

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (CDFW) INFORMATIONAL
REPORT ON STATE LOGBOOKS FOR SWORDFISH HARPOON, HIGHLY MIGRATORY
SPECIES (HMS) DRIFT GILL NET AND GROUND FISH TRAWL

The California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) is in the process of considering changes to state commercial logbook regulations that would repeal state logbook requirements for federal fisheries including Swordfish harpoon, HMS drift gill net, and groundfish trawl. These regulations will be considered for adoption at the Commission's December 12, 2018 meeting. If adopted, these regulations will likely become effective on April 1, 2019.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) proposed the Commission repeal these requirements because they are unnecessary, redundant, costly, and burdensome to both industry and the agency. Moreover, California Office of Technology requirements for housing and protecting confidential state fisheries data have intensified in recent years, requiring CDFW to prioritize its fishery data collection efforts to keep within existing fiscal resources.

The swordfish harpoon and large mesh drift gill net fisheries are required to submit paper logbooks (Swordfish Harpoon Log, General Gill/Trammel Net Log) to CDFW once a month, per state regulations. Federal regulations for HMS fisheries also require submission of either a state or federal log to the Regional Administrator, NMFS-SWFSC, within 30 days (50 CFR, §660.708). The state logbooks, however, do not provide information necessary for management that isn't also included on mandatory state landing receipts which, as of July 1 2019, will be required within 3 business days.

For groundfish trawl, the state log (Trawl Trip Log, also known as the Tri-State Trawl log) has long been required for retained fish taken with trawl gear. The log was used primarily as a compliance tracking tool, and also has been used in a limited number of federal groundfish stock assessments and in the development of the groundfish trawl individual quota (TIQ) program, but is not used to manage catch. As with the HMS logbooks, this information is readily attainable through other more timely data streams, such as VMS and landing receipts.

Additionally, with the advent of the TIQ fishery, a federal discard log was established to determine the volume of fish discarded at sea by TIQ participants. This federal requirement became necessary as the state log does not require an operator to document fish discarded at sea – it requires only that the operator list retained fish. This discard log is a federal record and, combined with fish ticket information that also must be submitted within 24 hours per federal regulations, comprise the data streams necessary for timely federal tracking of used quota pounds in the TIQ fishery.

NMFS is in the process of reviewing and revising logbooks for federal HMS fisheries to improve the data collected for management including location and bycatch data currently lacking in the state logs. For groundfish, NMFS is considering combining the state Tri-State Trawl Log for retained fish with the federal log for discarded fish, which would allow for comprehensively revisiting what information is needed from a federal groundfish trawl logbook, including potential needs to address bycatch or interactions with endangered species or marine mammals. These actions, coupled with repealing state logbook requirements, would improve fisheries data

collection and streamline the submission process by requiring a single groundfish logbook for all groundfish trawl fishing activity.

The proposed regulatory change can be found at: <http://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=161285&inline>. The Commission is accepting public comment on the proposed regulation changes, which must be submitted in writing, or orally at the adoption hearing on December 12, 2018. Written comments mailed to (Fish and Game Commission, PO Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090), or emailed to the Commission office (FGC@fgc.ca.gov), must be received before 12:00 noon on December 7, 2018.