Notice of Exemption **Appendix E**

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

County Clerk
County of: N/A

Project Title: Second re-adoption of amendment of Section 180.15 of Title 14, California Code of Regulations, regarding commercial coonstripe shrimp fishery, for 90 days

Project Applicant: N/A

Project Location: Ocean Waters, Statewide

Project Location – City: N/A Project Location – County: N/A

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

Coonstripe shrimp (*Pandalus danae*) support a commercial trap fishery centered in northern California, from the California/Oregon border to and including Monterey Bay. Coonstripe fishery gear has been implicated in four whale entanglements: one in 2017 near Crescent City, two in 2024 near San Francisco, and one in 2025 near Monterey Bay. With declining opportunities in other fisheries (i.e., salmon, groundfish), there is a growing concern with the potential for more commercial fishermen to turn to coonstripe fishing, increasing gear usage in the fishery and further increasing the risk of marine life entanglement. The fishery operates in areas, and at times of the year, with relatively high densities of whales, including species federally listed under the Endangered Species Act. Therefore, the California Fish and Game Commission proposes to readopt for a subsequent 90 days the emergency amendment of Section 180.15 to address marine life entanglement risk in the commercial coonstripe shrimp fishery.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Fish and Game Commission

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Exempt Status **(check one):**

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. CEQA guidelines classes 7 and 8; California Code of Regulations, Title 14, sections 15307 and 15308
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: Class 7 and Class 8 Categorical Exemptions to Protect Natural Resources and the Environment

The class 7 and class 8 exemptions apply to agency actions to assure the maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of natural resources and the environment, respectively. The Commission approved the emergency regulation by relying on the categorical exemptions described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15307 (Action by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources), the class 7 exemption, and Section 15308 (Action by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment), the class 8 exemption.

The Commission took this emergency action pursuant to its duty and authority to protect marine resources in state waters. The action readopted emergency regulations to reduce marine life entanglement risk in the fishery by: (1) establishing a north/south dividing line at the Sonoma/Mendocino counties border, (2) limiting the number of vertical lines that may be deployed per vessel, (3) limiting the number of traps per string, (4) establishing a maximum depth limit of 30 fathoms for the northern fishery only, and (5) setting a new control date. This regulatory action is intended to continue limiting the growth of the fishery to reduce marine entanglement risk. Therefore, the proposed project is designed to reduce the risk of marine life entanglements caused by commercial coonstripe shrimp trap gear and is exempt under CEQA because the project will ensure the maintenance and enhancement of marine resources and the marine environment.

Lead Agency: California Fish and Game Comission

Contact Person: Melissa Miller-Henson Telephone: (916) 653-4899

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ☒Yes ☐No

Signature: Date: December 22, 2025 Title: Executive Director

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant. Date Received for filing at OPR: