



# The LINE. A Publication of the Pacific Fishery Management Council

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*The Line is a summary of West Coast fisheries news, for fishermen, published five times per year. The Pacific Fishery Management Council ([www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)) recommends commercial & recreational fishery management measures for Federal waters off the coasts of Washington, Oregon & California. The Council has five public meetings a year. All Council recommendations are subject to approval by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). To sign up for our full newsletter and other notices, go to <http://tinyurl.com/3s5edce>.*

## ROCKFISH, FLATFISH, WHITING AND OTHER GROUND FISH.

**General:** The Council adopted preferred harvest specifications for 2013-2014 as outlined at <http://tinyurl.com/7dw4vq9>, except for lingcod. The 2013-2014 lingcod harvest spex will be specified N. and S. of 40°10 N. latitude with the annual catch limits set equal to the acceptable biological catches of 3,036 mt and 2,878 mt, respectively.

- The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission is looking into the possibility of replacing groundfish observers with electronic monitoring systems on some trawl vessels. The Council will discuss this at its June 2012 meeting.
- In 2013, stock assessments are tentatively scheduled for darkblotched rockfish, bocaccio, petrale sole, shortspine & longspine thornyheads, cowcod, aurora rockfish, and Pacific sanddabs. Pacific ocean perch, sablefish, canary rockfish & yelloweye rockfish will also be looked at, but will not be the subject of full assessments.
- The shoreward boundary of the trawl Rockfish Conservation Area was moved from 75 to 100 fm for the area 40°10 to 48°10 N. latitude, for Periods 3 & 5.
- The Council is looking at essential fish habitat for groundfish and is scheduled to take final action in June 2013.
- A moratorium on trading all quota shares may be continued while quota share reallocation is being considered.
- The Council is working on numerous other trailing actions related to quota shares.

**Whiting:** Starting this year, whiting harvest spex are being set in an international process with Canada. This year, the total allowable catch is 186,037 metric tons after accounting for research & incidental catch. The sector allocations are 42% to the shoreside sector, 34% to catcher-processors, and 24% to the mothership sector.

- In response to a lawsuit, the Council is looking at different allocation base periods for the shoreside whiting quota shares allocation to catcher vessels with limited entry permits and shoreside whiting buyers. Alternative base periods range from 2003-2010; this will be discussed at the June Council meeting.

**Widow:** Widow rockfish are no longer considered overfished. The Council is considering a reallocation of widow rockfish quota shares and will start discussing this at its November meeting.

**Sablefish:** In April, the Council recommended reductions to the sablefish daily trip limit fishery north of 36° N. latitude starting May 1, 2012 for the rest of the year. The limits would change from 1,300 pounds per week, not to exceed 5,000 pounds per two months, to 1,000 pounds per week, not to exceed 4,000 pounds per two months, subject to approval by NMFS.

## SALMON.

Salmon fishing looks good for most of the coast this year. Returns to the Klamath and Sacramento are expected to be higher than usual, with Klamath returns four times last year's size.

- The Council is using a new, more conservative method to estimate Sacramento returns, because estimates have been off in the last few years.
- The Oregon Coast natural coho forecast in 2012 is about 290,000, the largest forecast since at least 1996. For more details, see <http://tinyurl.com/852cwr4>.
- Strait of Juan de Fuca coho, declared overfished in 2009, are now rebuilt.

## HALIBUT.

Beginning May 1, salmon troll (incidental fishery) license holders may land no more than one Pacific halibut per each four Chinook, except one Pacific halibut may be landed without meeting this requirement, & no more than 20 halibut may be landed per trip. Retained halibut must be no less than 32" in total length, with head on.

- In the fixed gear sablefish fishery N of Point Chehalis, WA, beginning May 1, incidental Pacific halibut landings are restricted to 50 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed, and up to two additional halibut in excess of this ratio.

## SARDINES, ANCHOVIES AND OTHER COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES.

The Council recommended that NMFS approve an exempted fishing permit proposed by the Northwest Aerial Sardine Survey. Any of the 3000 metric ton set-aside that is not used will be re-allocated to the third period directed fishery.

## TUNAS, SWORDFISH AND OTHER HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES.

The Council recommended continuing the U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty but suspending shared access to each country's waters at least through 2012, to allow time to study the impacts of Canadian vessels fishing in U.S. waters.

- The Council will look at whether changes can be made to the closure dates or southern boundary of the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area to allow some California drift gillnet fishing. NMFS will look at creating hard caps for sea turtle take in the drift gillnet fishery.
- NMFS is also studying different gear types for targeting swordfish.

## OTHER NEWS.

The Council is calling for more water in the Klamath River to help the large number of salmon returning, and to avoid a fish kill like the one that occurred in 2002. The Council is also calling for the Army Corps of Engineers to reconsider their proposed rule to remove most vegetation from levees; see <http://tinyurl.com/7fk7qod>.

- A grid of acoustic receivers will soon be moored off Stonewall Bank, Ore., to study yelloweye rockfish. For more info, contact Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife at (541) 867-0300 x273.
- Find information about marine debris from the Japanese tsunami online at <http://tinyurl.com/dxocuay>. NOAA is asking those who have seen tsunami debris to email [DisasterDebris@noaa.gov](mailto:DisasterDebris@noaa.gov).
- The next Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting will be held on June 21-26 in San Mateo, Cal. For more information see our website or call us at the number above.

## PEOPLE.

Sarah McTee has been appointed to the conservation seat on the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel, and Nick Jurlin was appointed to the California commercial seat on the same panel.

- The Council is creating a South of Humboldt Halibut Workgroup and an Area 2A Policy Committee to look at halibut issues. For more info, email [Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov](mailto:Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov).