



National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Region

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY

Trawl Rationalization Program:
Program Improvement and Enhancement Rule and Amendment 21-1
Changes for 2012 and Beyond

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces several changes to the groundfish fishery's trawl rationalization program (also called the catch share program) for 2012 and beyond. Some of these changes affect all sectors of the commercial groundfish fishery (limited entry trawl, limited entry fixed gear, and open access). These changes are based on recommendations by the Pacific Fishery Management Council and implemented by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) through the "Program Improvement and Enhancement," or PIE, final rule (76 FR 74725, December 1, 2011). **These changes will be effective January 1, 2012.**

The PIE rule includes, but is not limited to, the following changes:

- revisions to the Pacific halibut trawl bycatch mortality limit;
- clarification that Amendment 21 supersedes limited entry/open access allocations for certain groundfish species;
- revisions to the observer coverage requirement while a vessel is in port and before the offload is complete;
- revisions to the electronic fish ticket reporting requirements;
- revisions to the first receiver site license requirement;
- further clarification on moving between limited entry and open access fisheries;

- a process for end-of-the-year vessel account reconciliation; and
- an exemption from processing at sea for qualified participants in the Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program (applications due February 15, 2012).

A small entity compliance guide (compliance guide) is available and provides a plain language guide to the changes to the program.

**SEE THE
COMPLIANCE GUIDE
FOR MORE DETAILS
ON THE CHANGES
FOR 2012.**

The final rule and compliance guide, along with other useful information, including applications and the 2012 interim IFQ allocations and vessel limits, are posted on NMFS Trawl Program website at:
<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Groundfish-Halibut/Groundfish-Fishery-Management/Trawl-Program/index.cfm>.

Fishing into the New Year

If you are planning to fish during the last days of December and wait to offload until the first days of 2012, your discards and landings will be debited against your 2012 vessel account, even if the discards and target species harvests actually occurred in 2011. The offload date as reported on the electronic fish ticket determines which year the vessel account is debited.

