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PUBLIC NOTICE

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NMFS-SEA-14-11
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 19, 2014

Proposed Rule to Modify Chafing Restrictions for Midwater Trawl Gear Used in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery

The West Coast Region has published a proposed rule that will modify chafing gear restrictions for midwater trawl gear. The proposed action 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 proposed rule also includes minor technical revisions to related regulatory text.

Public comments on this rule are due April 18, 2014.

View the proposed rule and submit comments at www.regulations.gov by searching for Docket Number NOAA-NMFS-2014-0028 or by following the link below:

<http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2014-0028>

This proposed rule can also be found on the West Coast Region's website at:
<http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/frn/2014/79fr15296.pdf>

The Environmental Assessment can be found at:

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