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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Parts 300 and 660

[Docket No. 261124-0011]

RIN 0648-BO46

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan; Amendment 38; 2027–28 Biennial Specifications and Management Measures

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This rule implements 2027–28 harvest specifications and management measures for groundfish caught in the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) seaward of Washington, Oregon, and California, consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (Groundfish FMP). This rule also includes regulations to implement amendment 38 to the Groundfish FMP, which removes rebuilding plan requirements for yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish. Lastly, this rule includes regulations that modify select fishery closures that apply to both groundfish and Pacific halibut.

DATES: Effective January 1, 2027.

ADDRESSES: This rule is accessible via the Internet at the Office of the Federal Register web site at *https://www.federalregister.gov/*. The Analysis prepared for this action, which includes an Environmental Assessment (EA) that addresses the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as well as analyses that address Presidential

Executive Order (E.O.) 12866, the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), and the statutory requirements of the MSA, is accessible via the NMFS West Coast Region website at: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/laws-policies/groundfish-actions-nepa-documents*. The current Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report for Pacific Coast groundfish, as well as the SAFE reports for previous years, are available from the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) website at *https://www.pcouncil.org/stock-assessments-star-reports-stat-reports-rebuilding-analyses-terms-of-reference/*. The SAFE will be updated to reflect any relevant changes from this action by January 1, 2027. Any in-text citation referencing an "Agenda Item" refers to Council briefing book materials, which are available at *https://www.pcouncil.org* (click the "+" icon next to "Council meetings" and then select the specific briefing book you wish to access). Any in-text citation referencing a peer-reviewed stock assessment is available on the Council's website at *https://www.pcouncil.org/stock-assessments-star-reports-stat-reports-rebuilding-analyses-terms-of-reference/groundfish-stock-assessment-documents/*. Last, the Council Analytical Document prepared to support the Council's final action is currently available at: *https://www.pcouncil.org/documents/2026/07/pacific-coast-groundfish-fishery-2027-28-harvest-specifications-and-management-measures.pdf/*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lynn Massey, Fishery Management Specialist, at 562-900-2060 or *lynn.massey@noaa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Harvest Specifications

This final rule sets 2027–28 harvest specifications and management measures for the 90+ groundfish stocks or management units which currently have annual catch limits (ACLs) or ACL contributions to stock complexes managed under the Groundfish FMP, except for Pacific whiting. Pacific whiting harvest specifications are established annually

through a separate bilateral process with Canada. The overfishing limits (OFLs), acceptable biological catches (ABCs), and ACLs are based on the best available biological and socioeconomic data, including projected biomass trends, information on assumed distribution of stock biomass, and revised technical methods used to calculate stock biomass. See tables 1a and 2a to part 660, subpart C in the regulatory text supporting this rule for the 2027-28 OFLs, ABCs, and ACLs for each stock or stock complex.

A detailed description of each stock and stock complex for which the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) establishes harvest specifications set through this rule can be found in the SAFE document posted on the Council's website at *https://www.pcouncil.org/stock-assessments-star-reports-stat-reports-rebuilding-analyses-terms-of-reference/safe-documents-4/*. A summary of how the 2027-28 harvest specifications were developed, including a description of off-the-top deductions for Tribal, research, incidental open access, and experimental fisheries, was provided in the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026) and is not repeated here. Additional information on the development of these harvest specifications is also provided in the Analysis and the Council Analytical Document (see **ADDRESSES**).

For most stocks, the Council recommended harvest specifications based on the default harvest control rule used in the prior biennium. The Council recommended deviating from the default harvest control rule for six stocks for the 2027-28 biennium (see table 1 below). The Council considered deviating from the default harvest control rule for chilipepper rockfish and yelloweye rockfish but ultimately recommended the default harvest control rule. Each of these changes was discussed in the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026) and that discussion is not repeated here.

Table 1 -- Changes to Harvest Control Rules for the 2027-28 Biennium

Stock	**Default Harvest Control Rule[a]**	**Alternative Harvest Control Rule[a]**

Canary rockfish[b]	ABC > ACL, P* 0.45 (40-10 rule)	ABC = ACL, P* 0.45, no 40-10 adjustment
Petrale sole	ABC = ACL, P* 0.45	Constant ABC = ACL 2,489 mt
Rougheye/blackspotted rockfish	ABC = ACL, P* 0.45	Constant ACL = 300 mt
Shortspine thornyhead[b]	ABC > ACL, P* 0.45 (40-10 rule)	Constant ABC = ACL 902 mt
Widow rockfish[c]	ABC = ACL, P* 0.45	SSC-recommended OFL – 1 mt
Yellowtail rockfish north of 40°10' North latitude (N lat.)[d]	ABC = ACL, P* 0.45	Phase-in

[a] The Default Harvest Control Rules are those that were used to set the ACLs in 2025 and 2026. The Alternative Harvest Controls rules are the changes for setting the ACLs in 2027 and 2028.
[b] The 40-10 adjustment applies where a precautionary reduction is warranted, per the Groundfish FMP at section 4.6.1. The 40-10 adjustment reduces the harvest rate to help the stock return to the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) level.
[c] The SSC recommended an OFL based on the yield associated with 40 percent unfished spawning biomass ($B_{40\%}$) as a justifiable proxy for the MSY, and thus the OFL, given that the stock is estimated to be above the $B_{40\%}$ reference point.
[d] A phase-in approach ramps down the ABC/ACL over the course of the biennium. Per the National Standard 1 guidelines (see 50 CFR 600.310(f)(2)(ii)(A)), Councils can develop and recommend to NMFS, ABC control rules that allow for changes in catch limits to be phased-in over time to help stabilize catch.

Table 2 compares the ACLs for major stocks and stock complexes for 2026 and 2027 with harvest specifications set under the Council's recommended harvest control rules.

Table 2 -- Current (2026) ACLs in metric tons (mt) and ACLs for the 2027 fishing year under the recommended harvest control rules. Bold indicates a change in ACL greater than 50 percent. N Lat. = North Latitude.

Species/Stock	Area	2026 ACL (mt)	2027 ACL (mt)	Percent Difference
Arrowtooth Flounder	Coastwide	9,227	7,947	-13.9
Big Skate	Coastwide	1,188	1,155	-2.8
Black Rockfish	Washington	241	240	-0.4
Black Rockfish	California	236	249	5.5
Bocaccio	S of 40°10' N lat.	1,668	2,288	37.2
Cabezon	California	155	150	-3.2
California quillback rockfish	**California**	**1.5**	**12**	**700**
California Scorpionfish	California	238	233	-2.1
Canary Rockfish	Coastwide	626	643	2.7

Chilipepper	S of 40°10' N lat.	2,623	2,986	13.8
Cowcod	S of 40°10' N lat.	75	74	-1.3
Darkblotched Rockfish	Coastwide	732	773	5.6
Dover Sole	Coastwide	42,457	38,573	-9.1
English Sole	**Coastwide**	**8,819**	**3,168**	**-64.1**
Lingcod	N of 40°10' N lat.	3,534	3,482	-1.5
Lingcod	S of 40°10' N lat.	773	789	2.1
Longnose Skate	Coastwide	1,579	1,546	-2.1
Longspine Thornyhead	Coastwide			--
Longspine Thornyhead	N of 34°27' N lat.	1,957	1,878	-4
Longspine Thornyhead	S of 34°27' N lat.	618	593	-4
Pacific Cod	Coastwide	1,600	1,600	0
Pacific Ocean Perch	N of 40°10' N lat.	3,220	3,123	-3
Pacific Spiny Dogfish	Coastwide	1,318	1,278	-3
Petrale Sole	Coastwide	2,489	2,489	0
Sablefish	Coastwide			--
Sablefish	**N of 36° N lat.**	**27,238**	**10,962**	**-59.8**
Sablefish	**S of 36° N lat.**	**7,460**	**3,002**	**-59.8**
Shortspine Thornyhead	Coastwide	897	902	0.6
Splitnose	**S of 40°10' N lat.**	**1,469**	**620**	**-57.8**
Starry Flounder	Coastwide	392	393	0.3
Widow Rockfish	Coastwide	10,392	6,238	-40
Yelloweye Rockfish	**Coastwide**	**56.6**	**113**	**99.6**
Yellowtail Rockfish	N of 40°10' N lat.	6,023	5,050	-16.2
Complexes				
Blue/Deacon/Black Rockfish	Oregon	428	448	4.7
Cabezon/Kelp Greenling	Washington	15	14	-6.7
Cabezon/Kelp Greenling	Oregon	174	174	0
Nearshore Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	86	85	-1.2
Nearshore Rockfish South	S of 40°10' N lat.	931	928	-0.3
Other Fish	Coastwide	223	223	0
Other Flatfish	Coastwide	7,144	6,577	-7.9
Shelf Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	1,316	1,342	2.0

Chilipepper rockfish		199	225	13.1
Shelf Rockfish South	S of 40°10' N lat.	1,455	1,456	0.1
Slope Rockfish North	**N of 40°10' N lat.**	1,460	1,089	-25.4
Rougheye/blackspotted Rockfish		**183**	**294**	**60.7**
Slope Rockfish South	**S of 40°10' N lat.**	690	688	-0.3
Rougheye/blackspotted Rockfish		**4**	**6**	**50**

II. Management Measures

This final rule revises management measures which are used to further allocate the ACLs to the various components of the fishery (*i.e.*, biennial fishery harvest guidelines (HGs) and set-asides) and management measures to control fishing. Management measures for the commercial fishery serve to modify fishing behavior during the fishing year to ensure catch does not exceed the ACL and include trip limits, time/area closures, size limits, and gear restrictions. Management measures for the recreational fisheries include bag limits, size limits, gear restrictions, fish dressing requirements, and time/area closures. Each of these changes was discussed in the proposed rule and that discussion is not repeated here.

A. Deductions from the ACLs

Before making allocations to the commercial and recreational components of groundfish fisheries, the Council recommends off-the-top deductions from the ACLs to account for anticipated mortality for certain types of activities, including: (1) harvest in Pacific Coast treaty Indian Tribal fisheries; (2) harvest in scientific research activities; (3) harvest in non-groundfish fisheries (incidental catch); and (4) harvest that occurs under exempted fishing permits (EFPs). All off-the-top deductions (except for Tribal off-the-top deductions) for individual stocks or stock complexes will be published in the SAFE as opposed to the Federal regulations, as off-the-top deductions are bycatch estimates and not formal catch limits. These deductions were discussed in detail in the

preamble to the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026) in section II. A. (Deductions from the ACLs) and I. (EFPs), and that discussion is not repeated here. Tribal off-the-top deductions can be found at § 660.50 in the regulatory text of this final rule.

B. Annual Catch Targets

As defined at 50 CFR 660.11, an annual catch target (ACT) is a management target set below the ACL that may be used as an accountability measure in cases where there is uncertainty in inseason catch monitoring to ensure against exceeding an ACL. Since the ACT is a target and not a limit, a stock-specific ACT can be used in lieu of HGs or set strategically to accomplish other management objectives. Sector-specific ACTs can also be specified to accomplish management objectives. For the 2027-28 biennium, NMFS is implementing ongoing ACTs for yelloweye rockfish in the non-trawl sectors (both commercial and recreational), copper rockfish in the recreational sector south of 34°27' N lat., and shortspine thornyhead in the commercial non-trawl sector north of 34°27' N lat. Further, NMFS is implementing new recreational sector ACTs for vermilion/sunset rockfish south of 40°10' N lat., California quillback rockfish, and lingcod south of 40°10' N lat. These ACTs were discussed in detail in the preamble to the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026) in section II. B. (Annual Catch Targets), and that discussion is not repeated here. These ACTs can be found in the footnotes to tables 1a and 2a to part 660, subpart C in the regulatory text of this final rule.

C. Biennial Fishery Allocations

The Council routinely recommends 2-year trawl and non-trawl allocations during the biennial specifications process for stocks without formal allocations (as defined in section 6.3.2 of the Groundfish FMP) or stocks where the long-term allocation is suspended because the stock is declared overfished. The 2-year trawl and non-trawl allocations, with the exception of sablefish north of 36° N lat., are based on the fishery

HG. The fishery HG is the tonnage that remains after subtracting the off-the-top deductions described in section III. A. entitled "Deductions from the ACLs," in this preamble. The trawl and non-trawl allocations and recreational HGs are designed to accommodate anticipated mortality in each sector as well as variability and uncertainty in those mortality estimates. Additional information on the Council's allocation framework and formal allocations can be found in section 6.3 of the Groundfish FMP and § 660.55 of the Federal regulations. These allocations were discussed in detail in the preamble to the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026) in section II. C. (Biennial Fishery Allocations), and that discussion is not repeated here. Allocations are detailed tables 1b, 1c, 2b, and 2c to part 660, subpart C, in the regulatory text of this final rule.

D. Harvest Guideline Sharing Agreements

For each biennium, the Council can consider HG sharing agreements for other stocks or stock complexes separate from the standard list of biennial allocations discussed in section III. C. of this preamble. These sharing agreements can be arrangements on how the HG is split between separate states, fishery sectors, or both. For the 2027-28 biennium, NMFS is implementing sharing agreements for: bocaccio south of 40°10' N lat., canary rockfish, cowcod, sablefish south of 36° N lat., the Slope Rockfish Complex south of 40°10' N lat., and blackgill rockfish. All sharing agreements are maintained from the 2025-26 biennium, with the exception of those for the Slope Rockfish Complex south of 40°10' N lat. and blackgill rockfish. NMFS is implementing a revised informal sharing agreement for blackgill rockfish, based on shifting sector needs. Informal sharing agreements were discussed in detail in the preamble to the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026) in section II. D. (Harvest Guideline Sharing Agreements), and that discussion is not repeated here. See the Council Analytical Document (see **ADDRESSES**) for more information on how these HG sharing agreements were chosen. Informal HG sharing agreements are not managed by NMFS except in the case of

a risk to the ACL. For this reason, informal HG sharing agreements are published in the SAFE each biennium (see **ADDRESSES**).

E. Modifications to Area-Based Management Measures

For the 2027-28 biennium, NMFS is implementing three categories of modifications to area-based management measures, including changes to the 20 fathom (fm; 37 meters (m)) depth contour off Washington, the 150-fm (274-m) Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) line around Lasuen Knoll off Southern California, and certain Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Areas (YRCAs) off Oregon and California. RCAs are large area closures intended to reduce the catch of a rockfish stock or stock complex by restricting fishing activity at specific depths. The boundaries for most RCAs are defined by straight lines connecting a series of latitude and longitude coordinates that approximate depth contours. These sets of coordinates, or lines, are not gear or fishery specific, but can be used in combination to define a closed area. NMFS then implements fishing restrictions for a specific gear and/or fishery within each defined area. YRCAs are specialized RCA closures intended to protect yelloweye rockfish. YRCA boundaries are not depth-based; their coordinates are chosen based on areas of known yelloweye rockfish occurrence. Similar to depth-based RCAs, YRCAs can be applicable to specific gears or fishery sectors.

First, NMFS is implementing modifications to select waypoints on the 20 fm (37 m) depth contour off Washington. Specifically, NMFS is removing the first waypoint listed at § 660.71(b)(1) and replacing it with two new waypoints. The specific latitude and longitude changes are included in the regulatory text of this final rule (see under § 660.71, Latitude/longitude coordinates defining the 10-fm (18-m) through 40-fm (73-m) depth contours). Second, NMFS is removing the 150-fm (274-m) depth contour around Lasuen Knoll off Southern California. In addition to removing the line, NMFS is modifying the Non-Trawl RCA Boundaries tables at Table 2a (South) to Part 660,

Subpart E and Table 3a (South) to Part 660, Subpart F, which would clarify that the 100 fm (183 m) to 150 fm (274 m) Non-Trawl RCA closure south of 34°27' N lat. around islands and banks only applies when both depth contours are defined in the Federal regulations. Third, NMFS is removing seven YRCAs from Federal regulations that have never been used, including Stonewall Bank Expansion 1 and Stonewall Bank Expansion 2 off Oregon, as well as all five YRCAs off California, including Point St. George, South Reef, Reading Rock, Northern Point Delgada, and Southern Point Delgada. This final rule removes the coordinates for all seven of these YRCAs from the Federal regulations at § 660.70, and all references to the YRCAs are removed from the applicable fishery management measure sections for the limited entry non-trawl (LENT), open access (OA), and recreational fisheries (*i.e.*, at §§ 660.230, 660.330, and 660.360). Stonewall Bank Expansions 1 and 2 also applied to the directed commercial Pacific halibut fishery; therefore, references to those two YRCAs are also removed from the Pacific halibut regulations at 50 CFR part 300. These area-based modifications were discussed in detail in the preamble to the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026) in section II. E. (Modifications to Area-Based Management Measures), and that discussion is not repeated here.

