NOTICE OF OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET ACTION

Date 06/14/2016

Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL: Jennifer Jessup
FOR CLEARANCE OFFICER: Jennifer Jessup

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, OMB has taken action on your request received 03/22/2016

ACTION REQUESTED: Extension without change of a currently approved collection
TYPE OF REVIEW REQUESTED: Regular
ICR REFERENCE NUMBER: 201603-0648-015
AGENCY ICR TRACKING NUMBER:
TITLE: Groundfish Tagging Program
LIST OF INFORMATION COLLECTIONS: See next page

OMB ACTION: Approved without change
OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 0648-0276
The agency is required to display the OMB Control Number and inform respondents of its legal significance in accordance with 5 CFR 1320.5(b).

EXPIRATION DATE: 06/30/2019 DISCONTINUE DATE:

BURDEN:	RESPONSES	HOURS	COSTS
Previous	895	78	30
New	1,015	88	30
Difference			
Change due to New Statute	0	0	0
Change due to Agency Discretion	0	0	0
Change due to Agency Adjustment	120	10	0
Change due to PRA Violation	0	0	0

TERMS OF CLEARANCE:

OMB Authorizing Official: Dominic J. Mancini
Acting Deputy Administrator,
Office Of Information And Regulatory Affairs

List of ICs			
IC Title	Form No.	Form Name	CFR Citation
Groundfish Tagging Program - Simple tags	NA, NA	Groundfish tagging form, Sablefish Tagging Form	
Groundfish taggng program - archival tags	NA, NA	Sabblefish tagging form, Groundfish tagging form	

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION

Please read the instructions before completing this form. For additional forms or assistance in completing this form, contact your agency's Paperwork Clearance Officer. Send two copies of this form, the collection instrument to be reviewed, the supporting statement, and any additional documentation to: Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Docket Library, Room 10102, 725 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20503.

1. Agency/Subagency originating request
DOC/NOAA/NMFS

2. OMB control number
a. 0648 - 0276
b. [ ] None

3. Type of information collection (*check one*)
a. [ ] New Collection
b. [ ] Revision of a currently approved collection
c. [✔] Extension of a currently approved collection
d. [ ] Reinstatement, without change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired
e. [ ] Reinstatement, with change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired
f. [ ] Existing collection in use without an OMB control number
For b-f, note Item A2 of Supporting Statement instructions

4. Type of review requested (*check one*)
a. [✔] Regular submission
b. [ ] Emergency - Approval requested by ____/____/____
c. [ ] Delegated

5. Small entities
Will this information collection have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities? [ ] Yes [✔] No

6. Requested expiration date
a. [✔] Three years from approval date b. [ ] Other Specify:____

7. Title
Groundfish Tagging Program

8. Agency form number(s) (*if applicable*)
N/A

9. Keywords
"Fishery"

10. Abstract

The Groundfish Tagging Program provides scientists with information necessary for effective conservation, management and scientific understanding of the groundfish fishery off Alaska and the North Pacific. The program area includes the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, Alexander Archipelago of SE Alaska, Oregon and Washington. Distribution, movement rates and direction, growth, recruitment and mortality estimated from tag recoveries are important parameters used in groundfish population assessment models and in developing allocation systems.

11. Affected public (*Mark primary with "P" and all others that apply with "x"*)
a. X Individuals or households
b. ___ Business or other for-profit
c. ___ Not-for-profit institutions
d. ___ Farms
e. ___ Federal Government
f. ___ State, Local or Tribal Government

12. Obligation to respond (*check one*)
a. [✔] Voluntary
b. [ ] Required to obtain or retain benefits
c. [ ] Mandatory

13. Annual recordkeeping and reporting burden
a. Number of respondents: 440
b. Total annual responses: 1,015
1. Percentage of these responses collected electronically: 0 %
c. Total annual hours requested: 89
d. Current OMB inventory: 78
e. Difference: 11
f. Explanation of difference
1. Program change: ____
2. Adjustment: 11

14. Annual reporting and recordkeeping cost burden (*in thousands of dollars*)
a. Total annualized capital/startup costs: 0
b. Total annual costs (O&M): 0
c. Total annualized cost requested: 0
d. Current OMB inventory: 0
e. Difference: 0
f. Explanation of difference
1. Program change: ____
2. Adjustment: ____

15. Purpose of information collection (*Mark primary with "P" and all others that apply with "X"*)
a. ___ Application for benefits
b. ___ Program evaluation
c. ___ General purpose statistics
d. ___ Audit
e. ___ Program planning or management
f. P Research
g. ___ Regulatory or compliance

16. Frequency of recordkeeping or reporting (*check all that apply*)
a. [ ] Recordkeeping
b. [ ] Third party disclosure
c. [ ] Reporting
1. [✔] On occasion 2. [ ] Weekly 3. [ ] Monthly
4. [ ] Quarterly 5. [ ] Semi-annually 6. [ ] Annually
7. [ ] Biennially 8. [ ] Other (describe) ____

17. Statistical methods
Does this information collection employ statistical methods
[ ] Yes [✔] No

18. Agency Contact (person who can best answer questions regarding the content of this submission)
Name: John Clary
Phone: (206) 526-4039

19. Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

On behalf of this Federal Agency, I certify that the collection of information encompassed by this request complies with 5 CFR 1320.9

