



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  
June 3, 2010

### PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY

#### **Proposed Initial Issuance Rule for the Trawl Rationalization Program Available for Public Comment**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces the publication of the proposed initial issuance rule to implement Amendments 20 & 21 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The public comment period for this rulemaking is concurrent with the comment period on the notice of availability for FMP amendments 20 & 21 (see the public notice, dated May 12, 2010, on our website for more information).

#### **Public Comment Open on Proposed Initial Issuance Rule**

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NMFS announces publication of a proposed rule for Amendments 20 and 21 to the FMP. The proposed rule is posted on the NMFS website at <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Groundfish-Halibut/Groundfish-Fishery-Management/Trawl-Program/index.cfm>, the Pacific Fishery Management Council's website at <http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/fishery-management-plan/fmp-amendment-20/>, and the Office of the Federal Register website at [http://www.federalregister.gov/OFRUpload/OFData/2010-13312\\_PI.pdf](http://www.federalregister.gov/OFRUpload/OFData/2010-13312_PI.pdf).

**Public comment must be received no later than 5 p.m. (PST) on July 12, 2010.**

You may submit comments, identified by RIN 0648-AY68 by any one of the following methods:

- Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>
- Fax: 206-526-6736, Attn: Jamie Goen.
- Mail: William W. Stelle, Jr., Administrator, Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115-0070, Attn: Jamie Goen.

Instructions: All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter N/A in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

## Background

Amendment 20 would establish a trawl rationalization program for the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. Amendment 20's trawl rationalization program would consist of: An individual fishing quota (IFQ) program for the shorebased trawl fleet (including whiting and non-whiting sectors); and cooperative (coop) programs for the at-sea whiting mothership (MS) and catcher/processor (C/P) trawl fleets. The trawl rationalization program is intended to increase net economic benefits, create individual economic stability, provide full utilization of the trawl sector allocation, consider environmental impacts, and achieve individual accountability of catch and bycatch.

Amendment 21 would allocate select groundfish species among sectors within the groundfish fishery, including trawl versus non-trawl, shoreside trawl versus at-sea trawl, and whiting versus non-whiting. These allocations are intended to improve management under the rationalization program by streamlining its administration, providing stability to the fishery, and addressing halibut bycatch.

NMFS is reviewing Amendments 20 and 21 in their entirety. However, due to the complexity of the proposed fishery management measures, this rule proposes only certain key components that would be necessary to have permits and endorsements issued in time for use in the 2011 fishery and in order to have the 2011 specifications reflect the new allocation scheme. Specifically, this rule would establish the allocations set forth under Amendment 21 and establish procedures for initial issuance of permits, endorsements, quota shares, and catch history assignments under the IFQ and coop programs. In addition, the proposed rule would restructure the entire Pacific Coast groundfish regulations to more closely track the

organization of the proposed management measures and to make the total groundfish regulations more clear. NMFS plans to propose additional program details in a future proposed rule. Such additional details would include: Program components applicable to IFQ gear switching, observer programs, retention requirements, equipment requirements, catch monitors, catch weighing requirements, coop permits/agreements, first receiver site licenses, quota share accounts, vessel quota pound accounts, further tracking and monitoring components, and economic data collection requirements. In order to encourage more informed public comment, this proposed rule includes a general description of these additional program requirements. NMFS is also planning a future "Cost-Recovery" rule based on a recommended methodology yet to be developed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council).

The draft FMP language for Amendments 20 & 21 are available electronically through the Council's website at [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org) or by calling the Council at 866-806-7204 to request a copy. The draft environmental impact statements (DEIS) for Amendments 20 and 21 provide further information on the amendments, including an analysis of the expected impacts of the actions. The DEISs are available on the Council's website.

- The Amendment 20 DEIS is titled, "Rationalization of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Limited Entry Trawl Fishery."
- The Amendment 21 DEIS is titled, "Allocation of Harvest Opportunity between the Sectors of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery."

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

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