F. Limited Entry Trawl

The limited entry trawl fishery is made up of the shorebased individual fishing quota (IFQ) program (for whiting and non-whiting) and the at-sea whiting sectors (Mothership (MS) and catcher-processor (C/P)).

At-Sea Set Asides

For some stocks and stock complexes with a trawl allocation, an amount is first set aside for the at-sea whiting sector with the remainder of the trawl allocation going to the shorebased IFQ sector. This amount is designed to accommodate catch by the at-sea whiting sector when they are targeting Pacific whiting. Set-asides are not managed by

NMFS or the Council except in the case of a risk to the ACL. For this reason, at-sea set-asides are published in the SAFE each biennium (see **ADDRESSES**). This final rule adopts at-sea set asides as shown in section III.F. table 11 of the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026).

Incidental Trip Limits for IFQ Vessels

For vessels fishing in the Shorebased IFQ Program with either groundfish trawl gear or non-trawl gears, the following incidentally-caught stocks are managed with trip limits: big skate, blackgill rockfish, cabezon (California), California scorpionfish, longnose skate, the Nearshore rockfish complexes north and south of 40°10' N lat., the Washington black rockfish and Oregon black/blue/deacon rockfish complexes, the Oregon cabezon/kelp greenling complex, the Other fish complex, Pacific spiny dogfish, and Pacific whiting. For all these stocks, this rule maintains the same trip limits for these stocks for the start of the 2027-28 biennium as those in place in the 2025-26 biennium. Trip limits for the IFQ fishery can be found in Table 1b (North) and Table 1b (South) to part 660, subpart D in the regulatory text of this final rule. Future changes to trip limits would be considered a routine measure under 50 CFR 660.60(c) and may be implemented or adjusted, if determined necessary, through inseason action.

G. LENT and OA Non-trawl Fishery

Management measures for the LENT and OA non-trawl fisheries tend to be similar because the majority of participants in both fisheries use hook-and-line gear. Management measures, including area restrictions (*e.g.*, Non-Trawl RCA) and trip limits in these non-trawl fisheries, are generally designed to allow harvest of target stocks while keeping catch of overfished stocks low. LENT trip limits are specified in Table 2b (North) and Table 2b (South) to part 600 subpart E. OA trip limits are specified in Table 3b (North) and Table 3b (South) to part 660 subpart F. The full list of trip limits for the 2027-28 biennium are included below; the specific trip limits that are changing from

those in place at the end of 2026 are included in the regulatory text of this final rule at Table 2b (North) and Table 2b (South) to part 600 subpart E, and Table 3b (North) and Table 3b (South) to part 660 subpart F. In addition to trip limit modifications, NMFS is modifying the regulations at § 660.60(c)(1) to clarify that trip or sub-trip limits for any groundfish species (separately or in any combination) managed under the Groundfish FMP, including those species managed in a stock complex, may be adopted or revised inseason.

Table 3 -- 2027 Trip Limits for Limited Entry Non-Trawl Gear North of 40°10' N Lat.

Species	Trip Limit in pounds (lb)
Big skate	Unlimited
Black rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	8,000 lb/2 months
Cabezon (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	Unlimited
Cabezon/kelp greenling complex (Oregon)	Unlimited
California quillback rockfish (42° N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	300 lb/ 2 months
Canary rockfish	4,000 lb/2 months
Flatfish (includes dover sole, arrowtooth flounder, petrale sole, English sole, starry flounder)	20,000 lb/2 months
Lingcod (north of 42°00' N lat.)	11,000 lb/2 months
Lingcod (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	2,000 lb/2 months
Longnose skate	Unlimited
Longspine thornyheads	10,000 lb/2 months
Nearshore rockfish complex, Oregon black/blue/deacon rockfish, & Washington black rockfish (north of 42°00' N lat.)	5,000 lb/2 months, no more than 1,200 lb of which may be species other than black rockfish or blue/deacon rockfish. See § 660.230(e) for additional trip limits for Washington black rockfish.
Nearshore rockfish complex (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months
Other fish	Unlimited
Other flatfish complex	20,000 lb/2 months
Pacific cod	1,000 lb/2 months
Pacific ocean perch	3,600 lb/2 months
Pacific Spiny Dogfish	Periods 1–2: 200,000 lb/2 months Period 3: 150,000 lb/2 months Periods 4–6: 100,000 lb/2 months

Pacific whiting	10,000 lb per trip
Sablefish	5,500 lb/week not to exceed 11,000 lb/2 months
Shelf rockfish complex	8,000 lbs./2 months, of which no more than 300 lb may be vermilion/sunset rockfish
Shortspine thornyhead	3,000 lb/2 months
Slope rockfish complex & darkblotched rockfish	8,000 lb/2 months
Widow rockfish	12,000 lb/2 months
Yelloweye rockfish	75 lb/2 months
Yellowtail rockfish	7,000 lb/2 months

Table 4 -- 2027 Trip Limits for Limited Entry Non-Trawl Gear South of 40°10' N Lat.

Species	Trip Limit
Big skate	Unlimited
Bocaccio	8,000 lb/2 months
Bronzespotted rockfish	CLOSED
Cabezon	Unlimited
California quillback rockfish	300 lb/ 2 months
California scorpionfish	3,500 lb/2 months
Canary rockfish	4,000 lb/2 months
Chilipepper rockfish	15,000 lb/2 months
Cowcod	75 lb/2 months
Flatfish (includes dover sole, arrowtooth flounder, petrale sole, English sole, starry flounder)	20,000 lb/2 months
Lingcod	1,600 lb/2 months
Longnose skate	Unlimited
Longspine thornyhead	10,000 lb/2 months
Nearshore rockfish complexes	
Shallow nearshore rockfish (south of 40°10' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months
Deeper nearshore rockfish complex (40°10' N lat.-34°27' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months
Deeper nearshore rockfish complex (south of 34°27' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months, of which no more than 75 lb may be copper rockfish
Other fish	Unlimited
Other flatfish complex	20,000 lb/2 months
Pacific cod	1,000 lb/2 months
Pacific spiny dogfish	Periods 1-2: 200,000 lb/2 months Period 3: 150,000 lb/2 months

	Periods 4-6: 100,000 lb/2 months
Pacific whiting	10,000 lb per trip
Sablefish (40°10' N lat.-36° N lat.)	5,500 lb/week not to exceed 11,000 lb/2 months
Sablefish (south of 36° N lat.)	3,000 lb/week
Shelf rockfish complex (40°10' N lat.-34°27' N lat.); excludes bronzespotted rockfish	8,000 lb per 2 months, of which no more than 500 lb may be vermilion/sunset rockfish
Shelf rockfish complex (south of 34°27' N lat.); excludes bronzespotted rockfish	5,000 lb per 2 months, of which no more than 3,000 lb may be vermilion/sunset rockfish
Shortspine thornyhead (40°10' N lat.-34°27' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months
Shortspine thornyhead (south of 34°27' N lat.)	5,000 lb/2 months
Slope rockfish complex & darkblotched rockfish	40,000 lb/2 months, of which no more than 6,000 lb may be blackgill rockfish
Splitnose rockfish	40,000 lb/2 months
Widow rockfish	24,000 lb/2 months
Yelloweye rockfish	75 lb/2 months

Table 5 -- 2027 Trip Limits for Open Access North of 40°10' N Lat.

Species	Trip Limit
Big skate	Unlimited
Black rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	8,000 lb/2 months
Cabezon (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	Unlimited
Cabezon/kelp greenling complex (Oregon)	Unlimited
California quillback rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	300 lb/ 2 months
Canary rockfish	2,000 lb/2 months
Flatfish (includes dover sole, arrowtooth flounder, petrale sole, English sole, starry flounder)	10,000 lb/2 months
Lingcod (north of 42°00' N lat.)	9,000 lb/2 months
Lingcod (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	2,000 lb/2 months
Longnose skate	Unlimited
Longspine thornyheads	100 lb/2 months
Nearshore rockfish complex, Oregon black/blue/deacon rockfish, & Washington black rockfish (north of 42°00' N lat.)	5,000 lb/2 months no more than 1,200 lb of which may be species other than black rockfish or blue/deacon rockfish
	See § 660.330(e) for additional trip limits for Washington black rockfish

Nearshore rockfish complex (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months
Other fish	Unlimited
Other flatfish complex	10,000 lb/2 months
Pacific cod	1,000 lb/2 months
Pacific ocean perch	200 lb/2 months
Pacific Spiny Dogfish	Periods 1-2: 200,000 lb/2 months
Pacific whiting	600 lb/2 months
Sablefish	4,000 lb/week not to exceed 8,000 lb/2 months
Shelf rockfish complex	6,400 lbs./2 months, of which no more than 300 lb may be vermilion/sunset rockfish
Shortspine thornyhead	100 lb/2 months
Slope rockfish complex & darkblotched rockfish	4,000 lb/2 months
Widow rockfish	8,000 lb/2 months
Yelloweye rockfish	50 lb/2 months
Yellowtail rockfish	5,000 lb/2 months
Salmon Troll	See § 660.334(b)(1)
Pink Shrimp non-groundfish trawl	See § 660.333(g) and (h)

Table 6 -- 2027 Trip Limits for Open Access South of 40°10' N Lat.

Species	Trip Limit
Big skate	Unlimited
Bocaccio	6,000 lb/2 months
Bronzespotted rockfish	CLOSED
Cabezon	Unlimited
California quillback rockfish	300 lb/ 2 months
California scorpionfish	3,500 lb/2 months
Canary rockfish	2,000 lb/2 months
Chilipepper rockfish	9,000 lb/2 months
Cowcod	50 lb/2 months
Flatfish (includes dover sole, arrowtooth flounder, petrale sole, English sole, starry flounder)	10,000 lb/2 months
Lingcod	1,600 lb/2 months
Longnose skate	Unlimited
Longspine thornyhead (40°10' to 34°27' N lat.)	100 lb/2 months
Nearshore rockfish complexes	
Shallow nearshore rockfish (south of 40°10' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months
Deeper nearshore rockfish complex (40°10' N lat.-34°27’ N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months
Deeper nearshore rockfish complex (south of 34°27' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months, of which no more than 75 lb may be copper rockfish

Other fish	Unlimited
Other flatfish complex	10,000 lb/2 months
Pacific cod	1,000 lb/2 months
Pacific spiny dogfish	Periods 1-2: 200,000 lb/2 months Period 3: 150,000 lb/2 months Periods 4-6: 100,000 lb/2 months
Pacific whiting	600 lb 2 months
Sablefish (40°10' N lat.-36° N lat.)	4,000 lb/week not to exceed 8,000 lb/2 months
Sablefish (south of 36° N lat.)	2,500 lb/week not to exceed 7,500 lb/ 2months
Shelf rockfish complex (40°10' N lat.-34°27' N lat.); excludes bronzespotted rockfish	4,000 lb per 2 months, of which no more than 300 lb may be vermilion/sunset rockfish
Shelf rockfish complex (south of 34°27' N lat.); excludes bronzespotted rockfish	3,000 lb per 2 months, of which no more than 900 lb may be vermilion/sunset rockfish
Shortspine thornyhead (40°10' N lat.-34°27' N lat.)	100 lb/2 months
Shortspine thornyhead and longspine thornyhead (south of 34°27' N lat.)	100 lb/day, no more than 1,000 lb/2 months for all periods
Slope rockfish complex & darkblotched rockfish	10,000 lb/2 months, of which no more than 2,500 lb may be blackgill rockfish
Splitnose rockfish	400 lb/2 months
Widow rockfish	16,000 lb/2 months
Yelloweye rockfish	50 lb/2 months
Salmon Troll	See § 660.334(b)(2)
Ridgeback Prawn, California halibut, and sea cucumber	See § 660.333(e) and (f)

Primary Sablefish Tier Limits

The primary sablefish fishery tier program is a limited access privilege program set up under amendment 14 to Groundfish FMP (66 FR 41152, August 7, 2001). Under amendment 14, as set out in § 660.231, the permit holder of a sablefish-endorsed permit receives a tier limit, which is an annual share of the sablefish catch allocation to this sector. NMFS sets three different tier limits through the biennial harvest specifications and management measures process, and up to three permits may be stacked at one time on a vessel participating in the fishery. Stacked tier limits are combined to provide a cumulative catch limit for that vessel. After vessels have caught their full tier limits, they are allowed to move into other fisheries for sablefish, specifically the LENT or OA trip

limit fishery, or fisheries for other species. The tier limits for 2027 are as follows: Tier 1 at 93,770 lb (42,533 kg), Tier 2 at 42,623 lb (19,333 kg), and Tier 3 at 24,356 lb (11,047 kg). The tier limits for 2028 are as follows: Tier 1 at 101,490 lb (46,030 kg), Tier 2 at 46,132 lb (20,923 kg), and Tier 3 at 26,361 lb (11,956 kg).

H. Recreational Fisheries

Management measures for the recreational fisheries typically include depth restrictions and bag limits to constrain catch within the recreational HGs for each stock. These measures are designed to limit catch of overfished stocks found in the waters adjacent to each state while allowing target fishing opportunities in their particular recreational fisheries. Washington, Oregon, and California each proposed, and NMFS is implementing, different combinations of seasons, bag limits, area closures, and size limits for stocks targeted in recreational fisheries, as described in section III. H. (Recreational Fisheries) of the proposed rule. This final rule would set these measures for recreational fisheries occurring in the EEZ. Each state, respectively, typically sets measures for recreational fisheries in State waters. Changes to management measures for recreational fisheries off the coasts of Washington, Oregon and California can be found in § 660.360 of the regulatory text of this final rule.

I. Exempted Fishing Permits

Issuing EFPs is authorized by regulations implementing the MSA at 50 CFR 600.745, which state that EFPs may be used to authorize fishing activities that would otherwise be prohibited. The Council routinely considers EFP applications concurrently with the biennial harvest specifications and management process because expected catch under most EFP projects is accounted for via off-the-top deductions from ACLs. However, both EFP applications recommended by the Council for 2027-28 do not request off-the-top deductions from ACLs and plan to account for their catch within existing fishery allocations. All of the EFP applications for 2027-28 are renewals from previous

biennia. A summary of each EFP application is provided in section II. I. (Exempted Fishing Permits) of the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026). NMFS intends to issue permits for each EFP project as proposed. The titles of the EFP applications are "Groundfish EFP Proposal – Year-round Coastwide Midwater Rockfish EFP: Monitoring and Minimizing Salmon Bycatch When Targeting Rockfish in the Shorebased IFQ Fishery, 2027" (commonly referred to as the Trawl Gear EFP) and "California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2027-28 Exempted Fishing Permit Application" (commonly referred to as the CDFW EFP).

J. Amendment 38 Implementing Regulations

Amendment 38 to the Groundfish FMP was approved by the Secretary on October 16, 2026. In accordance with the approved FMP changes, this final rule modifies the regulations at § 660.40 to remove the rebuilding plans for yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish. NMFS no longer categorizes these species as prohibited species, meaning the relevant sector-specific management measure sections at §§ 660.230 (LENT), 660.330 (OA), and 660.360 (Recreational) can now allow retention of these species via the inclusion of commercial trip limits or recreational bag limits.

III. Comments and Responses

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for amendment 38 was published on July 21, 2026 (91 FR 45764), and open for comment until September 19, 2026. NMFS received five unique comments opposing the FMP changes proposed in the NOA and one comment seeking procedural clarification on the public comment process.

The proposed rule was published on September 22, 2026 (91 FR 60238), and open for public comment until October 22, 2026. NMFS received a total of seven comments, including one duplicate comment that was also submitted on the NOA for amendment 38. Of the other comments, one comment supported the proposed rule (from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)), one comment was a mix of

support and opposition, two comments sought additional clarification regarding NMFS' decisions on harvest specifications, and two comments opposed the proposed rule. Except for the comment from CDFW, all comment letters were from individuals.

NMFS did not make any modifications to the FMP amendment in response to public comments on the NOA. NMFS made technical corrections to the proposed rule in response to the public comment from CDFW. No other changes were made to the proposed rule in response to written public comments. All public comments pertaining to the proposed changes to the Groundfish FMP and to the groundfish harvest specification and management measures described in the NOA and the proposed rule are summarized and addressed below.