NOTE: The text of 5 CFR 1320.9, and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3), appear at the end of the instructions. *The certification is to be made with reference to those regulatory provisions as set forth in the instructions.*

The following is a summary of the topics, regarding the proposed collection of information, that the certification covers:

(a) It is necessary for the proper performance of agency functions;

(b) It avoids unnecessary duplication;

(c) It reduces burden on small entities;

(d) It used plain, coherent, and unambiguous terminology that is understandable to respondents;

(e) Its implementation will be consistent and compatible with current reporting and recordkeeping practices;

(f) It indicates the retention period for recordkeeping requirements;

(g) It informs respondents of the information called for under 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3):

- (i) Why the information is being collected;
- (ii) Use of information;
- (iii) Burden estimate;
- (iv) Nature of response (voluntary, required for a benefit, mandatory);
- (v) Nature and extent of confidentiality; and
- (vi) Need to display currently valid OMB control number;

(h) It was developed by an office that has planned and allocated resources for the efficient and effective management and use of the information to be collected (see note in Item 19 of instructions);

(i) It uses effective and efficient statistical survey methodology; and

(j) It makes appropriate use of information technology.

If you are unable to certify compliance with any of the provisions, identify the item below and explain the reason in Item 18 of the Supporting Statement.

Signature of Senior Official or designee	Date

Agency Certification (signature of Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Line Office Chief Information Officer, head of MB staff for L.O.s, or of the Director of a Program or StaffOffice)	
Signature signed by Dr. Ned Cyr, Director, Science and Technology	Date 3/21/2016
Signature of NOAA Clearance Officer	
Signature BRABSON.SARAH.1365710488 Digitally signed by BRABSON.SARAH.1365710488 DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government, ou=DoD, ou=PKI, ou=OTHER, cn=BRABSON.SARAH.1365710488 Date: 2016.07.13 13:10:47 -04'00'	Date

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
GROUNDFISH TAGGING PROGRAM
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0276

BACKGROUND

This request is for extension of a current information collection.

Beginning with the passage of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq*. (MSA) in 1976, the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) has undertaken a set of objectives for the conservation and management of marine fishery resources. Under this stewardship role of one of the nation's natural resources, the Secretary was given certain regulatory authorities to ensure the most beneficial uses of these resources through regional councils. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has prepared groundfish Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for the following fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off Alaska: Groundfish fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) EEZ under the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska and groundfish fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands EEZ under the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area. These fishery management plans are implemented by regulations at 50 CFR part 679. General regulations that also pertain to these fisheries appear in subpart H of 50 CFR part 600.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Groundfish Tagging Program provides scientists with information necessary for effective conservation, management, and scientific understanding of the groundfish fishery resources off Alaska. The collection of information for the Groundfish Tagging Program has been in operation since the early 1970s. Prior to 1992, OMB Control No. 0648-0009 included fish tagging reports from all regions. That collection of information was later revised to include only the annual burden for the Southwest Fisheries Science Center tag reporting.

This information collection covers the Groundfish Tagging Program on the northeast Pacific coast and Alaska. The groundfish tagging and tag recovery program is part of the fishery resource assessment that NMFS conducts under the Magnuson-Stevens Act authority as codified in 16 U.S.C. 1854 (e) and 1801 (a)(8). The program is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Operations, Research, and Facilities Appropriation which is available for necessary expenses of activities authorized by law.

1. <u>Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.</u>

This collection involves the submission of tag recovery information from the public. Each year, thousands of fish are caught during NMFS stock assessment surveys. These fish are weighed and measured, and their sex is determined. Fish that appear healthy and uninjured are tagged before being released back into the wild. Fishermen and seafood processors subsequently find the tagged fish. By returning the tag to NMFS, along with information on when and where the fish

was caught and the size and weight of the fish, these fishermen and processors provide extremely valuable information to fishery scientists and managers.

Groundfish tagging programs in the northeastern Pacific Ocean and Alaska waters provide essential research data on groundfish life histories and migration patterns that are necessary for implementing management regimes. To be most cost effective, tagging of sablefish and other groundfish is usually accomplished on board NOAA and NMFS chartered survey vessels as one of many data collection tasks performed during the surveys. Tagging groundfish for subsequent tracking and recovery is an important tool for managing fishery resources and the information gathered has resulted in numerous scientific and management publications by NMFS personnel.

There are two general categories of tags. Simple plastic tags (spaghetti tags) are external tags approximately two inches long printed with code numbers. When a tag is returned the tag number is correlated with databases of released, tagged fish to determine the net movement and growth rate of the tagged fish. Archival tags are microchips with sensors encased in plastic cylinders that record the depth, temperature or other data, which can be downloaded electronically from the recovered tags. See the information flyers posted with this submission for photos of each type of tag. Flyers are distributed to inform fishers and processors of the program and to encourage them to be on the lookout for tagged fish. Tag return information is collected through the use of either of two 4" x 6-1/2" forms sent directly to the fishing vessel's captain, or are made available at the processing plants where fishermen unload their catches. One form is specific to sablefish, the other to all other groundfish species. Sablefish are the predominant species tagged. Approximately three thousand are tagged annually as part of a long term and well-advertised program. Groundfish other than sablefish are generally tagged in fewer numbers. They are usually tagged on a more opportunistic basis and for shorter duration projects. Both types of tags are used with both sablefish and other groundfish; archival tags are quite expensive, so are used less frequently. A significant percentage of the tags are recovered by fishery agency staff and fishery observers, while the remainder are recovered by fishermen and processing workers (all responses are counted in this information collection).

Although the two forms are very similar, it is useful to have distinct forms. The groundfish program and the sablefish program are run from two separate facilities. The tagged fish are caught in distinctly different fisheries. The use of separate forms generally prevents the need to sort out responses in Seattle and forward some to Auke Bay.

The tag recovery information collected from fishermen, observers, port samplers, various state and federal fishery agencies, and fish processors is received by the NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle, Washington and its Auke Bay Laboratory in Juneau, Alaska. In recent years, as many as 500 to 1000 tag recoveries have been submitted per year. The number of individuals returning tags varies widely. Many fishers and processors associate the tagging programs with the NMFS observer program and utilize observers onboard fishing vessels and in processing plants to collect and return all tags from that particular vessel or plant. The usual number of non-NOAA people participating ranges between 300 and 400 annually.

The standard tag recovery form is attached to a business reply envelope. Individuals use this envelope to submit and record recovery information for each tag. Typical information given by the respondent and collected is: (1) tag number, (2) date of capture, (3) location, (4) size of fish, (5) sex, (6) depth of capture and (7) gear type.

Submitting tag recovery information is voluntary and can be accomplished at any time. Most tag recovery information is submitted directly after a groundfish fishery closure because fishermen are anxious to receive the release information. Respondents receive information only on the tags they have recovered. Recovery information needs to be as accurate as possible, and fishermen are aware of this necessity. Some individuals return recovered tags quickly, while others will accumulate many tags and return them on an annual or seasonal schedule. Less frequent transmittal of data (less than annually) delays processing of the information. Such a delay can make the information less valuable to the fishermen and reduce the temporal significance of the data for prediction of stock abundance by management area.

Existing data sets are used to match recovery and release information for each tag submitted. A letter generated by a series of computer programs and the existing tag release data set provides fishermen with release information for each tag recovery submitted, while providing researchers with information necessary to manage the groundfish fisheries.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

Scientists of NMFS, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), universities, and from Japan and Canada use the groundfish tag identification number, recovery position, biological data from the tagged fish, (sex, length, weight), and recovery nation, depth, and gear information to study growth rates, mortality, recruitment, migration patterns, and differences by area, sex, size, and depth.

Each year between 15-20-% of the tagged fish are recovered and returned. Data collected from the groundfish tagging program are used in population dynamics models to effectively estimate population size and manage the groundfish resource. Information gathered provides data on the rates of migration between the west coast, British Columbia, and Alaska and among Alaska management areas.

Persons consulted on the information requirements of the groundfish tagging program during research cruises, at fishery meetings, and elsewhere over the years include:

1. Dr. Jon Heifetz, NMFS, TSMRI/Auke Bay Laboratory, 17109 Pt. Lena Loop Rd., Juneau, AK 99801, (907) 789-6052.

2. Frank Shaw, Fiseries Biologist, NOAA/NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Seattle, WA 98115-0070, (206) 526-4120.

3. Takashi Sasaki, Far Seas Fisheries Research Laboratory, Japan, 0543-34-0715.

4. Dave Carlile, State of Alaska, Department of Fish & Game, (907) 465-4216.

5. Gordon A. McFarlane, Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, (604) 756-7052.

6. Bob Demory, State of Oregon, Department of Fish and Wildlife, (503) 867-4741.

7. Al Millikan, State of Washington, Department of Fisheries, (206) 545-6597.

8. Jim Hardwick, State of California, Department of Fish and Game, (408) 649-2884.

9. Jim Ianelli, NMFS Alaska Fisheries and Science Center, (206) 526-6510.

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the information gathered has utility. NOAA Fisheries will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 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.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

Electronic archival tags represent advances in the collection of data, both in the quantity and specificity of the data collected from individual fish. However, the means by which respondents report tag information will not become automated. The necessity of obtaining the actual tag from each fish to verify the data collected makes it impractical to seek electronic or other automated methods of collecting tag information.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

No other tagging information is available for groundfish in outside waters off California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. Scientists from the U.S., Canada, and ADF&G are collaborating to form a joint database of groundfish tag releases and recoveries. Tags can be sent to any of the agencies, because tags will be forwarded to the appropriate agency upon receipt. Duplication of effort and superfluous data collection is avoided through this cooperation. Only the recoverer of the tagged groundfish can supply the information necessary for analysis. There is no other source for these data.

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

Individuals at processing plants, on fishing vessels, and state fishery agencies send tag recovery information as tagged fish are caught in state and federally managed groundfish fisheries. Both tag recovery forms require five minutes to complete and are designed to create minimal burden. Many fishing vessels and processors in the fisheries associated with these tagging programs carry NMFS observers. In the great majority of these instances, tagged fish will simply be handed to the observer for recovery of the tag and recording and forwarding of pertinent information thereby minimizing public burden.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

If the information were not collected, management effectiveness of the groundfish resource would be diminished. Tagging has provided estimates of a number of important biological parameters used in stock assessment models, models that are used to recommend harvest levels. Parameters include growth, fishing and natural mortality, and direction and rates of fish movement among management areas. The parameters are incorporated in population dynamics models such as stock reduction analysis, stock synthesis, and more advanced methods incorporating likelihood functions and non-linear optimization functions. The lack of adequate information derived from tagging would result in groundfish stock assessments that are less accurate thereby decreasing the credibility of the fishery management process and increasing costs associated with under and over harvest of groundfish resources.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

Not Applicable.

