

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

This action requests extension of this existing information collection.

INTRODUCTION

Fishing for groundfish by United States (U.S.) vessels in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in waters off the coast of Alaska is authorized under the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#), 16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.* (Magnuson-Stevens Act) as amended in 2006. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council prepares and amends fishery management plans for any fishery in waters under its jurisdiction. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) manages groundfish 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.

The first buyer of raw fish, persons who catch and process fish, and persons who catch and have fish processed by another business are required to file an annual report of their purchasing and processing activities. This report is called the State of Alaska Commercial Operators Annual Report (COAR) and is due by April 1 of the following year. NMFS also requires annual COAR reports from catcher/processors and motherships operating in the EEZ off Alaska.

The COAR requires submission of information on seafood purchasing, production, and both ex-vessel and wholesale values of seafood products. The buying information from COAR is reported by species, area of purchase, condition of fisheries resources at the time of purchase, type of gear used in the harvest, pounds purchased, and ex-vessel value. The ex-vessel value in COAR includes any post-season adjustments or bonuses paid after the fish was purchased.

The production information from COAR is reported by species, area of processing, process type (frozen, canned, smoked, etc.), product type (fillets, surimi, sections, etc.), net weight of the processed product, and the first wholesale value.

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 (FFP) to complete and submit portions of the Alaska COAR on an annual basis.

The mothership and catcher/processor data, when added to the COAR information collected from shoreside processors and stationary floating processors required under State of Alaska requirements, yields a complete data base 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 State of Alaska, Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

NMFS uses the COAR database 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.

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.

NMFS requires COAR reports from processing vessels operating in Federal waters of the EEZ. The COAR is used to gather statewide fish and shellfish information describing Buying (ex-vessel) and Production (wholesale or retail) activities. 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 owner of a mothership or catcher/processor must annually complete and submit to ADF&G the appropriate **Forms A through M** and COAR certification page for each year in which the mothership or catcher/processor was issued an FFP. The owner of a mothership or catcher/processor must record and submit the appropriate COAR production forms for all production that occurred for each species during the applicable year, including:

- ◆ that were purchased from fishermen on the grounds and/or dockside, including both processed and unprocessed seafood
- ◆ that were then either processed on the mothership or exported out of the State of Alaska
- ◆ that were received from an associated buying station.

The motherships and catcher/processors must submit the COAR by the following April 1 to

Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Division of Commercial Fisheries
Attn: Seafood Industry Coordinator
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Telephone: 907-465-6131
Email: dfg.seafood-coord@alaska.gov

The COAR form can be downloaded from <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.coar> under Commercial Fish Reporting.

Commercial Operator's Annual Report (COAR)

Certification page

MANDATORY for everyone

Everyone who buys, processes, and/or sells fishery resources MUST complete this page.

If a processor had more than one processor code for 2014, a separate form for each processor code must be completed

If a processor did not operate with a processor code in 2014, either inside or outside of the 3-mile zone, the Certification Page is the only page needed to return to Fish & Game

Production Information

Check YES or NO to indicate:

Did you operate using the above processor code this reporting year

Were fish tickets written using the above processor code this reporting year

Did you operate **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 and title

e-mail address, telephone number, and company fax number

Alternate contact printed name, email address, and telephone number

Printed name, signature, and date signed

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

Species name and code

Area purchased

Gear code

Delivery code (form G only)

Total weight (to the nearest lb) purchased from fishermen

Total amount paid to fishermen

Average price per pound

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

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 (\$)

Can size (in ounces, to the hundredth of an ounce)

Number of cans per case

Number of cases

Production, non-canned.

