

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
ALASKA RECREATIONAL CHARTER VESSEL GUIDE AND OWNER DATA
COLLECTION
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-XXXX**

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g. establishments, State and local governmental units, households, or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form. The tabulation must also include expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted before, provide the actual response rate achieved.

The potential respondent universe is all saltwater-based charter boat businesses in Alaska during the year(s) of interest. Each of these businesses must purchase a state license to provide fishing guide services. The sport fishing license program is administered by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). In 2011, there were approximately 643 licensed saltwater sport fishing charter businesses. Thus, the population consists of all saltwater charter boat businesses that were licensed to offer saltwater fishing charter boat trips off Alaska during the year.

A full census is expected to be conducted of the population each year, so no sampling or other methods will be employed. For the collection as a whole, an overall response rate of 50% is anticipated. This estimate is based on the Alaska Fisheries Science Center social scientists' previous experience with using the survey protocols that will be followed here, as well as accounting for the extensive outreach AFSC social scientists have conducted with members of the population.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection, including: the statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection; the estimation procedure; the degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification; any unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

Since the survey will be conducted as a census, no sampling or sample selection methods will be employed.

3. Describe the methods used to maximize response rates and to deal with nonresponse. The accuracy and reliability of the information collected must be shown to be adequate for the intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided if they will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

Numerous steps have been, and will be, taken to maximize response rates and deal with non-response behavior. These efforts are described below.

Maximizing Response Rates

The first step in achieving a high response rate is to develop an appealing questionnaire that is easy for respondents to complete. Significant effort has been spent on developing a good survey instrument. The survey instrument has benefited from input on earlier versions from focus groups and one-on-one interviews with members of the target population. In the focus groups, participants helped identify questions and concepts that needed to be clarified or modified to make them easier to fill out for them, as well as provided useful information about ways of making the survey more useful and attractive for them and other charter boat operators to want to fill it out. The interviews were used to fine-tune survey design issues related to specific wording, flow, and comprehension issues. Additionally, the interviews were used to ensure the survey was a comfortable length and easy to complete. The result is a high-quality and professional-looking survey instrument.

Also, charter boat operators have made it clear to us that the optimal time for conducting the survey to minimize burden on them and maximize the accuracy of the information they provide is April of each year. During April and May, they will have the previous year's tax information (profit and loss sheets) available—much of which we ask for in one form or another in the survey. Moreover, this is the time of year where they are gearing up for the upcoming season, which usually begins in late May and ends in early to mid September. As a result, conducting the survey in April and May will ensure that most charter boat operators are able to provide accurate information and have the time to do so before the season begins.

The implementation techniques that will be employed are consistent with methods that maximize response rates. Implementation of the mail survey will follow the Tailored Design Method (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian, 2009), which consists of multiple contacts. The specific set of contacts that will be employed is the following:

1. An **advance letter** notifying respondents a few days prior to the questionnaire arriving. This will be the first contact with the sample.
2. An **initial mailing** sent a few days after the advance letter. Each mailing contains a personalized cover letter, instructions and credentials for accessing the online survey, a printed questionnaire, and a pre-addressed stamped return envelope,
3. A **postcard follow-up reminder** to be mailed 5-7 days following the initial mailing.
4. A **follow-up phone call** to encourage response.

5. A **second full mailing** will be mailed after the follow-up phone calls.

Non-respondents

To better understand why non-respondents did not return the survey and to determine if there are systematic differences between respondents and non-respondents, those contacted in the follow-up phone call and identified as non-respondents will be asked a few questions to gauge their reasons for not responding to the mail survey. These include select classification questions related to the structure of their business and participation in the fishery in the past year and plans for the future. Information collected from non-respondents will aid in improving the survey implementation and to correct for non-response bias where necessary (e.g., using the Heckman method).

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Tests are encouraged as effective means to refine collections, but if ten or more test respondents are involved OMB must give prior approval.

Several focus groups with fewer than ten members of the target population in each group, as well as a handful of cognitive interviews¹, were conducted during the survey design phase to test survey materials. Moreover, the survey design and implementation plan have benefited from review by individuals with expertise in fishing economic survey design and implementation.

Note that since the timing of the survey requires fielding the survey in April, and the industry, ADF&G, the Council, and NMFS have requested information about 2011 charter boat activities, we do not anticipate being able to conduct a formal pretest implementation.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design, and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

The following individuals were consulted on the statistical aspects of the design:

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Dr. Brian Garber-Yonts
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¹ Both the focus groups and cognitive interviews were conducted without a set list of questions.

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Drs. Dan Lew, Brian Garber-Yonts, and Amber Himes-Cornell are responsible for analyzing the data.

The survey will be conducted in cooperation with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission:

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Reference:

Dillman, D. A., J. D. Smyth, and L. M. Christian. 2009. Internet, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Total Design Method. 3rd Edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.