

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Northeast Region Logbook Family of Forms
OMB Control No. 0648-0212

RIN 0648-BF43

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is proposing a change to the 0648-0212 family of forms to add a new species code to the Vessel Trip Report for Federally permitted fishing vessels. This information collection will remain unchanged, with the exception of a new species code that will be available for selection. There will be no burden added, and no additional public cost burden associated with this change.

A change request was authorized by OMB for this collection due to change requests for related information collection requests 0648-0202 – Northeast Region Permit Family of Forms – and 0648-0229 – Northeast Region Dealer Purchase Family of Forms also affected by this rule.

Under the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's process for species that are managed by both the states and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, the Commission decides upon a management strategy, and then recommends that the states and Federal government enact regulations to complement these measures when appropriate. The Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act directs the Federal Government to support the management efforts of the Commission and, to the extent the Federal Government seeks to regulate a Commission species, to develop regulations that are compatible with the Commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan and consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act's National Standards.

The Commission developed an Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Jonah Crab and requested that we issue complementary measures. Among these measures is a recommendation to allow for a regulated claw-only fishery. Several states, however, have elected to maintain their more restrictive whole crab-only fisheries while others have allowed a claw fishery. The variety of state regulations complicate our ability to complement the state's regulations. We do not intend to propose regulations for the claw fishery; leaving this measure to the states to regulate when crabs are landed.

Presently, there is only one species code associated with Jonah crab on the Vessel Trip Report, and is assumed to be a whole crab. In order to facilitate the collection of accurate catch information associated with this fishery, a new species code is being added to differentiate claw landings. The addition of a new species code does not modify the form, or burdens associated with the data collection. The new species code provides a better option for vessel operators, permitted to fish in states where the claw fishery is allowed, to use when filling out their Vessel Trip Report.