



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

*National Marine Fisheries Service*  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

May 6, 2016

Mr. John Gauvin  
Alaska Seafood Cooperative  
4241 21st Ave W, Suite 302  
Seattle, Washington 98119

Re: Exempted Fishing Permit No. 2016-01

Dear Mr. Gauvin:

We have approved your application for exempted fishing permit (EFP) 2016-01 to conduct a feasibility study to reduce halibut mortality on designated non-pelagic trawl catcher processor vessels in the Bering Sea (Amendment 80, Community Development Quota (CDQ), and trawl limited access). This permit allows exemptions from certain regulations under 50 CFR part 679 to facilitate deck sorting of halibut in an effort to reduce halibut mortality. This study is supported by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council and the International Pacific Halibut Commission.

Enclosed is a copy of EFP 2016-01. A copy of this EFP must be on board the permitted vessels when fishing under the EFP, as long as groundfish from exempted fishing are retained on board the vessels. The permit holder and permitted vessel operators must comply with all provisions of 50 CFR 679, except as provided in the terms and conditions of the EFP. If you have any questions regarding this permit, please contact Jeff Hartman of the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (907) 586-7442 or email at [jeff.hartman@noaa.gov](mailto:jeff.hartman@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,

James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.  
Administrator, Alaska Region

cc: William McGill, Alaska Groundfish Cooperative  
Mark Fina, United States Seafoods, LLC  
~~Annika Saltman, Fishermen's Finest~~  
Todd Loomis, Ocean Peace, Inc.  
Jan Jacobs, American Seafoods Company, LLC  
Jim Johnson, Glacier Fish Company, LLC

Enclosure



**BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS  
GROUNDFISH FISHERY  
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT  
AUTHORITY: 50 CFR 600.745(b) AND 50 CFR 679.6  
PERMIT 2016-01**

The Administrator, Alaska Region, (Regional Administrator), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), acting on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, hereby authorizes designated non-pollock trawl catcher-processor vessels in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (Amendment 80, CDQ, and Trawl Limited Access) to conduct experimental fishing that will provide information on how modified halibut handling practices may contribute to incidentally caught halibut survival. The exempted fishing permit (EFP) describes exemptions to regulations and other requirements that are necessary to facilitate the project.

The permit holders and the owner(s) and operator(s) of the participating vessel(s) must comply with the EFP terms, and unless otherwise provided in this permit, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and 50 CFR parts 600 and 679. An authorized designated representative for each vessel participating in experimental fishing under this EFP must complete and sign a copy of the vessel information form contained in Appendix A, of this EFP.

This permit is valid and in effect when signed by both the Regional Administrator and all participating Permit Holders. This permit is valid through April 30, 2017. If experimental fishing concludes before the expiration date, the Principal Investigator may terminate the permit prior to the expiration date by notifying Jeff Hartman, (907) 586-7442, NMFS Alaska Regional Office. This permit may be revoked, modified, or suspended under the permit's terms, by the Regional Administrator, or by regulatory action under 50 CFR part 679, 50 CFR 600.745, or 15 CFR part 904.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.  
Administrator,  
Alaska Region, NMFS

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Gauvin  
Principal Investigator,  
Alaska Seafood Cooperative

5-6-2016  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

May 3, 2016  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

**BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS  
GROUNDFISH FISHERY  
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT 2016-01  
PERMIT HOLDER SIGNATURE PAGE**



Permit Holder Signature

William McGill

Permit Holder Printed Name

Alaska Groundfish Cooperative (AGC)

Permit Holder Company/Affiliation

May 3, 2016

Date Signed



Permit Holder Signature

Mark Fina

Permit Holder Printed Name

United States Seafoods, LLC (USS)

Permit Holder Company/Affiliation

May 3, 2016

Date Signed



Permit Holder Signature

Todd Loomis

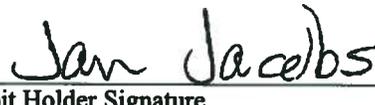
Permit Holder Printed Name

Ocean Peace, Inc. (OP)

Permit Holder Company/Affiliation

May 3, 2016

Date Signed



Permit Holder Signature

Jan Jacobs

Permit Holder Printed Name

American Seafoods Company, LLC (ASC)

