

Trawl Rationalization: A Catch Share Program

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Overview of the Trawl Rationalization Program:

The current groundfish trawl fishery may be converted to co-ops and individual fishing quotas, or catch shares, through a trawl rationalization program. Trawl rationalization would change the usual way of doing business here on the west coast. If approved, implementation is scheduled for January 1, 2011.



The trawl rationalization program is intended to increase net economic benefits, create individual economic stability, provide full utilization of the trawl sector allocation, consider environmental impacts, and achieve individual accountability of catch and bycatch.

The trawl rationalization program would be a limited access privilege program (LAPP). The program would be a conditional privilege that is conveyed through quota shares or catch shares, to harvest a specified amount of fish; however, it may be revoked, limited, or modified at any time. The trawl rationalization program is intended to increase net economic benefits, create individual economic stability, provide full utilization of the trawl sector allocation, consider environmental impacts, and achieve individual accountability of catch and bycatch.

Components of the program would include an individual fishing quote (IFQ) for the shore-based fleet and cooperative programs for the at-sea trawl fleet. The shore-based trawl fleet would consist of IFQ participants who land groundfish to shore-based processors. The at-sea trawl fleet would consist of fishery participants harvesting whiting with midwater trawl gear (i.e., whiting catcher/processor vessels, whiting motherships, and whiting catcher vessels associated with motherships). The cooperative programs for the at-sea trawl fleet would be further divided as follows: (1) the whiting catcher/processor co-op; and (2) whiting mothership co-ops. Under the program, a mothership co-op may be a single co-op or multiple co-ops where vessels pool their harvest together, or it may consist of vessels not associated with a particular mothership.

Collection of Ownership Information:

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) has adopted limits on the amount of pounds a vessel can hold, acquire,

or use and limits the amount of quota share that can be held, acquired, or used. NOAA Fisheries would be required to determine and track ownership interest in quota shares to further determine if individuals are within set limits, both at the initial allocation stage and during the operation of the program. As a first step in supporting the implementation of the future trawl rationalization program under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and as a means to streamline the initial issuance process, NOAA Fisheries is planning to collect ownership interest information from potential participants in the trawl rationalization program in early 2010.

If you are interested in participating in the program, you MUST submit ownership data to NOAA Fisheries beginning in 2010. Data is requested from the following potential participants:

- At-Sea Fleet: whiting motherships, whiting mothership catcher vessels, and whiting catcher/processors.
- Shore-Based Fleet: whiting and non-whiting permit owners and vessel owners
- Whiting Shore-Based Processors



The Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form

The Trawl Identification of Ownership Interest Form (see image) will be mailed to potential participants in early 2010 and will be available online. The form MUST be filled out and submitted back to NOAA Fisheries no later than May 1, 2010. Completion of the form would be required only once in preparation of the trawl rationalization program.

NOAA Fisheries will use this data to determine allocation of quota shares and provide a streamlined approach for implementation of the trawl rationalization program. The agency will also use this data to determine which potential quota share holders might be over their accumulation limits as individuals or as members of a business entity. The information collected would create a baseline of ownership to evaluate the trawl rationalization program during periodic reviews. The form, however, does not prequalify persons for quota shares nor guarantee they will qualify for quota shares under the program.

Rulemakings:

The PFMC is developing the trawl rationalization program through two amendments to the Groundfish FMP: (1) the Trawl Rationalization Program through Amendment 20; and (2) Intersector Allocation through Amendment 21. NOAA Fisheries plans on implementing these amendments, if approved, through three or more rulemakings: the ownership data rule, the Amendment 20 and 21 FMP review with main program components, and a follow up rule. The follow up rule may be necessary to further implement program details such as cost recovery.

Draft Schedule:

1. Ownership Data Rule – Fall/Winter 2009
2. Ownership Information Collected – Early 2010
3. Amendment 20 and 21 Draft Environmental Impact Statement Published – Fall/Winter 2009
4. Review of Amendment 20 and 21 and Rulemaking – Summer/Fall 2010

5. Testing of Tracking and Monitoring – Summer 2010
6. Applications, Initial Issuance, and Appeals – Fall/Winter 2010
7. Follow up Rule for further program details – 2011 and Beyond

Databases, Data Requests, and Corrections:

Potential participants of the trawl rationalization program should be aware that the agency intends to use landings data from the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission's PacFIN database and NOAA Fisheries Northwest Fisheries Science Center's Pacific whiting observer data from NORPAC to determine initial allocations of QS for the trawl rationalization program. Landings data from state fish tickets, as provided by the states to the PacFIN database, would be used to determine initial allocation of IFQ QS for the shore-based whiting and nonwhiting harvesters and for the shore-based whiting processors. Landings data from the NORPAC database would be used to determine initial allocation of at-sea QS for the whiting mothership catcher vessels. NOAA Fisheries intends to extract a copy of, or "freeze," the data in the databases for the purposes of initial allocation on the date the proposed rule proposing to implement Amendment 20 to the FMP is published in the Federal Register, likely summer 2010. This should allow time for NOAA Fisheries to compile the dataset and cross check the data for any errors. Extracting a copy of the data in the databases is necessary to hold them constant for use during qualification and initial issuance of the trawl rationalization program and to form an administrative record of the database at a given point in time. Following the extraction of a copy of the databases, any corrections to the copy of the database would be made with the agency through the processes set forth in future trawl rationalization rules. After the agency extracts a copy of the databases, the PacFIN and NORPAC databases will continue to exist and be updated through their normal processes, but such updates may not be used for initial allocations of QS.

NOAA Fisheries is urging industry to make efforts now to review their fish landing ticket and at-sea whiting data and resolve any concerns over their data. NOAA Fisheries will use these databases for initial issuance of quota shares. To make the process more efficient, potential participants should start to organize their records, check with the state or, for at-sea whiting, NOAA on their fish landing/delivery records during qualifying years, and resolve any data errors/discrepancies before NOAA Fisheries extracts information from these databases in the summer 2010.

If you have concerns over the accuracy of your data in the PacFIN database, contact the state in which you landed those fish to correct any errors. Any revisions to an entity's fish tickets would have to be approved by the state in order to be accepted. If you have concerns over the accuracy of your at-sea whiting data in the NORPAC database, contact NOAA Fisheries. Contact information is provided in the box on this page.

State contacts are as follows:

- Washington – Carol Turcotte
Carol.Turcotte@dfw.wa.gov
(360) 902-2253
- Oregon – John Seabourne
john.d.seabourne@state.or.us
(503) 947-6207
- California – Gerry Kobylinski
Gkobylin@dfg.ca.gov
(916) 323-1456

For concerns over the accuracy of NORPAC data, contact

- Janell Majewski
janell.majewski@noaa.gov
(206) 860-3293

NMFS urges potential QS owners to go directly to the source where fisheries data is entered in the database to get it corrected before NMFS extracts the data for initial issuance of QS.



We value your interest, questions, and comments.
Please feel free to contact us.

www.nmfs.noaa.gov

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