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NMFS Confirms January 1, 2026 Start Date for MMPA Certificates of Admissibility

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has confirmed that **January 1, 2026** remains the effective start date for requiring **Certificates of Admissibility (COA)** for certain seafood imports under the [Marine Mammal Protection Act \(MMPA\) Import Provisions](#). The requirement applies to imports associated with **240 fisheries across 46 countries** that were denied comparability findings, meaning their fishing practices do not meet U.S. marine mammal protection standards.

Beginning January 1, affected shipments will be subject to import restrictions unless they can be documented as admissible. NMFS has indicated that enforcement will be coordinated with U.S. Customs and Border Protection using **tariff classification and country of origin triggers**. In cases where a tariff code does not distinguish between admissible and non-admissible catch methods, NMFS will rely on the COA to confirm whether a shipment may enter the United States.

Importers should be aware that **multiple COAs may be required for a single shipment**, depending on the species and country of origin of the products included. For example, shipments containing seafood from more than one country or fishery may need separate COAs for each applicable species and origin. COAs must be signed by authorized officials from the exporting nation, and documentation is expected to be submitted through CBP's document imaging system or provided at the port of entry.

NMFS acknowledged that some implementation issues remain unresolved, including procedures for intermediary nations that process or transship seafood

prior to export to the United States. The agency has indicated it will continue working with affected countries into early 2026. In addition, COA requirements for certain swimming crab fisheries remain temporarily stayed pending further review ([see 2510310035](#)).

Importers are encouraged to review NMFS resources to determine whether their products are subject to the new restrictions and to prepare internal procedures ahead of the January 1 deadline. ([Resources](#)) Questions regarding compliance may be directed to NOAA Fisheries' trade monitoring support team at trademonitoring.support@noaa.gov.

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