Permit Holder Company/Affiliation

May 3, 2016

Date Signed



Permit Holder Signature

Jim Johnson

Permit Holder Printed Name

Glacier Fish Company, LLC (GFC)

Permit Holder Company/Affiliation

May 3, 2016

Date Signed

Permit Holder Signature

Permit Holder Printed Name

Permit Holder Company/Affiliation

Date Signed

**BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS  
GROUNDFISH FISHERY  
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT 2016-01  
TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

**AUTHORITY: 50 CFR 600.745(B) AND 50 CFR 679.6**

**MODIFIED HALIBUT HANDLING EXPERIMENT FOR THE BERING SEA NON-POLLOCK  
TRAWL CATCHER-PROCESSOR FISHERIES**

**A. Permit Holders** – The following individuals and the companies they represent were co-applicants for this EFP and will be considered joint permit holders if the co-applicant has signed on page 2 of this permit. Each permit holder must designate an authorized representative(s) to act as the main point of contact between the permit holder, the Principal Investigator, the vessel and crew, and NMFS.

1. John Gauvin  
Alaska Seafood Cooperative (AKSC)  
4241 21st Avenue W., Suite 302  
Seattle, WA 98199  
(206) 462-7682  
*Vessels: Arica, Cape Horn, American No 1, US Intrepid, Vaerdal, Seafisher,  
Constellation, Defender, Enterprise, Ocean Peace, Rebecca Irene, Unimak, Seafreeze  
AK, Legacy, Seafreeze America*
2. William McGill  
Alaska Groundfish Cooperative (AGC)  
580 Naches Ave. SW, #100  
Renton, WA 98057  
(425) 738-5200  
*Vessels: Alaska Spirit, Alaska Victory*
3. Mark Fina  
United States Seafoods, LLC (USS)  
1801 Fairview Ave. E., #100  
Seattle, WA 98102  
(206) 763-3133  
*Vessels: Seafreeze Alaska, Seafreeze America, Legacy, Vaerdal*
4. Todd Loomis  
Ocean Peace, Inc. (OP)  
4201 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. West  
Seattle, WA 98199  
(206) 282-6100  
*Vessels: Seafisher, Ocean Peace*
5. Jan Jacobs  
American Seafoods Company, LLC (ASC)  
2025 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., #900  
Seattle, WA 98121  
(206) 448-0300  
*Vessel: Katie Ann*

6. Jim Johnson  
Glacier Fish Company, LLC (GFC)  
2320 W. Commodore Way, #200  
Seattle, WA 98199  
(206) 298-1200  
Vessel: *Northern Glacier*

**B. Principal Investigator and Designated Representatives.** The Principal Investigator is authorized to receive data from observers and vessel crew participating in this EFP. Each permit holder must identify a designated representative for their participating vessels. The permit holder may be the same person as the designated representative. The designated representatives are authorized to act on the behalf of the Principal Investigator and permit holders to receive information or data generated from the EFP from the vessel operator of any vessel authorized to participate in this EFP.

1. Principal Investigator: The Principal Investigator (PI) is, in addition to any other responsibilities described in this permit, responsible for compiling and analyzing all EFP data collected according to the provisions of this permit and the procedures described in Appendix B, and presenting a summary of those data to NMFS. The PI is also responsible for ensuring that the designated representatives understand and comply with the provisions of this EFP.  
John Gauvin  
Alaska Seafood Cooperative (AKSC)  
4241 21st Avenue W., Suite 302  
Seattle, WA 98199  
(206) 462 7682
2. Designated Representatives: A designated representative, in addition to any other responsibilities described in this permit, manages the daily operations of a vessel or group of vessels and is the main point of contact for the vessel, PI, and NMFS.
  - a. Beth Concepcion, AKSC  
(206) 462 7683
  - b. Jason Anderson, AKSC  
(206) 462 7682
  - c. William McGill, AGC  
(425) 738-5200
  - d. Mark Fina, USS  
(206) 763-3133
  - e. Todd Loomis, OP  
(206) 282-6100
  - f. Jan Jacobs, ASC  
(206) 448-0300
  - g. Jim Johnson, GFC  
(206) 298-1200

