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PUBLIC NOTICE

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PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY

Changes to the Boundaries of the Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area off Washington, Oregon, and Northern California

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has implemented new bottom trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) boundaries beginning April 17, 2014 (79 FR 21639). These changes affect the limited entry bottom trawl sector managed under the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP participating in the IFQ fishery by opening RCA boundaries to improve access to target species. These changes will not change how the trawl RCA applies to vessels fishing for groundfish using bottom trawl gear. Rather, only changes to the boundaries of the trawl RCA will be implemented.

This public notice announces these new RCA boundary modifications implemented as follows:

- Shoreward 100 fm (183-m)(year-round) between 40° 10' N. latitude to 48° 10' N. latitude, and;
- Seaward 150 fm (274-m)(year-round) north of 45° 46' N. latitude to 48° 10' N. latitude.
- Seaward 200 fm (366-m) between 40° 10' N. latitude to 45° 46' N. latitude during periods 2-5, and modified 200 fm (366-m) in periods 1 and 6 (i.e., status quo).

Table 1: RCA boundaries implemented beginning April 17, 2014.

	JAN-FEB	MAR-APR	MAY-JUN	JUL-AUG	SEP-OCT	NOV-DEC
48°10' N. lat. - 45°46' N. lat.	100 fm line- 150 fm line					
45° 46' N. lat. - 40°10' N. lat.	Shoreward 100 fm line (Seaward line below)					
45° 46' N. lat. - 40°10' N. lat.	Seaward modified 200 fm line	Seaward 200 fm line				Seaward modified 200 fm line

These changes will increase access to approximately 2,389 square miles of additional year-round access to the bottom trawl fleet.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) associated with this action can be found at:

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

The Final Rule associated with this action can be found at:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/frn/2014/fr_2014.html

Please note that there was an error in the trip limit table coordinates published in the Federal Register (79 FR 21639). Three intended references to 45° 46' N. lat. as published in lines 2, 3, and 4 of table 1 (North) are incorrect. As published, Line 2 incorrectly specified 45° 16' N. lat., instead of the correct reference, 45° 46' N. lat., and lines 3 and 4 incorrectly specified 45° 10' N. lat., instead of the correct reference, 45° 46' N. lat.

NMFS will be making a correction to the Code of Federal Regulations as soon as possible in order to properly reflect the intended trip limit table coordinates as described below; Limited Entry Trawl Rockfish Conservation Areas and Landing Allowances (table 1, North):

Table 1 (North) to Part 660, Subpart D -- Limited Entry Trawl Rockfish Conservation Areas and Landing Allowances for non-IFQ Species and Pacific Whiting North of 40°10' N. Lat.

This table describes Rockfish Conservation Areas for vessels using groundfish trawl gear. This table describes incidental landing allowances for vessels registered to a Federal limited entry trawl permit and using groundfish trawl or groundfish non-trawl gears to harvest individual fishing quota (IFQ) species.

Other Limits and Requirements Apply -- Read § 660.10 - § 660.399 before using this table

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	JAN-FEB	MAR-APR	MAY-JUN	JUL-AUG	SEP-OCT	NOV-DEC
Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA)^{1/}:						
1 North of 48°10' N. lat.	shore - modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}	shore - 200 fm line ^{1/}	shore - 150 fm line ^{1/}		shore - 200 fm line ^{1/}	shore - modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}
2 48°10' N. lat. - 45°46' N. lat.	100 fm line ^{1/} - 150 fm line ^{1/}					
3 45° 46' N. lat. - 40°10' N. lat.	Shoreward 100 fm line (Seaward line below) ^{1/}					
4 45° 46' N. lat. - 40°10' N. lat.	Seaward modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}	Seaward 200 fm line ^{1/}				Seaward modified ^{2/} 200 fm line ^{1/}
<p>Selective flatfish trawl gear is required shoreward of the RCA; all bottom trawl gear (large footrope, selective flatfish trawl, and small footrope trawl gear) is permitted seaward of the RCA. Large footrope and small footrope trawl gears (except for selective flatfish trawl gear) are prohibited shoreward of the RCA. Midwater trawl gear is permitted only for vessels participating in the primary whiting season. Vessels fishing groundfish trawl quota pounds with groundfish non-trawl gears, under gear switching provisions at § 660.140, are subject to the limited entry groundfish trawl fishery landing allowances in this table, regardless of the type of fishing gear used. Vessels fishing groundfish trawl quota pounds with groundfish non-trawl gears, under gear switching provisions at § 660.140, are subject to the limited entry fixed gear non-trawl RCA, as described in Tables 1 (North) and 1 (South) to Part 660, Subpart E.</p> <p>See § 660.60, § 660.130, and § 660.140 for Additional Gear, Trip Limit, and Conservation Area Requirements and Restrictions. See §§ 660.70-660.74 and §§ 660.76-660.79 for Conservation Area Descriptions and Coordinates (including RCAs, YRCA, CCAs, Farallon Islands, Cordell Banks, and EFHCAs).</p> <p>State trip limits and seasons may be more restrictive than federal trip limits, particularly in waters off Oregon and California.</p>						
3 Minor nearshore rockfish & Black rockfish	300 lb/ month					
4 Whiting						
5 midwater trawl	Before the primary whiting season: CLOSED. -- During the primary season: mid-water trawl permitted in the RCA. See §660.131 for season and trip limit details. -- After the primary whiting season: CLOSED.					
6 large & small footrope gear	Before the primary whiting season: 20,000 lb/trip. -- During the primary season: 10,000 lb/trip. -- After the primary whiting season: 10,000 lb/trip.					
7 Cabazon						
8 North of 46°16' N. lat.	Unlimited					
9 46°16' N. lat. - 40°10' N. lat.	50 lb/ month					
10 Shortbelly	Unlimited					
11 Spiny dogfish	60,000 lb/ month					
12 Longnose skate	Unlimited					
13 Other Fish^{3/}	Unlimited					

TABLE 1 (North)

1/ The Rockfish Conservation Area is an area closed to fishing by particular gear types, bounded by lines specifically defined by latitude and longitude coordinates set out at §§ 660.71-660.74. This RCA is not defined by depth contours, and the boundary lines that define the RCA may close areas that are deeper or shallower than the depth contour. Vessels that are subject to the RCA restrictions may not fish in the RCA, or operate in the RCA for any purpose other than transiting.

2/ The "modified" fathom lines are modified to exclude certain petrale sole areas from the RCA.

3/ "Other fish" are defined at § 660.11 and include sharks (except spiny dogfish), skates (except longnose skate), ratfish, morids, grenadiers, and kelp greenling.

To convert pounds to kilograms, divide by 2.20462, the number of pounds in one kilogram.