

REGULATIONS RELATED TO TRAWL GEAR CONFIGURATION, GEARS ALLOWED  
ON BOARD, AND AREA OF USE

The following is an excerpt of some groundfish gear regulations and may not include all trawl gear restrictions. Please refer to the Code of Federal Regulations at [50 CFR part 660](#) for complete groundfish regulations—current as of August 14, 2015.

**§ 660.11 General definitions.**

Fishing gear includes the following types of gear and equipment:

(11) Trawl gear means a cone or funnel-shaped net that is towed through the water, and can include a pair trawl that towed simultaneously by two boats. For the purpose of this definition, trawl gear includes groundfish and non-groundfish trawl. See definitions for groundfish trawl and non-groundfish trawls (previously called “exempted trawl”).

(i) Bottom trawl means a trawl in which the otter boards or the footrope of the net are in contact with the seabed. It includes demersal seine gear, and pair trawls fished on the bottom. Any trawl not meeting the requirements for a midwater trawl in §660.130(b), subpart D is a bottom trawl.

(A) Beam trawl gear means a type of trawl gear in which a beam is used to hold the trawl open during fishing. Otter boards or doors are not used.

(B) Large footrope trawl gear means a bottom trawl gear with a footrope diameter larger than 8 inches (20 cm,) and no larger than 19 inches (48 cm) including any rollers, bobbins, or other material encircling or tied along the length of the footrope.

(C) Small footrope trawl gear means a bottom trawl gear with a footrope diameter of 8 inches (20 cm) or smaller, including any rollers, bobbins, or other material encircling or tied along the length of the footrope. Selective flatfish trawl gear that meets the gear component requirements in §660.130(b), subpart D is a type of small footrope trawl gear.

(ii) Midwater (pelagic or off-bottom) trawl means a trawl in which the otter boards and footrope of the net remain above the seabed. It includes pair trawls if fished in midwater. A midwater trawl has no rollers or bobbins on any part of the net or its component wires, ropes, and chains. For additional midwater trawl gear requirements and restrictions, see §660.130(b), subpart D.

(iii) Trawl gear components include:

(A) Breastline means a rope or cable that connects the end of the headrope and the end of the trawl fishing line along the edge of the trawl web closest to the towing point.

(B) Chafing gear means webbing or other material attached to the codend of a trawl net to protect the codend from wear.

(C) Codend. (See §600.10 of this chapter)

- (D) Double-bar mesh means webbing comprised of two lengths of twine tied into a single knot.
- (E) Double-walled codend means a codend constructed of two walls (layers) of webbing.
- (F) Footrope means a chain, rope, or wire attached to the bottom front end of the trawl webbing forming the leading edge of the bottom panel of the trawl net, and attached to the fishing line.
- (G) Headrope means a chain, rope, or wire attached to the trawl webbing forming the leading edge of the top panel of the trawl net.
- (H) Rollers or bobbins means devices made of wood, steel, rubber, plastic, or other hard material that encircle the trawl footrope. These devices are commonly used to either bounce or pivot over seabed obstructions, in order to prevent the trawl footrope and net from snagging on the seabed.
- (I) Single-walled codend means a codend constructed of a single wall of webbing knitted with single or double-bar mesh.
- (J) Trawl fishing line means a length of chain, rope, or wire rope in the bottom front end of a trawl net to which the webbing or lead ropes are attached.
- (K) Trawl riblines means a heavy rope or line that runs down the sides, top, or underside of a trawl net from the mouth of the net to the terminal end of the codend to strengthen the net during fishing.

Groundfish trawl means trawl gear that is used under the authority of a valid limited entry permit issued under subparts C and D of this part endorsed for trawl gear and which meets the gear requirements specified in subpart D of this part. It does not include any type of trawl gear listed as non-groundfish trawl gear (previously called “exempted gear”).

**§ 660.130 Trawl fishery—management measures.**

(b) Trawl gear requirements and restrictions. Trawl nets may be fished with or without otter boards, and may use warps or cables to herd fish.

(1) Codends. Only single-walled codends may be used in any trawl. Double-walled codends are prohibited. Chafing gear may not be used to create a double-walled codend. {revised at 79 FR 71340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015 }

(2) Mesh size. Groundfish trawl gear must meet the minimum mesh size requirements in this paragraph. Mesh size requirements apply throughout the net. Minimum trawl mesh sizes are:

Bottom trawl, 4.5 inches (11.4 cm); midwater trawl, 3.0 inches (7.6 cm). Minimum trawl mesh size requirements are met if a 20-gauge stainless steel wedge, less one thickness of the metal wedge, can be passed with only thumb pressure through at least 16 of 20 sets of two meshes each of wet mesh.

(3) Bottom trawl gear {revised at 79 FR 71340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015 }

(i) Large footrope trawl gear. Lines or ropes that run parallel to the footrope may not be augmented with material encircling or tied along their length such that they have a diameter larger than 19 inches (48 cm). For enforcement purposes, the footrope will be measured in a straight line from the outside edge to the opposite outside edge at the widest part on

any individual part, including any individual disk, roller, bobbin, or any other device. {revised at 79 FR 71340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015}

(ii) Small footrope trawl gear. Lines or ropes that run parallel to the footrope may not be augmented with material encircling or tied along their length such that they have a diameter larger than 8 inches (20 cm). For enforcement purposes, the footrope will be measured in a straight line from the outside edge to the opposite outside edge at the widest part on any individual part, including any individual disk, roller, bobbin, or any other device. {revised at 79 FR 71340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015}

(A) Selective flatfish trawl gear. Selective flatfish trawl gear is a type of small footrope trawl gear. The selective flatfish trawl net must be a two-seamed net with no more than two riblines, excluding the codend. The breastline may not be longer than 3 ft (0.92 m) in length. There may be no floats along the center third of the headrope or attached to the top panel except on the riblines. The footrope must be less than 105 ft (32.26 m) in length. The headrope must be not less than 30 percent longer than the footrope. The headrope shall be measured along the length of the headrope from the outside edge to the opposite outside edge. An explanatory diagram of a selective flatfish trawl net is provided as Figure 1 of part 660, subpart D. {added at 79 FR 71340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015}

(B) [Reserved] {added at 79 FR 71340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015}

(iii) Chafing gear restrictions for bottom trawl gear. Chafing gear may encircle no more than 50 percent of the net's circumference and may be in one or more sections. Chafing gear may be used only on the last 50 meshes, measured from the terminal (closed) end of the codend. Only the front edge (edge closest to the open end of the codend) and sides of each section of chafing gear may be attached to the codend; except at the corners, the terminal edge (edge closest to the closed end of the codend) of each section of chafing gear must not be attached to the net. Chafing gear must be attached outside any riblines and restraining straps. {revised at 79 FR 71340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015}

(4) Midwater (pelagic or off-bottom) trawl gear. Midwater trawl gear must have unprotected footropes at the trawl mouth, and must not have rollers, bobbins, tires, wheels, rubber discs, or any similar device anywhere on any part of the net. The footrope of midwater gear may not be enlarged by encircling it with chains or by any other means. Ropes or lines running parallel to the footrope of midwater trawl gear must be bare and may not be suspended with chains or any other materials. Sweep lines, including the bottom leg of the bridle, must be bare. For at least 20 ft (6.15 m) immediately behind the footrope or headrope, bare ropes or mesh of 16-inch (40.6-cm) minimum mesh size must completely encircle the net. {revised at 79 FR 71340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015}

(i) Chafing gear restrictions for midwater trawl gear. Chafing gear may cover the bottom and sides of the codend in either one or more sections. Only the front edge (edge closest to the open end of the codend) and sides of each section of chafing gear may be attached to the codend; except at the corners, the terminal edge (edge closest to the closed end of the codend) of each section of chafing gear must not be attached to the net. Chafing gear is not permitted on the top codend panel

except as provided in paragraph (b)(4)(ii) of this section. { revised at 79 FR 71 340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015 }

(ii) Chafing gear exception for midwater trawl gear. A band of mesh (a “skirt”) may encircle the net under or over transfer cables, lifting or splitting straps (chokers), riblines, and restraining straps, but must be the same mesh size and coincide knot-to-knot with the net to which it is attached and be no wider than 16 meshes. { revised at 79 FR 71340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015 }

(c) Restrictions by limited entry trawl gear type. Management measures may vary depending on the type of trawl gear (i.e., large footrope, small footrope, selective flatfish, or midwater trawl gear) used and/or on board a vessel during a fishing trip, cumulative limit period, and the area fished. Trawl nets may be used on and off the seabed. For some species or species groups, Table 1 (North) and Table 1(South) of this subpart provide trip limits that are specific to different types of trawl gear: Large footrope, small footrope (including selective flatfish), selective flatfish, midwater, and multiple types. If Table 1 (North) and Table 1 (South) of this subpart provide gear specific limits for a particular species or species group, it is unlawful to take and retain, possess or land that species or species group with limited entry trawl gears other than those listed. The following restrictions are in addition to the prohibitions at §660.112(a)(5). { revised at 75 FR 82296, 12/30/2010; revised at 76 FR 74725, 12/1/2011; revised at 79 FR 71340, 12/02/2014, effective 1/1/2015 }

(1) Fishing with large footrope trawl gear. It is unlawful for any vessel using large footrope gear to fish for groundfish shoreward of the RCAs defined at paragraph (e)(4) of this section and at §§660.70 through 660.74, subpart C. The use of large footrope gear is permitted seaward of the RCAs coastwide.

