

“Demersal shelf rockfish” means *Sebastes pinniger* (canary), *S. nebulosus* (china), *S. caurinus* (copper), *S. maliger* (quillback), *S. helvomaculatus* (rosethorn), *S. nigrocinctus* (tiger), and *S. ruberrimus* (yelloweye).

“Other rockfish” in the Western and Central Regulatory Areas means “other rockfish (slope rockfish)” and demersal shelf rockfish.

“Other rockfish” in the West Yakutat District of the EGOA means “other rockfish (slope rockfish),” northern rockfish, *S. polyspinosus*, and demersal shelf rockfish.

“Other rockfish” in the SEO District of the GOA (and SEAK for Table 2) means “other rockfish (slope rockfish) and northern rockfish, *S. polyspinosus*.”

<sup>9</sup>“Other rockfish” in the BSAI includes all *Sebastes* and *Sebastes* species except for Pacific ocean perch, northern, shortraker, and rougheye rockfish.

#### *Halibut and Sablefish IFQ and CDQ Standard Ex-vessel Prices*

Table 3 shows the observer fee standard ex-vessel prices for halibut and sablefish. These standard prices are

calculated as a single annual average price, by species and port or port group. Volume and ex-vessel value data collected on the 2024 IFQ Buyer Report for landings made from October 15, 2023 through September 30, 2024 were

used to calculate the standard ex-vessel prices for the 2025 observer fee for halibut IFQ, halibut CDQ, sablefish IFQ, and sablefish landings that accrue against the fixed gear sablefish CDQ reserve.

**TABLE 3—STANDARD EX-VESSEL PRICES FOR HALIBUT IFQ, HALIBUT CDQ, SABLEFISH IFQ, AND SABLEFISH ACCRUING AGAINST THE FIXED GEAR SABLEFISH CDQ RESERVE FOR THE 2025 OBSERVER FEE**  
[based on 2024 IFQ Buyer Reports]

Species	Port/area <sup>1</sup>	Price <sup>2</sup>
Halibut (200) .....	Craig .....	\$5.63
Halibut (200) .....	SEAK .....	5.51
Halibut (200) .....	Cordova .....	5.46
Halibut (200) .....	EGOAxSE .....	5.44
Halibut (200) .....	Homer .....	5.63
Halibut (200) .....	Kodiak .....	4.88
Halibut (200) .....	Seward .....	4.08
Halibut (200) .....	CGOA .....	4.97
Halibut (200) .....	GOA .....	5.19
Halibut (200) .....	BS .....	4.15
Halibut (200) .....	BSAI .....	4.15
Halibut (200) .....	AK .....	5.05
Halibut (200) .....	ALL .....	5.05
Sablefish (710) .....	Petersburg .....	1.67
Sablefish (710) .....	SEAK .....	1.58
Sablefish (710) .....	Cordova .....	1.65
Sablefish (710) .....	EGOAxSE .....	1.48
Sablefish (710) .....	Homer .....	1.54
Sablefish (710) .....	Kodiak .....	1.11
Sablefish (710) .....	Seward .....	1.07
Sablefish (710) .....	CGOA .....	1.11
Sablefish (710) .....	GOA .....	1.30
Sablefish (710) .....	BS .....	1.22
Sablefish (710) .....	BSAI .....	1.22
Sablefish (710) .....	AK .....	1.28
Sablefish (710) .....	ALL .....	1.28

<sup>1</sup> Regulatory areas are defined at § 679.2. (AK = Alaska; ALL = all ports including those outside Alaska; BS = Bering Sea subarea; CGOA = Central Gulf of Alaska; EGOAxSE = Eastern Gulf of Alaska except Southeast Alaska; SEAK = Southeast Alaska; WGOA = Western Gulf of Alaska).

<sup>2</sup> If a price is listed for the species and port combination, that price will be applied to the round weight equivalent for sablefish landings and the headed and gutted weight equivalent for halibut landings. If no price is listed for the port, use port group.

*Authority:* 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: December 19, 2024.

**Kelly Denit,**

*Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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#### **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

#### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**RIN 0648–XE540**

#### **Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Fisheries Independent Research Programs**

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

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of application for Letter of Authorization; request for comments and information.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS has received a request from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ALDCNR) for authorization to take small numbers of marine mammals incidental to fisheries independent research programs in Mobile Bay and adjacent waters of Alabama over the course of five years from the date of issuance. Pursuant to regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is announcing receipt of the ALDCNR's

request for the development and implementation of regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals. NMFS invites the public to provide information, suggestions, and comments on the ALDCNR's application and request.

**DATES:** Comments and information must be received no later than January 27, 2025.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the applications should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service. Physical comments should be sent to 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and electronic comments should be sent to [ITP.cockrell@noaa.gov](mailto:ITP.cockrell@noaa.gov).

**Instructions:** NMFS is not responsible for comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. Comments received electronically, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel or Adobe PDF file formats only. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/incidental-take-authorizations-research-and-other-activities> without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.*, name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Craig Cockrell, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401. An electronic copy of the ALDCNR's application may be obtained online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/incidental-take-authorizations-research-and-other-activities>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **Background**

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce (as delegated to NMFS) to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is

limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An incidental take authorization shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth.

NMFS has defined "negligible impact" in 50 CFR 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.

The MMPA states that the term "take" means to harass, hunt, capture, kill or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines "harassment" as: any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance, which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (Level A harassment); or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering (Level B harassment).

##### **Summary of Request**

On April 12, 2024, NMFS received an application from the ALDCNR requesting authorization for take of marine mammals incidental to their fisheries independent research programs related to sampling activities with gillnet and trawl gear in Mobile Bay and adjacent waters of Alabama. Following NMFS' review of the application, ALDCNR provided responses to NMFS initial questions on July 11, 2024 and responses to follow up questions on December 10, 2024. NMFS determined the application was adequate and complete on December 12, 2024. The requested regulations would be valid for five years from the date of issuance. The ALDCNR plans to conduct the research in Mobile Bay and adjacent waters including Mississippi Sound, Perdido Bay, Wolf Bay, and Little Lagoon. It is possible that marine mammals may interact with fishing gear (*e.g.* gillnets and trawl gear) proposed for use in ALDCNR's fishery independent resulting in injury, serious injury, or mortality. Therefore, the ALDCNR

requests authorization to incidentally take marine mammals.

##### **Specified Activities**

The ALDCNR conducts fishery independent surveys throughout the inshore and coastal waters of Alabama, in the northern Gulf of Mexico, to produce scientific information necessary for the management and conservation of living marine resources in that area. The fisheries independent research programs use sampling gear including gillnets, seines, and otter trawls to assess marine organisms in different habitats and trophic levels and provides data about post-larval, juvenile, and adult populations of marine organisms in Alabama inshore and coastal waters. The collective data is used by fisheries scientists to monitor growth, seasonal and geographical distribution, changes in population structures, and correlation of abundance with some abiotic factors for all Alabama marine fauna. These proposed activities by ALDCNR would be conducted over the 5-year period of the regulations and subsequent LOA.

##### **Information Solicited**

Interested persons may submit information, suggestions, and comments concerning the ALDCNR's request (see **ADDRESSES**). NMFS will consider all information, suggestions, and comments related to the request during the development of proposed regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals by the ALDCNR, if appropriate.

Dated: December 18, 2024.

**Kimberly Damon-Randall,**

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

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#### **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

##### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648-XE536]

##### **Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting open to the public.

**SUMMARY:** The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a second Recreational Initiative