



# Update on Marine Scientific Research (MSR) Diplomatic Consent



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# Your DoS MSR Team



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# ★★★ Presidential Proclamation on MSR



- Policy updated via Presidential Proclamation No. 10071 signed September 9, 2020:
  - Applies only to foreign scientists wishing to conduct MSR in the U.S.
  - Advance consent in all instances consistent with international law
  - In the U.S. EEZ and on the continental shelf (was always required in the territorial sea)



# New RATS Portal



- Designed on a Microsoft O365 cloud-based platform.
- Several new features:
  - Online submission for new account requests,
  - Extra security (multi-factor authentication),
  - Automatic task reminders, and
  - Better search capabilities.
- Please let us know if you would like to schedule a training!
- RATS Portal: <https://ratsportal.state.gov/>

Home

Role: Platform Coordinator

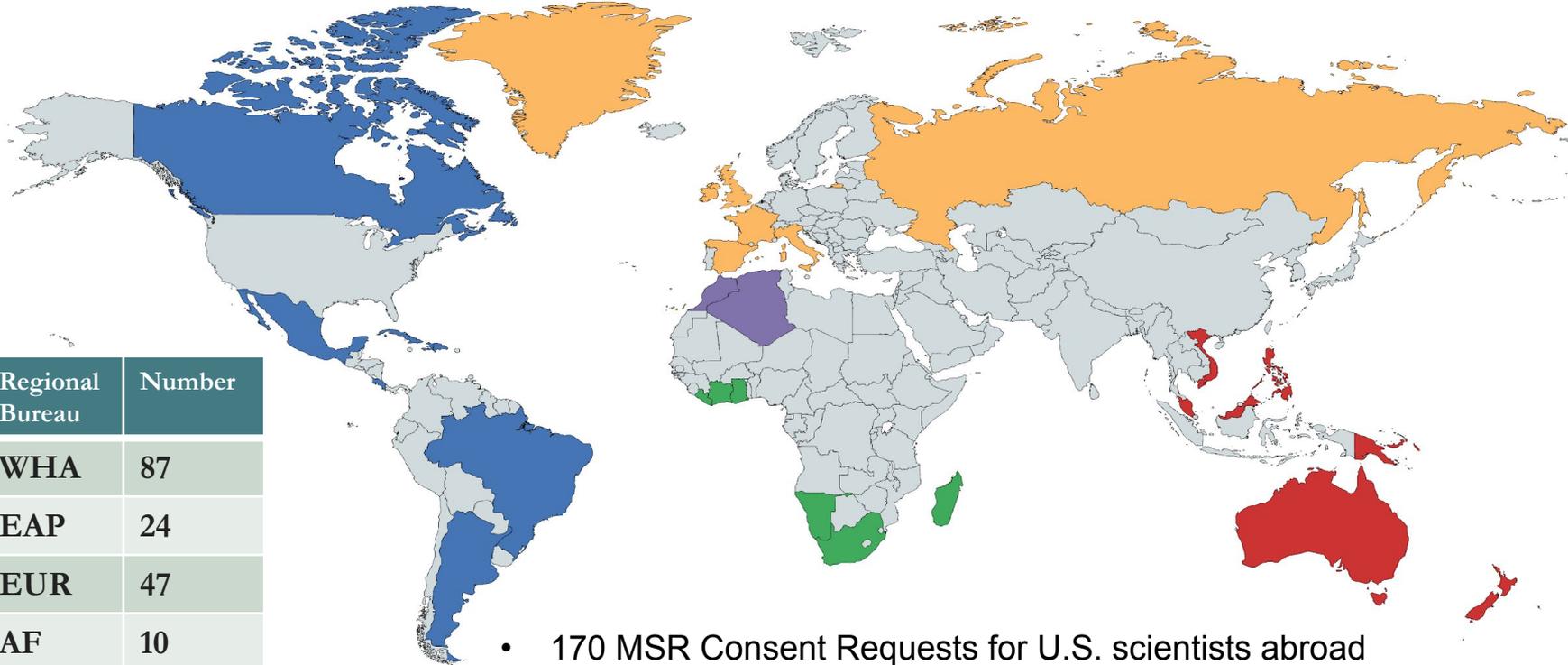
Welcome to the RATS Portal

This site is a self-service portal where users can submit and track marine scientific research applications for review by the U.S. Department of State office of Ocean and Polar Affairs (OPA). OPA develops, coordinates, negotiates, and implements U.S. foreign policy with respect to marine science and research, including Marine Scientific Research Consent. OPA promotes science and diplomacy, improves maritime domain awareness, and safeguards the interests of the U.S. scientific community through the marine scientific research consent program.

Please review the [Guidance page](#) for further details before submitting an application. Additional information can be found on the [Marine Scientific Research page](#).

Task	Regarding	Workflow Step	Created On	Application Status (Regarding)	Due Date	Assigned
Submit Final Report to DoS	<a href="#">F2021-039 - *20588 Submit Preliminary Report to MFA &amp; Submit Final Report to DoS</a>	Reporting	12/6/2021 2:09 PM	Reporting	12/6/2021 8:00 AM	OPA Platform Coordinator
Re-Submit Preliminary Report to DoS	<a href="#">F2021-016 - *OPA F-Cruise G</a>	Reporting	10/22/2021 1:50 PM	Inactive	12/23/2021 8:00 AM	OPA Platform Coordinator
Re-Submit Preliminary Report to DoS	<a href="#">F2021-031 - *23785 Re-Submit Preliminary Report</a>	Reporting	12/6/2021 1:03 PM	Reporting	1/6/2022 8:00 AM	OPA Platform Coordinator

# ☆☆☆ U.S. MSR Abroad CY 2021



Color Code	Regional Bureau	Number
	WHA	87
	EAP	24
	EUR	47
	AF	10
	NEA	2

- 170 MSR Consent Requests for U.S. scientists abroad
- 10 rescheduled or cancelled because of COVID



## Trends/Challenges



### ● **Bureaucratic/Diplomatic Challenges**

- Applications due at least 6- 6.5 months advance, many coastal States firm
- Increased scrutiny, evolving requirements, no uniform system

### ● **Late Reports/Data**

- Hundreds of late reports and data from U.S. scientists
- Coastal States are asking – they can withhold consent from any U.S. scientist for another U.S. scientist's late reports
- NZ, Mexico, France, Costa Rica, United States, Canada, Bahamas, BVI, and Argentina may withhold/delay consent for outstanding reports.

### ● **Extreme Events**

- Hurricanes, COVID, etc.



# More Trends...



- The timing of requirement changes can be a challenge
- Timing of quarantine, forms and documents for additional observers
- Upward trend in requiring participants, which can present challenges
- Clarifications from coastal states with more challenges with port call visits
- Covid-19 safety protocols are now being requested along with additional insurance information.

# ★★★ Examples of Coastal State Requirements



Please check the State Department [Marine Science Guidance Page](#) for full list.

- **Argentina** – Interested in science collaboration. Likely to request a participant.
- **Bahamas** – New legislation, application portal, fees, and data requirements.
- **Barbados** – more extensive review process, with Prime Minister review.
- **Canada** – Since January 2020 firm **6-month** review period.
- **Cuba** – **It's complicated.** Still processing applications but challenges exist.
- **France**
  - Need local scientist involved for French territories.
  - If non-U.S. Flag vessel, please provide proof of liability insurance.
  - Very strict on 6.5-month processing deadline.

# ☆☆☆ Coastal State Requirement Updates



- **Guatemala** – Has several new requirements, including **NDA and research fees**.
- **Japan** – Increase in requirements. Now passports, crew lists, and detailed information and cruise tracks are required. Very strict 6-month processing deadline.
- **Kiribati** – New fees and Covid-19 regulations
- **Mexico** – Processing has been significantly delayed, firm **6-month** review period for applications and forms.
- **Philippines** – Now welcoming MSR applications, but very strict on 6-month processing deadline. Will not accept late applications.

# ☆☆☆ Coastal State Requirement Updates



- **St. Kitts and Nevis** – Requires a separate application in addition to RATS app.
- **Solomon Islands** – Now requires **11** additional documents.
- **UK (all territories)** – Now requiring applications to be submitted 6.5 months in advance and have outstanding reports submitted.



# Outstanding Reports



- State has ramped up efforts to improve reporting of foreign scientists who have conducted MSR in U.S. waters, and U.S. scientists who have conducted MSR in foreign waters.
- In total, we estimate ~ 580+ prelim/final reports outstanding for all scientists in RATS.
- Instructions for reports/data submission can be found in scientists' consent letters/authorizations.
- Coastal States have the right to withhold consent from any scientist on the basis of late reports. Please do your part and submit reports on time.

**MISSING**

**MISSING**

DRAFT STANDARD FORM 6

PRELIMINARY CRUISE REPORT

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Cruise name/number:		
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Authorizations:

Coastal State	Authorization Document Number	National Participant(s)

Scientist in charge of reporting:

Name:	
Country/Nationality:	
Affiliation:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Website (for CV and photo):	

Brief description of scientific objective:

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**MISSING**

# Helpful Tips for all Scientists Requesting MSR Consent

- SUBMIT EARLY!!!
- Talk to others for lessons learned
- Build in time buffer (~1 week at the beginning and/or the end)
- No maritime boundaries on cruise track
- SUBMIT EARLY (7 months)
- Sell your science-benefits (lay audience)
- Outreach/engagement/public diplomacy
- Engage local scientists
- Follow-up regularly on status of request
- Timely submission of preliminary report, final report, data
- Did we say SUBMIT EARLY?



# Resources



## **U.S. MSR Policy General:**

<https://www.state.gov/marine-scientific-research/>

## **About the Research Application Tracking System (RATS):**

<https://www.state.gov/research-application-tracking-system/>

## **\*\*Documentation Required by Coastal State\*\*:**

<https://www.state.gov/guidance-on-supporting-documentation/>



Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs  
U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

# Thank you!



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