696. Costs for these different monitoring and communication systems vary; some impose no direct costs on the vessel owners or operators.

Direct costs (actual or projected) to vessel owners or operators of VTS in the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery and in the Northeast Multispecies Fishery are, on average: (1) \$7,000 per initial purchase and installation of transceiver/terminal and antenna; (2) \$120 for basic monthly communications and messaging costs; and (3) \$2,000 per year for repairs and maintenance (assuming antenna or other

problems). Out of the 150 multispecies vessels and 250 scallop vessels potentially subject to VTS requirements under existing regulations, an estimated 5 multispecies vessels and 125 scallop vessels already have VTS installed.

Therefore, annual installation costs would be \$630,000 (\$7,000 times 270 vessels annualized over the 3-year period of this information collection), annual communications and messaging costs would be \$576,000 (\$1,440 times 400 vessels), and annual repair and maintenance costs could be \$160,000 (\$2,000 times 20 percent of the 400 vessels). These costs total \$1,366,000 annually. A requirement for VTS in the scallop and multispecies fisheries has been proposed, but is not mandatory at present.

Direct costs to industry for communication equipment for electronic reporting by observers in the Alaska Groundfish Fisheries are: (1) \$30,000 per initial purchase and installation of INMARSAT Standard A units; and (2) \$5,000 per initial purchase and installation of INMARSAT Standard C units. All but 12 of the approximately 190 at-sea processing vessels, affected by the requirement for electronic communication equipment to facilitate reporting of fisheries data by observers, are believed to have installed the required equipment. Annual installation costs would be \$36,666 (\$30,000 times 2 vessels installing Standard A units and \$5,000 times 10 vessels installing Standard C units annualized over the 3-year period of this information collection). Costs of net-sounder devices on 100 groundfish trawlers around Kodiak Island are not included here because NMFS does not actually require their use although still in the regulations.

There are no direct costs to owners or operators of the 165 vessels in the Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific because NMFS owns, installs, repairs, and maintains the VMS units. NMFS operation also includes the messaging costs.

Of the 15 permitted vessels in the limited entry Crustacean Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region, 9 also fish in the pelagic fishery and already carry VMS units. The owners or operators of the additional possible 6 lobster vessels would incur a direct cost of about \$2,500 each for initial purchase of VMS units. Installation cost for each unit would be about \$200. Therefore, annual purchase and installation costs would be \$5,400 (\$2,700 times 6 vessels annualized over the 3-year period of this information collection). Annual messaging costs would be about \$270 for the fleet of 15 vessels (15 vessels times 30 days times 4 messages per day

times \$0.15 per message—assumes a 30-day season). Annual repair and maintenance costs for the 6 vessels is estimated at \$360 (\$60 times 6 vessels). These costs total \$6,030 annually.

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: October 23, 1997.

Linda Engelmeier,

Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Office of Management and Organization.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 101497E]

Protection of California Salmonids; Public Meeting and Availability of Draft Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) Between the National Marine Fisheries Service and the State of California for Review and Comment

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting and request for comments on draft MOU.

SUMMARY: NMFS, Southwest Region, in cooperation with the California Resources Agency, intends to hold a public meeting for the purpose of soliciting public input on development of a MOU between NMFS and the State of California (State). The purpose of the MOU is to seek an agreement with the State on a process that addresses the conservation of California's salmonids.

This agreement will define NMFS' relationship to the Governor's Watershed Restoration and Protection Council (WRPC).

DATES: The meeting date is November 12, 1997, 1:00–4:00 p.m. and 6:00–9:00 p.m. Written comments on the draft MOU must be received by November 28, 1997, to be considered during preparation of the final MOU.

ADDRESSES: Both meetings will be held at the State of California Building, Room 410–B, 50 D Street, Santa Rosa, CA. Requests for a copy of the draft MOU should be addressed to Chief, Protected Resources Division, NMFS, Southwest Region, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA, 90802–4213; or Supervisor, Northern California Protected Resources Division, NMFS, 777 Sonoma Avenue, Room 325, Santa Rosa, CA, 95404. Copies of the draft MOU may also be obtained by phone (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**). Written comments regarding the draft MOU should be directed to the same addresses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jim Lecky at (562) 980–4020, or Patrick Rutten at (707) 575–6059.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The following information is furnished to provide a synopsis of NMFS' salmon and steelhead listing actions and critical habitat designation in California. This information frames the complexity and need for a Federal-State cooperative approach to salmonid management in California.

