

**Project Title:** SAFMC Release Project

**Program Office Sponsoring or Conducting this CSC Project:** South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC)

**Authority for this CSC Project:** MSA and CCSA

**Purpose of this CSC Project:** The SAFMC is responsible for the conservation and management of federal fisheries resources in the South Atlantic US. Its Citizen Science Program aims to develop and support projects that address research needs. This project addresses one of the SAFMC's overall research priorities and citizen science research priorities to improve information available on released fish. The number of released fish are increasing in many South Atlantic fisheries. Information on released fish is not collected through many traditional sampling programs that occur back at the dock. Fishermen are critical in collecting information on released fish.

**Type(s) of Information Collected and From Whom It Is Collected:** Information on released fish is collected by commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishermen via a free mobile app, SciFish. Data collected include name, email, birthdate, date, trip type, state of return, species, release time, length, depth, location, hook type, hook location, condition on release, release treatment (e.g., whether the line was cut, descending device usage, venting, shark depredation), and photo.

**Use of the Information:** Information gained through SAFMC Release will be made available to help complement other data sources to inform relevant stock assessments and management measures in the South Atlantic.

**Method(s) of Information Collection:** electronically and paper format

**Affected Public:** Individuals, business or other for-profit organizations, not-for-profit organizations/institutions, state and federal government.

**Estimated Average Annual Number of Participants:** 100

**Estimated Average Annual Number of Responses per Participant:** 9

**Estimated Average Minutes per Response:** 2.3

**Estimated Average Annual Burden Hours:** 34

**Estimated Total Annual Cost to Participants in this CSC Project:** \$0

**Estimated Average Annual Costs to the Federal Government:** \$83,924

**Estimated Average Annual Number of Federal Government Employees (FTEs):** 0.10

**Recruitment and Retention Methods for Voluntary Participants (SSA item 1):** SAFMC Release uses a variety of methods to recruit participants including, sharing promotional materials via tackle shops; in person events such as fishing seminars, trade shows, fishing summits, conferences, and other meetings; posting flyers at boat landings; mailings to fishing license

holders; sharing information via the SAFMC's communication platforms (e.g., social media, biweekly newsletter, press releases, webpage), sharing information during various SAFMC meetings, and working with current participants to share information about the project within their communities. Current retention methods include sending a monthly newsletter to project participants, social media posts, regular email and phone communication with participants, and annual reports summarizing the data collected through the project. We are hoping to develop a participant recognition program and additional points of contact with participants in the future. To ensure a sufficient number of voluntary participants and to encourage continued participation, communications will note the important role fishermen play in helping collect information on released fish.

**Gifts or Payments (SSA Item 9):** We do not plan to provide a gift or payment to the voluntary participants.

**Annual and Multi-Year Schedules (SSA Item 16):** Data collection for this project began in June 2019 but was initially piloted to collect information on released Scamp Grouper. The project was expanded to collect information on additional species in August 2021 (shallow water grouper species) and April 2022 (red snapper). There is currently no end date for the project. Summary reports are compiled each year to share information on the data collected with participants and are posted to the project webpage.

**Display OMB Control No. and Expiration Date (SSA Item 17):** This information will be provided when individuals sign up to participate in this CSC project.

**Statistical Methods:** This CSC project will not employ statistical methods.

**Approval for Pretesting:** This CSC project will not require additional pretesting with more than nine members of the public.

**Supplemental Documents:** The free mobile app, SciFish, is used to collect information on the project. The app is available in the Google Play Store (Android version) and the Apple App Store (iOS version). To create a SciFish account, users need to complete an online form via the project webpage or contact project staff. The one supplemental document for this CSC project provides screenshots of the SAFMC Release project in the SciFish application and a paper form that is available to any participants that do not use a smartphone.

**CERTIFICATION:** I certify the following are true.

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The collection will not include highly influential scientific information, which is information NOAA or OMB determines: (i) could have a potential impact of more than \$500 million in any year, or (ii) is novel, controversial, or precedent setting or has significant interagency interest.

5. The collection complies with 5 CFR 1320.9 and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3).
6. The collection will provide qualitative and quantitative data that help inform scientific research and monitoring, validate models or tools, support STEM learning, and enhance the quantity and quality of data collected to support NOAA's mission.

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