

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
COMMERCIAL OPERATOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (COAR)
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0428**

INTRODUCTION

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.* ([Magnuson-Stevens Act](#)) authorizes the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to prepare and amend fishery management plans for any fishery in waters under its jurisdiction. Fishing for groundfish by United States (U.S.) vessels in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in waters off the coast of Alaska is managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska and the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (FMPs).

The Commercial Operator's Annual Report (COAR) information collection is an enhanced socioeconomic database which provides detailed and consistent fish and shellfish data on production, product prices, and product forms. NMFS uses COAR data to accurately measure economic and socioeconomic impacts and to prepare economic analyses of proposed or existing management measures. In addition, NMFS uses COAR data in response to requests for economic information that are frequently required by Federal and State management agencies, the fishing industry, and the general public.

Shoreside processors and stationary floating processors are required to annually submit the COAR to State of Alaska, Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), under Alaska Administrative Code, chapter [5 AAC 39.130](#). The information submitted in the COAR is protected by Alaska State confidentiality statute [AS 16.05.815](#).

Catcher/processors and motherships operating in the EEZ off Alaska are required by NMFS to annually submit the COAR for groundfish fisheries to ADF&G under [50 CFR part 679.5\(p\)](#).

This action requests renewal of this collection-of-information. Regulations implementing this collection are found at 50 CFR part 679.5(p).

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

Catcher/processors and motherships operating in the EEZ off the coast of Alaska represent a significant part of the total capacity of groundfish processors in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and account for a substantial part of the total landings each year. NMFS requires motherships and catcher/processors that are issued a Federal fisheries permit to complete and submit the Alaska COAR on an annual basis.

Added to the information from shoreside processors and stationary floating processors (SFP) required under State of Alaska requirements, this data collection from motherships and catcher/processors yields a complete database of equivalent annual product value information for all respective processing sectors. It also provides a consistent time series according to which groundfish resources may be managed more efficiently. Use of the information generated by the COAR is coordinated between NMFS and the ADF&G.

The COAR database is used in the annual NMFS Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation documents for the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI and GOA, annual Federal publications on the value of U.S. commercial fisheries, and in periodic reports that describe the fisheries and that serve as reference documents to management agencies, the industry, and others.

The COAR data are also used by NMFS to comply with legislative mandates as follows:

- ◆ Executive Order 12866 and the Magnuson-Stevens Act.
- ◆ American Fisheries Act to monitor and report to Congress on the effects and efficacy of the new groundfish management programs.
- ◆ Regulatory Flexibility Act, to the extent that any of the entities reporting under the COAR program are classified as "small" (using Small Business Administration definitions), access to these data is key to our fulfilling the impact assessments required of the agency as pertaining to Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analyses (IRFA).
- ◆ The National Standards 4, 5, and 7 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act National Standards for Fishery Conservation and Management.
- ◆ The National Standards 8 mandate increases the agency's need for these economic performance data cross sections in a compatible and consistent format.

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.

The COAR information is required annually on paper application forms from all catcher/processors and motherships issued a Federal Fisheries permit. ADF&G provides the COAR to each mothership and catcher/processor to record information from the previous year. Each mothership or catcher/processor is required to complete and submit one or more pages of the COAR to ADF&G for computer data entry, whether the processor operated or not. A certification page is available to indicate no receipt or production took place for that year; in this case, no other COAR pages are required. The COAR form can be downloaded from <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/geninfo/permits/intent/coar07.pdf>.

The motherships and catcher/processors submit the COAR by mail the following April to ADF&G, Division of Commercial Fisheries, P.O. Box 25526, Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526.

Information from motherships and catcher/processors is verified using the NMFS weekly production report (WPR) database. Information from processors that operate in State of Alaska waters, shoreside processors, and SFPs are verified using the ADF&G fish ticket database.

COAR

A separate form must be completed for each ADF&G processor code.

Certification page.

Enter processor code

Check YES or NO to indicate:

That you operated using the above processor code this reporting year

Whether fish tickets were written using the above processor code this reporting year

Whether you operated **only** in EEZ this reporting year.

Company name and address, including street, city, state and zip code

Physical location of land-based plant

Vessel name

Contact name, title, email address, telephone number, and company fax number

Alternate contact name, title, email address, telephone number, and company fax number

Signature and date signed.

Buying (ex-vessel) forms A(1-3), C(1-2), E, G, I(1-2), K, and M.

Species name and code

Area purchased

Gear code

Delivery code (form G only)

Total pounds (to the nearest lb) purchased from fishermen

Total amount paid to fishermen, including all post season adjustments and/or bonuses and any credit received by fishermen for gas expenses, ice, delivery premiums, and other miscellaneous expenses.

Price per pound. If additional adjustments may be made after this report has been filed, check the "\$ not final" box, and submit form M when those adjustments are paid.

Do not include fish purchased from another processor.

Wholesale production forms B(1-6), D, F, H, J(1-2), and K).

Production-except-canned.

Area of processing. List production of Canadian harvested fish separately.

Processed product

Process prefix code

Process suffix code

Product code

Total net weight. Enter total weight of the finished product.

Total value(\$). Enter the total wholesale value of the finished product

Price per pound.

Canned production. Complete an entry for each can size produced.

Area of processing

Process 51 (conventional canned) or

Process 52 (smoked, conventional canned)

Total value(\$). Enter the total wholesale value of the finished product

Price per pound

Can size in ounces, to the hundredth of an ounce

Number of cans per case

Number of cases.

Custom production forms L(1-2).

