

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044
1400 Tenth Street, St #100
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Department of Fish and Wildlife
Marine Region
1933 Cliff Drive, Suite 9
Santa Barbara, CA 93109

Project Title: NWFSC West Coast Groundfish Bottom Trawl Survey

Project Location: Statewide

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to NOAA Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 2081(a) to sample fish statewide for the West Coast Groundfish Bottom Trawl Survey. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes NWFSC to incidentally take Longfin Smelt (*Spirinchus thaleichthys*), Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), and Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) during the course of its research subject to terms and conditions set forth in the permit. The purpose of this assessment is to collect fishery-independent data that will be used to assess the status and trends of commercially important species. Covered methods of take are limited to an Aberdeen-style bottom trawl net.

California Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Aimee Keller, Principal Investigator, NOAA NWFSC

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial;
- Declared Emergency;
- Emergency Project;
- Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Section 15306, Information Collection, Class 6.

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project involves research which will not result in a serious or major disturbance to Longfin Smelt, a threatened species, Spring Run Chinook Salmon, a threatened species, Winter Run Chinook Salmon, an endangered species, Central California Coast ESU Coho Salmon, an endangered species, and Southern Oregon/Northern California ESU Coho Salmon, a threatened species.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Arn Aarreberg Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (707) 791-4195

Signature:  _____ **Date:** 6/8/21

Dr. Craig Shuman, Regional Manager, Marine Region

Signed by Lead Agency Date Received for filing at OPR: _____