

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Commercial Operator's Annual Report (COAR)
OMB Control No. 0648-0428

Abstract

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Regional Office, is requesting renewal of the currently approved information collection for the Commercial Operator's Annual Report (COAR). No revisions are made to this collection.

The COAR is a State of Alaska report. NMFS requires motherships and catcher/processors that are issued a Federal fisheries permit to annually complete and submit the appropriate sections of the COAR.

The COAR is used to gather statewide fish and shellfish information describing buying (ex-vessel) and production (wholesale or retail) activities. The information collected in the COAR is used to determine the value of Alaska's fisheries resources and products. NMFS uses the COAR database in annual Federal publications on the value of U.S. commercial fisheries, in the annual NMFS Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation reports for the groundfish fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska, and in periodic reports that describe the fisheries and that serve as reference documents to management agencies, the industry, and others.

Justification

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

Fishing for groundfish by United States (U.S.) vessels in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in waters off 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. NMFS manages groundfish according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska and the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area.

The COAR is a State of Alaska report that is required to be completed and submitted by direct marketers, catcher/processors, catcher exporters, buyer exporters, shore-based processors, and floating processor permit holders pursuant to Alaska Administrative Code ([5 AAC 39.130](#)) and Federal regulations at 50 CFR 679. Under [50 CFR 679.5\(p\)](#), NMFS requires motherships and catcher/processors that are issued a Federal fisheries permit to annually complete and submit the appropriate sections of the COAR.

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Federal publications on the value of U.S. commercial fisheries, in the annual NMFS Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation reports for the groundfish fisheries of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), and in periodic reports that describe the fisheries and that serve as reference documents to management agencies, the industry, and others.

Catcher/processors and motherships operating in the EEZ off Alaska represent a significant part of the total capacity of groundfish processors in the BSAI and GOA and account for a substantial part of the total landings each year.

The catcher/processor and mothership data, when added to the COAR information collected from shoreside processors and stationary floating processors required under State of Alaska requirements, yield a complete database of equivalent annual product value information for all respective processing sectors. The information 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 Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The section above describes how and by whom this information is used, and this information is not repeated here.

For each year in which a mothership or catcher/processor was issued a Federal fisheries permit, the owner must annually complete and submit to ADF&G the appropriate forms and the COAR certification page for the previous year's activity. There are six COAR forms: Buying, Production by You, Custom Production for You, Custom Production by You, Retro/Postseason Buying Adjustments, and Retro/Postseason Sales Adjustments. If no receipt or production took place that year, the owner submits only the COAR certification page.

The COAR must be submitted by April 1 of the year following the year for which the report is required.

The COAR is available in fillable PDF, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel formats on the ADF&G Commercial Fish Reporting web page at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.coar> and may be emailed or printed and mailed to the ADF&G at the addresses below:

- Mail: ADF&G, Division of Commercial Fisheries, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811
- Email: dfg.seafood-coord@alaska.gov

The COAR may also be uploaded as a Microsoft Excel file into the eLandings System (<https://elandings.alaska.gov/>) and submitted electronically to ADF&G.

The COAR requires submission of information on seafood purchasing, production, and both ex-vessel and wholesale values of seafood products. The buying information is reported by species, harvest area, 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 includes any post-season adjustments or bonuses paid after the fish was purchased. The production information is reported by species, area of processing, process type (e.g., frozen, canned, smoked), product type (e.g., fillets, surimi, sections), net weight of the processed product, and the first wholesale value.

All production that occurred for each species during the applicable year must be recorded, including species—

- 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; and
- that were received from an associated buying station.

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](#) (the Information Quality Act).

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The COAR is available, and may be submitted, electronically. The COAR is available in fillable PDF, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel formats on the ADF&G Commercial Fish Reporting web page at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.coar> and may be submitted to ADF&G by email.

The COAR may also be submitted electronically through eLandings, the Interagency Electronic Reporting System (elandings.alaska.gov). eLandings enables authorized users to generate a spreadsheet of data that summarizes several types of information:

- their buying information from throughout the year using sold fish ticket data. The spreadsheet contains translations to COAR reporting areas using previously reported information. This spreadsheet is then supplemented with ex-vessel value and ex-vessel price information by the user. Buying information from conventional paper fish tickets, not submitted through eLandings, can also be added to the spreadsheet prior to submission.
- the seafood that was purchased by their operation and custom processed by another processing facility;
- a list of other processing facilities that their operation performed custom processing for.

Production information and custom processing for other processors can also be added to the spreadsheet. Once all the supplemental information is added, the user can upload the spreadsheet into eLandings and it is accessed electronically by ADF&G. Instructions on how to generate COAR data from eLandings and upload it can be found on the same web page as the COAR and through eLandings User Documentation at [elandings Commercial Operator's Annual Report User Documentation](#).

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2

No duplication exists with other information collections.

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

This information collection impacts some small entities. NMFS has attempted to minimize the burden on all entities, including small entities, by providing a variety of ways for COAR submission. These are all explained in Question 3. The catcher/processors and motherships operating in the EEZ off Alaska are proficient users of the eLandings system, and one of the ways they may now submit the COAR is through eLandings. The mechanism in eLandings generates data summaries, eliminating the need for one of the preliminary steps in COAR submission for each user, and allows for uploads once supplemental information has been added.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The 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](#), the [Magnuson-Stevens Act](#), the [American Fisheries Act](#), the [Regulatory Flexibility Act](#), and National Standards 4, 5, 7, and 8 (Magnuson-Stevens Act section 301). The COAR database is used in the annual NMFS Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation reports 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 would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

This collection will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

A *Federal Register* Notice published on January 11, 2021 ([86 FR 1943](#)), which solicited public comments. In addition to the *Federal Register* notice, NOAA contacted nine stakeholders 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, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. No comments were received in response to our inquiries or from the *Federal Register* notice.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift 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 the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

All information collections by NMFS Alaska Region are protected under confidentiality provisions of section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act as amended in 2006 (16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.*) and 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.

The System of Records Notice that covers this information collection is [COMMERCE/NOAA #6: Fishermen's Statistical Data](#).

Because the COAR is a state form, there is no privacy act statement on it. The privacy act statement is posted on the NMFS COAR web page: <https://elandings.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/doc/pages/379650058/PRIVACY+ACT+STATEMENT+for+the+ADF+G+Commercial+Operators+Annual+Report>.

The Privacy Impact Assessment that covers this information collection is [NOAA NMFS Alaska Region Local Area Network \(NOAA4700\)](#).

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

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

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

Information Collection	Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents/year ¹ (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) ² (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
Commercial Operator's Annual Report	owner of a mothership or catcher/processor	72	1	72	8 hrs	576	\$42.21	\$24,313

¹The total respondents equal 59 catcher/processors, 3 motherships, and 10 vessels that operate as both a catcher/processor and a mothership.

² Many of these catcher/processors and motherships are based in the Seattle area. The hourly wage rate is the mean hourly wage for Occupation Code 13-2011 (Accountant and Auditors) from [May 2020 Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, Washington](#).

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).

Information Collection	# of Respondents/year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Cost Burden / Respondent (h)	Total Annual Cost Burden (i) = (c) x (h)
Commercial Operator's Annual Report	72	1	72	Operating costs - \$5	\$360

¹Operating costs account for the typical inclusive general office services packages that include expenses for email, fax, copying, mailing, printing, and internet.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

There are no appreciable costs to NMFS. Respondents submit the COAR 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 reported in ROCIS.

Information Collection	Respondents		Responses		Burden Hours		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	
Commercial Operator's Annual Report	72	98	72	98	576	784	The previous number of respondents, which effects the number of responses and burden hours, may have included vessels that were not respondents to this collection. The COAR data do not differentiate vessels in Federal groundfish fisheries in the EEZ from those in state managed fisheries in state waters. For this extension, data from the NMFS Alaska Region Catch Accounting System and the COAR data were used to try to differentiate between the two so only those required to submit the COAR due to NMFS regulations are included in the counts.
Difference	- 26		- 26		- 208		

Information Collection	Labor Costs		Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	
Commercial Operator's Annual Report	\$24,313	\$29,008	\$360	\$392	Labor Costs: Is now based on a BLS hourly wage rate. Misc. Costs: Revised the amount to account for typical inclusive general office services packages.
Difference	- \$4,695		- \$32		

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

Individual data from the COAR is confidential. The public (e.g., fishermen, researchers, economists) requests and receives ad hoc reports (non-confidential data) from COAR data for various reasons.

NMFS economists use data from COAR 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 that display would be inappropriate.

The OMB control number and expiration date will not be displayed because the COAR is a State of Alaska form.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.”

The agency certifies compliance with [5 CFR 1320.9](#) and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#).