



- Fisheries Home
- About Us
- Programs
- Regions
- Science Centers
- Partners
- News & Multimedia
- Fisheries Resources
- Congress
- Educators and Students
- Get Involved
- Forms

International Home Our Work Agreements IUU Fishing Bycatch International Development Species

Informational Report 2
September 2017

[Fisheries Home](#) » [International Affairs](#) » [Marine Mammals](#)

NMFS Publishes Draft List of Foreign Fisheries for Public Comment

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has published a draft List of Foreign Fisheries (LOFF) for **comment**, as required by 50 C.F.R. § 216.24(h) implementing the **Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions Section 101(a)(2) of the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)**.

- [Draft List of Foreign Fisheries \(Abridged\)](#)
- [Draft List of Foreign Fisheries \(with References and Detailed Information\)](#)
- [Draft List of Intermediary Nations and Products](#)
- [Draft List Wherein MMPA Import Provisions Rule Not Applicable](#)
- [Challenges of Global Tuna Fisheries \(Abbreviations and Acronyms\)](#)
- [Marine Mammal Annotated Bibliography](#)
- [Submit Public Comment on Draft List of Foreign Fisheries \(LOFF\)](#)

In August 2016, NMFS published the **MMPA Import Provisions Rule**, which established the criteria for evaluating a nation's regulatory program for reducing marine mammal bycatch and the procedures required to receive authorization to import fish and fish products into the United States. The **MMPA Import Provisions Rule** aims to reduce marine mammal bycatch associated with international commercial fishing operations by requiring fish and fish products imported into the United States to be held to the same standards as U.S. commercial fishing operations.

About the List of Foreign Fisheries (LOFF)

An essential component in implementing the import provisions of the **MMPA Import Provisions Rule** is the List of Foreign Fisheries (LOFF). The LOFF lists foreign commercial fisheries that export fish and fish products to the United States and that have been classified as either "export" or "exempt" based on the frequency and likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals. The entire list of these export and exempt fisheries, organized by nation (or subsidiary jurisdiction), constitutes the List of Foreign Fisheries.

By January 1, 2022, a harvesting nation must apply for and receive a comparability finding for each of its export and exempt fisheries on the LOFF to continue to export fish and fish products from those fisheries to the United States.

Developing the Draft List of Foreign Fisheries (LOFF)

The draft LOFF is comprised of 138 nations with 720 exempt and 3,270 export fisheries. To develop this list, NMFS reviewed and considered, when available, multiple sources of information, including documentation provided directly by the nations or subsidiary jurisdictions. Fisheries are classified, based on their frequency of marine mammal bycatch, as either "exempt" or "export" fisheries. Exempt fisheries are fisheries that have no known or a remote likelihood of marine mammal bycatch and are exempt from instituting a regulatory program. Export fisheries are those fisheries with more than a remote likelihood of marine mammal bycatch or insufficient information available on marine mammal interactions.

The draft LOFF is organized by harvesting nation and other defining factors including: geographic location of harvest, gear type, target species, or a combination thereof. It also includes a list of the marine mammals that interact with each commercial fishing operation, where known, and, when available, indicates the level of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in each commercial fishing operation.

Public Engagement

NMFS encourages all interested parties, especially nations exporting fish and fish products to the United States to review and comment on the LOFF. NMFS will consider all comments and information received during the comment period in preparing a final LOFF. Submit public comment on draft LOFF [here](#).

NMFS' Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection will also host public webinar meetings to further engage with interested stakeholders about this notice. Dates to be posted.

Additional information

- [MMPA Import Final Rule](#)
- [Federal Register Notice Seeking Information to Develop a List of Foreign Fisheries \(LFF\), 1/2017](#)
- [MMPA Import Final Rule Compliance Guide, 12/2016](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Seafood Import Provisions Under the MMPA, also in Spanish, 8/2016](#)

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