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## OMB Control Number 0648–0580 - collection of information from vessels subject to regulations in the ‘2008 speed rule’

1 message

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**Peter Thomas** <PThomas@mmc.gov>

Tue, Nov 21, 2023 at 11:23 AM

To: "NOAA.PRA@noaa.gov" <NOAA.PRA@noaa.gov>

Cc: Dennis Heinemann <DHeinemann@mmc.gov>, Phyllis Malloy <PMalloy@mmc.gov>

Ms. Adrienne Thomas  
NOAA PRA Officer  
Department of Commerce

Subject: OMB Control Number 0648–0580

Dear Ms. Thomas,

On 22 September 2023 (73 Fed. Reg. 65367), the Department of Commerce invited the public and federal agencies to comment on the department’s collection of information from vessels subject to regulations in the ‘2008 speed rule’ (73 Fed. Reg. 60173).

The ‘2008 speed rule’ created seasonal speed restrictions in areas in which North Atlantic right whales are high risk of being injured or killed by vessel strikes. The rule included an exception that permits certain classes of vessels to exceed a speed limit when they need to maintain safe maneuverability. The rule also required that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) collect vessel logbook entries whenever the vessels take advantage of the safe-maneuverability exception. In 2021, this information-collection requirement was revised to include a voluntary survey of vessel operators to evaluate their ability and willingness to: (1) comply with North Atlantic right whale mandatory speed restrictions, and (2) cooperate with voluntary speed reduction efforts to protect North Atlantic right whales. The survey also collects information about vessel operators' time spent on the water, experience and knowledge about large whales, knowledge of North Atlantic vessel-strike reduction efforts, opinions about these whales and conservation efforts, and their preferred means of receiving information. NMFS uses this information to develop effective outreach to vessel communities, with the long-term goal of improving the communities' compliance with mandatory measures and cooperation with voluntary measures that support North Atlantic right whale vessel-strike-reduction efforts.

North Atlantic right whales are endangered and at considerable risk of extinction in the next 50 years. Collisions with vessels are one the two greatest threats to the species. The effectiveness of the ‘2008 speed rule’ depends strongly on compliance by the regulated vessels. Assessing compliance, in turn, depends in significant part on the data collected from vessels described above. Therefore, the Marine Mammal Commission staff recommend that NOAA collect the information described above.

Sincerely,

Peter O. Thomas, Ph.D.

Executive Director

## Marine Mammal Commission

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