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PUBLIC NOTICE

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Request for Industry Cooperation To Avoid Sablefish Bycatch in the At-Sea Whiting Fishery

The National Marine Fisheries Service estimates that bycatch of sablefish north of 36° North latitude (N. lat.) in the at-sea whiting fishery has exceeded the sector's set-aside of 50 metric tons (mt). As of October 23, 2018, the estimated bycatch of sablefish north of 36° N. lat. in the at-sea whiting sectors was approximately 93.55 mt. The Catcher-Processor sector caught 75.78 mt, and the Mothership sector caught 17.77 mt.

In 2018, sablefish north of 36° N. lat. had an annual catch limit (ACL) of 5,475 mt and a commercial harvest guideline for the limited entry and open access sectors of 4,894 mt. Overall catch of sablefish north of 36° N. lat. has been low this year with the individual fishing quota (IFQ) fishery, limited entry, and open access fisheries taking less than 70 percent of its respective allocations thus far in 2018 (See Table 1). Therefore, while the at-sea sector has exceeded its set-aside, the overall risk to the commercial harvest guideline or the ACL for sablefish north of 36° N. lat. is low.

Table 1.2018 sablefish north of 36° N. lat. allocation and catch to date by fishery.

Fishery		Allocation (mt)	Landings through October 23, 2018 (mt)	Remaining Allocation (mt)
LE Trawl	At-sea	50	93.55	-43.55
	Shorebased IFQ	2,522	1,640	882
LE Fixed Gear	Primary	1,583	1,365	218
	Daily Trip Limit (DTL)	279	173	106
Open Access		460	308	152
TOTAL		4,894	3,579.55	1,314.45

Catcher-Processor and Mothership sector representatives informed NMFS that vessels are taking voluntary steps to move from areas of high sablefish bycatch. NMFS will continue to monitor sablefish catch, and the Pacific Fishery Management Council will discuss up-to-date catch information at the upcoming November 1-8, 2018, meeting in San Diego, California. In the meantime, NMFS is requesting that industry continue its voluntarily bycatch avoidance measures

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to reduce interactions with sablefish north of 36° N. lat. in the at-sea whiting fishery for the remainder of 2018 to avoid exceeding the 2018 annual catch limit for this highly attained stock.