Area of processing

Processed product (enter three codes)

Process prefix code

Product suffix code

Product code

Total net weight (in lb)

Total value (\$)

Average price per pound

Custom production forms L(1-2)

For another processor L(1)

(Do not include any of that production in this report)

- Processor name
- State processor code (if known),
- Location of company or vessel name

By another processor L(2)

- (use a separate page to list each processor)
- Name of company
- Processor code
- 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
- Processed product (use 3 codes)
 - Process prefix code
 - Process suffix code
 - Product code

- Total net weight (lb)
- Total wholesale value (\$)

Custom canned production

(Complete an entry for each can size produced:

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

Fish buying retro payments/post-season adjustments, form M

- Species name and code
- Area purchased
- Gear code
- Total pounds purchased from fishermen
- Total amount paid to fishermen (base + adjustment)

Changed number of respondents from 204 to 179. Changed cost of personnel from \$25/hr to \$37/hr.

COAR, Respondent	
Estimated number of responses	179
151 catcher/processors	
28 motherships	
Total annual responses	179
Frequency of response = 1	
Total annual time burden hours	1,432 hr
Estimated response time = 8 hr	
Total personnel cost (\$37/hr x 1432)	\$52,984
Total miscellaneous cost	\$716
Postage 179 x \$2.50 = 447.50	
Copy 179 x 0.05 x 30pp = 268.50	

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. The COAR is a document of ADF&G. ADF&G maintains control of publication, distribution of the form, and maintenance of the data obtained from the form. See question No. 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 form is available on the Internet in fillable format that can be printed and mailed by catcher/processors and motherships to ADF&G.

4. Describe your efforts to identify duplication.

No duplication exists with other information collections.

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.

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 [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 12866](#) and the Magnuson-Stevens Act, [American Fisheries Act](#), [Regulatory Flexibility Act](#), and National Standards 4, 5, 7, and 8 (MSA Section 301). 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 data base, 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.

8. Provide information on the 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 October 22, 2014 (79 FR 63085) solicited public comments. No comments were received.

NMFS consulted with ADF&G Commercial Fisheries spokesperson for COAR, Gail Smith (907-465-6157) to update records on the COAR. ADF&G now provides a new process for COAR submitted by shoreside processors and stationary floating processors that allows the manager to use eLandings for part of the data required. This process is optional (thus voluntary) now, but will be in use in the future. However, the at-sea version of COAR, which is described in this collection, must still be completed using a fill-in form. The at-sea processors use a different method to record products and thus are not able to use an online form.

In addition, a survey was created for transmittal to respondents and sent by email to 17 names. Two emails were returned due to a bad address. Three surveys were returned and are summarized below. The questionnaire is appended.

QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

<p>1. Are the requirements for the COAR easy to understand and to apply for? All three said yes.</p>
<p>2. We estimate it takes 8 hours for your office personnel to complete the COAR. Is this time accurate and reasonable? Comment1: 16 hours Comment2: Depending on the year. Large returns have more boats/fish tickets Comment3: It takes less than 2 hours to complete because we keep the data internally for a variety of uses Response to above 3 comments: It is apparent that the time to complete the COAR depends on the individual setup of the office.</p>
<p>3. We estimate that personnel costs to complete and submit the COAR are \$37/hour. Is this cost accurate and reasonable? One Comment: \$60 Response: It is not clear from the comment whether persons of higher hourly wage are used or whether the total cost is indicated.</p>
<p>4. We estimate that it costs \$3 to submit by mail and make a copy. Do you agree? Note: No comment was given.</p>
<p>5. Do you believe that the COAR has practical utility? One Comment: Do you really need all that information? Response: NMFS and ADF&G do need all of the information requested in the COAR. Accurate and complete reporting is essential to sustainable management of Alaska's fishery resources.</p>
<p>6. Can you suggest ways to enhance the quality and clarity of the information to be collected? Note: No comment was given.</p>
<p>7. Can you suggest ways to minimize the burden of completing the COAR? Comment 1: Reduce the amount of information required Response: NMFS disagrees. Accurate and complete reporting is essential to sustainable management of Alaska's fishery resources. Comment 2: We find the COAR to be straight forward to complete Response: NMFS acknowledges this comment.</p>
<p>8. What else would you care to tell us? Provide any additional comments on any aspect of the COAR Program. Note: No comment was given.</p>

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 Section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act. 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: 179, decreased from 204. Total estimated responses: 179 decreased from 204. Total estimated burden: 1,432, decreased from 1,632 hr. Total estimated personnel costs: \$52,984, increased from \$40,800.

