



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

December 2012

To: Federal Fisheries Permitholders

The purpose of this letter is to remind you that your current Federal Fisheries Permit *remains valid through December 31, 2014*, to provide you with some reminders about the permit and associated logbooks, and to offer additional materials.

Changes to Processing Activities or Vessels

If your vessel characteristics change in the future, you will need to complete and submit a new application form. Federal Fisheries Permit application forms may be downloaded from our website: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov>. Alternatively, paper copies may be obtained by contacting us [NMFS, Restricted Access Management Program at 1-800-304-4846 (select option #2)]. **Please allow at least ten working days for processing of applications, and note that we do not accept applications by e-mail.**

Surrender and/or Amending Your Federal Fisheries Permit

Current Federal Regulations that became effective in 2012 limit the amendment and/or re-issuance of certain Federal Fisheries Permits that have specific endorsements. See the enclosed guide to these restrictions.

New Observer Program Requirements

Effective January 1, 2013, NMFS is implementing new regulations for the North Pacific Groundfish and Halibut Observer Program (Observer Program). You, as a vessel owner, and/or your vessel operator, may have new or additional requirements relating to observer coverage under these regulations. Please see the enclosed summary of upcoming changes to the Observer Program and additional information on the NMFS, Alaska Region website at:

<http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/observers/>. You may also call the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (907) 586-7228 if you have questions regarding these new regulations.

Paper Logbook Information

The operators of all catcher vessels, some catcher/processors, and all motherships must record information in the appropriate paper logbook for each day of the calendar year. A new logbook(s) appropriate to the endorsements on your current Federal Fisheries Permit is enclosed, unless your vessel is permitted as a catcher/processor using trawl gear.

If your vessel is permitted as a catcher/processor using trawl gear you may be required to report electronically (see below); therefore, we are not sending you a catcher/processor trawl gear Daily Cumulative Production Logbook (DCPL). If you still must report in a paper logbook, see the next section.



Electronic Logbook Information

The operator of an American Fisheries Act (AFA) catcher/processor or any catcher/processor harvesting Western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) pollock must use a NMFS-approved electronic logbook (ELB) in lieu of using the NMFS-prescribed catcher/processor trawl gear Daily Cumulative Production Logbook (DCPL). In the ELB, the operator must enter all of the required information including processor identification information, catch-by haul information, IR/IU species, and prohibited species discard or disposition data for all salmon species in each haul. The operator must transmit ELB data to NMFS by 2400 hours, A.l.t., each day to record the previous day's hauls.

If you are a catcher/processor and are not required to use an ELB, you may choose to use the ELB system to report your vessel's activity or you may request a paper logbook through our website at: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/index/comment/lborderform.asp>

Landings Information

Any operator of a catcher/processor or a mothership that is issued a Federal Fisheries Permit under 50 CFR 679.4 and that harvests groundfish must use eLandings to submit a daily groundfish production report including groundfish and prohibited species discard or disposition data. All motherships must submit a groundfish landing report after completion of receipt of each groundfish delivery.

Under the Amendment 91 Chinook Salmon Economic Data Report regulations, an operator of an AFA-permitted mothership must, as part of the eLandings submittal, report movement of a catcher vessel to avoid salmon.

Requests for Information or Additional Logbooks

To request additional paper logbooks for the 2013 fishing year, information about the electronic logbook, or information about eLandings, contact:

Sustainable Fisheries Division
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Region.

by mail: P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, AK 99802-1668

by phone: 800-304-4846 (select option #3) or 907-586-7228
by FAX: 907-586-7465

Reminder about Diligent Use of Seabird Avoidance Requirements

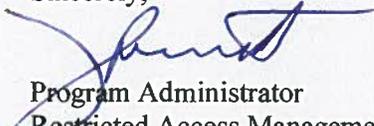
Every year, we estimate the number of seabirds, by species that are incidentally caught as bycatch in commercial groundfish fisheries operating in federal waters of the Alaska U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. The preliminary report of estimates for 2011 groundfish fisheries indicates higher numbers of Northern Fulmars, gulls, and of particular concern, Black-footed Albatross than in previous years. Although the Black-footed Albatross is not endangered (like its relative, the Short-tailed Albatross), it is considered a Bird of Conservation Concern by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. This designation means that without additional conservation actions, these birds of concern are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act. We remind fishermen using longline gear that we must continue to be vigilant in efforts to keep these, and other seabirds, off of longline

hooks. Hook-and-line vessel operators should be alert to their presence and are required to use multiple seabird avoidance measures, most notably, streamer lines that are correctly constructed and deployed.

For information about seabird avoidance requirements, see our website at: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/guide.html> or contact Kim Rivera, NMFS's Seabird Coordinator at 907-586-7424, Kim.Rivera@noaa.gov. Remember that free streamer lines for longline vessels are still available. See our website at <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/streamers.htm> or contact the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission at 503-595-3100 to place your order. We also continue to request that you report all observations of Short-tailed Albatross to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service using the enclosed form; it is also available at <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/repform.pdf> We will post the final report of 2011 seabird bycatch estimates once it is available at <http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/REFM/REEM/Seabirds/Default.php>

Thanks for your careful compliance with these important permitting requirements. Have a safe and productive fishing year.

Sincerely,



Program Administrator
Restricted Access Management

Enclosures