Comments on the NOA

Comment 1: Several commenters critiqued the use of the 40 percent unfished biomass (*i.e.*, $B_{40\%}$) threshold used to declare yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish rebuilt. The arguments regarding the $B_{40\%}$, threshold included: (1) it was not adequately identified or explained in the NOA as the rebuilding threshold for either stock; and (2) the stocks' current percentages of unfished biomass, particularly yelloweye rockfish's at $B_{40.1\%}$, are not sufficiently above the $B_{40\%}$ threshold to allow increased catch limits without an unacceptable risk of overfishing in violation of National Standard 1.

Response 1: The Groundfish FMP adequately identifies and explains the overfished and rebuilding thresholds used by NMFS, the Council, and the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to manage the harvest of Pacific Coast groundfish consistent with the MSA and its National Standards. Amendment 11 to the Groundfish FMP established a default overfished threshold equal to 25 percent of the unexploited female spawning output (B_0), or 50 percent of B_{MSY}, if known. By definition, groundfish stocks falling below that level were designated to be in an overfished state. To reduce the likelihood that stocks would decline to that point, the Council set a policy that

specifies a precautionary threshold equivalent to 40 percent of B_0. Stocks below the $B_{40\%}$ threshold are considered rebuilding and subject to a rebuilding plan. Stocks above the $B_{40\%}$ threshold are considered rebuilt. The Council's policy further requires that the ACL, when expressed as a fraction of the allowable biological catch, be progressively reduced at stock sizes less than $B_{40\%}$. Theoretical results support the view that a robust biomass-based harvesting strategy for most rockfish would be to maintain stock size at about 40% of the unfished level (Clark 1991, 2002; refer to the Groundfish FMP for citations at *https://www.pcouncil.org*). In the absence of a credible estimate of B_{MSY}, which can be very difficult to estimate (MacCall and Ralston 2002; refer to the Groundfish FMP for citations at *https://www.pcouncil.org*), $B_{40\%}$ is a suitable proxy to use as a rebuilding target for most groundfish. There is no additional requirement for a stock's biomass to be a particular amount above the $B_{40\%}$ threshold to be considered rebuilt. NMFS therefore appropriately relied on the $B_{40\%}$ threshold to declare yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish rebuilt.

Additionally, the NOA states that the stock assessments for both yelloweye rockfish and the California stock of quillback rockfish show that the stocks are above 40 percent unfished biomass, which constitutes the rebuilt threshold under the Groundfish FMP. Precise biomass estimates that correspond to specific levels of unfished biomass for any stock are typically not reported in **Federal Register** notices and are instead adopted by reference via the applicable stock assessments. NMFS adopted both the yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish stock assessments by reference in the NOA.

Comment 2: A commenter opposed the decision to declare yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish rebuilt, claiming that the change in status would jeopardize the conservation progress made for these stocks.

Response 2: Amendment 38 does not change harvest levels or the timing and location of fishing, nor does it revise the goals and objectives or the management frameworks of the Groundfish FMP. As described under response 1, both yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish have reached biomass levels that can support fishing. Under the existing Groundfish FMP framework, the amount of allowable fishing for this biennium and in the future will be set according to the stocks' then-current estimate of biomass. When setting harvest specifications for these stocks, NMFS will account for both scientific uncertainty in the stock assessments and management uncertainty in the fishery. As described in Chapter 4 of the Groundfish FMP, ABCs are set at a level lower than the OFL to account for scientific uncertainty in the stock assessments, and ACLs may be set equal to the ABC, or lower than the ABC, to account for management uncertainty in the fishery. Therefore, harvest levels will be set at sustainable levels that allow limited mortality while preventing overfishing.

Comment 3: One commenter expressed concern about the opportunity for public comment on amendment 38, specifically (1) requesting an explanation regarding what practical effect public comment on the amendment could have on the underlying rebuilt determinations since NMFS has already changed the official status of both stocks and (2) asking whether there would be a meaningful opportunity to comment on the proposed rule to implement amendment 38.

Response 3: NMFS makes stock status determinations, applying the best scientific information available (BSIA), consistent with the MSA and its National Standards. NMFS properly exercised this authority in the context of determining yelloweye rockfish and the California stock of quillback rockfish rebuilt in 2026 and 2025, respectively, and appropriately provided the opportunity for public comment during those decision-making processes. NMFS' rebuilt stock status determinations for both stocks were final agency decisions that resulted from longer processes, which included public comment at several

junctures, including during multiple Council meetings. The public expressed concerns regarding the underlying assessments, particularly about the quillback rockfish assessment, which were addressed through the review and evaluation processes, including during SSC reviews and a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel evaluation of the quillback rockfish assessment in July 2025. NMFS also solicited public comment on both amendment 38, as well as on the proposed rule to implement amendment 38, which was published in the **Federal Register** on September 22, 2026 (91 FR 60238) with a 30-day comment period that ended on October 22, 2026.

Additionally, although NMFS declared both stocks rebuilt already based on the BSIA, the previous Groundfish FMP language and the regulations governing the harvest of both stocks remain in effect until the effective date of this final rule containing the amendment's implementing regulations. Accordingly, NMFS has considered public comment on both the proposed FMP changes and the corresponding regulatory changes to implement amendment 38 before publishing this final rule to implement those proposed changes.

Comment 4: A commenter generally opposed fishing, including for the rebuilt groundfish stocks, and claimed fish feel pain because of fishing. The commenter also generally opposed fishing due to the harm the commenter argued it causes to marine mammals and because of the overarching threat of overfishing. The commenter specifically cited to concerns regarding the overfishing of Atlantic wolffish.

Response 4: The MSA requires NMFS to regulate fishing in Federal waters according to the standards and procedures set out in the statute, its implementing regulations, and the relevant FMP. NMFS sets harvest specifications for managed stocks at levels that prevent overfishing (see additional explanation under response 2), and the amount of fishing that will be allowed for yelloweye rockfish, the California stock of quillback rockfish, and the other species managed under the Groundfish FMP, in the

2027-28 biennium and in the future, will be set according to this standard. Concerns regarding Atlantic wolffish are beyond the scope of this proposed rule, as Atlantic wolffish is not managed under the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP. Finally, concerns regarding the potential impacts of West Coast groundfish fishing on marine mammals are evaluated on an action-by-action basis, consistent with the requirements of the NEPA, the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), for listed species.

The potential adverse impacts to marine mammals that could result from fishing activities covered in this final rule are discussed in the EA prepared for this action, in which NMFS concluded that the harvest specifications and management measures for the 2027-28 biennium are not anticipated to have significant environmental effects. Additionally, the on-going operation of the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery under the Groundfish FMP is in compliance with ESA and MMPA requirements. On November 22, 2024, NMFS issued a biological opinion pursuant to the ESA analyzing the effects of ongoing implementation of the Groundfish FMP on the endangered Central America distinct population segment (DPS) and threatened Mexico DPS of humpback whales. The opinion concluded that continued implementation of the FMP is likely to adversely affect ESA-listed humpback whales, but it is unlikely to jeopardize the species or adversely affect their critical habitat. This action does not modify the action analyzed in the November 2024 opinion in a manner that may affect the covered species or their critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered. Regarding the MMPA, West Coast (WA/OR/CA) pot fisheries for sablefish are considered Category II fisheries under the statute's List of Fisheries, indicating occasional interactions with marine mammals. All other West Coast groundfish fisheries, including the trawl fishery, are considered Category III fisheries under the MMPA, indicating a remote likelihood of, or no known serious injuries or mortalities to, marine mammals. NMFS issued a permit

under MMPA section 101(a)(5)(E) for the West Coast pot fisheries for sablefish on December 4, 2024 (89 FR 96230). NMFS also established the West Coast Take Reduction Team in November 2025 (90 FR 49237, November 4, 2025). The Team developed and submitted to NMFS consensus recommendations regarding sablefish fishery measures for reducing mortality and serious injury to humpback whales, and research and monitoring priorities. NMFS is considering these recommendations consistent with MMPA section 118.

Comment 5: Though one commenter expressed support for updating the FMP language promptly when stocks are rebuilt, at least two commenters on the NOA asserted that NMFS did not sufficiently explain the substance of the scientific review that justified the reversal of the California stock of quillback rockfish's status based on the 2025 benchmark assessment as compared to its 2021 update stock assessment. The commenters argued that declaring a slow-growing, long-lived species rebuilt to 43.5 percent just 24 months after an overfished declaration is not using the "best science." Accordingly, the commenters claimed that the 2025 rebuilt status determination violates National Standard 2 because it is not based on the BSIA.

Response 5: See response 1 for an explanation on the use of 40 percent unfished biomass for a rebuilt threshold. With regard to the most recent stock assessment for California quillback rockfish being deemed the BSIA, the 2025 benchmark assessment, indicating the stock is above target, was reviewed by a STAR Panel chaired by an SSC member in June 2025 and endorsed by the SSC as BSIA in September 2025. The Northwest Fishery Science Center and the Southwest Fishery Science Center also concluded that the assessment met the requirements of National Standard 2 and represented BSIA in September 2025, and NMFS issued its rebuilt stock status determination on September 16, 2025.

NMFS specifically acknowledged the differences between the 2025 benchmark stock assessment for the California stock of quillback rockfish and the 2021 assessment in reaching its 2025 rebuilt determination. The 2025 stock status determination explained that the 2025 California quillback rockfish stock assessment featured newly available, localized data that considerably revised NMFS' past and current perception of the stock. A large number of age and biological samples that provided California-specific information on the stock were collected since the 2021 assessment. This new information, particularly regarding growth, updated NMFS' understanding of quillback dynamics, leading to higher estimates of population size and stock status. Additionally, a new assumption for natural mortality was used based on a new synthesis of available age data from California to Alaska, which led to a slightly more optimistic view of population size and stock status relative to the 2021 assessment. Overall, in its 2025 stock status determination NMFS explained that the 2025 benchmark assessment indicated that the stock had never been overfished and was currently above the target biomass level for rebuilding.

NMFS adopted the California quillback rockfish stock assessment by reference in the NOA. Furthermore, the data sources used for this assessment are common to those used for West Coast stock assessments and were considered along with other model elements during the STAR Panel review. Accordingly, based on the extensive scientific review of the 2025 benchmark assessment, and consistent with its authority under the MSA, NMFS properly determined that the assessment constituted the BSIA for determining the stock status of California quillback rockfish, and properly determined the stock rebuilt in September 2025, consistent with National Standard 2.

Comment 6: A commenter made a series of claims regarding the sufficiency of the NEPA evaluation for NMFS' rebuilt stock status determinations. Specifically, the commenter argued that NMFS violated NEPA (1) by failing to prepare an Environmental

Impact Statement (EIS), (2) by improperly segmenting the EA prepared for amendment 38 from the analysis for the 2027-28 harvest specifications and management measures action to avoid a finding of significance, (3) because the underlying analysis relied too heavily on historical recruitment averages and failed to evaluate environmental baseline shifts in the stocks, and (4) because it failed to account for the fact that yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish function as "choke species" constraining bottom trawl effort, and thus failed to evaluate how their rebuilt status "could unleash suppressed commercial trawl effort across the West Coast."

Response 6: NEPA requires Federal agencies to take a hard look at the expected environmental consequences of their actions prior to making a final decision on a Federal action. To meet its NEPA obligations for this action, NMFS drafted an EA. The draft EA, "Amendment 38 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, 2027-28 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Environmental Assessment, Regulatory Impact Review, Regulatory Flexibility Act Analysis, and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Analysis," was published alongside the NOA for amendment 38 in July 2026 and the EA was finalized in September 2026. The EA analyzes the effects anticipated from setting harvest specifications and management measures for the 2027-28 groundfish fisheries managed under the Groundfish FMP and provides that the proposed action includes amendment 38 to the Groundfish FMP, which, if adopted, would remove the rebuilding plans for yelloweye rockfish and the California stock of quillback rockfish.

As described in section 1.3, the EA was tiered from the EIS titled "Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2015-16 and Bienniums Thereafter, Final Environmental Impact Statement," which was incorporated by reference as the "2015 EIS" throughout the EA. The 2015 EIS analyzed the anticipated impacts from the general process of adopting and adjusting regulations for managing the groundfish fishery

(including harvest specifications and management measures) as part of an ongoing, adaptive process. Changes in the type and intensity of environmental impacts resulting from biennial specifications and management measures tend not to differ substantially from one period to the next. Therefore, it is appropriate for NMFS to prepare an EA for these biennial actions that considers and evaluates potential impacts from the adjustments to routine harvest specifications and management measures that are proposed in a particular biennium based on new stock assessments and other BSIA. NMFS prepared an EA for the 2027-28 biennium consistent with that practice and through that evaluation determined that the Proposed Action (which includes amendment 38) would not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, NMFS properly determined that preparation of an EIS is not required.

Additionally, NMFS did not unlawfully segment its analysis of amendment 38 and the proposed 2027-28 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures. Although NMFS published two separate notices in the **Federal Register** for amendment 38 (91 FR 45764, July 21, 2026) and the proposed rule for the 2027-28 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026), which includes implementing regulations for amendment 38, NMFS analyzed the actions together as component parts of the proposed action evaluated in its EA. This is a standard regulatory and NEPA process for fishery actions that include both an FMP amendment and corresponding regulatory changes that implement an FMP amendment, which have different timeline requirements under the MSA and the Administrative Procedure Act (*e.g.*, FMP amendments must be out for public comment for 60 days, whereas proposed regulations need be out for public comment for only 30 days).

Next, NMFS rejects the claim that the EA is insufficient under NEPA because the underlying stock assessments relied too heavily on historical recruitment averages and lacked an evaluation of environmental baseline shifts or future reproductive success.

First, the commenter's critique is focused on the stock assessments themselves not NMFS' NEPA analysis. As described in the responses above, the most recent stock assessments for yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish were subject to a thorough MSA review and endorsed as BSIA by the SSC, the NWFSC, and the SWFSC. Both assessments estimate recruitment deviations annually, allowing variation, and stock status is based on the last year in the model. Future recruitment does not affect current stock status, and, therefore, the stock assessments appropriately relied on available annually varying recruitment estimates generated to date. Both stock assessments also included decision tables applying alternative states of nature based on natural mortality. These tables were analyzed by the SSC when adopting the assessments and are used by NMFS when considering the range of uncertainties the assessments cover. In short, both assessments properly considered the available scientific information on environmental baseline, which the SSC and others considered in their recommendations on BSIA. Accordingly, the draft EA's reliance on the underlying assessments was appropriate and fully consistent with NMFS' NEPA requirements.

Finally, the EA did not rely on unverified discard mortality rates and fail to consider the increase in multi-species effort that may follow increased catch limits for these rebuilt "choke species." First, the current discard mortality rates are based on scientific research that compiled data from multiple peer-reviewed studies (see Agenda Item H.4.a Supplemental GMT Report 1 November 2022). These rates are applied to recreational and commercial hook-and-line data only and do not apply to trawl gear (*e.g.*, all rockfish discards are assumed dead). Further, the groundfish expanded multiyear mortality report will continue to account for all landed and discard mortality based on fish tickets and data from on-board observers to determine total mortality for management use. The EA's impacts analysis assumes full attainment of all 2027-28 groundfish catch limits. Accordingly, regardless of whether there may be an increase in

multi-species catch due to increased opportunity to land yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish, catch of all groundfish species remains constrained by species-specific ACLs. Therefore, the potential impacts of any potential increased catch resulting from the new, rebuilt stock status determinations are already accounted for and analyzed in the EA.

Comments on the Proposed Rule

Comment 7: One commenter opposed the selection of the default harvest control rule to set harvest specifications for yelloweye rockfish. Instead, the commenter recommended that NMFS adopt the alternative harvest control rule considered for yelloweye rockfish during the Council process, which would yield a lower ACL than under the default harvest control rule. The commenter expressed the opinion that the default harvest control rule would provide a more conservative approach to increased fishing pressure, which they believe is warranted given the stock's vulnerability to climate change.

Response 7: The 2025 stock assessment for yelloweye rockfish, which was adopted as the BSIA for informing the selection of harvest specifications by the SSC and NMFS, indicates that the biomass of yelloweye rockfish is at $B_{40.1\%}$. Stocks above the $B_{40\%}$ threshold are considered rebuilt and therefore at biomass levels that can sustain fishing. The 2027 and 2028 ABCs endorsed by the SSC for yelloweye rockfish are appropriately reduced from the OFL to account for scientific uncertainty in the stock assessment. In addition to this OFL-ABC buffer included in the 2027-28 harvest specifications for yelloweye rockfish, there are sector-specific ACTs for the stock set below the ACL (which is set equal to the ABC) to track mortality of yelloweye rockfish catch inseason (see section II. B. of the preamble of this final rule). These sector-specific ACTs serve as an additional accountability measure to ensure against exceeding the ACL. Therefore, the 2027-28 harvest specifications under the default harvest control rule,

which were recommended by the Council's SSC, combined with the additional accountability measures intended to keep catch at or below the ACLs, will adequately prevent overfishing of the stock. Further, if a need to reduce mortality arises for any reason during the biennium, the Council and NMFS may take inseason action to reduce harvest to prevent overfishing or as may be otherwise appropriate.

