



National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Region

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY

Trawl Rationalization Program: **2012 Year-End and Gearing Up for 2013**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reminds the fishing industry of several provisions in the groundfish fishery's trawl rationalization program (also called the catch share program) as we approach 2013.

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Regulations and compliance guides, along with other useful information, including applications and the 2013 interim IFQ allocations and vessel limits, are posted on NMFS Trawl Program website (listed in the box at right).

Fishing in to the New Year

As announced in the November 27, 2012 public notice, if you are planning to fish during the last days of December and wait to offload until the first days of 2013, the discards and landings will be debited against your 2013 vessel account, even if the discards and target species harvests actually occurred in 2012. The offload date as reported on the

electronic fish ticket determines the year in which the vessel account is debited.

Moratorium on QP Transfers

As announced in the November 27, 2012 public notice, the deadline for transferring reapportioned whiting QP from QS accounts to vessel accounts and the deadline for transferring all QP or individual bycatch quota (IBQ) between vessel accounts is 11:59 pm on December 14, 2012. From 12:00 am on December 15 through December 31, 2012, QP or IBQ pounds will not be transferrable. Any pending transfers that have not been accepted by the receiving vessel account as of December 15 (12:00 am) will be retracted and credited to the originating vessel account. Any reapportioned whiting QP remaining in QS accounts as of December 15 (12:00 am) will expire.

If a deficit is incurred in a vessel account between December 15–31, 2012, the earliest the deficit can be cured is January 1, 2013. Vessels with a vessel account in deficit for any IFQ species cannot fish in the IFQ fishery until the deficit is cured.

Groundfish E-mail Group

Subscribe to "wgroundfish" by visiting the following website: <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Groundfish-Halibut/Groundfish-Fishery-Management/Public-Notices/Index.cfm> and clicking "sign up".

NMFS Trawl Program Website

<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Groundfish-Halibut/Groundfish-Fishery-Management/Trawl-Program/index.cfm>



Observer Discard Data

Observer discard data was updated December 11, 2012, so please check your account balance to see any possible changes. Like last year, NMFS will not debit observer discard data December 12-31, 2012 to prevent deficits in 2012 vessel accounts during the QP transfer moratorium period (December 15-31, 2012). Any observer discard data submitted during this time will be debited against the 2012 vessel account no earlier than January 1, 2013.

2012 observer data is scheduled to be finalized during the first quarter of 2013. Any 2012 observer data updated or entered in 2013 will debit from any remaining 2012 QP balance first, and then will be debited from the 2013 vessel account. Unless a vessel has submitted paperwork to the Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) to opt out of the IFQ fishery, all deficits must be covered within 30 days, and no vessel may take an IFQ trip while their vessel account is in deficit. OLE will attempt to contact any vessel account in deficit December 12-15, 2012.

For more information on the observer program or discard estimates, please call the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) Observer Program at (206) 861-7601.

IFQ Website Temporarily Unavailable

NMFS may shut down the IFQ website for several hours on December 31, 2012 to refresh for the opening of 2013 accounts. Please prepare to have limited access from December 31, 2012 until service is restored.

Account Information

NMFS will activate 2013 QS and vessel accounts on or about January 1, 2013. QS accounts will be populated with an initial allocation of QP based on the QS percent on the QS permit.

Vessel accounts will start 2013 with zero QP, except for accounts which ended 2012 in a deficit. 2012 deficits will appear in the 2013 account, and must be cured with QP issued in 2013.

Landings and discard data for 2012 fishing trips may continue to be debited or changed in 2013 until data is final. Any vessel that landed IFQ fish in 2012, regardless of if they plan to fish in 2013, should

continue to monitor their vessel account in 2013 until landings and discard data are final.

2013 Shorebased IFQ Program Allocation

The initial 2013 Shorebased IFQ Program allocations will be announced on NMFS's website shortly. NMFS will issue QP based on these initial Shorebased IFQ Program allocations, as reduced by the amount of QP for whiting trips for whiting and for species caught incidentally in the whiting fishery. The reduced amount will be issued at the start of 2013 to preserve NMFS' ability to deposit the appropriate final amounts into QS accounts in the spring based on any recalculation of QS allocations in response to a court order. In the spring of 2013, after final harvest specifications are available for Pacific whiting and Pacific halibut and after NMFS has made a final decision on the reallocation of whiting (and associated species from whiting trips), NMFS will revise QS accounts if necessary.

2013 allocations and the corresponding vessel limits (daily and annual) will be posted on NMFS's website in mid-December 2012.

QS Permit and Vessel Account Renewals

NMFS mailed QS permits on December 6-7, 2012. Any vessel account that was not renewed by November 30, 2012, will not be activated for 2013, and the vessel cannot fish in the IFQ fishery in 2013 until the account is renewed. The vessel account will also not be eligible for any surplus carryover of 2012 QP or IBQ pounds.

NMFS will not accept any 2013 vessel account renewals from December 1-December 31, 2012. In January 2013, any vessel account that was not renewed during the renewal period for 2013 can renew their account by calling the Fisheries Permit Office to request a paper renewal form.

Beginning in 2013, NMFS will restrict non-renewed vessel accounts to only allow those accounts to transfer in QP to cover a deficit.

Change in Ownership of Vessels Participating in the IFQ Fishery

As a reminder, any time a vessel participating in the IFQ fishery changes ownership, the new vessel

owner must request from NMFS a new vessel account, and include an ownership interest form.

Once the new vessel account is established by NMFS, the vessel owner must provide to the observer, catch monitor, and processor the new vessel account number during transactions. The owner of the limited entry trawl permit which is registered to the vessel must submit a change in vessel owner form and provide a copy of the vessel documentation (USCG or state) to reflect the new ownership.

Also, the new vessel owner cannot fish using a vessel account established under the prior owner's name. The vessel account under the previous owner's name will remain open until the landing/discard data is final for that year, but the vessel account will not be renewed in the following year.

Surplus Carryover Information

In spring of 2013 and based on Council recommendations, NMFS will make a decision on the specifics of the 2012 surplus carryover.

OLE Declarations Reminder

As a reminder, it is important for all vessels to make sure their current declaration with NMFS OLE is accurate. The vessel operator must send a new declaration report to OLE before leaving port on a trip in which a gear type that is different from the gear type most recently declared for the vessel will be used. A declaration report will be valid until another declaration report revising the existing gear declaration is received by NMFS OLE.

For more information on declaration reports or to make a declaration, please call NMFS OLE at 206-526-6133.

Changes for 2013 to be Announced Soon

The 2013-2014 harvest specification and management measures (spex) final rule will publish in December 2012 and will be effective January 2013. The rule will implement several provisions that affect the trawl rationalization program. The spex rule will include, but is not limited to:

- Lingcod split - lingcod will be changed from a coastwide IFQ species to separate IFQ for north and south of 40°10' N. lat. This will result in new QS control limits, vessel limits, and changes to deficit carryover.
- Changing surplus carryover for 2013 & beyond to provide more Council involvement
- Modifying trawl RCA boundaries
- Adding sorting requirements for select species (e.g., blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat. because there is a sub-trip limit in limited entry fixed gear and open access fisheries)

Changes for 2013 as a result of the spex rule will be announced soon through a separate public notice.