Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044
1400 Tenth Street, Rm 2
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

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

Project Title: Life History and Reproductive Ecology Studies

Project Location: nearshore and offshore waters Statewide

Project Description: The Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 2081(a) for educational purposes. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes the applicant to take coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), and steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus)* during the course of sampling, subject to terms and conditions set forth in the permit. The purpose of this sampling is for the NOAA SWFSC's research to improve reproductive ecology and other life history information available to inform stock assessment models of West Coast groundfish. The Section 2081(a) permit authorizes the applicant to potentially capture coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout during surveys. The applicant will conduct year-round research of nearshore and offshore groundfish species using hook & line – baited shrimp fly through December 31, 2025.

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

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Dr. Roger Hewitt, NOAA SWFSC

Exempt Status:

☐ Ministerial;

☐ Declared Emergency;

☐ Emergency Project;

☒ Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Calif. Code Regs., § 15306, Information Collection, Class 6

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project involves research sampling within nearshore and offshore waters Statewide which will not result in a serious or major disturbance to coho salmon, Chinook salmon, or steelhead trout which are all listed under the California Endangered Species Act.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Dylan Inskeep **Telephone:** (707) 317-3924

Signature: _____ **Date:** ____**1/24/2024**_____
Craig Shuman, Regional Manager, Marine Region

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