Comment 8: One commenter submitted four requests for clarification on NMFS' yelloweye rockfish decision and future tracking of yelloweye rockfish stock status and mortality. The commenter did not express support or opposition to the proposed rule, but rather identified what the commenter considered to be "tradeoffs" and "open questions" regarding NMFS' proposal to provide greater fishing access to yelloweye rockfish following its rebuilt determination. The commenter's requests are as follows: "(1) Please provide or link a connected account of the yelloweye decision with the final rule. Explain how the agency intends to judge whether the changes reduce regulatory discards while managing total fishing mortality. Identify the existing information it intends to use, including how changes in targeting will be considered, what it expects to assess between stock assessments, and material limitations; (2) Please identify the first public review of available results after the 2027 yelloweye season. Name the anticipated meeting, report, or interval from implementation, the responsible body, and where the public account will appear; (3) At that review, please publish what the results support doing next. A brief account could explain the basis for retaining the arrangements, allowing further access, or making a targeted correction, including remaining uncertainty. An existing report or specifications analysis could carry it; and (4) Please correct or clarify Table 1 [in the proposed rule] so the selected yelloweye approach is clear. Its footnote describes the alternative controls as proposed changes and the yelloweye alternative is 85 metric tons (mt), while the narrative and operative tables propose 113 mt in both years. [1, pp. 60242, 60244, 60274, and 60276]".

Response 8: See response 1 above and the responses to comments on the NOA for information on NMFS' determination that the yelloweye rockfish stock is rebuilt and therefore at a biomass level that can sustain fishing. NMFS' final decision on the harvest control rule for yelloweye rockfish is explained in section I of the preamble in this final rule. The comparison between the default and alternative harvest control rules considered for use in the 2027-28 biennium is provided in section II. C. of the preamble to the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026). NMFS' final decisions on the resulting harvest specifications for yelloweye rockfish are provided in tables 1a and 2a to part 660, subpart C, in the regulatory text of this final rule for the 2027 and 2028 fishing years, respectively.

Regarding the tracking and public availability of information on yelloweye rockfish discards and mortality, fishery landings data by species is tracked inseason and is accessible to the public via the Pacific Fisheries Information Network online database (PacFIN; see *https://pacfin.psmfc.org/*). Discard mortality is tracked by the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP). WCGOP publishes this information in an annual report called the Groundfish Expanded Mortality Multiyear (GEMM) report. The GEMM report is published in the briefing book at the September Council meeting each year and reports out on discard data from the previous fishing year. Using PacFIN, NMFS and the Council will track future fishery landings inseason (see next paragraph for additional detail) and will determine trends in discard mortality following review of the GEMM in September 2027. Overall, discard mortality is expected to decrease in 2027, given that the small trip limits and bag limits available to the commercial non-trawl and recreational sectors are expected to reduce regulatory discards.

The Council's Groundfish Management Team (GMT) has closely monitored yelloweye rockfish mortality during the rebuilding period. Most recently, this information has been recorded via a scorecard that was included in each inseason report at every

Council meeting throughout the year (*i.e.*, every March, April, June, September, and November). Starting in 2027, the GMT will shift their scorecard from documenting projected discard mortality to documenting mortality from current fishery landings. This approach is expected to decrease uncertainty in the overall mortality of yelloweye rockfish throughout the fishing year. Specifically, landings information is expected to more accurately reflect real-time yelloweye rockfish mortality, as landings information is available much sooner than discard data, which is not available until the September Council meeting of the following fishing year (*e.g.*, discard data for 2026 would not be available until September 2027). The first update on yelloweye rockfish mortality following the effective date of this final rule will be available at the March 2027 Council meeting, which is approximately two and half months after the start of the 2027 fishing year and implementation of the 2027 ACL. Additional updates will be provided at subsequent Council meetings. If landings for yelloweye rockfish are approaching a sector-specific ACT or the overall ACL, the GMT would discuss a potential inseason action for trip or bag limit reductions at the meeting in which this new information is reviewed.

Regarding the 85 mt value contained in table 1 of the proposed rule, table 1 in section II. C. of the preamble to the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026) provided a full list of the alternative harvest control rules considered by the Council and NMFS, regardless of whether those alternative harvest control rules were recommended for implementation in the 2027-28 biennium by the Council. Table 1 in section I of the preamble of this final rule displays only the six alternative harvest control rules recommended by the Council and implemented by NMFS for the 2027-28 biennium. NMFS notes below table 1 in this final rule that, in accordance with the Council's recommendations, the default harvest control rules are being implemented for chilipepper rockfish and yelloweye rockfish.

Comment 9: One commenter expressed support for the rebuilt declarations of yelloweye rockfish and California quillback rockfish but opposed the harvest specifications contained in the proposed rule for those stocks with a greater than 50 percent reduction in their 2027 ACL relative to their 2026 ACL. Specifically, the commenter asks NMFS to: "(1) Justify each cut of more than 50 percent with current data. Where a cut comes from assessment-age uncertainty buffers rather than new science (English sole, splitnose), update the assessment before cutting, consistent with National Standards 1 and 2; (2) Show the impact on consumers and communities: the expected effect on domestic seafood prices and port jobs under National Standard 8; (3) Phase down gradually, not by half in a single year, and take each step only if the newly required updated assessments support it. Hold catch at current levels until that science is in; (4) Report foreign ownership and control of processors and quota holders in the socioeconomic analysis, so the public can see who benefits as the fleet shrinks; and (5) Correct Table 1, which lists the yelloweye alternative as 85 mt while the text uses 113 mt."

Response 9: Regarding requests 1 and 3, NMFS' decision on the harvest control rules implemented for the 2027-28 biennium are explained in section I of the preamble in this final rule and in section II. C. of the preamble to the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026). NMFS' final decisions on the resulting harvest specifications are provided in tables 1a and 2a to part 660, subpart C, in the regulatory text of this final rule for the 2027 and 2028 fishing years, respectively. Each stock's harvest specifications are based on the most recent stock assessment or catch-only projection, all of which were recommended by the SSC and adopted by NMFS as the BSIA for informing harvest specifications for that stock, consistent with National Standard 2. NMFS does not conduct a new stock assessment for every managed groundfish stock each biennium due to staffing and resource constraints. Therefore, the Council has a stock assessment

prioritization process that guides which stock assessments NMFS' stock assessors conduct each biennium. Each biennial set of harvest specifications for every managed groundfish stock, regardless of their percent change, are based on the most recent stock assessment information that has been deemed BSIA. Additionally, each stock assessment or catch projection provides 10 years of harvest specifications. Using the BSIA to set harvest specifications, even where that BSIA results in significant decreases in available harvest, is consistent with the MSA and its National Standards, including the mandate to prevent overfishing. To hold catch limits consistent over time, as opposed to in accordance with the latest stock assessment or catch-only projection, would constitute not setting harvest specifications according to the BSIA and may cause overfishing in violation of National Standards 1 and 2.

Regarding the impact of the 2027-28 harvest specifications on consumers and fishing communities, NMFS analyzed the potential economic impacts of this action in the Analysis (see **ADDRESSES**). Of those stocks with a greater than 50 percent reduction in the ACL (English sole, sablefish north and south of 36° N lat., and splitnose rockfish), a large ACL reduction for sablefish is the most likely to cause adverse economic impacts, given that sablefish is one of the most common target species and most highly attained stocks in the non-whiting commercial groundfish fishery. English sole and splitnose rockfish are not common target species in any sector. As explained in the Analysis, although the ACLs for sablefish are decreasing for the 2027-28 biennium, the 2025-26 ACLs and resulting allocations were so high (tripled from the 2023-24 biennium) that even the reduced limits and allocations for 2027-28 are still at historic highs. Further, during the preceding years of historic high allocations in 2025 and 2026, there has been underattainment of annual sablefish catch limits. Thus, despite the reduced ACLs for 2027 and 2028, those participants who target sablefish are still expected to benefit from

the 2027-28 sablefish allocations, with no adverse impacts anticipated from the reductions.

Regarding the commenter's request that NMFS report foreign ownership and control of processors and quota holders, NMFS is not able to report this information in the Analysis because it does not track ownership of foreign processors or quota.

Finally, as explained in response 2 above, table 1 in section I of the preamble of this final rule lists only those stocks with alternative harvest control rules that were recommended by the Council and are being implemented by NMFS, which excludes the alternative harvest control rule for yelloweye rockfish. Table 1 in section II. C. of the preamble to the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026) provided a full list of the alternative harvest control rules considered by the Council and NMFS during this biennial harvest specifications process, regardless of whether they were ultimately adopted.

Comment 10: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) comment letter supported the action contained in the proposed rule, including amendment 38 and its implementing regulations. CDFW specifically noted its support for relevant California management measures, including the new ACTs, area management changes, commercial trip limits, recreational fishery measures, and the CDFW EFP application. Last, CDFW offered a list of minor technical corrections to the proposed regulatory changes and the text in the preamble to the proposed rule.

Response 10: NMFS addresses each of CDFW's helpful requested technical corrections below in table 9 under section V. NMFS notes that some minor errors identified in the preamble text to the proposed rule are not repeated in this final rule and are therefore not addressed in table 9. All technical corrections identified by CDFW were indeed inaccuracies, except that the Pacific whiting trip limits were correctly stated in tables 14 and 15 in the proposed rule preamble.

Comment 11: One commenter expressed the opinion that there should be limitations on fishing within areas it referred to as economic zones in order to prevent future economic or market disasters in future fishing seasons. The commenter noted the negative consequences of overfishing without identifying any specific stocks of concern.

Response 11: NMFS does not designate economic zones for fishing on the U.S. West Coast. It is possible that the comment is referring to the U.S. EEZ. As a general matter, NMFS manages Federal fisheries within the EEZ. Additionally, NMFS designates fishery closure areas to help rebuild overfished stocks or to protect Essential Fish Habitat. These closures can be based on a specific depth range, latitude range, or polygonal area, depending on the purpose. NMFS also establishes fishing limitations for all managed groundfish stocks through the use of harvest specifications (OFLs, ABCs, and ACLs) and management measures (*e.g.*, trip limits, bag limits, fishery closures), which serve to keep catch within ACLs. These harvest specifications are set in accordance with the BSIA on the status of each managed stock and are designed to prevent overfishing while promoting the economic benefits of optimum yield.

Comment 12: A commenter requested that NMFS explain how its selected harvest limits account for uncertainty in stock abundance, recruitment, and assessment models. The commenter specifically requests an explanation for the selected widow rockfish harvest control rule. The commenter further stated that NMFS should quantify the risk of exceeding sustainable removals, under plausible alternative assumptions, and explain why a more precautionary limit is not warranted for widow rockfish. Finally, the commenter stated that NMFS should provide a probabilistic risk analysis for petrale sole and that the EA projects biomass approaching the 25-percent overfished threshold under the selected alternative harvest control rule for that stock.

Response 6: As noted in the responses above, NMFS provided an extensive description of how the 2027-28 groundfish harvest specifications were developed, with a

detailed explanation of how scientific uncertainty was accounted for in the stock assessments and harvest control rules considered in the biennial process, in section I of the proposed rule (91 FR 60238, September 22, 2026). In summary, the ABC for a stock is reduced from that stock's OFL to account for any scientific uncertainty in the results of a stock assessment. A proposed OFL and ABC are not selected unless endorsed by the SSC as acceptable annual catch limits for that stock that will prevent overfishing. For widow rockfish, a specific explanation of the OFLs, ABCs, and selected harvest control rule for the 2027-28 biennium is provided in the SSC's June 2026 report (see agenda item E.6.a, supplemental SSC report 1). The SSC recommended an OFL for 2027 and 2028 based on the yield associated with $B_{40\%}$ as a justifiable proxy for MSY, given that the stock is estimated to be above the $B_{40\%}$ reference point. This approach is consistent with recent NOAA technical guidance (March 2026, Informational Report 4) related to specifying reference points identified in National Standard 1 of the MSA. As such, the OFL is designed to prevent overfishing while achieving optimum yield. The SSC-recommended ABC of 6,238 mt for widow rockfish will be applied over the next two years, which is consistent with the National Standard 1 technical guidance for phase-in provisions. The Council did not recommend a more precautionary harvest control rule for widow rockfish because of socio-economic concerns for the affected fishery sectors. These concerns are documented in multiple Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reports, as well as GMT reports, the Council Analytical Document, and the Analysis prepared for this action (see **ADDRESSES**). Overall, the Council recommended, and NMFS is implementing, a harvest control that NMFS finds will prevent overfishing while minimizing adverse economic impacts to the affected fishery sectors and fishing communities.

Regarding petrale sole, the Analysis prepared for this action (see **ADDRESSES**) describes how harvest under the recommended harvest control rule affects the stock's

unfished biomass over a 10-year projection period. Although the stock's unfished biomass is expected to decrease from $B_{26\%}$ to $B_{25.6\%}$ over the course of the 2027-28 biennium, it is expected to increase to $B_{28\%}$ by the end of the 10-year projection period. As described in the proposed rule, NMFS uses a suite of management measures (*e.g.*, closed areas, inseason monitoring and changes to harvest limits) to ensure that catch under all ACLs is not exceeded. Although petrale sole is a highly attained stock, it is unlikely that the ACL will be exceeded, even under a less conservative harvest control rule.

IV. Corrections from Language In the Proposed Rule

At the September 2026 meeting, the Council discussed and recommended necessary corrections to the proposed rule that were discovered by Council and NMFS staff during the preparation of the final rule. The 2027-28 OFLs, ABCs, ACLs, and trawl/non-trawl allocations for the Oregon/Washington stock of vermilion rockfish, which are a component species of the Shelf Rockfish Complex north of 40°10' N lat., were incorrectly stated in the proposed rule. The values reported in Council documents were inadvertently derived from the 2021 vermilion stock assessment and not the 2023 catch projection (Agenda Item G.6, Revised Attachment 2, September 2023), which was endorsed in September 2023 by the SSC in Agenda Item G.6.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, September 2023 and subsequently noted in G.6.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, September 2025. The corrections increase the OFL and ABC/ACL of the stock and the Shelf Rockfish Complex north of 40°10′ N lat., as well as the trawl and non-trawl allocation amounts as reported in Agenda Item H.3 Attachment 1, September 2026. Since NMFS rounds OFLs, ABCs, and ACLs to the nearest whole number, only the HGs and trawl/non-trawl allocation values listed at tables 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b to part 660, subpart C, are modified. The OFLs, ABCs, and ACLs remain the same as published in the proposed rule.

In alignment with the Council's recommendations, NMFS implements the following corrections in this final rule (incorrect values included for comparison). These corrections do not change the original substance or intent of this action.

Table 7 provides the corrected harvest specifications for the Shelf Rockfish Complex North of 40°10′ N lat. with the incorrect values for reference.

Table 7 -- Incorrect and corrected harvest specifications for the Shelf Rockfish Complex North of 40°10′ N lat. in 2027 and 2028

	Incorrect (mt)		Corrected (mt)	
	2027	2028	2027	2028
OFL	1,673.2	1,664.7	1,673.4	1,665
ABC/ACL	1,341.9	1,332.7	1,342.2	1,333.1
Fishery HG	1,293.3	1,284.1	1,293.6	1,284.5

Note: Amounts rounded to nearest tenth of a mt.

Table 8 provides the corrected trawl/non-trawl allocations for the Shelf Rockfish Complex North of 40°10′ N lat. with the incorrect values for reference.

Table 8 -- Corrected trawl/non-trawl allocations for the Shelf Rockfish Complex North of 40°10′ N lat. in 2027 and 2028

	Incorrect (mt)		Corrected (mt)	
	2027	2028	2027	2028
Trawl	743.6	738.1	743.8	738.3
Non-Trawl	514.8	511.1	514.9	511.2

Note: Values rounded to nearest tenth of a mt.

V. Other Corrections to the Proposed Rule

As described above, CDFW's comment letter identified technical errors in certain harvest specifications, footnote references, and trip limit boundary delineations. The incorrect and corrected items are displayed in table 9 below.

