

copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Hannah Goodale at 508-281-9101, or to
Hannah.F.Goodale@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

Owners or operators of vessels that have caught 500 metric tons of herring in the past year, or intend to catch 500 metric tons in the current year, must equip their vessels with an approved Vessel Monitoring System (VMS). The VMS units automatically report the vessel's position at least once per hour when the vessel is underway. Vessel owners must submit proof that the VMS has been installed. Herring carriers may be exempted from this requirement by obtaining a letter of authorization from NOAA.

II. Method of Collection

Position reports are automated and automatic. Proof of installation is mailed to NOAA. A letter of authorization can be requested by phone.

III. Data

OMB Number: 0648-0404.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations, individuals or households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 150.

Estimated Time Per Response: 1 hour to install a VMS; 2 minutes for submission of proof of installation; 5 seconds for an automated position report from the VMS or transponder system (10 minutes if an Inmarsat communication unit is used to transmit the data); and 2 minutes for a request for a letter of authorization exemption.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 816.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$298,000.

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: January 17, 2003.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket No. 030121015-3015-01; I.D. 120602C]

RIN 0648-AQ66

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council); Request for Research Proposals (RFP)

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

ACTION: Notice of solicitation for applications.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that, for fishing year 2004, up to 3 percent of the total allowable landings (TAL) will be dedicated to research endeavors under a research set-aside (RSA) program. This notice describes how the application and selection process will operate for research projects funded under the RSA by a set-aside from the TAL of selected species. The RSA provides a mechanism to fund research and compensate vessels through the sale of fish harvested under the research quota. The setting of the actual research set-aside quotas will be the subject of future rulemaking. NMFS is soliciting proposals for research activities concerning the summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, *Loligo* squid, *Illex* squid, Atlantic mackerel, butterflyfish, bluefish, and tilefish fisheries.

DATES: All research proposals to be considered under this solicitation must be received between January 27, 2003, and 5 p.m., EST, on March 28, 2003, in the Northeast Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**). Postmarks prior to the end of the receipt period will not be sufficient. Facsimile applications will not be accepted. For further information related to the timeframe for review and selection of proposals to be conducted with research quota set-asides, see

Section A, Background, under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

ADDRESSES: Proposals must be submitted to Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark proposals "Attention—Mid-Atlantic Research Proposals." Copies of the Standard Forms for submission of research proposals may be found on the Internet in a PDF (Portable Document Format) version at <http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/grants>, under the title "Grant Application Forms and Budget Guidelines," or by contacting NMFS (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Daniel Furlong, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, (302) 674-2331, fax (302) 674-5399, e-mail cheaton@mafmc.org, or Paul Perra, Fishery Policy Analyst, NMFS, (978) 281-9153, fax 978-281-9135, e-mail paul.perra@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

The award of a set-aside from the TAL of selected species became possible with the approval of Framework Adjustment 1 (Framework 1) to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish; Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass; and Bluefish Fishery Management Plans (FMPs); and the RSA provisions of the Tilefish FMP. Framework 1 was approved by the Secretary of Commerce on August 10, 2001. It established a procedure through which research set-aside amounts would be set annually as part of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) quota-setting process. The set-asides may range between 0 and 3 percent of each species' TAL. The set-aside allocated for a given species is to be utilized primarily for research involving that species. However, to promote research in those cases where it would otherwise be infeasible, individual research projects may involve allocations from the set-asides for several of the species listed in this notice. Therefore, in addition to, or in lieu of, applying for part of the set-aside involving a species directly involved in a research project, applicants may also apply for up to 25 percent of the research set-aside quota for species not directly involved in a particular research project.

To be eligible for consideration, a research proposal for work to be conducted using a research set-aside allocation for the 2004 fishing year must be received during the application period identified in the DATES section