



National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Region  
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[www.nwr.noaa.gov](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov)



## PUBLIC NOTICE

For Information Contact:  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 4, 2009

### PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY

#### **Trawl Rationalization Program: DEIS out for public comment & changes to canary rockfish IFQ QS initial allocation**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces: 1) the availability of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the trawl rationalization program, 2) Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) modifications to the initial allocation formula for canary rockfish quota share (QS), and 3) updated QS estimates.

The trawl rationalization program, Amendment 20 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, would consist of: (1) an individual fishing quota (IFQ) program for the shore-based limited entry groundfish trawl fleet; and (2) cooperative (coop) programs for the at-sea whiting limited entry groundfish trawl fleet. The trawl rationalization program is intended to increase net economic benefits, create economic stability, provide full utilization of the trawl sector allocation, consider environmental impacts, and promote conservation through individual accountability for catch and bycatch. The DEIS titled, Rationalization of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Limited Entry Trawl Fishery, analyzes the impacts of the proposed program on the physical, biological, and socioeconomic environment. The DEIS is available for review and public comment as announced in a notice of availability published December 4, 2009 (74 FR 63751).

The DEIS is available electronically through the Pacific Fishery Management Council's website at

[www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org), or more specifically at <http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gffmp/gfa20.html>. Copies of the DEIS may also be obtained from the Responsible Program Official identified below.

Written comments should be submitted through mail, fax, or email to the Responsible Program Official identified below. **Written comments must be received by January 19, 2010.**<sup>1</sup> When submitting fax or email comments include the following document identifier in the comment subject line: **Trawl Rationalization DEIS.**

Responsible Program Official:

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The "Dear Reviewer" letter that accompanied the DEIS incorrectly stated that the comment period ends on January 18, 2010. That is a Federal holiday. Therefore, the comment period ends on the next business day, January 19, 2010.

### **Council Modified Canary QS**

The Council took final action on the trawl rationalization program at their November 2008, and March, April, and June 2009 meetings. At its September 2009 meeting, the Council announced that they may consider amending their final decision on trawl rationalization in response to public input after permit owners received estimates of their IFQ QS based on the analyses used for the DEIS. Those estimates revealed that some permit owners would receive zero canary rockfish, which may have precluded their opportunity to harvest other co-occurring groundfish species.

At its November 2009 meeting, the Council modified its final decision on the initial allocation formula for canary rockfish QS in the shoreside IFQ program. The Council amended the initial allocation formula for canary rockfish to include the bycatch rate formula for overfished species and an equal distribution of quota pounds (QP) from the buyback permits (similar to the Council's preliminary preferred alternative for overfished species from June 08). This would provide some QP of canary rockfish for all permit owners. The equal distribution of QP from the buyback permits is similar to the approach provided for non-overfished species. This modification to the canary rockfish initial allocation formula is included in the trawl rationalization DEIS that is available for public comment.

### **Updated IFQ QS Estimates**

The Council has provided an IFQ QS allocation table showing the estimated preliminary initial allocations of QS on a permit by permit basis, as developed for purposes of analysis in the DEIS. The updated preliminary estimates of QS for each permit will be published on the Council's website at: <http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gffmp/gfa20/gfa20progtrack.html>  
Look for "QS Allocation Table"

In addition to the change to implement the Council's November 2009 action on canary rockfish, the IFQ estimates will be modified to reflect updated area of catch determinations and include the estimated amounts of halibut individual bycatch quota (IBQ) for each permit. With respect to the updated area of catch determinations, the QS estimates most significantly affected are those for sablefish in southern California.

*[Note: Actual QS allocations will be determined by NMFS and may vary from the estimates developed by the Council for purposes of policy analysis. Permit owners should not rely on the QS estimates as being absolutely accurate and should not rely on the QS estimates to make any final decisions prior to the IFQ program going into effect. In the latter part of 2010, NMFS will announce a QS issuance process.]*

Visit the NMFS Northwest Region website for current groundfish management regulations, VMS information, and RCA boundary coordinates.  
<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Groundfish-Halibut/index.cfm>

#### **Groundfish E-mail Group**

Subscribe to "wcgroundfish" by visiting the following website: [http://listserver.afsc.noaa.gov/read/all\\_forums/subscribe?name=wcgroundfish](http://listserver.afsc.noaa.gov/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=wcgroundfish)