Table 9 -- Incorrect and corrected harvest specifications from CDFW's Comment Letter

Item Description	Regulatory or Document Citation	Incorrect (mt)	Correct (mt)
Footnote references for the Nearshore Rockfish South and Shelf	Tables 1a and 2a to part 660, subpart C	Footnote h for the vermilion/sunset rockfish recreational ACTs and footnote i for the copper rockfish recreational ACTs are inverted; footnote h	Footnote h for the vermilion/sunset rockfish recreational ACTs associates with the Shelf Rockfish South Complex and Footnote i for the

Rockfish South complexes		associates with the Nearshore Rockfish South Complex and footnote i associates with the Shelf Rockfish South Complex	copper rockfish recreational ACTs associates with the Nearshore Rockfish South Complex
Footnote d references for Lingcod lat. 40°10′ N ACTs	Tables 1a and 2a to part 660, subpart C	table 1a: [d] Lingcod south of lat. 40°10′ N has a recreational ACT of 387.1 mt for south of lat. 40°10′ N table 1b: [d] Lingcod south of lat. 40°10′ N has a recreational ACT of 391.3 mt for south of lat. 40°10′ N	table 1a: [d] Lingcod south of lat. 40°10′ N has a recreational ACT of 387.1 mt in table 1a table 1b: [d] Lingcod south of lat. 40°10′ N has a recreational ACT of 391.3 mt
Footnote f reference for the shortspine thornyhead non-trawl commercial ACT	Tables 1a to part 660, subpart C	[f] Shortspine thornyhead has a commercial ACT of 61.6 mt for north of lat. 34°27′ N	[f] Shortspine thornyhead has a commercial non-trawl ACT of 61.6 mt for north of lat. 34°27′ N
Yelloweye rockfish 2027 HG	Tables 1a and 1b to part 660, subpart C	96.6	96.7
Yelloweye rockfish 2027 non-trawl allocation	Table 1b to part 660, subpart C	88.9	89
Yelloweye rockfish 2028 HG	Table 2a to part 660, subpart C	96.8	96.7
Pacific cod 2027 HG	Table 1b to part 660, subpart C	1,199.9	1,099.9
Sablefish coastwide 2028 ACL	Table 2a to part 660, subpart C	Coastwide ACL is absent	15,103
Deeper Nearshore Complex trip limit delineations	Tables 13 and 15 of section G in the preamble of the proposed rule Tables 3 and 4 of section G in the preamble of this final rule	Trip limits delineated at the 36° N lat. line (40°10′ N lat. – 36° N lat. and south of 36° N lat.)	Trip limits delineated at the 34°27′ N lat. line (40°10′ N lat. – 34°27′ N lat. and south of 34°27′ N lat.)

Last, during internal review of this final rule, NMFS identified inaccurately labeled Non-Trawl boundaries off northern and central California at tables 2a North and table 2a South to Part 660, subpart E, and tables 3a North and table 3a South to Part 660, subpart F. The inaccurate and corrected boundaries are displayed in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Incorrect and corrected Non-Trawl RCA Latitude and Boundaries.

Regulatory Citation	Incorrect Latitude	Incorrect Boundary	Correct Latitude	Correct Boundary
Table 2a (North) to Part 660, subpart E	46°16' N lat. - 42°00' N lat.	--	46°16' N lat. - 40°10' N lat.	--
	42°00' N lat. - 40°10' N lat.	Shoreward EEZ - 75 fm line	--	30 fm line - 75 fm line
Table 2a (South) to Part 660, subpart E	40°10' N lat. - 37°07' N lat.	Shoreward EEZ - 75 fm line	40°10' N lat. - 38°57.5' N lat.	40 fm line - 75 fm line
	37°07' N lat. - 34°27' N lat.	--	38°57.5' N lat.- 34°27' N lat.	--
Table 3a (North) to Part 660, subpart F	46°16' N lat. - 42°00' N lat.	--	46°16' N lat. - 40°10' N lat.	--
	42°00' N lat. - 40°10' N lat.	Shoreward EEZ - 75 fm line	--	30 fm line - 75 fm line
Table 3a (South) to Part 660, subpart F	40°10' N lat. - 37°07' N lat.	Shoreward EEZ - 75 fm line	40°10' N lat. - 38°57.5' N lat.	40 fm line - 75 fm line
	37°07' N lat. - 34°27' N lat.	--	38°57.5' N lat.- 34°27' N lat.	--

VI. Classification

Pursuant to sections 303(c) and 304(b) of the MSA, the NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that this final rule is consistent with the Groundfish FMP, other provisions of the MSA, and other applicable laws.

Regulations governing the U.S. fisheries for Pacific halibut are developed by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC), the Council, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and the Secretary of Commerce. Section 5 of the Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982 (Halibut Act, 16 U.S.C. 773c) allows the Regional Council having authority for a particular geographical area to develop regulations governing the allocation and catch of halibut in U.S. Convention waters so long as those regulations do

not conflict with IPHC regulations. The final action is consistent with the Council's authority to regulate Pacific halibut catches among fishery participants in the waters in and off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California.

National Environmental Policy Act

In accordance with NEPA, as amended, NMFS prepared an EA that discusses the impact on the quality of the human environment as a result of this rule. A copy of the EA is available from NMFS (see **ADDRESSES**).

Executive Order 12866

This final rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of E.O. 12866.

Executive Order 14192

This final rule is exempt from the requirements of E.O. 14192 because it is a routine fishing action.

Executive Order 13175

Pursuant to E.O. 13175, this rule was developed after meaningful consultation and collaboration with Tribal officials from the area covered by the Groundfish FMP. Under the MSA at 16 U.S.C. 1852(b)(5), one of the voting members of the Pacific Fishery Management Council must be a representative of an Indian Tribe with federally recognized fishing rights from the area of the Council's jurisdiction. The Tribal representative on the Council made a motion to adopt the Tribal management measures, which was passed by the Council, and those management measures, which were developed and proposed by the Tribes, are included in this rule.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Senior Lead Counsel for Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration during the proposed rule stage that this action would not have a significant economic impact on

a substantial number of small entities. The factual basis for the certification was published in the proposed rule and is not repeated here. No comments were received regarding this certification. As a result, a regulatory flexibility analysis was not required, and none was prepared.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This final rule contains no information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

List of Subjects

50 CFR Part 300

Fisheries, Fishing.

50 CFR Part 660

Fisheries, Fishing, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: November 25, 2026.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, NMFS amends 50 CFR parts 300 and 660 as follows:

PART 300—INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES REGULATIONS

1. The authority citation for part 300 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 951 *et seq.*, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, 16 U.S.C. 5501 *et seq.*, 16 U.S.C. 2431 *et seq.*, 31 U.S.C. 9701 *et seq.*

2. Amend § 300.63 by revising paragraphs (c)(5)(ii)(A)(*4*) and (c)(6)(ii)(G) to read as follows:

§ 300.63 Catch sharing plan and domestic management measures in Area 2A.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(5) * * *

(ii) * * *

(A) * * *

(*4*) Recreational fishing for halibut is prohibited within the Stonewall Bank YRCA. It is unlawful for recreational fishing vessels to take and retain, possess, or land halibut taken with recreational gear within the Stonewall Bank YRCA. A vessel fishing in the Stonewall Bank YRCA may not possess any halibut. Recreational vessels may transit through the Stonewall Bank YRCA with or without halibut onboard. The Stonewall Bank YRCA is defined at 50 CFR 660.70(i).

* * * * *

(6) * * *

(ii) * * *

(G) Modification of the Stonewall Bank Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA) restrictions off Oregon as defined in groundfish regulations at 50 CFR 660.70(i).

* * * * *

PART 660–FISHERIES OFF WEST COAST STATES

3. The authority citation for part 660 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq*., 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq*., and 16 U.S.C. 7001 *et seq*.

§ 660.40 [Amended]

4. Amend § 660.40 by removing paragraphs (a) and (b).

5. Amend § 660.50 by revising paragraphs (f)(4), (f)(10) through (25), and (g)(2) to read as follows:

§ 660.50 Pacific Coast treaty Indian fisheries.

* * * * *

(f) * * *

(4) *Canary rockfish.* The Tribal harvest guideline is 35 mt per year.

* * * * *

(10) *Nearshore Rockfish*. The Tribal harvest guideline is 1.5 mt per year.

(11) *Other Flatfish*. The Tribal harvest guideline is 60 mt per year.

(12) *Pacific cod.* The Tribal harvest guideline is 500 mt per year.

(13) *Pacific Ocean Perch*. The Tribal harvest guideline is 130 mt per year.

(14) *Pacific Spiny Dogfish*. The Tribal harvest guideline is 275 mt per year.

(15) *Pacific whiting*. The Tribal allocation for 2026 is 49,130.2 mt, which is 17.5 percent of the 280,744 mt U.S. TAC.

(16) *Petrale sole.* The harvest guideline is 290 mt per year.

(17) *Sablefish*. (i) The sablefish allocation to Pacific coast treaty Indian Tribes is 10 percent of the sablefish ACL for the area north of 36° N lat. This allocation represents the total amount available to the treaty Indian fisheries before deductions for discard mortality.

(ii) The Tribal allocation is 1,096 mt in 2027 and 1,186 mt in 2028. This allocation is, for each year, 10 percent of the Monterey through Vancouver area (North of 36° N lat.) ACL, including estimated discard mortality.

(18) *Shelf Rockfish*. The Tribal harvest guideline is 30 mt per year.

(19) *Slope Rockfish*. The Tribal harvest guideline is 36 mt per year.

(20) *Starry Flounder*. The Tribal harvest guideline is 2 mt per year.

(21) *Thornyheads*. The Tribal harvest guideline for shortspine thornyhead is 40 mt per year and the Tribal harvest guideline for longspine thornyhead is 30 mt per year.

(22) *Washington cabezon/kelp greenling*. The Tribal harvest guideline is 2 mt per year.

(23) *Widow rockfish.* Widow rockfish taken in the directed Tribal midwater trawl fisheries are subject to a catch limit of 100 mt for the entire fleet, per year.

(24) *Yelloweye Rockfish.* The Tribal harvest guideline is 12 mt per year.

(25) *Yellowtail rockfish.* Yellowtail rockfish taken in the directed Tribal mid-water trawl fisheries are subject to a catch limit of 1,000 mt for the entire fleet, per year.

(g) * * *

(2) *Yelloweye rockfish.* Subject to a 500-lb (227-kg) trip limit.

* * * * *

6. Amend § 660.60 by revising paragraph (a), the introductory text of paragraphs (b) and (c), paragraph (c)(1), and the introductory text of paragraph (c)(2) to read as follows:

§ 660.60 Specifications and management measures.

(a) *General.* NMFS will establish and adjust specifications and management measures biennially or annually and during the fishing year. Regulations under this subpart may be promulgated, removed, or revised during the fishing year. Any such action will be made according to the framework standards and procedures in the PCGFMP and other applicable law and will be published in the **Federal Register**.

(b) *Biennial actions.* The Pacific Coast Groundfish fishery is managed on a biennial, calendar year basis. Harvest specifications and management measures will be announced biennially, with the harvest specifications for each species or species group set for two sequential calendar years. In general, management measures are designed to achieve, but not exceed, the specifications (particularly optimum yields, including but not limited to harvest guidelines, allocations, quotas, and sharing agreements), and to protect overfished and depleted stocks. Management measures will be designed to take into account the co-occurrence ratios of target species with overfished species and will select measures that will minimize bycatch to the extent practicable.

* * * * *

(c) *Routine management measures.* Catch restrictions that are likely to be adjusted on a biennial, or more frequent basis may be imposed and announced by a single notification in the **Federal Register**, if good cause exists under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) to waive notice and comment, and if they have been designated as routine through the two-meeting process described in the PCGFMP. Routine management measures that may be revised during the fishing year, via this process, are implemented in paragraph (h) of this section, and in subparts C through G of this part, including: tables 1a through 1c and 2a through 2c to subpart C; tables 1a and 1b north and south to subpart D; tables 2a and 2b north and south to subpart E; and tables 3a and 3b north and south to subpart F. Most trip, bag, and size limits, and most Groundfish Conservation Area closures have been designated as "routine," which means they may be changed rapidly after a single Council meeting. Council meetings are held in the months of March, April, June, September, and November. Inseason changes to routine management measures are announced in the **Federal Register** pursuant to the requirements of the APA. Changes to routine management measures are effective at the times stated in the **Federal Register**. All routine management measures for commercial and recreational fisheries are intended to keep landings within the harvest levels announced by NMFS, to rebuild and protect overfished or depleted species, to maintain consistency with State regulations, and for the other purposes set forth in this section. The following catch restrictions have been designated as routine and can be applied to sectors and gear types individually or collectively:

(1) *Commercial Limited Entry and Open Access Fisheries, all gear types* —(i) *Trip limits.* Trip limits, including sub-trip limits, for any groundfish species, as defined under "Groundfish" at § 660.11, separately or in any combination. In addition, sub-limits or aggregate limits may be specified for groundfish stocks managed outside the

Shorebased IFQ Program. Once a trip limit change is effective, it is illegal to take and retain, possess, or land more fish than allowed under the new trip limit. This means that, unless otherwise announced in the **Federal Register**, offloading must begin before the time a fishery closes or a more restrictive trip limit takes effect.

(ii) *Size limits.* Size limits for sablefish and lingcod.

(iii) *Closures*. Closures include depth-based closures, area closures, seasonal closures, and other fishery closures (*e.g.*, species, sector, or gear-specific), as defined in § 660.11.

(iv) *Type of limited entry trawl gear on board.* Limits on the type of limited entry trawl gear on board a vessel may be imposed on a biennial or more frequent basis. Requirements and restrictions on limited entry trawl gear type are found at § 660.130(b).

(v) *List of IFQ species documented on Observer Program reporting form.* As specified at § 660.140(h)(1)(i), to be exempt from observer coverage while docked in port depends on documentation of specified retained IFQ species on the Observer Program reporting form. The list of IFQ species documented on the Observer Program form may be modified on a biennial or more frequent basis under routine management measures § 660.60(c)(1).

(vi) *Shorebased IFQ Program surplus carryover percentage.* As specified at § 660.140(e)(5)(i), a percentage of surplus QP or IBQ pounds in a vessel account may be carried over from one year to the next. The percentage of surplus QP or IBQ pounds, that may be carried over may be modified on a biennial or more frequent basis, and may not be higher than 10 percent.

(2) *Recreational fisheries, all gear types* — Routine management measures for all groundfish species, separately or in any combination, include bag limits, sub-bag limits, size limits, time and area closures, other fishery closures, boat limits, hook limits, and dressing requirements. All routine management measures on recreational fisheries are

intended to keep landings within the harvest levels announced by NMFS, to rebuild and protect overfished or depleted species, and to maintain consistency with State regulations, and for the other purposes set forth in this section.

* * * * *

§ 660.70 [Amended]

7. Amend § 660.70 by:

a. Removing paragraphs (j), (k), and (n) through (r); and

b. Redesignating paragraphs as follows:

Old Paragraph	New Paragraph
(l)	(j)
(m)	(k)
(s)	(l)
(t)	(m)

8. Amend § 660.71 by:

a. Revising paragraph (b)(1);

b. Redesignating paragraphs (b)(2) through (112) as paragraphs (b)(3) through (113); and

c. Adding new paragraph (b)(2).

