



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region
7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115
www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/index.html



PUBLIC NOTICE

For Information Contact:

Groundfish Branch: Keeley Kent, (206) 526-4655

Permits Branch: (206) 526-4353

NMFS-SEA-18-09

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 26, 2018

Important Information about Widow Rockfish Quota Share (QS) Transferability/Divestiture

NMFS published a final rule revising regulations to reallocate widow rockfish quota shares (QS) in the Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program. Regulations contained in this rule were effective December 26, 2017.

The Federal Register notice of the final rule can be found at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/11/24/2017-25349/magnuson-stevens-act-provisions-fisheries-off-west-coast-states-pacific-coast-groundfish-fishery>

NMFS mailed initial administrative determinations (IAD) letter to applicants on January 18, 2018, indicating each widow reallocation application had been approved. Applicants had 60 calendar days from the date of the IAD letter to appeal the decision. No appeals were received by the appeal deadline of March 19, 2018.

Because no appeals were received, widow rockfish QS will become transferrable on **March 26, 2018**. After this date, any QS permit owner who exceeds either the widow rockfish QS control limit or the non-whiting QS aggregate limit as the result of the reallocation will have until 11:59 pm, **November 30, 2018**, to divest of their excess holdings. Alternatively, any QS permit owner who exceeds either the widow rockfish QS control limit or the non-whiting QS aggregate limit as the result of the reallocation may voluntarily abandon excess holdings by **November 15, 2018**. If a QS holder chooses to abandon their excess QS holdings, NMFS must receive written notification of the intent to abandon their excess QS by close of business on November 15, 2018. Such requests must include the following information: QS permit number, IFQ species (widow rockfish), and the QS percentage to be abandoned. Either the QS permit owner or an authorized representative of the QS permit owner must sign the request. NMFS will revoke and redistribute any QS in excess of an accumulation limits after the divestiture deadline according to the procedures in the regulations (see 50 C.F.R. 660.140(d)(4)(v)(D) through (G)).

Background information and documents for the widow rockfish reallocation, including a small entity compliance guide, are available at the NMFS West Coast Region Web site at:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/groundfish_catch_shares/rules_regulations/widow_rockfish_reallocation.html.