- C. Permitted Vessels.** Designated non-pollock trawl catcher-processor vessels in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Amendment 80, CDQ, and Trawl Limited Access programs are authorized to fish under this EFP. Each vessel must have sufficient space on deck to sort and handle halibut and adequate space and facilities for the additional observer(s), project field manager, or other staff required for this EFP.
1. The PI will submit to NMFS a completed and signed Vessel Data Sheet (see **Appendix A**) for each participating vessel that includes the following information:
    - a. Vessel name(s)
    - b. Vessel length and tonnage (gross)
    - c. Federal permit number and USCG registration number
    - d. Vessel homeport
    - e. Name, address, telephone number, and fax number of owner
    - f. Name of managing company
    - g. Name of designated representative
    - h. Contact information for designated representative
    - i. Signature of designated representative
  2. A copy of this EFP must be on board each participating vessel when EFP fishing.
- D. Timing of Fishing under the EFP.** Fishing under the terms of this permit is authorized from the date of issuance through April 30, 2017, or until exempted fishing is concluded, whichever is earlier.
- E. Area of the Exempted Fishing.** Exempted fishing under this permit is restricted to the BSAI.
- F. Requirements for Participating Vessels.** In addition to other applicable requirements, including those set forth in **Appendix B**, owners and operators of a vessel participating in the project must comply with the following provisions:
1. A vessel satisfying all of the following criteria may participate in this EFP:
    - a. it is a member of the non-pollock trawl catcher-processor fisheries (Amendment 80, CDQ, or Trawl Limited Access) in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands;
    - b. it is named on a Vessel Data Sheet submitted to NMFS by the permit holder; and
    - c. it is approved by NMFS for fishing under the EFP.
  2. Each vessel must maintain sufficient space on deck to conduct halibut sorting and handling activities and adequate space and facilities for the additional observer(s), designated representative, or other staff required for this EFP.
  3. Owners and operators of vessels selected for EFP fishing must operate the vessel and maintain collected experiment data in accordance with the requirements of the EFP, as described in this permit and in **Appendix B**. Vessel owners and operators must follow any sampling or handling protocol adjustments deemed necessary by the Principal Investigator, in consultation with NMFS.
- G. Pre-Trip Duties**
1. Notification to NMFS to opt-in to EFP.
    - a. The vessel's designated representative must notify Chris Rilling (206-526-4194) at the NMFS Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis (FMA) office in Seattle or his designee at least 7 business days prior to a vessel beginning its first trip fishing under the EFP.
    - b. The vessel's designated representative must also notify the Principal Investigator or his designated representatives (Jason Anderson or Beth Concepcion) when opting-in to the EFP.

- c. If a vessel discontinues EFP fishing for one or more trips, a designated representative must notify FMA prior to that vessel leaving on a subsequent EFP trip(s). This notice will include the name and Federal permit number of each vessel.
2. Notification to observer provider. The Permit Holder or their designated representative must inform their observer provider of their coverage needs at least 7 days prior to a vessel's first trip fishing under the EFP to allow for the observers to register for a briefing (as described in paragraph G4 below). This notification requirement allows time for FMA to provide additional training associated with sampling that will be required on this EFP.
3. Pre-trip meeting with vessel.
  - a. A pre-EFP trip meeting is conducted prior to any EFP fishing trip when any one of the following— observer, vessel captain, or key crew member – is participating in deck sorting for the first time. The observers, captain, and key crew members will participate in the meeting and discuss EFP fishing protocols and responsibilities of each party to ensure adherence to the terms of this permit and applicable regulations.
  - b. The pre-EFP trip meeting may occur on the vessel at any time prior to fishing.
4. Observer pre-cruise briefing. Pre-cruise briefings with observers are separate from the pre-trip meeting with the vessel described in paragraph G3 above, and should be scheduled with the NMFS Dutch Harbor office (907-581-2060) by the observer provider or designated representative as soon as possible prior to the observer embarking on an EFP trip (under EFP 2016-01) on that vessel for the first time. If FMA staff is not available to conduct the briefing in Dutch Harbor, contact Chris Rilling (206-526-4194) of the FMA office in Seattle.
  - a. An observer provider or vessel's designated representative will give NMFS 72 hours from the time of embarkation to schedule the pre-cruise briefing with observers embarking on their first EFP trip.
  - b. FMA will provide each observer with a copy of the signed EFP in their training materials.

