

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Alaska Interagency Electronic Reporting System (IERS)
OMB Control No. 0648-0515

RIN 0648-BJ49

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is proposing a change to 0648-0515. This information collection consists of the information collection requirements for the Alaska Interagency Electronic Reporting System, which includes electronic logbooks, landing reports, and production reports used for management of the commercial fisheries off Alaska. This information collection will remain unchanged, with the exception that sculpins will be reported as non-target ecosystem component (EC) species rather than target species.

In October 2019, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council voted to reclassify sculpins as a non-target EC species, not in need of conservation and management. Sculpins are currently classified as a target species in the groundfish fishery management plans (FMPs) for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), but they are currently caught only incidental to other target groundfish fisheries.

The reclassification of sculpins in the FMPs requires clarifying the location of the species code for sculpins in Tables 2a and 2c to 50 CFR part 679 to note they should be reported as non-target EC species instead of target species. The species code is not changed. Requirements for recording and reporting the catch and discard of sculpins in logbooks or on catch or production reports will not change. This action is necessary to properly classify sculpins in the BSAI and GOA FMPs. This proposed rule is intended to promote the goals and objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

This action will not change the respondents, responses, reporting burden, or costs associated with this information collection.