

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 Integrated Ecosystem and Pacific Hake Acoustic-Trawl

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 Integrated Ecosystem and Pacific Hake Acoustic-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 survey used to assess the abundance, distribution, and biology of Pacific hake (*Merluccius productus*) along the west coast of the U.S. and Canada. Estimates of total population abundance derived from these surveys are a key fishery-independent data source for the joint U.S.-Canada Pacific hake stock assessment, which ultimately helps with setting harvest levels. Covered methods of take are limited to an Aluetian wing mid-water trawl net.

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

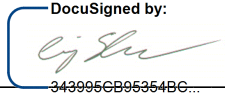
Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Steve DeBlois, Principal Investigator, NOAA NWFSC

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: _____