

6.2 Appendix II: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Respondents

Recreational For-Hire Economic Survey FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) AND ANSWERS

Why is this survey being conducted?

The recreational for-hire industry is economically important up and down the East Coast. However, NMFS currently lacks the data to adequately estimate the economic impacts of changes in fishery regulations on this industry. The Recreational For-Hire Economic Survey (RFHES) is necessary to demonstrate the overall economic importance of the industry and to gauge how policies impact the economic health of head boat and charter fishing operations in New England and the Mid Atlantic (all coastal states from North Carolina north to Maine). This survey will collect financial data including trip and annual costs and revenue. The data will be used to create an economic impact model of the head boat and charter fishing industry. This economic impact model will be used to estimate the overall economic importance of the entire for-hire industry. Additionally, the model will be used to examine how changes in policy positively or negatively impact this important industry.

Who is conducting the survey?

The survey is funded by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and is being conducted by QuanTech, Inc. of Arlington, Virginia. Survey design and testing was completed by Gentner Consulting. QuanTech's interviewers will conduct the actual in-person interviews.

How was I selected and is my participation voluntary?

You were selected randomly from the 2010 NMFS for-hire telephone survey (FHTS) directory, which is compiled from State and Federal permit lists. Your participation in this survey is voluntary.

How long will it take to complete the survey?

The survey designers aimed for a survey that takes no longer than one hour to complete. If you own a single boat and only offer one type of trip (half day, full day, or overnight), the survey will be quite short, taking only about 20 minutes.

Why am I being asked to provide economic information?

By providing information about your business, you are helping to construct a baseline assessment of the financial health and economic impact of the recreational for-hire industry. Knowing the industry's profitability and economic value is especially important when benefits and costs of new regulations are discussed by policy makers. The information is also important when determining the economic effects of other external forces, such as economic downturns, fuel prices, and natural disasters. Such information is commonly requested by decision makers and media outlets interested in publicizing the industry's economic situation. Currently, it is impossible to answer these questions due to lack of data.

Will the IRS get any of my information?

No. As fisheries economists, we are only interested in collecting appropriate data to provide an accurate snapshot of the recreational for-hire industry as a whole. Individual data is treated as confidential. When you complete your interview, identifying information will be removed from the rest of your answers and will not be submitted to NMFS.

Will my answers remain anonymous?

Yes. All individual information will be treated as strictly confidential. Individual data will be combined with information from other respondents to present an overall view of the economic health of the industry or a particular component of the industry.