**H. Observer Requirements for EFP Participants.** All sampling under this EFP will be conducted by NMFS-certified observers deployed pursuant to regulatory requirements and working under the direction of NMFS.

1. Observer qualifications. Observers must have current NMFS observer certification as defined at 50 CFR 679.53(a).
2. Duration of trips. As identified at § 679.52(b)(8)(i) an individual who is deployed as an observer may not stay out on the vessel participating in this EFP for more than 90 days in a 12-month period.
3. Number of observer(s) for EFP trips. Each vessel participating in the EFP will be required to have three NMFS-certified observers on board during EFP trips to collect required data and conduct required sampling during all hauls.
4. Employment of observers. Observers must be employed by a NMFS-approved observer service provider.
5. Working conditions. Prohibitions pertaining to working conditions for NMFS observers may be found at 50 CFR 679.7(g).

**I. Deck Sorting Video Monitoring.** A video system will be installed by vessel owners or operators on each participating vessel. Video system requirements must meet the requirements described below:

1. A screenshot of the proposed view for each video camera installed on the participating vessel and a diagram showing all cameras and their views must be submitted to NMFS for approval 10 working-days prior to their first EFP trip.
2. The video system must be approved and operational prior to their first EFP trip.

3. The video system must be maintained by the vessel operator, and must be recording at all times during all EFP trips from the commencement of EFP fishing until EFP fishing is completed.
4. The video system must record at a minimum of 5 unique frames per second and the video stream must be viewable on a monitor, which can be placed anywhere on the boat, to verify its functionality.
5. Video data must be reviewed by the vessel operator once per calendar day on EFP trips to verify camera placement, camera view (must be clear and unobstructed), and the system's ability to record and save the video data. Daily reviews of video monitoring system will be recorded by the vessel operator in a log and submitted with the video to NMFS as described in paragraph I8 below.
6. In the event of a video monitoring system malfunction, the time, date, and description of the malfunction must be recorded in the video log. The video monitoring system must be repaired and operational before the vessel may begin a new trip under the EFP.
7. NMFS employees and authorized officers will be provided access to the video data any time during the vessel's participation in the EFP.
8. The video data and log must be maintained on board the vessel for the duration of a vessel's participation in the EFP and must be submitted by the designated representative to NMFS for review at the end of each vessel's participation in the EFP. Any software needed to review this video must also be submitted to NMFS. The address to submit to video data:

NMFS Alaska Region  
709 West 9th Avenue, Room 404  
Juneau, AK 99801-1668

-or-

NMFS Alaska Region  
P.O. Box 21668  
Juneau, AK 99802-1668

**J. Deck Sorting.** This EFP allows deck sorting of halibut on trips designated as EFP trips when an observer is on duty and present to monitor deck sorting activities. The observer on duty will record length (which will be converted to weight via the IPHC conversion tables) and viability of halibut sorted on deck in accordance with the procedures in Appendix B. During EFP hauls, all halibut sorting on deck must be carried out under the direct supervision of the observer on duty.

1. EFP mode is the default fishing mode.
2. Notification to observer of non-deck sorting hauls.
  - a. The lead observer will provide the vessel captain with each observer's on-duty schedule, and any changes to that schedule during the trip. This schedule will allow the captain to identify the on-duty observer for purposes of the EFP haul-back and factory notification requirements.
  - b. At least 15 minutes prior to fish being brought on board the vessel, the captain, or the mate if the captain is not on duty, is responsible for notifying the on-duty observer if the vessel will not deck sort halibut during that haul. This will be done by "Deck Sort opt-out" notice between the vessel captain and the on-duty observer.
  - c. When halibut deck sorting resumes following a "Deck Sort opt-out", the vessel captain, or mate if the captain is not on duty, is responsible for notifying the observer on duty that the vessel is resuming deck sorting. For any haul where deck sorting did not occur, all halibut mortality will be calculated from the halibut collected in the observer species composition sample.
3. Data collection procedures on deck.