8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons 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 (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice was published on October 13, 2015 (FR 80/61378), soliciting public comments. No substantive comments were received.

NMFS observers are a primary liaison between the groundfish tagging program and fishers and processors in the field. Comments from observers are used to gauge participant interest and the general level of participation in the program. Observers are debriefed after deployment and have not had negative comments.There has been a continuing level of cooperation with the industry.

Fishermen often call, interested in the movement and growth information on the tag recoveries that the program provides them, and the reward is generally appreciated. Recent comments/requests:

1. We had interest from an invidual wanting to tag as a volunteer.
2. We had input from sport fishermen via an online forum site regarding locations of juvenile sablefish catch.
3. A fishermen requested a quicker response from his tags he turned in. These were handed in to an observer, a program from which we have had problems receiving tags from in a timely manner. We have discussed the possibility of more frequent deliveries of tags with the observer program, and because of the debrief schedule, it does not appear likely that this will change. Our solution is just to explain, to any individual who comments on the response time, the process of the observer debriefer. Some indivduals, who have observers on board, choose to turn in tags on their own and not use the observer. This has also been recommended to concerned individuals.
4. We had a request from a fishermen to be able to keep the archival tag he recovered after the data had been retrieved from the tag.
5. We had a request for more shirts as an incentive instead of hats.

The response time is so minimal that we do not expect to receive (and have not received) comments on the burden.

9. <u>Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees</u>.

The various tagging efforts within the groundfish tagging program offer a variety of rewards and incentives for participation ($5 cash, a ball cap, etc.). Participants also receive the release information (date, position, depth, size) and data generated from each tag recovered (growth, miles traveled, and days at large). The data associated with the recovered tags is of great interest to fishermen and may be as much of an incentive as the small rewards. For sablefish, there is in addition an annual drawing of the recovered tag numbers; the recoverer of the winning tag number receives $1,000. The sablefish information is currently more valuable, which is why an additional reward is offered for these tags. Similarly, archival electronic tags earn the participant $200 for return of an undamaged electronic tag, reflecting the value of the data contained therein.

10. <u>Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy</u>.

The information collected is confidential under section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1881a). It is also confidential under NOAA Administrative Order 216-100, which sets forth procedures to protect the confidentiality of fishery statistics. Under guidance of NOAA General Counsel, Alaska Region, changes to Alaska state regulations have been implemented to allow the State access to fishery information collected from the groundfish industry under Federal regulations, consistent with NOAA Administrative Order 216-100.

11. <u>Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private</u>.

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

12. <u>Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information</u>.

The burden associated with a respondent returning a spaghetti tag is five minutes to complete the form. Since a business reply envelope is provided to the participant, no other burden is associated. There are two forms used with this tagging program. The first, the tagged sablefish form, has most recently generated approximately 550 responses per year (about half from the public rather than observers or NMFS staff). The second, the groundfish tagging form, has most recently generated approximately 450 responses per year.

Approximately 15 electronic tags are returned per year, however the vast majority of these are simply handed over to on-site NMFS observers, thereby incurring no burden. It is estimated that approximately 5 respondents per year return these tags themselves. The burden associated with a respondent returning an electronic archival tag is less than twenty minutes to remove the tag and record information.

Annual Time and Cost Burden to the Industry
Groundfish Tagging Program

Tagged sablefish form

Estimated number respondents 275
Average number of responses per respondent 2
Estimated number of responses 550
Average recording time (5 min) ..... .083 hr
Time requirement for all responses (550 x 5 min) .....45.83 (46) hr
Burden per hour, in dollars $17/hr
Total burden for tagging form ($17 x 46 hr) $782

Tagged groundfish form

Estimated number of respondents 150
Average number of responses per respondent 3
Estimated number of responses 450
Average recording time (5 min) ..... .083 hr
Time requirement for all responses (450 x 5 min) .....37.5 (38) hr
Burden per hour, in dollars $17/hr

Total burden for tagging form ($17 x 38 hr).....$646

Total hours for these two forms is 83, not 84 (rounded down in ROCIS when combined).

Electronic archival tag return

Estimated number of respondents.....15
Average number of responses per respondent 1
Estimated number of responses 15
Average recording time (20 min)..... .0.34 hr
Time requirement for all responses (15 x .20 min)..... 5 hr
Burden per hour, in dollars $17/hr
Total burden for tagging form ($17 x 5 hr).....$85

Totals: 440 respondents, 1,015 responses and 89 hours. Labor cost: $1,513.

13. <u>Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above)</u>.

Return of spaghetti tags incurs no costs on the part of respondents other than their time, as they are supplied with postage-paid envelopes. Groundfish Tagging Program Respondents who return electronic archival tags incur no costs if they simply hand the tagged fish to a NMFS observer, in which case the observer assumes responsibility for collecting and forwarding information. If a fisherman chooses to return an electronic tag himself he will incur the postage costs of mailing the tag (approximately $2.00 per tag): **15 x $2.00 = $30 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.** In either case, the finder of the tag will receive a $200 reward.

