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FISHERIES**

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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Trawl Rationalization Program: Chafing Gear Modifications

The West Coast Region has published a final rule (79 FR 71340) modifying chafing gear restrictions for midwater trawl gear. The rule applies to all midwater trawl gear including Pacific whiting and non-whiting target fishing. Chafing or chafer panels are webbing or other material attached to the codend to minimize damage to the codend netting from wear caused by rubbing against the stern ramp and trawl alley during net retrieval and from contact with the ocean floor. This rule also includes minor technical revisions to related regulatory text. The regulations contained in this rule will be effective January 1, 2015.

This rule and a compliance guide can be found on the West Coast Region's website at:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/frn/groundfish_frns.html

and at:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/groundfish_catch_shares/rules_regulations/trawl_regulations_compliance_guides.html

The Environmental Assessment can be found at:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/nepa/groundfish/groundfish_nepa_documents.html