

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
INDIVIDUAL FISHING QUOTAS FOR PACIFIC HALIBUT AND SABLEFISH
IN THE ALASKA FISHERIES
OMB CONTROL NO.: 0648-0272**

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. groundfish fisheries of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off the coast of Alaska are managed by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act ([Magnuson-Stevens Act](#)), 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.* and the Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982, 16 U.S.C. 773, *et seq.* The Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska were prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and are implemented by regulations at 50 CFR part 679.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

This action changes the requirement for participants to use the current Internet address to report landings to NMFS of Individual Fishing Quotas (IFQ) halibut, IFQ sablefish, and Western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) halibut. NMFS instead requires the use of the Internet address to eLandings: <http://www.elandings.alaska.gov/> (see Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control No.: 0648-0515), the data entry component of the International Electronic Reporting System which supersedes the current Internet system and allows processors and others to make landings reports with a single reporting system to NMFS, the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). Using eLandings removes reporting duplications, and once implementation is complete, eLandings will make recordkeeping and reporting simpler.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

Electronic landing report and manual landing report [REMOVED]

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the information gathered has utility. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NMFS will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response #10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be

subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to Section 515 of Public Law 106-554.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

The permit applications are “fillable” on the computer screen at the NMFS Alaska Region Home Page at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram/default.htm>. After completion on the screen, the participant may print and fax the application to NMFS.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

By removing the electronic landings report from this collection, none of the information collected as part of this information collection duplicates other collections. This information collection is part of a specialized and technical program that is not like any other.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

This collection of information does not impose a significant impact on small entities.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

Without the removal of the landings report, the program would be severely jeopardized by duplication and confusion. Because this action is intended to benefit the fishing industry and three fishery management agencies, the real consequence of not removing these items would be negative for the fishing industry.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

No inconsistencies occur in this collection.

8. Provide a copy of the PRA Federal Register notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

The NMFS Alaska Region will submit a proposed rule, RIN 0648-AT91, coincident with this submission, requesting comments from the public.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payment or gift will be provided under this program.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

The information collected is confidential under section 303(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*); and under NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-100, which sets forth procedures to protect confidentiality of fishery statistics.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

This information collection does not involve information of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

Total estimated unique respondents remain at 2,877. Total estimated responses: 21,833, a decrease from 38,273. Total estimated burden hours: 10,578, a decrease from 15,750 hr. Total estimated personnel costs: \$513,435, a decrease from \$640,650. Personnel labor costs are estimated to the average wage equivalent of a GS-9 employee in Alaska, including Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA), at \$25 per hour.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in #12 above).

Total estimated miscellaneous costs: \$24,176, a decrease from \$43,337.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

Total estimated burden hours: 6,037 a decrease from 7,258 hr. Total estimated personnel cost: \$132,375, a decrease from \$181,450.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB 83-I.

The electronic landing report and backup manual report were removed from this collection, because they are replaced by eLandings (see OMB Control No.: 0648-0515). Additional adjustments account for 402 hours and \$381 of the total reductions.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

The information collected will not be published.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

In accordance with OMB requirements, the control number and the expiration date of OMB approval are shown on the forms.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-I.

No exceptions to the certification statement are requested.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.