The revisions read as follows:

§ 660.71 Latitude/longitude coordinates defining the 10-fm (18-m) through 40-fm (73-m) depth contours.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(1) 48°25.00' N. lat., 124°44.06' W. long.;

(2) 48°25.00' N. lat., 120°45.22' W. long.;

* * * * *

9. Revise tables 1a through 1c to part 660, subpart C, to read as follows:

Table 1a to Part 660, Subpart C—2027, Specifications of OFL, ABC, ACL, ACT and Fishery HG
[Weight in metric tons]

Species/Stock	Area	OFL	ABC	ACL[a]	Fishery HG[b]
Arrowtooth Flounder	Coastwide	12,152	7,947	7,947	5,879.5
Big Skate	Coastwide	1,398	1,155	1,155	1,105.8
Black Rockfish	Washington	260	240	240	221.7
Black Rockfish	California	281	260	249	248.8
Bocaccio	S of 40°10' N lat.	2,542	2,288	2,288	2,284.9
Cabezon	California	165	150	150	149.6
California quillback rockfish[c]	California	13	12	12	12
California Scorpionfish	California	263	233	233	232.5
Canary Rockfish	Coastwide	694	643	643	601.5
Chilipepper	S of 40°10' N lat.	3,194	2,986	2,986	2,980.6
Cowcod	S of 40°10' N lat.	111	74	74	73.3
Darkblotched Rockfish	Coastwide	859	773	773	751.9
Dover Sole	Coastwide	42,064	38,573	38,573	37,026.2
English Sole	Coastwide	4,072	3,168	3,168	2,956
Lingcod	N of 40°10' N lat.	4,140	3,482	3,482	3,212.9
Lingcod[d]	S of 40°10' N lat.	966	812	789	786.8
Longnose Skate	Coastwide	1,872	1,546	1,546	1,303.8
Longspine Thornyhead	Coastwide	4,076	2,471		
Longspine Thornyhead	N of 34°27' N lat.			1,878	1,833.9
Longspine Thornyhead	S of 34°27' N lat.			593	592.1
Pacific Cod	Coastwide	3,200	1,926	1,600	1,099.9
Pacific Ocean Perch	N of 40°10' N lat.	3,856	3,123	3,123	2,987.6
Pacific Spiny Dogfish	Coastwide	1,810	1,278	1,278	990.2
Pacific Whiting[e]	Coastwide				
Petrale Sole	Coastwide	2,645	2,489	2,489	2,171.7
Sablefish	Coastwide	14,935	13,964	13,964	
Sablefish	N of 36° N lat.			10,962	9,774.8
Sablefish	S of 36° N lat.			3,002	2,990.3
Shortspine Thornyhead[f]	Coastwide	994	902	902	849.3
Splitnose	S of 40°10' N lat.	796	620	620	615.9
Starry Flounder	Coastwide	652	393	393	377.8
Widow Rockfish	Coastwide	6,239	6,238	6,238	6,137.4
Yelloweye Rockfish[g]	Coastwide	129	113	113	96.7
Yellowtail Rockfish	N of 40°10' N lat.	5,051	5,050	5,050	4,043.1
Species/Stock Complexes					
Blue/Deacon/Black Rockfish	Oregon	495	448	448	447.5
Cabezon/Kelp Greenling	Washington	19	14	14	12.5
Cabezon/Kelp Greenling	Oregon	193	174	174	173.5
Nearshore Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	104	85	85	82.3
Nearshore Rockfish South[h]	S of 40°10' N lat.	1,145	929	928	925.6
Other Fish	Coastwide	286	223	223	218.5
Other Flatfish	Coastwide	9,367	6,577	6,577	6,451.7
Shelf Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	1,673	1,342	1,342	1,293.6

Shelf Rockfish South[i]	S of 40°10' N lat.	1,832	1,457	1,456	1,443.1
Slope Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	1,966	1,623	1,089	1,039.4
Slope Rockfish South	S of 40°10' N lat.	878	699	688	686.8

[a] Annual catch limits (ACLs), annual catch targets (ACTs) and harvest guidelines (HGs) are specified as total catch values.

[b] Fishery HGs means the HG or quota after subtracting Pacific Coast treaty Indian Tribes' allocations and projected catch, projected research catch, deductions for fishing mortality in non-groundfish fisheries, and deductions for EFPs from the ACL or ACT. These deductions, as well as any HG sharing agreements between states and/or sectors, are published in the SAFE.

[c] California quillback rockfish off California has a recreational ACT of 7.1 mt.

[d] Lingcod south of 40°10' N lat. has a recreational ACT of 387.1 mt.

[e] Pacific whiting ACLs are set through an annual United States/Canada treaty process external to the Council.

[f]Shortspine thornyhead has a non-trawl commercial ACT of 61.6 mt for north of 34°27' N lat.

[g]Yelloweye rockfish has a non-trawl ACT of 69.7 mt and a non-nearshore ACT of 14.6 mt. The recreational ACTs are: 17.9 mt (Washington), 16.3 mt (Oregon), and 21.1 mt (California).

[h] Copper rockfish has a recreational ACT of 20.1 mt for south of 34°27' N lat.

[i] Vermilion/sunset rockfish has a recreational ACT of 168 mt for south of 40°10' N lat.

Table 1b to Part 660, Subpart C—2027, Allocations by Species or Species Group
[Weight in metric tons]

Species/Stock & Complexes	Area	Fishery HG or ACT	Trawl		Non-Trawl	
			%	mt	%	mt
Arrowtooth Flounder	Coastwide	5,879.5	95	5,585.5	5	294
Big Skate	Coastwide	1,105.8	95	1,050.5	5	55.3
Bocaccio	S of 40°10' N lat.	2,284.9	39	891.1	61	1,393.8
Canary Rockfish	Coastwide	601.5	72.3	434.9	27.7	166.6
Chilipepper	S of 40°10' N lat.	2,980.6	75	2,235.5	25	745.2
Cowcod	S of 40°10' N lat.	73.3	36	26.4	64	46.9
Darkblotched Rockfish	Coastwide	751.9	95	714.3	5	37.6
Dover Sole	Coastwide	37,026.2	95	35,174.9	5	1,851.3
English Sole	Coastwide	2,956	95	2,808.2	5	147.8
Lingcod	N of 40°10' N lat.	3,212.9	45	1,445.8	55	1,767.1

Species/Stock & Complexes	Area	Fishery HG or ACT	Trawl		Non-Trawl	
			%	mt	%	mt
Lingcod	S of 40°10' N lat.	786.8	40	314.7	60	472.1
Longnose Skate	Coastwide	1,303.8	90	1,173.4	10	130.4
Longspine Thornyhead	N of 34°27' N lat.	1,833.9	95	1,742.2	5	91.7
Pacific Cod	Coastwide	1,099.9	95	1,044.9	5	55
Pacific Ocean Perch	N of 40°10' N lat.	2,987.6	95	2,838.2	5	149.4
Pacific Whiting	Coastwide		100		0	
Petrale Sole	Coastwide	2,171.7		2,141.7		30
Sablefish	N of 36° N lat.	9,774.8	See table 1c			
Sablefish	S of 36° N lat.	2,990.3	42	1,255.9	58	1,734.4
Shortspine Thornyhead	Coastwide	849.3	71	603	29	246.3
Splitnose	S of 40°10' N lat.	615.9	95	585.1	5	30.8
Starry Flounder	Coastwide	377.8	50	188.9	50	188.9
Widow Rockfish	Coastwide	6,137.4		5,837.4		300
Yelloweye Rockfish	Coastwide	96.7	8	7.7	92	89
Yellowtail Rockfish	N of 40°10' N lat.	4,043.1	88	3,557.9	12	485.2
Other Flatfish	Coastwide	6,451.7	90	5,806.5	10	645.2
Shelf Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	1,293.6	60.2	743.8	39.8	514.9
Shelf Rockfish South	S of 40°10' N lat.	1,443.1	12.2	176.1	87.8	1,267
Slope Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	1,039.4	81	841.9	19	197.5
Slope Rockfish South	S of 40°10' N lat.	686.8	52.5	360.8	47.5	326

Table 1c to Part 660, Subpart C—Sablefish North of 36° N Lat. Allocations, 2027

[Weight in metric tons]

	Percent	Allocation (mt)
Non-tribal Commercial HG[a]	-	9,774.8
LE Share	90.6	8,856
LE Trawl	58	5,136
LENT	42	3,720
Primary	85	3,162
Trip limit	15	558
OA Share	9.4	919

[a] Off-the-top deductions from the ACL that result in the HG are in the SAFE.

10. Revise Tables 2a through 2c to part 660, subpart C, to read as follows:

Table 2a to Part 660, Subpart C—2028, and Beyond, Specifications of OFL, ABC, ACL, ACT, and Fishery HG

[Weight in metric tons]

Species/Stock	Area	OFL	ABC	ACL[a]	Fishery HG[b]
Arrowtooth Flounder	Coastwide	11,107	7,131	7,131	5,062.8
Big Skate	Coastwide	1,372	1,122	1,122	1,072.8
Black Rockfish	Washington	261	241	241	222.3
Black Rockfish	California	293	270	261	260.7
Bocaccio	S of 40°10' N lat.	2,438	2,185	2,185	2,182.1
Cabezon	California	161	146	146	145.4
California quillback rockfish[c]	California	13	12	12	12
California Scorpionfish	California	261	229	229	228.6
Canary Rockfish	Coastwide	720	664	664	622.5
Chilipepper	S of 40°10' N lat.	3,086	2,870	2,870	2,864.1
Cowcod	S of 40°10' N lat.	111	73	73	72
Darkblotched Rockfish	Coastwide	842	754	754	733.2
Dover Sole	Coastwide	39,010	35,616	35,616	34,069.6
English Sole	Coastwide	4,072	3,168	3,168	2,956
Lingcod	N of 40°10' N lat.	4,128	3,439	3,439	3,170.1
Lingcod[d]	S of 40°10' N lat.	984	820	796	793.8
Longnose Skate	Coastwide	1,852	1,515	1,515	1,272.4
Longspine Thornyhead	Coastwide	4,008	2,413		
Longspine Thornyhead	N of 34°27' N lat.			1,834	1,789.3
Longspine Thornyhead	S of 34°27' N lat.			579	578.1
Pacific Cod	Coastwide	3,200	1,926	1,600	1,099.9
Pacific Ocean Perch	N of 40°10' N lat.	3,781	3,036	3,036	2,900.3
Pacific Spiny Dogfish	Coastwide	1,790	1,240	1,240	952.5
Pacific Whiting[e]	Coastwide				
Petrale Sole	Coastwide	2,619	2,489	2,489	2,171.7
Sablefish	Coastwide	16,240	15,103	15,103	
Sablefish	N of 36° N lat.			11,856	10,579.7
Sablefish	S of 36° N lat.			3,247	3,235
Shortspine Thornyhead[f]	Coastwide	1,013	902	902	849.3
Splitnose	S of 40°10' N lat.	796	620	620	615.9
Starry Flounder	Coastwide	652	393	393	377.8
Widow Rockfish	Coastwide	6,239	6,238	6,238	6,137.4
Yelloweye Rockfish[g]	Coastwide	131	113	113	96.7
Yellowtail Rockfish	N of 40°10' N lat.	4,859	4,730	4,730	3,723.1
Blue/Deacon/Black Rockfish	Oregon	502	452	452	451.7
Cabezon/Kelp Greenling	Washington	19	14	14	12.4
Cabezon/Kelp Greenling	Oregon	193	173	173	172.9
Nearshore Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	103	83	83	81
Nearshore Rockfish South[h]	S of 40°10' N lat.	1,145	925	924	921.7
Other Fish	Coastwide	286	223	223	218.5
Other Flatfish	Coastwide	8,950	6,193	6,193	6,067.7
Shelf Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	1,665	1,333	1,333	1,284.5
Shelf Rockfish South[i]	S of 40°10' N lat.	1,831	1,453	1,453	1,439.8
Slope Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	1,964	1,612	1,086	1,036.2

Slope Rockfish South	S of 40°10' N lat.	877	696	686	684

[a] Annual catch limits (ACLs), annual catch targets (ACTs) and harvest guidelines (HGs) are specified as total catch values.

[b] Fishery HGs means the HG or quota after subtracting Pacific Coast treaty Indian Tribes' allocations and projected catch, projected research catch, deductions for fishing mortality in non-groundfish fisheries, and deductions for EFPs from the ACL or ACT. These deductions, as well as any HG sharing agreements between states and/or sectors, are published in the SAFE.

[c] California quillback rockfish off California has a recreational ACT of 7.1 mt.

[d] Lingcod south of 40°10' N lat. has a recreational ACT of 391.3 mt.

[e] Pacific whiting ACLs are set through an annual US/Canada treaty process external to the Council.

[f] Shortspine thornyhead has a non-trawl commercial ACT of 61.6 mt for north of 34°27' N lat..

[g] Yelloweye rockfish has a non-trawl ACT of 69.7 mt and a non-nearshore ACT of 14.6 mt. The recreational ACTs are: 17.9 mt (Washington), 16.3 mt (Oregon), and 21.1 mt (California).

[h] Copper rockfish has a recreational ACT of 22.0 mt for south of 34°27' N lat.

[i] Vermilion/sunset rockfish has a recreational ACT of 164.4 mt for south of 40°10' N lat.

Table 2b to Part 660, Subpart C—2028, and Beyond, Allocations by Species or Species Group

Species/Stock & Complexes	Area	Fishery HG or ACT	Trawl		Non-Trawl	
			%	mt	%	mt
Arrowtooth Flounder	Coastwide	5,062.8	95	4,809.7	5	253.1
Big Skate	Coastwide	1,072.8	95	1,019.2	5	53.6
Bocaccio	S of 40°10' N lat.	2,182.1	39	851	61	1,331.1
Canary Rockfish	Coastwide	622.5	72.3	450.1	27.7	172.4
Chilipepper	S of 40°10' N lat.	2,864.1	75	2,148.1	25	716
Cowcod	S of 40°10' N lat.	72	36	25.9	64	46.1
Darkblotched Rockfish	Coastwide	733.2	95	696.6	5	36.7
Dover Sole	Coastwide	34,069.6	95	32,366.1	5	1,703.5
English Sole	Coastwide	2,956	95	2,808.2	5	147.8
Lingcod	N of 40°10' N lat.	3,170.1	45	1,426.6	55	1,743.6
Lingcod	S of 40°10' N lat.	793.8	40	317.5	60	476.3
Longnose Skate	Coastwide	1,272.4	90	1,145.2	10	127.2
Longspine Thornyhead	N of 34°27' N lat.	1,789.3	95	1,699.9	5	89.5
Pacific Cod	Coastwide	1,099.9	95	1,044.9	5	55
Pacific Ocean Perch	N of 40°10' N lat.	2,900.3	95	2,755.3	5	145

Species/Stock & Complexes	Area	Fishery HG or ACT	Trawl		Non-Trawl	
			%	mt	%	mt
Pacific Whiting	Coastwide		100		0	
Petrale Sole	Coastwide	2,171.7		2,141.7		30
Sablefish	N of 36° N lat.	10,579.6	See Table 1c			
Sablefish	S of 36° N lat.	3,235	42	1,358.8	58	1,876.4
Shortspine Thornyhead	Coastwide	849.3	71	603	29	246.3
Splitnose	S of 40°10' N lat.	615.9	95	585.1	5	30.8
Starry Flounder	Coastwide	377.8	50	188.9	50	188.9
Widow Rockfish	Coastwide	6,137.4		5,837.4		300.0
Yelloweye Rockfish	Coastwide	96.7	8.0	7.7	92	89
Yellowtail Rockfish	N of 40°10' N lat.	3,723.1	88	3,276.3	12	446.8
Other Flatfish	Coastwide	6,067.7	90	5,460.9	10	606.8
Shelf Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	1,284.5	60.2	738.3	39.8	511.2
Shelf Rockfish South	S of 40°10' N lat.	1,439.8	12.2	175.7	87.8	1,264.1
Slope Rockfish North	N of 40°10' N lat.	1,036.2	81	839.3	19	196.9
Slope Rockfish South	S of 40°10' N lat.	684	52.4	359.5	47.6	324.5

Table 2c to Part 660, Subpart C—Sablefish North of 36° N. Lat. Allocations, 2028 and Beyond

[Weights in metric tons]

	Percent	Allocation (mt)
Non-tribal Commercial HG[a]	-	10,579.6
LE Share	90.6	9,585
LE Trawl	58	5,559
LENT	42	4,026
Primary	85	3,422
Trip limit	15	604
OA Share	9.4	995

[a] Off-the-top deductions from the ACL that result in the HG are in the SAFE.

11. Amend § 660.140 by revising table 1 to paragraph (d)(1)(ii)(D) to read as follows:

§ 660.140 Shorebased IFQ Program.