A. Coho Salmon

1. Central California coho Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) listed as threatened on October 31, 1996 (61 FR 56138).

2. Southern Oregon/Northern California (SONC) coho listed as threatened on May 6, 1997 (62 FR 24588).

3. Endangered Species Act (ESA) 4(d) interim rule that applied the section 9 take prohibitions, with certain exceptions, to the SONC coho ESU was published by NMFS on July 18, 1997 (62 FR 38479), and became effective on August 18, 1997. The 60-day comment period on the interim final rule ended on September 16, 1997. NMFS will review all comments and publish a final rule in the **Federal Register** in the next 90 days.

4. NMFS is developing a proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the Central California and SONC coho salmon ESUs. The proposed rule is

expected to publish in the **Federal Register** within the next 30 days.

B. Steelhead

1. On August 18, 1997 (62 FR 4393), NMFS listed the Southern California steelhead ESU as endangered and the Central California and South-Central California steelhead ESUs as threatened.

2. Section 9 take prohibitions were automatically applied to the endangered Southern California ESU at the time of listing.

3. NMFS is developing an ESA 4(d) interim rule that will apply the section 9 take prohibitions, with certain exceptions, to the Central California and South-Central California ESUs. An interim final rule is expected to publish in the **Federal Register** in the next 60 days.

4. At the time of the steelhead listing, NMFS announced that it was delaying its proposal for designating critical habitat. NMFS expects to designate critical habitat for these ESUs within the 1-year period allowed for in the ESA.

5. On August 18, 1997 (62 FR 43974), NMFS delayed its decision to list Central Valley, Northern California, and Klamath Mountains Province steelhead ESUs for 6 months. Accordingly, NMFS expects to publish in the **Federal Register** a final listing decision for these ESUs by February 18, 1998. If any of these steelhead ESUs are listed as threatened, NMFS will promulgate appropriate ESA 4(d) interim rules to apply the section 9 take prohibitions.

C. Chinook Salmon

1. NMFS is continuing work on its status review for West Coast chinook salmon.

2. In early 1997, NMFS provided copies of a draft status review for West Coast chinook to peer reviewers and its co-managers in California (i.e., California Department of Fish and Game, Indian tribes, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) for review and comment. NMFS is reviewing these comments and gathering updated information for the status review.

3. NMFS expects to publish in the **Federal Register** a listing proposed rule for West Coast chinook salmon in early 1998.

Watershed Restoration and Protection Council

The State, by Executive Order W–159–97, has established the WRPC to be responsible and provide oversight of State activities aimed at watershed protection and enhancement, including conservation and restoration of anadromous salmonids in California. The WRPC will be composed of State

Secretaries and Chairs of Commissions, or Boards. The WRPC also establishes a Working Group whose members are Directors of State Agencies and Executive Officer's of Regional Water Quality Control Boards. An Executive Director of the WRPC will also be appointed and will be responsible for the coordination of the WRPC and Working Group.

NMFS in cooperation with the California Resources Agency is exploring entering into a MOU that will develop a process and mechanism, through the WRPC, that results in a State plan for the protection of the State's salmonid population. Completion and implementation of this State plan through the WRPC, in consultation with NMFS, will be the basis by which NMFS initiates a rulemaking action (pursuant to its authority under section 4(d) of the ESA) to adopt the State of California's plan or plans as equivalent to habitat conservation plans provided that NMFS determines that the plans are consistent with the requirements of the Federal ESA for issuing incidental take permits to non-Federal parties (section 10 of the ESA).

Public Comments Solicited

The meeting will focus on the latest draft MOU provided to NMFS by the State of California. Participants are reminded that this is only a draft and that NMFS intends that the final MOU will take advantage of the information and recommendations from all interested parties. Therefore, comments and suggestions are hereby solicited from the public, other concerned governmental agencies, the scientific community, industry, and any other person concerned with these draft guidelines.

Dated: October 22, 1997.

Hilda Diaz-Soltero,

*Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 102097B]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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