14. <u>Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government</u>.

The costs to the Federal government are unchanged and are about $16,000 a year in rewards and $2,000 a year in tags, paper supplies, and tagging equipment. The groundfish tagging program requires an average of one full time employee to maintain the database and return release information to the respondents. Minimal ship time costs are incurred because tagging is piggy-backed onto routine stock assessment survey operations.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

Adjustments:

There is a slight correction that adds 120 responses and 11 hours for all activity.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

Results of the tagging program have been published on a regular basis in such publications as the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, Fishery Bulletin, Fisheries Research, the International Symposium on the Biology and Management of Sablefish in 1993, and the informal annual newsletter, Blackcod Almanac, distributed to members of industry. A summary report of the sablefish tagging program, *Report to Industry on the Alaska Sablefish Tag Program, 1972-2012* is available on-line at

https://www.afsc.noaa.gov/Publications/AFSC-TM/NOAA-TM-AFSC-254.pdf.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

The forms will be used for tens of years in this study. To reduce paper work, effort, and money expended over the life of the study it is reasonable to eliminate the expiration date on the forms so that frequent renewal efforts will be eliminated. Also, fishermen and processors may keep forms on hand for long periods before needing to use them, and it would be difficult to ascertain that the most recent forms are available to them. Fishermen would be unlikely to replace old forms with new ones just because the expiration date had changed. Consequently, it is requested that the expiration date be omitted from the form.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

This information collection does not request exceptions to the certification statement.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.

TAGGED GROUNDFISH FORM

OMB Control No. 0648-0276
Expiration Date: 04/28/2016

Please provide the following information, detach and enclose in envelope with the tag.

SPECIES_____

TAGGING AGENCY_____TAG PREFIX AND NUMBER_____

DATE CAUGHT_____LATITUDE_____LONGITUDE_____
Month, Day, Year (GPS) (GPS)

AREA_____ FISH SEX _____FEMALE _____MALE

FISH FORK LENGTH _____round FISH WEIGHT _____round

_____dressed_____ _____dressed_____
(indicate units) (indicate units)

VESSEL NAME_____ GEAR_____

NAME AND PERMANENT ADDRESS

_____

_____

_____

Information regarding tagging and recovery of this fish will be sent to you with a reward. Please provide as much accurate information as you can. Thank you.

The groundfish tag recovery program is part of the fishery resource assessment that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducts under the Magnuson-Stevens Act authority as codified in 16 U.S.C. 1854 (e) and 1801 (a)(8). Tagging information provides essential biological and movement data used in groundfish stock assessment. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 5 minutes per response (20 minutes for electronic tags), including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Please send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the address on the envelope. Information you provide is treated as confidential per Section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and NOAA Administrative Order 216-100, “Confidentiality of Statistics”. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

TAGGED SABLEFISH FORM

OMB Control No. 0648-0276
Expiration Date: 04/28/2016

Please provide the following information, detach and enclose in envelope with sablefish tag.

TAG PREFIX AND NUMBER_____DATE CAUGHT_____
year-month-day

LATITUDE_____LONGITUDE_____DEPTH_____
(GPS) (GPS)

AREA_____ FISH SEX _____FEMALE _____MALE

FISH FORK LENGTH _____round FISH WEIGHT _____round

_____dressed_____ _____dressed_____
(indicate units) (indicate units)

VESSEL NAME_____ GEAR_____

NAME AND PERMANENT ADDRESS

_____

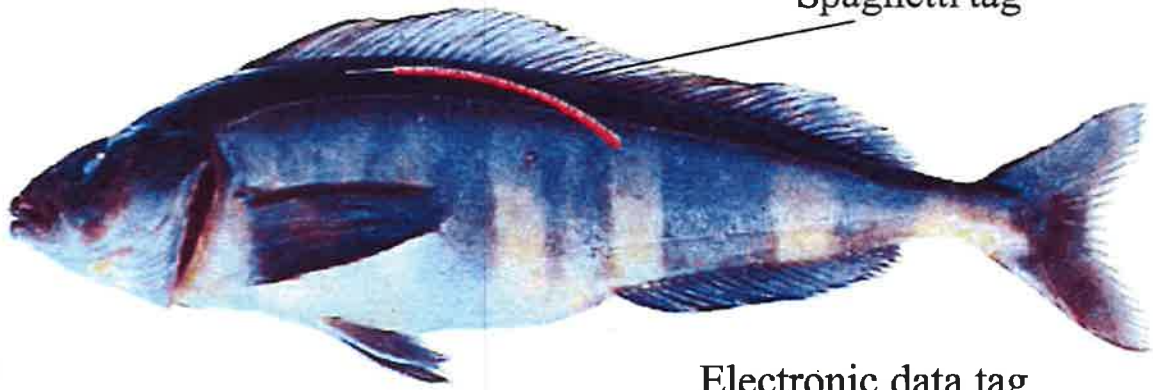
_____

_____

Information regarding tagging and recovery of this fish will be sent to you with a reward. Please provide as much accurate information as you can. Your name will be entered in the sablefish prize drawing. Thank you.

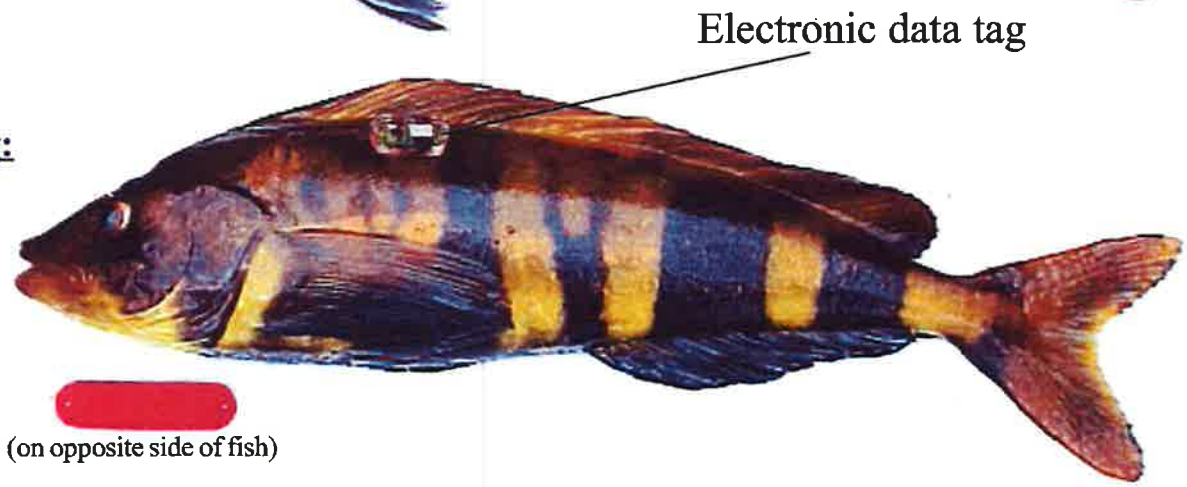
The groundfish tag recovery program is part of the fishery resource assessment that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducts under the Magnuson-Stevens Act authority as codified in 16 U.S.C. 1854 (e) and 1801 (a)(8). Tagging information provides essential biological and movement data used in groundfish stock assessment. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 5 minutes per response (20 minutes for electronic tags), including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Please send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the address on the envelope. Information you provide is treated as confidential per Section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and NOAA Administrative Order 216-100, “Confidentiality of Statistics”. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

REWARD for Atka Mackerel tags



REWARDS for Number of Spaghetti tags returned:

1 - 2 Hat
3 - 4 Towel
5 + Fleece Vest



REWARD for return of undamaged Electronic data tag:

$200

back

front

(on opposite side of fish)

NMFS offers rewards for the return of each tag from an Atka mackerel. These are specially marked fish for a migration and abundance study. Please include: Finders name, address, tag number, fish fork length, sex, vessel name, date, and capture location.

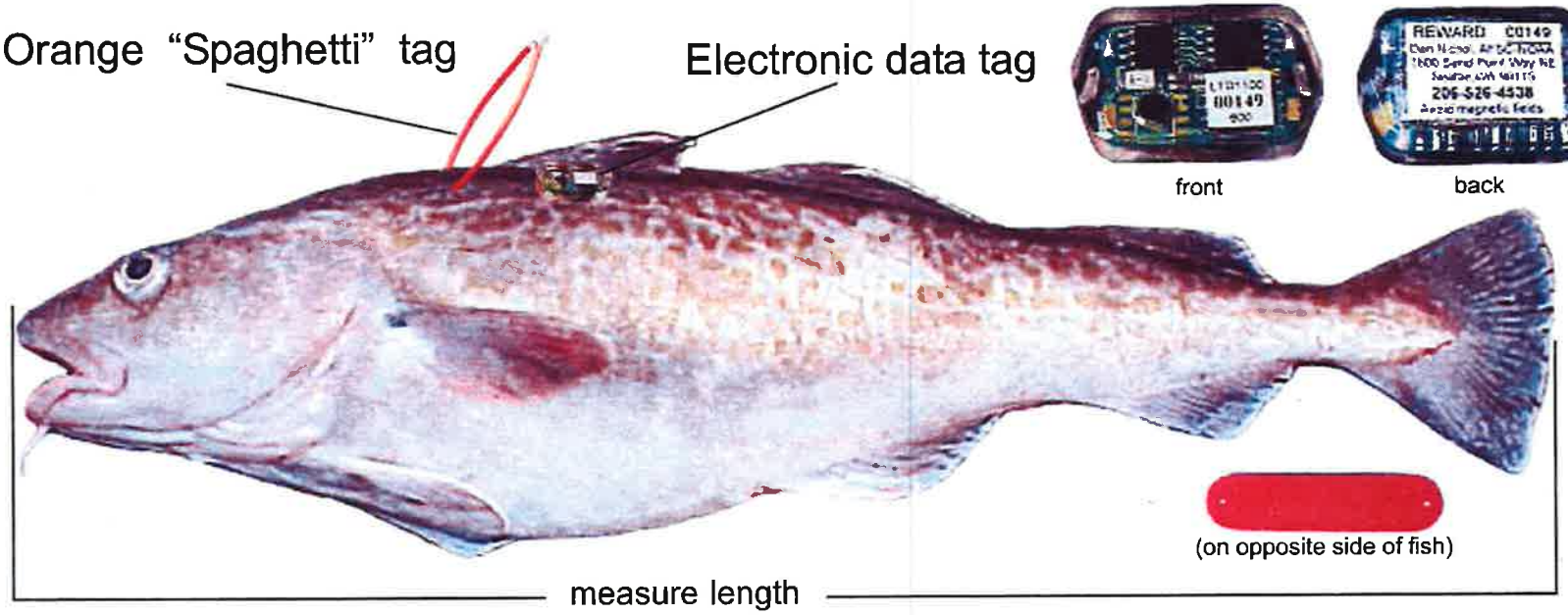
Finders should turn in the tags and information to the observer on board or send

