

proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our 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 on or before June 1, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at NOAA.PRA@noaa.gov. Please reference OMB Control Number 0648–0652 in the subject line of your comments. All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted on <https://www.regulations.gov> without change. 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 Rob Andrews, Survey Statistician, NOAA Fisheries, 200 Harry S. Truman Pkwy., Annapolis, MD 21401, (302) 827–3226, rob.andrews@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This is a request for revision and extension of an approved information collection. Marine recreational anglers are surveyed to collect catch and effort data, fish biology data, and angler socioeconomic characteristics. These data are required to carry out provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), as amended, regarding conservation and management of fishery resources.

Marine recreational fishing catch and effort data are collected through a combination of mail surveys, telephone surveys and on-site intercept surveys with recreational anglers. The Fishing Effort Survey (FES) is conducted by the NOAA Fisheries, Office of Science and Technology (OST). The FES is a self-administered, household mail survey that samples from a residential address frame to collect data on the number of recreational anglers and the number of recreational fishing trips. The survey estimates marine recreational fishing activity for all coastal states from Maine through Florida, as well as Hawaii.

FES estimates are combined with estimates derived from complementary surveys of fishing trips, the Access-Point Angler Intercept Survey, to

estimate total, state-level fishing catch, by species. These estimates are used in the development, implementation, and monitoring of fishery management programs by NOAA Fisheries, regional fishery management councils, interstate marine fisheries commissions, and state fishery agencies.

Previously, the FES was administered bi-monthly, estimating recreational fishing effort for two-month waves. In 2024, OST tested an experimental survey design that included monthly sampling and estimation and a modified questionnaire. The study concluded that the revised design resulted in more timely and accurate estimates of fishing activity. This information collection request will include a revision to transition from bi-monthly to monthly administration of the FES.

Additionally, the request will include an experiment to evaluate online reporting. Specifically, the collection will include a pilot study testing a web-push survey design that will encourage online reporting before providing the option of a mail response. The design will be evaluated with respect to data quality, timeliness of reporting and cost.

II. Method of Collection

Information will be collected through self-administered mail surveys and web surveys.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648–0652.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (revision and extension of current information collection).

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 112,500.

Estimated Time per Response: 5 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 9,338 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: 0.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

Legal Authority: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*).

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 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, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Sheleen Dumas,

Departmental PRA Compliance 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–XF645]

Magnuson-Stevens 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 (EFP) to facilitate the use of fishing year (FY) 2026 and 2027 monkfish research set-aside (RSA) days-at-sea (DAS) warrants further consideration. The EFP would allow federally permitted fishing vessels to fish outside fishery regulations in support of exempted fishing activities proposed by Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance (CCCFA). Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested

parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed EFPs.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before April 17, 2026.

ADDRESSES: You may submit written comments by email: nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line “CCCFA Monkfish RSA EFP.” All comments received are a part of the public record and may be posted for public viewing without change. All

personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), 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).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christine Ford, Fishery Management

Specialist, christine.ford@noaa.gov, 978–281–9185.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: CCCFA submitted a complete application for an EFP to conduct commercial fishing activities that the regulations would otherwise restrict. This EFP would exempt the participating vessels from the following Federal regulations:

TABLE 1—REQUESTED EXEMPTIONS

| CFR citation | Regulation | Need for exemption |
|---------------------|---|--|
| 50 CFR 648.94(b)(1) | Trip limits for vessels fishing under the monkfish DAS program in the Northern Fishery Management Area. | Needed to allow RSA DAS to have no trip limit, consistent with the design of the Monkfish RSA program. |
| 50 CFR 648.94(b)(2) | Trip limits for vessels fishing under the monkfish DAS program in the Southern Fishery Management Area. | Needed to allow RSA DAS to have no trip limit, consistent with the design of the Monkfish RSA program. |

TABLE 2—PROJECT SUMMARY

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Project title | Incorporating Fishermen’s Knowledge into a Standardized Catch Per Unit Effort Index for the Commercial Monkfish Gillnet Fishery. |
| Project start | 05/01/2026 or Upon Issuance. |
| Project end | 04/30/2027. |
| Project objectives | Enable monkfish RSA DAS compensation fishing in support of a project that is developing standardized catch per unit effort (CPUE) indices for the commercial directed monkfish gillnet fishery and possibly the multispecies trawl fishery to be used for stock assessment purposes. |
| Project location | All Regulated Mesh Areas. |
| Number of vessels | N/A. |
| Number of trips | N/A. |
| Trip duration (days) | N/A. |
| Total number of days | 216 2025 RSA DAS; approximately 240 2026 RSA DAS. |
| Gear type(s) | Sink gillnet. |
| Number of tows or sets | N/A. |
| Duration of tows or sets | N/A. |

Project Narrative

Monkfish RSA compensation fishing EFPs that waive monkfish landing limits have been routinely approved since 2007 to increase operational efficiency and to optimize research funds generated from the Monkfish RSA Program. This EFP would facilitate the continuation of compensation fishing in support of the project originally funded and awarded 500 RSA DAS under the 2023–2024 monkfish RSA competition.

The Monkfish RSA Program is allocated 500 monkfish RSA DAS annually as established in Amendment 2 of the Monkfish FMP (70 FR 21929, April 28, 2005). These monkfish RSA DAS may be awarded to applicants, and sold to limited access monkfish vessel owners to fund approved monkfish RSA projects. Award recipients receive an allocation of RSA DAS and a maximum amount of weight that may be landed under available RSA DAS.

Projects are constrained to the total DAS, maximum available landing weight, or grant award timetable,

whichever is reached first. To calculate a maximum weight allocation that is similar to the Councils’ original intent to be harvested under the allocated 500 RSA DAS, we have associated twice the landing limit for Permit Category A and C monkfish vessel fishing in the Southern Fishery Management Area 4,074 lb (1,848 kg) whole weight for each RSA DAS. Annually, a maximum of 2,037,000 lb (923,968 kg) of whole weight may be harvested under Monkfish RSA. Allowing vessels an exemption from monkfish landing limits provides an incentive for vessels to purchase and fish under RSA DAS to catch more monkfish per trip.

Both 2023- and 2024-awarded monkfish RSA DAS were available for this project to use. Only 34 2023-awarded monkfish RSA DAS were used through April 30, 2025. The 2024-awarded monkfish RSA DAS were authorized to be used by this project in FY2025. In order to continue the use of awarded RSA DAS, this EFP would extend the original DAS awards. This

EFP would authorize the use of the 216 unused 2023-awarded DAS in FY2026, to expire on April 30, 2027. Unused 2024-awarded RSA DAS (number to be determined after the expiration of the current EFP), would be available in FY2027, to expire on April 30, 2028.

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: March 31, 2026.

David R. Blankinship,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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