



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

18 September 2009

Ms. Diana Hynek
Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer
Department of Commerce, Room 7845
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Ms. Hynek:

On 5 August 2009 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration published in the *Federal Register* three notices regarding reporting requirements under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (74 Fed. Reg. 39040–39042). The notices addressed collection of information from users of the nation’s fishery resources, including commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries and fish processors, which are managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The data collected are used for scientific analyses that support critical conservation and management decisions by national and international fishery management organizations.

The Marine Mammal Commission has reviewed the three *Federal Register* notices. In the Commission’s opinion, the National Marine Fisheries Service cannot effectively authorize fisheries without collecting the information needed to manage them. Whether commercial, recreational, or subsistence, such fisheries have the potential to affect the marine environment, including marine mammals. It is incumbent on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Marine Fisheries Service to establish and maintain a legitimate basis for assessing such effects. Therefore, the Marine Mammal Commission supports continuation of the requirement for reporting the fishery-related information specified in the notices. We consider the collection of this information vital to effective management of fisheries and related marine resources and an essential part of the Service’s duties.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy J. Ragen".

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director