Spaghetti tags to:
Susanne McDermott F/AKC2
National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
7600 Sandpoint Way N.E.
Seattle, WA 98115
Phone: (206) 526-4417

Electronic tags to:
Dan Nichol F/AKC1
National Marine Fisheries Service
Alaska Fisheries Science Center
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.
Seattle, WA 98115
Phone: (206) 526-4538

OMB Control No. 0648-0276; Expiration Date: 07/31/2009

RETURN PACIFIC COD TAGS



RETURN a "Spaghetti" tag with length, sex and capture information.

GET a **custom embroidered cap** as a reward, and a record of where your fish was tagged.

RETURN an undamaged Electronic data tag with length, sex, and capture information.
(Avoid freezing and avoid magnetic fields)

GET a $200 REWARD.

* Retain fish & tag and turn in to NMFS Observer or local NMFS Observer office.
* If NMFS personnel are not available, do the following:
  * Collect tag, record capture location, and date.
  * Carefully measure fish as shown above.
  * Determine sex of fish.
  * Send Electronic tags to:

    Dan Nichol F/AKC1
    National Marine Fisheries Service
    Alaska Fisheries Science Center
    7600 Sand Point Way N.E.
    Seattle, WA 98115-0070
    (206) 526-4538

    Spaghetti tags to:

    Sandi Neidetcher F/AKC2
    National Marine Fisheries Service
    Alaska Fisheries Science Center
    7600 Sand Point Way N.E.
    Seattle, WA 98115-0070
    (206) 526-4521

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE PACIFIC COD TAGGING PROJECT

OMB Control No. 0648-0276, Expiration Date: 07/31/2009

BACK OF FLYERS

The voluntary groundfish tag recovery program is part of the fishery resource assessment that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducts under the Magnuson-Stevens Act authority as codified in 16 U.S.C. 1854 (e) and 1801 (a)(8). Tag returns provide essential biological and movement information used in groundfish stock assessment. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 5 minutes per response (20 minutes for electronic tags), including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the address above. Information you provide is treated as confidential per Section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and NOAA Administrative Order 216-100, "Confidentiality of Statistics". Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

maintenance and monitoring duties, while trying to minimize pinniped disturbance. It is critical for Point Blue to keep the California sea lions off of these structures to prevent severe damage and ensure the safety of island staff. However, to do so would be impossible for Point Blue and its partners without disturbing a larger number of California sea lions. Thus, NMFS proposes to modify the current Authorization to increase the number of take by Level B harassment only for California sea lions to a total of 44,871 for the duration of the current Authorization which expires on January 30, 2016.

Findings

Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)—As required by the MMPA, for the original Authorization, NMFS determined that: (1) The required mitigation measures are sufficient to reduce the effects of the specified activities to the level of least practicable impact; (2) the authorized takes will have a negligible impact on the affected marine mammal species; (3) the authorized takes represent small numbers relative to the affected stock abundances; and (4) Point Blue's activities will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on taking for subsistence purposes as no relevant subsistence uses of marine mammals are implicated by this action.

Negligible Impact: For reasons stated previously in the **Federal Register** notices for the proposed authorization (79 FR 76975, December 23, 2014) and the issued Authorization (80 FR 10066, February 25, 2015), NMFS anticipates that impacts to hauled-out California sea lions during Point Blue's activities would be behavioral harassment of limited duration (*i.e.,* less than one day) and limited intensity (*i.e.,* temporary flushing at most). NMFS does not expect Point Blue's specified activities to cause long-term behavioral disturbance, abandonment of the haul out area, or stampeding, and therefore injury or mortality to occur.

With the exception of a proposed increase in the number of authorized takes for California sea lions, no other substantive changes have occurred in the interim. Based on the analysis contained herein of the likely effects of the specified activity on marine mammals and their habitat, and taking into consideration the implementation of the required monitoring and mitigation measures, NMFS preliminarily finds that the total marine mammal take from Point Blue's survey activities will have a negligible impact on the affected marine mammal species or stocks.

Small Numbers: For reasons stated previously in the **Federal Register** notices for the proposed authorization (79 FR 76975, December 23, 2014) and the issued Authorization (80 FR 10066, February 25, 2015), NMFS estimates that four species of marine mammals could be potentially affected by Level B harassment over the course of the proposed Authorization. With the exception of a proposed increase in authorized take for California sea lions, no other substantive changes have occurred in the interim. For California sea lions, the proposed increase in take is small relative to the population size. The revised incidental harassment number represents approximately 15.1 percent of the U.S. stock of California sea lion.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)—In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), NMFS prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the potential effects to the human environment from the issuance of a proposed Authorization to Point Blue for their seabird research activities. In January 2014, NMFS issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the issuance of an Authorization for Point Blue's research activities in accordance with section 6.01 of the NOAA Administrative Order 216–6 (Environmental Review Procedures for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, May 20, 1999). No substantive changes have occurred in the interim.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)—No marine mammal species listed under the ESA occur in the action area. Therefore, NMFS has determined that a section 7 consultation under the ESA is not required. No substantive changes have occurred in the interim.