* * * * *

(d) * * *

(1) * * *

(ii) * * *

(D) * * *

Table 1 to Paragraph (d)(1)(ii)(D) – Shorebased Trawl Allocations for 2027 and 2028

IFQ species	Area	2027 Shorebased trawl allocation (mt)	2028 Shorebased trawl allocation (mt)
Arrowtooth flounder	Coastwide	5,486	4,710
Bocaccio	South of 40°10′ N lat.	891	851
Canary rockfish	Coastwide	413	428
Chilipepper rockfish	South of 40°10′ N lat.	2,235	2,148
Cowcod	South of 40°10′ N lat.	26	26
Darkblotched rockfish	Coastwide	614	597
Dover sole	Coastwide	35,175	32,366
English sole	Coastwide	2,808	2,808
Lingcod	North of 40°10′ N lat.	1,446	1,427
Lingcod	South of 40°10′ N lat.	315	318
Longspine thornyhead	North of 34°27′ N lat.	1,742	1,700
Pacific cod	Coastwide	1,045	1,045
Pacific ocean perch	North of 40°10′ N lat.	2,538	2,455
Pacific whiting [a]	Coastwide	TBD	TBD
Petrale sole	Coastwide	2,142	2,142
Sablefish	North of 36° N lat.	4,832	5,254
Sablefish	South of 36° N lat.	1,256	1,359
Shortspine thornyhead	Coastwide	527	527
Splitnose rockfish	South of 40°10′ N lat.	585	585
Starry flounder	Coastwide	189	189
Widow rockfish	Coastwide	6,019	6,019
Yelloweye rockfish	Coastwide	7.7	7.7
Yellowtail rockfish	North of 40°10′ N lat.	3,238	2,956
Other Flatfish complex	Coastwide	5,707	5,361
Shelf Rockfish complex	North of 40°10′ N lat.	744	738
Shelf Rockfish complex	South of 40°10′ N lat.	176	176
Slope Rockfish complex	North of 40°10′ N lat.	542	539

Slope Rockfish complex	South of 40°10′ N lat.	397	395

[a] Managed through an international process. These allocations will be updated when announced.

* * * * *

§ 660.230 [Amended]

12. Amend § 660.230 by:

a. Removing paragraphs (d)(9) through (d)(13); and

b. Redesignating paragraph (d)(14) as paragraph (d)(9).

13. Amend § 660.231 by revising paragraph (b)(3)(i) to read as follows:

§ 660.231 Limited entry non-trawl sablefish primary fishery.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(3) * * *

(i) A vessel participating in the primary season will be constrained by the sablefish cumulative limit associated with each of the permits registered for use with that vessel. During the primary season, each vessel authorized to fish in that season under paragraph (a) of this section may take, retain, possess, and land sablefish, up to the cumulative limits for each of the permits registered for use with that vessel (*i.e.*, stacked permits). If multiple limited entry permits with sablefish endorsements are registered for use with a single vessel, that vessel may land up to the total of all cumulative limits announced in this paragraph for the tiers for those permits, except as limited by paragraph (b)(3)(ii) of this section. Up to three permits may be registered for use with a single vessel during the primary season; thus, a single vessel may not take and retain, possess or land more than three primary season sablefish cumulative limits in any one year. A vessel

registered for use with multiple limited entry permits is subject to per vessel limits for species other than sablefish, and to per vessel limits when participating in the daily trip limit fishery for sablefish under § 660.232. In 2027, the following annual limits are in effect: Tier 1 at 93,770 lb (42,533 kg), Tier 2 at 42,623 lb (19,333 kg), and Tier 3 at 24,356 lb (11,047 kg). In 2028 and beyond, the following limits are in effect: Tier 1 at 101,490 lb (46,030 kg), Tier 2 at 46,132 lb (20,923 kg), and Tier 3 at 26,361 lb (11,956 kg).

* * * * *

14. Revise table 2a (North) to part 660, subpart E, as follows:

Table 2a (North) to Part 660, Subpart E—Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area Boundaries

Latitude	Boundary
North of 46°16' N lat.:	Shoreward EEZ100 fm line
46°16' N lat. - 40°10' N lat.	30 fm line–75 fm line

Note 1 to table 2a (North): The Non-Trawl RCA is an area closed to fishing with particular non-trawl gear types, as defined at § 660.11. Non-Trawl RCA boundaries apply in the EEZ only; however, state regulations may implement RCA boundaries in state waters; see appropriate state regulations. Non-Trawl RCA boundaries may be revised via inseason action; therefore, users should refer back to this table throughout the year.

15. Amend table 2b (North) to part 660, subpart E, by:

a. Revising the entries for “Black rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)”, “Nearshore rockfish complex (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)”, “Sablefish”, “Shelf rockfish complex”, “Widow rockfish”, “Yelloweye rockfish”, and “Yellowtail rockfish”;

b. Removing the entry for “Quillback rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)”; and

c. Adding a new entry for “California quillback rockfish (42°00' N lat.–40°10' N lat.)” between the entries for “Cabezon/kelp greenling complex (Oregon)” and “Canary rockfish.”

The revisions and addition read as follows:

Table 2b (North) to Part 660, Subpart E—Trip Limits for Limited Entry Non-Trawl North of 40°10' N lat.

Species	Trip Limit
* * * * * * *	
Black rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	8,000 lb/2 months.
* * * * * * *	
California quillback rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	300 lb/2 months.
* * * * * * *	
Nearshore rockfish complex (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months.
* * * * * * *	
Sablefish	5,500 lb/week not to exceed 11,000 lb/2 months.
Shelf rockfish complex	8,000 lb/2 months, of which no more than 300 lb may be vermilion/sunset rockfish
* * * * * * *	
Widow rockfish	12,000 lb/2 months
Yelloweye rockfish	75 lb/2 months
Yellowtail rockfish	7,000 lb/2 months

Note 1 to table 2b (North): Trip limits apply in the EEZ only; see appropriate state regulations for state trip limits. Trip limits are effective year-round unless otherwise specified for different cumulative periods (defined at § 660.11 under "Trip limits"). Trip limits are effective from the United States-Canada border to lat. 40°10' N unless otherwise specified via latitudinal or state subdivisions in this table. Stock complexes are defined at § 660.11 under "Groundfish". Trip limits may be revised via inseason action; therefore, users should refer back to this table throughout the year. To convert pounds to kilograms, divide the weight in pounds by 2.20462. The resulting quotient is the weight in kilograms.

16. Revise table 2a (South) to part 660, subpart E, as follows:

Table 2a (South) to Part 660, Subpart E—Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area Boundaries

Latitude	Boundary
40°10' N lat. - 38°57.5' N lat.	40 fm line - 75 fm line
38°57.5' N lat.- 34°27' N lat.	50 fm line - 75 fm line
South of 34°27' N lat.	100 fm line - 150 fm line (also applies around islands and banks with both a 100 fm and 150 fm line defined at § 660.73)

Note 1 to table 2a (South): The Non-Trawl RCA is an area closed to fishing with particular non-trawl gear types, as defined at § 660.11. Non-Trawl RCA boundaries apply in the EEZ only; however, state regulations may implement RCA boundaries in state waters; see appropriate state regulations. Non-Trawl RCA boundaries may be revised via inseason action; therefore, users should refer back to this table throughout the year.

17. Amend table 2b (south) to part 660, subpart E, by:

a. Revising the entries for “Chilipepper rockfish (40°10' N lat.-34°27' N lat.)”, “Cowcod”, “Shallow nearshore rockfish complex”, “Deeper nearshore rockfish complex”, “Sablefish (40°10′ N lat.-36° N lat.)”, “Sablefish (south of 36° N lat.)”, “Shortspine thornyhead (south of 34°27' N lat.)”, “Widow rockfish (40°10' N lat.-34°27' N lat.)”, and “Yelloweye rockfish”;

b. Adding a new entry for “California quillback rockfish” in between the entries for “Cabezon” and “California scorpionfish”;

c. Adding a new entry for “Deeper nearshore rockfish complex (south of 34°27' N lat.)” in between the entries for “Deeper nearshore rockfish complex (40°10' N lat.–34°27' N lat.)” and “Other fish”; and

d. Removing the entries for “Chilipepper rockfish (south of 34°27' N lat.)” and “Widow rockfish (south of 34°27' N lat.).

The revisions and additions read as follows:

Table 2b (South) to Part 660, Subpart E—Trip Limits for Limited Entry Non-Trawl South of 40°10' N. lat.

Species	Trip Limit
* * * * * * *	
California quillback rockfish	300 lb/2 months
* * * * * * *	
Chilipepper rockfish	15,000 lb/2 months
Cowcod	75 lb/2 months
* * * * * * *	
Shallow nearshore rockfish (south of 40°10' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months
Deeper nearshore rockfish complex	3,000 lb/2 months.

(40°10' N lat.- 34°27' N lat.)	
Deeper nearshore rockfish complex (south of 34°27' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months, of which no more than 75 lb may be copper rockfish.
* * * * * * *	
Sablefish (40°10′ N lat.-36° N lat.)	5,500 lb/week not to exceed 11,000 lb/2 months.
Sablefish (south of 36° N lat.)	3,000 lb/week.
* * * * * * *	
Shortspine thornyhead (south of 34°27' N lat.)	5,000 lb/2 months.
* * * * * * *	
Widow rockfish	24,000 lb/2 months.
Yelloweye rockfish	75 lb/2 months

Note 1 to Table 2b (South): Trip limits apply in the EEZ only; see appropriate state regulations for state trip limits. Trip limits are effective year-round unless otherwise specified for different cumulative periods (defined at § 660.11 under "Trip limits"). Trip limits are effective from lat. 40°10' N to the United States-Mexico border unless otherwise specified via latitudinal or state subdivisions in this table. Stock complexes are defined at § 660.11 under "Groundfish". Trip limits may be revised via inseason action; therefore, users should refer back to this table throughout the year. To convert pounds to kilograms, divide the weight in pounds by 2.20462. The resulting quotient is the weight in kilograms.

§ 660.330 [Amended]

18. Amend § 660.330 by:

a. Removing paragraphs (d)(9) through (d)(13); and

b. Redesignating paragraphs (d)(14) through (d)(16) as paragraphs (d)(9) through (d)(11).

19. Revise table 3a (North) to part 660, subpart F, as follows:

Table 3a (North) to Part 660, Subpart F—Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area Boundaries

Latitude	Boundary
North of 46°16' N lat.:	Shoreward EEZ–100 fm line
46°16' N lat. - 40°10' N lat.	30 fm line–75 fm line

Note 1 to Table 3a (North): The Non-Trawl RCA is an area closed to fishing with particular non-trawl gear types, as defined at § 660.11. Non-Trawl RCA boundaries apply in the EEZ only; however, state regulations may implement RCA boundaries in state waters; see appropriate state regulations; see appropriate state regulations for state closures. Non-Trawl RCA boundaries may be revised via inseason action; therefore, users should refer back to this table throughout the year.

20. Amend table 3b (North) to part 660, subpart F, by:

a. Revising the entries for “Black rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)”, “Nearshore rockfish complex (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)”, “Sablefish”, “Shelf rockfish complex (north of 42°00' N lat.)”, “Widow rockfish”, “Yelloweye rockfish”, and “Yellowtail rockfish”;

b. Removing the entry for “Quillback rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)”;

c. Adding a new entry for “California quillback rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)” in between the entries for “Cabezon/kelp greenling complex (Oregon)” and “Canary rockfish”; and

d. Removing the entry for “Shelf rockfish complex (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)”.

The revisions and addition read as follows:

Table 3b (North) to Part 660, Subpart F—Trip Limits for Open Access North of 40°10' N. lat.

Species	Trip Limit
* * * * * * *	
Black rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	8,000 lb/2 months.
* * * * * * *	
California quillback rockfish (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	300 lb/2 months
* * * * * * *	
Nearshore rockfish complex (42°00' N lat.-40°10' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months.
* * * * * * *	
Sablefish	4,000 lb/week not to exceed 8,000 lb/2 months.
Shelf rockfish complex	6,400 lb/2 months, of which no more than 300 lb may be vermilion/sunset rockfish
* * * * * * *	
Widow rockfish	8,000 lb/2 months
Yelloweye rockfish	50 lb/2 months
Yellowtail rockfish	5,000 lb/2 months
* * * * * * *	

Note 1 to table 3b (North): Trip limits apply in the EEZ only; see appropriate state regulations for state trip limits. Trip limits are effective year-round unless otherwise specified for different cumulative periods (defined at § 660.11 under "Trip limits"). Trip limits are effective from the United States-Canada border to lat. 40°10' N unless otherwise specified via latitudinal or state subdivisions in this table. Stock complexes are defined at § 660.11 under "Groundfish". Trip limits may be revised via inseason action; therefore, users should refer back to this table throughout the year. To convert pounds to kilograms, divide the weight in pounds by 2.20462. The resulting quotient is the weight in kilograms.

21. Revise table 3a (South) to part 660, subpart F, as follows:

Table 3a (South) to Part 660, Subpart F—Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area Boundaries

Latitude	Boundary
40°10' N lat. - 38°57.5' N lat.	40 fm line–75 fm line
38°57.5' N lat.- 34°27' N lat.	50 fm line–75 fm line
South of 34°27' Nlat.	100 fm line–150 fm line (also applies around islands and banks with both a 100-fm and 150-fm line defined at § 660.73)

Note 1 to table 3a (South): The Non-Trawl RCA is an area closed to fishing with particular non-trawl gear types, as defined at § 660.11. Non-Trawl RCA boundaries apply in the EEZ only; however, state regulations may implement RCA boundaries in state waters; see appropriate state regulations. Non-Trawl RCA boundaries may be revised via inseason action; therefore, users should refer back to this table throughout the year.

22. Amend table 3b (south) to part 660, subpart F, by:

a. Revising the entries for "Chilipepper rockfish (40°10' N lat.–34°27' N lat.)", "Cowcod", "Longspine thornyhead (40°10' to 34°27' N lat.)", "Shallow nearshore rockfish (south of 40°10' N lat.)", "Sablefish (40°10′ N lat.−36° N lat.)", "Sablefish (south of 36° N lat.)", "Shortspine thornyhead and longspine thornyhead (south of 34°27' N lat.)", "Widow rockfish (40°10' N lat.–34°27' N lat.)", and "Yelloweye rockfish";

b. Adding a new entry for "California quillback rockfish" in between the entries for "Cabezon" and "California scorpionfish";

c. Adding new entries for "Deeper nearshore rockfish complex

(40°10' N lat.–34°27' N lat.)" and "Deeper nearshore rockfish complex (south of 34°27' N lat.)" in between the entries for "Shallow nearshore rockfish (south of 40°10' N lat.)" and "Other fish (defined at § 660.11)"; and

d. Removing the entries for "Chilipepper rockfish (south of 34°27' N lat.)", "Widow rockfish (south of 34°27' N lat.), and "Deeper nearshore rockfish (south of 40°10' N lat.)".

The revisions and additions read as follows:

Table 3b (South) to Part 660, Subpart F—Trip Limits for Open Access South of 40°10' N. lat.

Species	Trip Limit
* * * * * * *	
California quillback rockfish	300 lb/2 months
* * * * * * *	
Chilipepper rockfish	9,000 lb/2 months
Cowcod	50 lb/2 months
* * * * * * *	
Longspine thornyheads (40°10' to 34°27' N lat.)	100 lb/2 months
* * * * * * *	
Shallow nearshore rockfish (south of 40°10' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months
Deeper nearshore rockfish complex (40°10' N lat.- 34°27' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months
Deeper nearshore rockfish complex (south of 34°27' N lat.)	3,000 lb/2 months, of which no more than 75 lb may be copper rockfish
* * * * * * *	
Sablefish (40°10′ N lat.−36° N lat.)	4,000 lb/week not to exceed 8,000 lb/2 months.
Sablefish (south of 36° N lat.)	2,500 lb/week not to exceed 7,500 lb/2 months.
* * * * * * *	
Shortspine thornyhead and longspine thornyhead (south of 34°27' N lat.)	100 lb/day, no more than 1,000 lb/2 months for all periods
* * * * * * *	
Widow rockfish	16,000 lb/2 months
Yelloweye rockfish	50 lb/2 months

Note 1 to table 3b (South): Trip limits apply in the EEZ only; see appropriate state regulations for state trip limits. Trip limits are effective year-round unless otherwise specified for different cumulative periods (defined at § 660.11 under "Trip limits"). Trip limits are effective from lat. 40°10' N to the United States-Mexico border unless otherwise specified via latitudinal or state subdivisions in this table. Stock complexes are defined at § 660.11 under "Groundfish". Trip limits may be revised via inseason action; therefore, users should refer back to this table throughout the year. To convert pounds to kilograms, divide the weight in pounds by 2.20462. The resulting quotient is the weight in kilograms.

23. Amend § 660.360 by:

a. Revising Table 1 to paragraph (c)(1)(i)(D), paragraph (c)(1)(ii), paragraph (c)(2)(i)(A), paragraphs (c)(2)(iii)(A) and (B), and paragraph (c)(2)(iii)(E);

b. Removing paragraph (c)(2)(iii)(F); and

c. Revising paragraph (c)(3).