- a. For all deck sorting hauls, vessel crew are prohibited from bringing a net on board until the observer on duty is present on the deck.
  - b. Observer shall be notified at least 15 minutes before the net is brought on deck.
  - c. Observer shall be provided a suitable space on deck to measure halibut and assess viabilities. In most cases, this will occur on a ramp, chute, or belt where halibut are slid from the deck and offboard the vessel. There may be only a single pathway on deck for halibut to be conveyed to the observer on duty.
  - d. For any deck sorted haul, crew will pull the codend forward of the live tank hatch. This will provide room for crew to sort halibut from the catch as it flows into the tank. All remaining catch, including the remainder of the halibut not sorted on deck will be dumped into the tank for sorting by crew in the factory.
  - e. The observer will work with the crew to adjust the pace that the crew delivers halibut to the observer for sampling.
  - f. Observer will collect and record data for deck sorted halibut according to the procedures described in Appendix B.
4. Video monitoring of deck sorting. The video monitoring system must show all deck areas where halibut are sorted from groundfish and other components of the catch on deck. (Video system requirements under the EFP are described in Section I of this permit.)

#### **K. Transition to Factory**

1. During deck sorting, any door between the live tank where the EFP fish are stored must be closed and any conveyor belt between the live tank and observer sample station must be stopped until observer duties on deck are completed.
2. Following completion of deck sorting, upon notification from the observer, the crew may open the stern tank gate and begin to discharge fish from the vessel's live tank(s) across the flow scale and into the factory.

#### **L. Factory Sampling**

1. The crew will collect all halibut in the factory that were not removed during deck sorting operations and will place them in totes designated for this purpose for the observer to count, weigh, and measure (see L5 below).
2. Observer need not be present for sorting in factory to begin.
3. Crew can run fish over the scale as normally occurs in these fisheries, as long as the observer is not on the deck performing deck sorting duties.
4. Accounting for halibut in the factory
  - a. Observer will sample halibut in the factory according to standard catch composition sampling procedures developed by FMA. Any halibut encountered in the observer's samples will be added to the industry count of factory halibut.
  - b. The weight of halibut from the observer species composition sample in the factory will be extrapolated by the NMFS Catch Accounting System to estimate the total weight of halibut recovered in the factory.
  - c. The total weight estimated according to 4b above will be assigned a mortality rate of 90%.
5. Industry count of factory halibut
  - a. Crew will sort all halibut for that haul at a point beyond the observer sampling station.
  - b. Following collection of all factory halibut by the crew, the crew will notify the observer on duty that all halibut have been collected.
  - c. Crew may sort, but not discard, halibut in the factory without the direct supervision of the observer.

- d. After all halibut have been sorted from catch, observers will measure or weigh all halibut and record information on the back of the project form.
  - e. Observer may determine the best time to weigh/measure factory halibut so as to ensure that sufficient time is available for factory sampling and other duties.
  - f. Factory halibut collected by crew from individual hauls must be kept separate and tracked by haul number.
  - g. PI will compare estimates of total halibut weight extrapolated from observer's species composition sample to the total weight of halibut collected by the crew in the factory as part of the final project report.
  - h. Additional instructions for the observer are provided in **Appendix B**.
6. Video monitoring in factory. The video monitoring system in the factory must show all factory areas where halibut are sorted from the catch, all crew action in these areas, and discern if individual fish are removed from the halibut storage container. (Video system requirements under the EFP are described in paragraph I of this permit.)