Request for Public Comments

NMFS invites comment on the proposed revised Incidental Harassment Authorization to Point Blue. Please include with your comments any supporting data or literature citations to help inform NMFS' final decision on Point Blue's request for a revised Authorization.

Dated: October 7, 2015.

Donna S. Wieting,

Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2015–25942 Filed 10–9–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Groundfish Tagging Program

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before December 14, 2015.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at *JJessup@doc.gov).*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to John Clary, (206) 526–4039 or email *john.c.clary@noaa.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection. The groundfish tagging program provides scientists with information necessary for effective conservation, management, and scientific understanding of the groundfish fishery off Alaska and the Northwest Pacific. The program area includes the Pacific Ocean off Alaska (the Gulf of Alaska, the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area, and the Alexander Archipelago of Southeast Alaska), California, Oregon, and Washington. Fish movement information from recovered tags is used in population dynamics models for stock assessment. There are two general categories of tags. Simple plastic tags (spaghetti tags) are external tags approximately two inches long, printed with code numbers. When a tag is returned, the tag number is correlated with databases of released, tagged fish to determine the net movement and growth rate of the tagged fish. Archival tags are microchips with sensors

encased in plastic cylinders that record the depth, temperature or other data, which can be downloaded electronically from the recovered tags. The groundfish tagging and tag recovery program is part of the fishery resource assessment and data collection that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducts under the Magnuson-Stevens Act authority as codified in 16 U.S.C. 1801 (a)(8).

II. Method of Collection

This is a volunteer program requiring the actual tag from the fish to be returned, along with recovery information. Reporting forms with pre-addressed and postage-free envelopes are distributed to processors and catcher vessels.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648–0276.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of a currently approved collection).

Affected Public: Not-for-profit institutions; State, local, or tribal government; business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 265.

Estimated Time per Response: 5 minutes for returning a regular tag, and 20 minutes for returning an internal archival tag.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 59.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: $0 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: October 6, 2015.

Sarah Brabson,

NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 2015–25848 Filed 10–9–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XE231

Endangered and Threatened Species; Recovery Plans

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, NMFS, announce that the *Proposed Endangered Species Act (ESA) Recovery Plan for Oregon Coast Coho Salmon* (Proposed Plan) is available for public review and comment. The Proposed Plan addresses the Oregon Coast Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) listed as threatened under the ESA. The geographic area covered by the Proposed Plan is the Pacific Ocean and freshwater habitat (rivers, streams and lakes) from the Necanicum River near Seaside, Oregon, on the northern end to the Sixes River near Port Orford, Oregon on the south. As required under the ESA, the Proposed Plan contains objective, measurable delisting criteria, site-specific management actions necessary to achieve the Proposed Plan's goals, and estimates of the time and costs required to implement recovery actions. We are soliciting review and comment from the public and all interested parties on the Proposed Plan.

DATES: We will consider and address, as appropriate, all substantive comments received during the comment period. Comments on the Proposed Plan must be received no later than 5 p.m. Pacific daylight time on December 14, 2015.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on the Public Draft Recovery Plan by the following methods:

- *Electronic Submissions:* Submit all electronic public comments via: *2015CohoPlan.WCR@noaa.gov.* Please include ''Comments on Oregon Coast Coho Salmon Recovery Plan'' in the subject line of the email.
- *Facsimile:* (503) 872–2737.
- *Mail:* Robert Walton, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1201 NE. Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100, Portland, OR 97232.

Instructions: Comments must be submitted by one of the above methods to ensure comments are received, documented, and considered by NMFS. Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

Electronic copies of the Proposed Plan are available on the NMFS Web site at: *http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected_species/salmon_steelhead/recovery_planning_and_implementation/oregon_coast/oregon_coast_recovery_plan.html.* Persons wishing to obtain an electronic copy on CD ROM of the Proposed Plan may do so by calling Nancy Johnson at (503) 230–5442 or by emailing a request to *nancy.johnson@noaa.gov* with the subject line ''CD ROM Request for Oregon Coast Coho Salmon Recovery Plan.''

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Walton, NMFS Oregon Coast Coho Salmon Recovery Coordinator, at (503) 231–2285, or *rob.walton@noaa.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

We are responsible for developing and implementing recovery plans for Pacific salmon and steelhead listed under the ESA of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). Recovery means that the listed species and their ecosystems are sufficiently restored, and their future secured, to the point that the protections of the ESA are no longer necessary. Section 4(f)(1) of the ESA requires that recovery plans include, to the maximum extent practicable: (1) Objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination that the species is no longer threatened or endangered; (2) site-specific management actions necessary to achieve the plan's goals; and (3) estimates of the time required and costs to implement recovery actions. The ESA requires the development of recovery plans for each listed species unless such a plan would not promote its recovery.

We believe it is essential to have local support of recovery plans by those whose activities directly affect the listed species and whose continued commitment and leadership will be needed to implement the necessary recovery actions. We therefore support and participate in locally led, collaborative efforts to develop recovery plans that involve state, tribal, and