The revisions read as follows:

§ 660.360 Recreational fishery—management measures.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(1) * * *

(i) * * *

(D) * * *

Table 1 To Paragraph (c)(1)(i)(d)—Washington Recreational Fishing Season Structure

<table>
<tr><th>Marine Area</th><th>Jan</th><th>Feb</th><th>Mar</th><th>Apr</th><th>May</th><th>June</th><th>July</th><th>Aug</th><th>Sep</th><th>Oct</th><th>Nov</th><th>Dec</th></tr>
<tr><td>3 & 4 (N. Coast)</td><td colspan="3">Closed</td><td colspan="2">Open[a]</td><td colspan="2">See WA State regulations for allowable depths [a b c]</td><td colspan="2">Open</td><td colspan="2">Closed</td></tr>
<tr><td>2 (S. Coast)</td><td colspan="3">Closed</td><td colspan="6">Open [a d]</td><td colspan="2">Closed</td></tr>
<tr><td>1 (Col. River)</td><td colspan="3">Closed</td><td colspan="6">Open [a e f]</td><td colspan="2">Closed</td></tr>
</table>

a Retention of copper, quillback, and vermilion rockfishes is prohibited May 1 through July 31.
b Fishing for or possession of groundfish seaward of the line approximating the 20-fm (37-m) depth contour is prohibited from June 1 through July 31, except bocaccio, silvergray, canary, widow, and yellowtail rockfishes as well as lingcod, sablefish, and Pacific cod can be retained during days open to the Pacific halibut fishery.
c Retention of yellowtail and widow rockfishes is allowed seaward of the line approximating 20-fm (37 m) in July.
d When lingcod is open, retention is prohibited seaward of a line drawn from Queets River (47°31.70' N lat. 124°45.00' W long.) to Leadbetter Point (46°38.17' N lat. 124°30.00' W long.), except on days open to the primary Pacific halibut fishery and June 1 - 15 and September 1 - 15.
e No groundfish may be landed if the vessel has brought halibut into port or landed halibut, except: sablefish, Pacific cod, all flatfish species, yellowtail, widow, canary, redstriped, greenstriped, silvergray, chilipepper, bocaccio, blue/deacon rockfish, and lingcod.
f Retention of lingcod is prohibited seaward of a line drawn from 46°38.17' N lat., 124°30.00' W long. to 46°33.00' N. lat., 124°28.55' W. long, except lingcod retention is allowed from June 1 - June 15 and Sept 1 - Sept 15.

(ii) *Rockfish.* In areas of the EEZ seaward of Washington (Washington Marine Areas 1-4) that are open to recreational groundfish fishing, there is a seven rockfish per day bag limit, including a sub-bag limit of five canary rockfish. This also includes a sub-bag limit of one yelloweye rockfish during the months of May and September only. In all other months, taking and retaining yelloweye rockfish is prohibited in all Marine Areas.

* * * * *

(2) * * *

(i) * * *

(A) *Stonewall Bank yelloweye rockfish conservation area.* Recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited within the Stonewall Bank YRCA. It is unlawful

for recreational fishing vessels to take and retain, possess, or land groundfish taken with recreational gear within the Stonewall Bank YRCA. A vessel fishing in the Stonewall Bank YRCA may not be in possession of any groundfish. Recreational vessels may transit through the Stonewall Bank YRCA with or without groundfish on board. The Stonewall Bank YRCA is defined by latitude and longitude coordinates specified at § 660.70, subpart C.

* * * * *

(iii) * * *

(A) *Marine fish.* The bag limit is 10 marine fish per day, which includes rockfish, kelp greenling, cabezon, and other groundfish species. Under the marine fish daily bag limit, there is a sub-bag limit of one fish per day for yelloweye rockfish. The daily bag limit in the long-leader gear fishery is 10 fish per day with a sub-bag limit of five fish per day for canary rockfish. The bag limit of marine fish excludes Pacific halibut, salmonids, tuna, perch species, sturgeon, sanddabs, flatfish, lingcod, sablefish, striped bass, hybrid bass, offshore pelagic species, and baitfish (*e.g.*, herring, smelt, anchovies, and sardines). The minimum size for cabezon retained in the Oregon recreational fishery is 16 in (41 cm) total length.

(B) *Lingcod.* There is a three fish limit per day. The minimum size for lingcod retained in the Oregon recreational fishery is 22 in (56 cm) total length. For vessels using long-leader gear (as defined in § 660.351), possession of lingcod is prohibited.

* * * * *

(E) *In the Pacific halibut fisheries.* Retention of groundfish is governed in part by annual management measures for Pacific halibut fisheries, which are published in the **Federal Register**. Between the Columbia River and Humbug Mountain, during days open to the "all-depth" sport halibut fisheries when the recreational groundfish fishery is restricted to inside of the 40-fm (73-m) depth restriction and Pacific halibut are onboard

the vessel, no groundfish, except sablefish, Pacific cod, and other species of flatfish (sole, flounder, sanddab), may be taken and retained, possessed or landed, except with long-leader gear (as defined at § 660.351). "All-depth" season days are established in the annual management measures for Pacific halibut fisheries, which are published in the **Federal Register** and are announced on the NMFS Pacific halibut hotline, 1-800-662-9825.

(3) *California.* Seaward of California, for groundfish species not specifically mentioned in this paragraph, fishermen are subject to the overall 20-fish bag limit for all species of finfish, of which no more than 10 fish of any one species may be taken or possessed by any one person. Petrale sole, Pacific sanddab, and starry flounder are not subject to a bag limit. Recreational spearfishing for all federally managed groundfish, is exempt from closed areas and seasons, consistent with title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. This exemption applies only to recreational vessels and divers provided no other fishing gear, except spearfishing gear, is on board the vessel. Retention of bronzespotted rockfish and quillback rockfish is prohibited in the recreational fishery seaward of California all year in all areas. Retention of species or species groups for which the season is closed is prohibited in the recreational fishery seaward of California all year in all areas, unless otherwise authorized in this section. For each person engaged in recreational fishing in the EEZ seaward of California, the following closed areas, seasons, bag limits, and size limits apply:

(i) *Recreational groundfish conservation areas off California.* A Groundfish Conservation Area (GCA), a type of closed area, is a geographic area defined by coordinates expressed in degrees latitude and longitude. The following GCAs apply to participants in California's recreational fishery.

(A) *Recreational rockfish conservation areas.* The Recreational RCAs are areas that are closed to recreational fishing for certain groundfish. Fishing for the Rockfish

Complex as defined in paragraph (c)(3)(ii) of this section, or lingcod, with recreational gear is prohibited within the Recreational RCA. It is unlawful to take and retain, possess, or land the Rockfish Complex or lingcod taken with recreational gear within the Recreational RCA, unless otherwise authorized in this section. A vessel fishing in the Recreational RCA may not be in possession of any species prohibited by the restrictions that apply within the Recreational RCA. For example, if a vessel fishes in the recreational salmon fishery within the Recreational RCA, the vessel cannot be in possession of lingcod or any species in the Rockfish Complex while in the Recreational RCA. The vessel may, however, on the same trip, fish for and retain species in the Rockfish Complex shoreward of the Recreational RCA on the return trip to port. If the season is closed for a species or species group, fishing for that species or species group is prohibited both within the Recreational RCA and outside of the Recreational RCA, unless otherwise authorized in this section. In times and areas where a Recreational RCA is in place, vessels may stop, anchor in, or transit through waters closed by the Recreational RCA so long as they do not have any hook-and-line fishing gear in the water. Coordinates approximating boundary lines at the 30-fm (55-m) through 100-fm (183-m) depth contours can be found at §§ 660.71 through 660.73. The recreational fishing season structure and Recreational RCA depth boundaries seaward of California by management area and month are as follows:

(*1*) Between 42° N lat. (California/Oregon border) and 40°10' N lat. (Northern Management Area), recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex and lingcod is closed January 1 through March 31 and is open at all-depths from April 1 through December 31.

(*2*) Between 40°10' N lat. and 38°57.50' N lat. (Mendocino Management Area), recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex and lingcod is closed from January 1 through March 31 and is open at all-depths from April 1 through December 31.

(*3*) Between 38°57.50' N lat. and 37°11' N lat. (San Francisco Management Area), recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex and lingcod is closed from January 1 through March 31 and is open at all-depths from April 1 through December 31.

(*4*) Between 37°11' N lat. and 34°27' N lat. (Central Management Area), recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex and lingcod is closed from January 1 through March 31 and is open at all-depths from April 1 through December 31.

(*5*) South of 34°27' N lat. (Southern Management Area), recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex and lingcod is closed from January 1 through March 31 and is open at all-depths from April 1 through December 31.

(B) *Groundfish exclusion areas (GEAs).* GEAs are closed areas defined by specific latitude and longitude coordinates (specified at § 660.70) where recreational and/or commercial fishing for groundfish is prohibited unless otherwise noted at § 660.70(t). It is unlawful to fish for, take and retain, possess (except for the purpose of continuous transit) or land groundfish within the GEAs unless otherwise specified at § 660.70(t). Prohibited recreational fishing gear for targeting groundfish, as specified at § 660.70(t), may not be deployed while transiting through a GEA. If fishing for non-groundfish species within a GEA, where all groundfish fishing is prohibited, then no groundfish may be on board the vessel.

(C) *Essential fish habitat conservation areas.* The Essential Fish Habitat Conservation Areas (EFHCAs) are closed areas, defined by specific latitude and longitude coordinates at §§ 660.76 through 660.79, subpart C where specified types of fishing are prohibited. Prohibitions applying to specific EFHCAs are found at § 660.12, subpart C.

(ii) *Rockfish Complex.* The Rockfish Complex includes all rockfish in the genus *Sebastes*. This category does not include California scorpionfish, also known as “sculpin”, cabezon, or kelp greenling.

(A) When recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex is open, it is permitted only outside of the Recreational RCAs described in paragraph (c)(3)(i) of this section.

(*1*) Between 42° N lat. (California/Oregon border) and 40°10' N lat. (Northern Management Area), recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex is closed from January 1 through March 31 and is open April 1 through December 31.

(*2*) Between 40°10' N lat. and 38°57.50' N lat. (Mendocino Management Area), recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex is closed from January 1 through March 31 and is open April 1 through December 31.

(*3*) Between 38°57.50' N lat. and 37°11' N lat. (San Francisco Management Area), recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex is closed from January 1 through March 31 and is open April 1 through December 31.

(*4*) Between 37°11' N lat. and 34°27' N lat. (Central Management Area), recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex is closed from January 1 through March 31 and is open April 1 through December 31.

(*5*) South of 34°27' N lat. (Southern Management Area), recreational fishing for the Rockfish Complex is closed from January 1 through March 31 and is open April 1 through December 31.

(B) *Bag limits, hook limits.* In times and areas when the recreational season for the Rockfish Complex is open, there is a limit of two hooks and one line when fishing for the Rockfish Complex. The bag limit is 10 Rockfish Complex fish per day, with the following sub-bag limits: two fish for vermilion/sunset rockfish, two fish for canary rockfish, one fish for copper rockfish, one fish for yelloweye rockfish during the month of December only, and one fish for cowcod during the month of December only. These sub-bag limits count towards the bag limit for the Rockfish Complex and are not in addition to that limit. Retention of bronzespotted rockfish and quillback rockfish is prohibited year-round. Retention of yelloweye rockfish and cowcod is prohibited from

January 1 through November 30. Multi-day limits are authorized by a valid permit issued by California and must not exceed the daily limit multiplied by the value of days in the fishing trip.

(C) *Dressing/fileting.* Yelloweye rockfish and cowcod must be landed whole. All other Rockfish Complex filets must have the entire skin attached.

(iii) *Cabezon.* (A) *Seasons.* When recreational fishing for cabezon is open, it is permitted both outside of and within the Recreational RCAs described in paragraph (c)(3)(i) of this section. Recreational fishing for cabezon is open from January 1 through December 31.

(B) *Bag limits, hook limits.* In times and areas when the recreational season for cabezon is open, there is a limit of two hooks and one line when fishing for cabezon. The bag limit is 10 fish per day. Multi-day limits are authorized by a valid permit issued by California and must not exceed the daily limit multiplied by the number of days in the fishing trip.

(C) *Dressing/fileting.* Each cabezon filet must have the entire skin attached.

(iv) *Kelp greenling.* (A) *Seasons.* When recreational fishing for kelp greenling is open, it is permitted both outside of and within the Recreational RCAs described in paragraph (c)(3)(i) of this section. Recreational fishing for kelp greenling is open from January 1 through December 31.

(B) *Bag limits, hook limits.* In times and areas when the recreational season for kelp greenling is open, there is a limit of two hooks and one line when fishing for kelp greenling. The bag limit is 10 fish per day. Multi-day limits are authorized by a valid permit issued by California and must not exceed the daily limit multiplied by the number of days in the fishing trip.

(C) *Dressing/fileting.* Each kelp greenling filet must have the entire skin attached.

(v) *Lingcod*. (A) *Seasons.* When recreational fishing for lingcod is open, it is permitted only outside of the recreational RCAs described in paragraph (c)(3)(i) of this section.

(*1*) Between 42° N lat. (California/Oregon border) and 40°10' N lat. (Northern Management Area), recreational fishing for lingcod is open from April 1 through December 31 (*i.e.*, recreational fishing for lingcod in the EEZ is closed from January 1 through March 31).

(*2*) Between 40°10' N lat. and 38°57.50' N lat. (Mendocino Management Area), recreational fishing for lingcod is open from April 1 through December 31 (*i.e.*, recreational fishing for lingcod in the EEZ is closed from January 1 through March 31).

(*3*) Between 38°57.50' N lat. and 37°11' N lat. (San Francisco Management Area), recreational fishing for lingcod is open from April 1 through December 31 (*i.e.*, recreational fishing for lingcod in the EEZ is closed from January 1 through March 31).

(*4*) Between 37°11' N lat. and 34°27' N lat. (Central Management Area), recreational fishing for lingcod in the EEZ is open from April 1 through December 31 (*i.e.*, recreational fishing for lingcod in the EEZ is closed from January 1 through March 31).

(*5*) South of 34°27' N lat. (Southern Management Area), recreational fishing for lingcod in the EEZ is open from April 1 through December 31 (*i.e.*, recreational fishing for lingcod in the EEZ is closed from January 1 through March 31).

(B) *Bag limits, hook limits.* In times and areas when the recreational season for lingcod is open, there is a limit of two hooks and one line when fishing for lingcod. The bag limit is two lingcod per day. Multi-day limits are authorized by a valid permit issued

by California and must not exceed the daily limit multiplied by the number of days in the fishing trip.

(C) *Size limits.* Lingcod may be no smaller than 22 in (56 cm) total length.

(D) *Dressing/fileting.* Lingcod filets may be no smaller than 14 in (36 cm) in length. Each lingcod filet must have the entire skin attached.

(vi) *"Other Flatfish," petrale sole, and starry flounder.* "Other Flatfish" are defined at § 660.11, and include butter sole, curlfin sole, flathead sole, Pacific sanddab, rex sole, rock sole, and sand sole.

(A) *Seasons.* Recreational fishing for "Other Flatfish," petrale sole, and starry flounder is open from January 1 through December 31. When recreational fishing for "Other Flatfish," petrale sole, and starry flounder is open, it is permitted both outside and within the Recreational RCA described in paragraph (c)(3)(i) of this section.

(B) *Bag limits, hook limits.* In times and areas where the recreational season for "Other Flatfish," petrale sole, and starry flounder is open, "Other Flatfish" are subject to the overall 20-fish bag limit for all species of finfish, of which there may be no more than 10 fish of any one species; there is no daily bag limit for petrale sole, starry flounder and Pacific sanddab.

(C) *Size limits.* There are no size limits for "Other Flatfish," petrale sole, and starry flounder.

(D) *Dressing/Filleting.* "Other Flatfish," petrale sole, and starry flounder may be filleted at sea. Filets may be of any size, but must bear intact a 1-inch (2.6-cm) square patch of skin.

(vii) *California scorpionfish.* California scorpionfish are also known as "sculpin".

(A) *Seasons.* When recreational fishing for California scorpionfish is open, it is permitted both outside of and within the Recreational RCAs described in paragraph

(c)(3)(i) of this section. Recreational fishing for California scorpionfish is open from January 1 through December 31.

(B) *Bag limits, hook limits.* In times and areas where the recreational season for California scorpionfish is open, there is a limit of two hooks and one line. The bag limit is five California scorpionfish per day. California scorpionfish do not count against the 10-Rockfish-Complex-fish-per-day limit. Multi-day limits are authorized by a valid permit issued by California and must not exceed the daily limit multiplied by the number of days in the fishing trip.

(C) *Dressing/fileting.* Each California scorpionfish filet must have the entire skin attached.

* * * * *

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