#### **M. Data Management**

- 1. Observers will follow data management responsibilities developed by FMA. (Described in paragraph E of Appendix B.)
- 2. Vessel data management responsibilities.
  - a. For each EFP haul where any deck sorting and/or industry counts of factory halibut are conducted, a vessel operator must enter "Exempted Fishing Permit (EXP)" as the Management Program, in the electronic logbook (eLogbook).
  - b. A vessel operator must provide copies of all EFP deck sheets and data to the PI and designated representatives.
  - c. Deck sorting video monitoring data requirements are described in paragraph I of this permit.
- 3. Principal Investigator responsibilities.
  - a. The PI will analyze the EFP data and draft an interim report summarizing the project objectives, areas fished, vessels used, EFP project staff aboard, itinerary and schedule, number of halibut assessed on and below deck, and the weight of halibut and groundfish harvest. This interim report will be presented to the NMFS AFSC and Alaska Region and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) at its December 2016 meeting.
  - b. In addition, the PI will submit a more detailed final report of the data and prepare a written report for submission to NMFS within 90 days of completion of fieldwork. That report will encompass activities, results, accounting of any halibut savings generated, any problems and successes, and how well the EFP objectives were accomplished. A copy of that report also will be provided to the Council. If requested, the PI will present the report to the Council and its advisory bodies. Any analysis and report writing are the responsibility of the EFP permit holder.

**N. Prohibited Species Catch Limits.** This EFP does not grant additional groundfish, halibut PSC, or other PSC beyond the amounts allocated through the NMFS annual harvest specifications for the year in which the EFP fishing will occur. The PI, permit holders, designated representatives, vessel owners, and operators must ensure that the estimated halibut mortality from EFP fishing under this permit does not exceed the 2016 or 2017 apportionments of halibut mortality specific to each EFP participant (see 2016 Harvest Specifications, [https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/harvest-specifications/field\\_harvest\\_spec\\_year/2016-2017-751f](https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/harvest-specifications/field_harvest_spec_year/2016-2017-751f)).

**O. Sale of Groundfish.** EFP participants will be allowed to sell all groundfish catch retained in compliance with the EFP, regulations, and the law.

- P. Administration of the Activities under Exempted Fishing.** Management of the EFP fieldwork will be the responsibility of the PI, permit holders, and their designated representatives. The PI, a permit holder, or a designated representative must immediately notify the NMFS Alaska Regional Office by contacting Jeff Hartman, (907-586-7442) and the owner of any vessel fishing under this permit if there are indications from observer debriefings, law enforcement inspections, project field managers, or other sources that the vessel is not meeting EFP requirements or if there is a departure from the EFP terms and conditions.
- Q. Sanctions.** Failure of the PI, permit holders, designated representatives, project field manager, vessel crew, or the owners or operators of the vessels fishing under this EFP to comply with the terms and conditions of this permit, non-exempted provisions of 50 CFR parts 600 and 679, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, or any other applicable regulations, may be cause for revocation, suspension, or modification of this permit as well as civil or criminal penalties under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.
- R. Exemptions from Federal Regulations.** All participants must comply with all requirements of 50 CFR part 679 regulations applicable to vessels participating in Amendment 80, CDQ, and TLAS fisheries, with the exception of the exemptions listed below, effective from May 1, 2016, or from the date the Regional Administrator signs this EFP (whichever date is later), through April 30, 2017. These exemptions apply only to the deck sorting of halibut, not other species, during the effective period of the EFP.
1. Biasing Observer Samples. Permit holders, vessel owners, and operators fishing under this permit, are exempt from § 679.7(g)(2) that otherwise prohibits biasing the observer's sampling procedure by pre-sorting halibut catch. The participating vessels will be allowed to account for the number of halibut caught through sampling methods described in Appendix B. All other elements of § 679.7(g)(2) continue to apply to all other fishing during an EFP trip. Sorting of PSC species other than halibut will continue to be prohibited.
  2. Immediate Return of Prohibited Species to Sea. Vessel owners and operators are exempt from the requirement at § 679.21(b)(2)(ii) to return all prohibited species, or parts thereof, to the sea immediately, with a minimum of injury, regardless of its condition, because halibut may be retained for a whole-haul count and may be handled and tagged for research purposes during EFP hauls designated under the conditions of the permit. Species other than halibut are not exempted from this prohibition and must be returned to the sea immediately, with a minimum of injury, regardless of condition.
  3. Halibut Flow Scale Exemption. Owners and operators of Amendment 80 vessels participating in this EFP are exempt from the requirement at § 679.93(c)(1), and owners and operators of all other vessels participating in this EFP are exempt from the requirement at § 679.28(b) that all catch of halibut must be weighed on a NMFS-approved scale and made available at a single location. This exemption is necessary to allow observers to take length measurements on halibut caught during EFP designated hauls, and release them to the sea.
  4. Apart from these exemptions, vessel owners and operators must comply with applicable observer coverage requirements, including those found at §§ 679.50, 679.51, 679.52, 679.53, 679.54 and 679.55, while participating in activities under this EFP.