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 Question 12 above).

Total estimated miscellaneous costs: \$716, decreased from \$816.

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 maintained and analyzed by ADF&G.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

Adjustments are made in this collection, due in part to differences in numbers of participants, based on current permit counts.

COAR

- a decrease of 25 respondents and responses, 179 instead of 204
- a decrease of 200 hr burden, 1,432 instead of 1,632 hr
- an increase of \$12,184 personnel costs, \$52,984 instead of \$40,800
- a decrease of \$100 miscellaneous costs, \$716 instead of \$816.

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.

This is a State of Alaska form; the OMB number and expiration date will not be displayed.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

This is a State of Alaska form; the OMB number and expiration date will not be displayed.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT
THE ALASKA COMMERCIAL OPERATOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (COAR)
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0428**

February, 2015

In the renewal process of information collections, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires each Federal agency to ask for comments from non-agency persons or stakeholders who are required to comply with recordkeeping and reporting requirements for that agency. NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Region (NMFS) is asking for your help with this task. Your name was chosen randomly from a list of persons who are participants in the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) Commercial Operator's Annual Report (COAR), identified as OMB Control Number 0648-0428.

Under Federal regulations at 50 CFR part 679.5(p), the owner of a mothership or catcher/processor must annually complete and submit the appropriate COAR Forms.

- ◆ The owner of a mothership must record and submit the appropriate COAR production forms (B(1-6), D, F, H, J(1-2), and K) for all production that occurred for each species during the applicable year:
 - ◇ That were purchased from fishermen on the grounds and/or dockside, including both processed and unprocessed seafood.
 - ◇ That were then either processed on the mothership or exported out of the State of Alaska.
- ◆ The owner of a catcher/processor must record and submit the appropriate COAR production forms (B(1-6), D, F, H, J(1-2), and K) for each species harvested during the applicable year that were then either processed on the vessel or exported out of the State of Alaska.

The ADF&G COAR is further described under Alaska Administrative Code (5 AAC 39.130).

The COAR collection expiration date is 04/30/2015. Please take a few minutes to comment on your experience submitting the COAR. To review the recent renewal notice, go to [79 FR 63085, October 22, 2014](#). The comments you send will help NMFS improve and modify this collection.

If you have questions or need additional information, please call me at 907-586-7008. Thanks in advance.

Respectfully,

Patsy A. Bearden
Sustainable Fisheries Division
NMFS Alaska Region

For YES or NO answers and NO COMMENT answers, respond with an “X”. If you do not have the permit or do not use the form indicated, mark “Not applicable” and go on to the next form. When completed, email your responses to me at patsy.bearden@noaa.gov by February 10, 2015.

OMB 0648-0428 – Expiration Date 04/30/2015				
ADF&G Commercial Operator's Annual Report (COAR) ◀ View at	YES (X)	NO (X)	COMMENTS	No Comment (X)
1. Are the requirements for the COAR easy to understand and to apply for?				
2. We estimate it takes 8 hours for your office personnel to complete the COAR. Is this time accurate and reasonable?				
3. We estimate that personnel costs to complete and submit the COAR are \$37/hour. Is this cost accurate and reasonable?				
4. We estimate that it costs \$3 to submit by mail and make a copy. Do you agree?				
5. Do you believe that the COAR has practical utility?				
6. Can you suggest ways to enhance the quality and clarity of the information to be collected?				
7. Can you suggest ways to minimize the burden of completing the COAR?				
8. What else would you care to tell us? Provide any additional comments on any aspect of the COAR Program.				