

## 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 95814

County Clerk

County of: N/A

Project Title: Amend Section 180.15 of Title 14, CCR – Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery

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*) supports 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 potential increase in entanglement risk with the growth of the fishery is especially acute because 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 amend sections 180.15 and 180.5 of Title 14, California Code of Regulations, to address marine life entanglement risk in the 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:

- 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:

The class 7 and class 8 categorical 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 purpose of the regulatory action is to reduce marine life entanglement risk in the fishery by incorporating previously enacted emergency regulations that (1) establish a north/south dividing line at the Sonoma and Mendocino counties border, (2) limit the number of vertical lines that may be deployed

per vessel, (3) limit the number of traps per string, (4) establish a maximum depth limit of 30 fathoms for the northern fishery only, and (5) set a new control date. In addition to incorporating previous emergency regulations, this regulation also (1) makes changes to the season in the northern fishery; (2) changes the trap set and bait time statewide; (3) allows voluntary use of ropeless fishing gear; (4) adds requirements for electronic monitoring of ropeless fishing gear; (5) limits the length of surface line, limit the size of surface buoys, and specify buoy marking requirements; (6) removes trap destruction device requirements; and (7) requires reporting on fishery activity. This regulatory action is intended to limit the deployment of gear that has the potential to entangle marine life, increase safety for fishery participants, and collect data on the fishery. Therefore, the project is designed to reduce the risk of marine life entanglements caused by 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

Contact Person: Melissa Miller-Henson

Phone: (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: February 17, 2026 Title: Executive Director

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