Custom-process for another processor L(1). If a mothership custom-processed fish or shellfish for another processor, the owner must list the processor name, State processor code (if known), and location of company or vessel name. Do not include any of that production in this report.

Custom-process by another processor L(2). If another processor custom-processed fish or shellfish for a mothership or catcher/processor, the owner must use a separate page to list each processor. Name of company, Processor code, and location or vessel name performing custom production.

Custom fresh/frozen miscellaneous production (wholesale/retail market and which are not frozen for canning later)

- Species name and code
- Area of processing
- Process code
- Product code
- Total net weight (lb)
- Total value (\$).

Custom canned production (Complete an entry for each can size produced:

- Species name and code
- Area of processing
- Process 51 or 52
- Can size in ounces, to the hundredth of an ounce.
- Number of cans per case
- Number of cases
- Total wholesale value(\$).

Fish buying retro payments/post-season adjustments, form M(1-2).

- Company name, Processor code, and location
- Year
- Species name and code
- Area purchased
- Gear code
- Delivery code
- Total pounds purchased from fisherman
- Total amount paid to fishermen (base + adjustment).

The time required to complete a COAR is estimated to range from 30 minutes (for completion of a certification page only) to 16 hours, an average of 8 hr per year. Each COAR must be submitted to ADF&G by mail. Postage costs are within a range of \$0.42 to \$1.23; estimated postage cost is \$1.23.

COAR, Respondent	
Estimated number of responses	99
Total annual responses	99
Frequency of response, annual	
Total annual time burden hours	792 hr
Estimated response time = 8 hr	
Total personnel cost	\$19,800
Cost per hour = \$25	
Total miscellaneous cost	\$122
Postage 99 x \$1.23 = 121.77	

COAR, Federal Government	
Total annual responses	0
Total annual time burden	0
Total personnel cost	0
Total miscellaneous cost	0

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. NMFS will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (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 COAR is a document of ADF&G. ADF&G maintains control of publication and distribution of the form and maintenance of the data obtained from the form. ADF&G requires an original signature on the COAR. At this time, ADF&G does not have funding to provide for electronic signature and submission of the COAR. *Although NMFS has attempted to procure grants or other funding for this purpose, so far funding is not available. Efforts to secure funding will continue.* In May 2008, NMFS and ADF&G formally initiated the process to create the COAR in an electronic format, through a NMFS-procured grant, such that participants could complete the form online. In the meantime, the form is available on the Internet at <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/geninfo/permits/intent/coar07.pdf> to review or print. The applicant provides a completed COAR in printed form directly to ADF&G.

4. Describe your efforts to identify duplication.

Although many of the questions on the COAR appear to duplicate requests for information that appear on the WPR, the COAR requests one annual amount for each species by product and area, compared with the many weekly amounts by species that are recorded and reported by the industry on Federal daily cumulative production logbooks (DCPL) and WPR. It is deemed a preferred method to request this summary along with associated value information, since each mothership or catcher/processor has a year-end summary by species and product in their own bookkeeping system. These requests are not duplications because applicants are either verifying information already on file (similar to persons verifying their income to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) although information has already been provided through W-2 forms) or providing information that is not on file. In addition, for economic data purposes, areas of buying and areas of processing are requested instead of reporting area of the harvested fish.

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. All of the processors affected by this request are small businesses.

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

A Federal requirement for catcher/processors and motherships to submit the COAR is a method to obtain complete and equivalent annual product value information for all respective processing sectors. The COAR data are fundamental to the agency's mandated obligations under E.O. 12866 and the Magnuson-Stevens Act, American Fisheries Act, Regulatory Flexibility Act, National Standards 4, 5, 7, and 8. The COAR database is used in the annual NMFS Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation documents for the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI and GOA, annual Federal publications on the value of U.S. commercial fisheries, and in periodic reports that describe the fisheries and that serve as reference documents to management agencies, the industry, and others. Without the COAR database, NMFS would be deficient in these very important data sectors.

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

The COAR is a State of Alaska form that is available on the Internet to download or print a copy for completion. However, it is not "fillable and printable".

8. Provide information on 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.

A Federal Register Notice published on February 25, 2008 (73 FR 10004) solicited public comment. No comments were received.

Eric Reiter, Seafood Industry Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries (Ph: (907) 465-6131; Fax: (907) 465-2604), provided current information regarding the COAR. In response to discussions with Eric, the data elements of the COAR as well as the number of participants responding to the COAR were updated.

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

No payment or gift is 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 Title II, Section 203(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-479). It is also confidential under NOAA Administrative Order 216-100, which sets forth procedures to protect confidentiality of fishery statistics. The information submitted in the COAR also is protected by Alaska State confidentiality statute AS 16.05.815.

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 99. Total estimated responses: 99. Total estimated burden: 792 hr. Total estimated personnel costs: \$19,800.

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: \$122, up from \$116.

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

There are no appreciable costs to NMFS. The COAR is submitted by respondents to ADF&G and data from the COAR are analyzed by ADF&G.

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

The total cost for postage is increased from \$116 to \$122 to reflect current rates.

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

Individual data from the COAR is confidential. Fishermen, researchers, economists, etc. request and receive ad hoc reports (non-confidential data) from COAR data for various reasons. NMFS economists use data from COAR as a source for a variety of tables that appear in an economic appendix to the annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Reports and also in regulatory analyses for groundfish fisheries such as Supplemental Environmental Impact Statements and Regulatory Impact Reviews.

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.

As this is a State of Alaska form, the OMB number and expiration date will not be displayed on the COAR.

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

Not applicable.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.