**APPENDIX A—VESSEL DATA SHEET**  
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT: 2016-01  
PERMITTED VESSEL

Name of managing company:

Vessel Name:

Federal Permit Number:

USCG Official Number:

Owner Name:

Owner Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Length Overall:

Gross Tonnage:

Type of Vessel:

Homeport:

Name, phone number, and email of designated representative:

Signature(s) of Designated Representative(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

The signature(s) above confirm this information, but do not constitute a final commitment to participate in the test operation.

## APPENDIX B: OBSERVER PROCEDURES FOR DECK SORTING UNDER EFP 2016-01

- A. Observer pre-cruise briefing.** Pre-cruise briefings with observers are separate from the pre-trip meeting with the vessel (described in paragraph G3 of the permit), and should be scheduled with the NMFS Dutch Harbor office (907-581-2060) by the observer provider or designated representative as soon as possible prior to the observer embarking on an EFP trip (under EFP 2016-01) on that vessel for the first time. If FMA staff is not available to conduct the briefing in Dutch Harbor, contact Chris Rilling (206-526-4194) of the FMA office in Seattle.
1. An observer provider or vessel's designated representative will give NMFS 72 hours from the time of embarkation to schedule the pre-cruise briefing with observers embarking on their first EFP trip.
  2. FMA will provide each observer with a copy of the signed EFP in their training materials.
- B. Deck Sorting.** This EFP allows deck sorting of halibut on trips designated as EFP trips when an observer is on duty and present to monitor deck sorting activities. The observer on duty will record length (which will be converted to weight via the IPHC conversion tables) and viability of halibut sorted on deck in accordance with the procedures in this Appendix. During EFP hauls, all halibut sorting on deck must be carried out under the direct supervision of the observer on duty.
1. EFP mode is the default fishing mode.
  2. Notification to observer of non-deck sorting hauls.
    - a. At least 15 minutes prior to fish being brought on board the vessel, the captain, or the mate if the captain is not on duty, is responsible for notifying the on-duty observer if the vessel will not deck sort halibut during that haul. This will be done by "Deck Sort opt-out" notice between the vessel captain and the on-duty observer.
    - b. When halibut deck sorting resumes following a "Deck Sort opt out", the vessel captain, or mate if the captain is not on duty, is responsible for notifying the observer on duty that the vessel is resuming deck sorting. For any haul where deck sorting did not occur, all halibut mortality will be calculated from the halibut collected in the observer species composition sample.
  3. Data collection procedures on deck.
    - a. For all deck sorting hauls, vessel crew are prohibited from bringing a net on board until the observer on duty is present on the deck.
    - b. Observer shall be notified at least 15 minutes before the net is brought on deck.
    - c. Observer shall be provided a suitable space on deck to measure halibut and assess viabilities. In most cases, this will occur on a ramp, chute, or belt where halibut are slid from the deck and off board the vessel. There may be only a single pathway on deck for halibut to be conveyed to the observer on duty.
    - d. When codend arrives on the stern ramp observer shall record on the project form the time of day that the codend was brought aboard as reference information for the haul.
    - e. For any deck sorted haul, crew will pull the codend forward of the live tank hatch. This will provide room for crew to sort halibut from the catch as it flows into the tank. The remainder of the halibut not sorted on deck will be placed into the tank for sorting by crew in the factory.
    - f. The observer will work with the crew to adjust the pace that the crew delivers halibut to the observer for sampling.

