



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

September 27, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR: Northeast Fisheries Observers & At Sea Monitors
FROM: Amy Van Atten
Branch Chief, FSB
SUBJECT: Expiration of Paperwork Reduction Act Number

All NEFOP and ASM logs, as well as the Program Manuals, are printed with a Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) number. That number is set to expire at the end of September. Despite the best efforts of FSB and National Observer Program staff, we have not been issued a new number yet. Please see below for answers to common questions you may have. If you still have questions, feel free to contact Katherine McArdle or Debra Duarte.

Why is this number important? The PRA number gives grants the Federal Government permission to collect information from the public (in our case, of fishermen). Without a current number, a Government Agency (*i.e.*, NMFS, Observer Program) cannot legally systematically collect the information that is asked, for example, "what is the target species of this trip?"

What happens if a new number is not issued before the current one expires? The Office of Management and Budget is still in the process of review our request for an annual extension of the current clearance that we have on our logs and, in the interim, they have granted observer programs nation-wide approval on a month-by-month basis, until the overall clearance is received for an annual extension. The electronic copy of the manual that is found on our website will be updated with the most current expiration date.

Will I need new logs? When the new PRA number with the full year expiration is issued, FSB we will print new logs for all observers and monitors. Until then, you may continue using your issued logs. If you need more logs printed, please request them from our office and we will provide the most recent version for you. If you are questioned about the expired number, please refer that person to our website for information about the temporary extension. We do have permission granted to collect the information.

What if a fisherman refuses to answer my questions due to the expired number? All observers should keep a printout of the most current PRA clearance and public notice bulletin, which is attached to this memo. Again, this will be re-issued on a monthly basis until we have the annual renewal approved. Our observer and at-sea monitoring programs are mandatory programs and fishermen should comply with answering the questions we ask on the logs. If they do not provide the information, comment on your logs that you were not able to obtain the NEFOP Memo 12-008 (Page 1 of 2)

information. Any hostilities or interference with your work should be documented in your field diary and an incident report, if warranted.

Will this affect the manual updates? The NEFOP Program and Biological Sampling Manuals were scheduled to be updated for January 2013. Without a new PRA number, we have decided to postpone this printing date. The updates for all manuals (NEFOP and ASM, Program and Biological Sampling) are now scheduled for May 1, 2013, by which time we are hoping to have the new PRA number. This also means that you have more time to submit suggestions for updates (to Debra Duarte; deadline is February 1, 2013).

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you. We thank you for your patience during this time, and we will provide updates as they become available.