- g. Project Forms: To record viability and other project data of deck sorted halibut, the permit holder will supply five different versions to each participating EFP vessel.
  - i. The project forms are double-sided. The front is used to collect information for halibut sorted on deck; the back is used to collect information for halibut sorted in the factory by the crew.
  - ii. Use a new project form for each haul.
  - iii. Complete all header information including the haul number on the project form(s).
  - iv. Project forms should be read top to bottom, left to right.
  - v. Each box represents one halibut.
  - vi. Shaded boxes indicate that the halibut it represents should be selected for assessment and measuring and time out of water.
  - vii. If the box is not shaded, place a mark in the box and slide the halibut overboard.
  - viii. To avoid any bias, the crew should not be aware of which halibut are selected for length and viability sampling. This is done by making sure the project forms are selected randomly so the sampling schedule is not predictable. The view of the forms by the crew should be obscured so crew cannot anticipate which fish will be sampled for viability.
- h. Length and viability sampling. For halibut that are selected for data collection (the halibut designated by a shaded box), measure the fork length in centimeters. For those same halibut, assess the viability using the standard IPHC assessment methodologies. Record the fork length, viability, and elapsed time out of water in the appropriate box.
- i. End of deck sorting for haul. When the last deck sorted halibut has been discarded through the chute, record the elapsed time on the deck sheet in the field marked “*Time of last halibut.*” Record the total number of deck sorted halibut in the field marked “*Total # deck sorted halibut for the haul.*”
- j. Documentation of deck-sorted halibut in observer data
  - i. The weight of sampled halibut during deck sorting will be derived using the IPHC halibut length/weight tables.
  - ii. The total weight of deck sorted halibut will be derived by multiplying the average weight of sampled halibut to the total number of halibut sorted on deck.
  - iii. The total number and weight of deck sorted halibut will be entered as a pre-sort sample type in the observer data.
  - iv. The total weight of halibut deck sorted will be added to the flow scale weight as outlined in the observer sampling manual.
  - v. The length and viability of halibut that are deck sorted and randomly selected for assessment will be entered into the length table in ATLAS.

### **C. Transition to Factory**

- 1. During deck sorting, any door between the live tank where the EFP fish are stored must be closed and any conveyor belt between the live tank and observer sample station must be stopped until observer duties on deck are completed.

2. Following completion of deck sorting, upon notification from the observer, the crew may open the stern tank gate and begin to discharge fish from the vessel's live tank(s) across the flow scale and into the factory.

#### **D. Factory Sampling**

1. Observer sampling in factory
  - a. Observer will sample halibut in the factory according to standard catch composition sampling procedures developed by FMA. Any halibut encountered in the observer's samples will be added to the industry count of factory halibut.
  - b. The weight of halibut from the observer species composition sample in the factory will be extrapolated by the NMFS Catch Accounting System to estimate the total weight of halibut recovered in the factory.
  - c. The total weight estimated according to 1b above will be assigned a mortality rate of 90%.
2. Industry count of factory halibut
  - a. Crew will sort all halibut for that haul at a point beyond the observer sampling station. Any halibut encountered in the observer's samples will be added to the industry count of factory halibut.
  - b. Following collection of all factory halibut by the crew, the crew will notify the observer on duty that the collected halibut are ready for the observer to weigh and record.
  - c. Crew may sort, but not discard, halibut in the factory without the direct supervision of the observer.
  - d. Observers will weigh halibut and record information on the back of the project form. Halibut too large to be weighed on the observer's MCP scale will be measured to the nearest centimeter and weight will be determined using the IPHC length to weight conversion table.
  - e. Observer may determine the best time to weigh/measure factory halibut so as to ensure that sufficient time is available for factory sampling and other duties.
  - f. Factory halibut collected by crew from individual hauls must be kept separate and tracked by haul number.
  - g. Observer will record the total number of halibut sorted in the factory in the field labeled "Total # factory halibut" on the back of the deck sheet.

#### **E. Data Management**

1. Each observer will provide copies of completed data forms to the vessel personnel at least once every 12 hours.

#### **F. Schedule**

1. The three observers will coordinate and work together to develop a schedule. The schedule will ensure that the workload is divided fairly and equitable between each observer. Observers will conduct sampling activities throughout each haul.
2. The lead observer will provide the vessel captain with each observer's on-duty schedule, and any changes to that schedule during the trip. This schedule will allow the captain to identify the on-duty observer for purposes of the EFP haul-back and factory notification requirements.