(2) Fishing with small footrope trawl gear. North of 40°10' N. lat., it is unlawful for any vessel using small footrope gear (except selective flatfish gear) to fish for groundfish or have small footrope trawl gear (except selective flatfish gear) onboard while fishing shoreward of the RCA defined at paragraph (e) of this section and at §§660.70 through 660.74. South of 40°10' N. lat., small footrope gear is required shoreward of the RCA. Small footrope gear is permitted seaward of the RCA coastwide. { revised at 76 FR 53833, August 30, 2011 }

(i) North of 40°10' N. lat., selective flatfish gear is required shoreward of the RCA defined at paragraph (e) of this section and at §§660.70, through 660.74. South of 40°10' N. lat., selective flatfish gear is permitted, but not required, shoreward of the RCA. The use of selective flatfish trawl gear is permitted seaward of the RCA coastwide. { revised at 76 FR 53833, August 30, 2011 }

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) Fishing with midwater trawl gear. North of 40°10' N. lat., midwater trawl gear is permitted only for vessels participating in the primary Pacific whiting fishery (for details on the Pacific whiting fishery see §660.131, subpart D.) South of 40°10' N. lat., the use of midwater trawl gear is prohibited shoreward of the RCA and permitted seaward of the RCA.

(4) More than one type of trawl gear on board. The trip limits in Table 1 (North) or Table 1 (South) of this subpart must not be exceeded. { revised at 76 FR 74725, 12/1/2011 }

(i) The following restrictions apply to vessels operating north of 40°10' N. lat.:

(A) A vessel may not have both groundfish trawl gear and non-groundfish trawl gear onboard simultaneously. A vessel may not have both bottom

trawl gear and midwater trawl gear onboard simultaneously. A vessel may have more than one type of limited entry bottom trawl gear on board, either simultaneously or successively, during a cumulative limit period.

(B) If a vessel fishes exclusively with large or small footrope trawl gear during an entire cumulative limit period, the vessel is subject to the small or large footrope trawl gear cumulative limits and that vessel must fish seaward of the RCA during that limit period.

(C) If a vessel fishes exclusively with selective flatfish trawl gear during an entire cumulative limit period, then the vessel is subject to the selective flatfish trawl gear-cumulative limits during that limit period, regardless of whether the vessel is fishing shoreward or seaward of the RCA.

(D) If more than one type of bottom trawl gear (selective flatfish, large footrope, or small footrope) is on board, either simultaneously or successively, at any time during a cumulative limit period, then the most restrictive cumulative limit associated with the bottom trawl gear on board during that cumulative limit period applies for the entire cumulative limit period, regardless of whether the vessel is fishing shoreward or seaward of the RCA.

(E) If a vessel fishes both north and south of 40°10' N. lat. with any type of small footrope gear onboard the vessel at any time during the cumulative limit period, the most restrictive trip limit associated with the gear on board applies for that trip and will count toward the cumulative trip limit for that gear (See crossover provisions at §660.120, subpart D.)

(F) Midwater trawl gear is allowed only for vessels participating in the primary whiting season.

(ii) The following restrictions apply to vessels operating south of 40°10' N. lat.:

(A) A vessel may not have both groundfish trawl gear and non-groundfish trawl gear onboard simultaneously. A vessel may not have both bottom trawl gear and midwater trawl gear onboard simultaneously. A vessel may not have small footrope trawl gear and any other type of bottom trawl gear onboard simultaneously.

(B) If a vessel fishes both north and south of 40°10' N. lat. with any type of small footrope gear onboard the vessel at any time during the cumulative limit period, the most restrictive trip limit associated with the gear on board applies for that trip and will count toward the cumulative trip limit for that gear (See crossover provisions at §660.120, subpart D.) {redesignated at 76 FR 74725, 12/1/2011}

§660.60(h)(7) Crossover provisions. Crossover provisions apply to two activities: Fishing on different sides of a management line, or fishing in both the limited entry and open access fisheries....Crossover provisions also apply to vessels that fish in both the limited entry and open access fisheries, or that use open access non-trawl gear while registered to limited entry fixed gear permits. Fishery specific crossover provisions can be found in subparts D through F of this part. {revised at 75 FR 78344, 12/15/2010; revised at 76 FR 74725, 12/1/2011}....

(ii) Fishing in both limited entry and open access fisheries —

(A) Fishing in limited entry and open access fisheries with different trip limits. Open access trip limits apply to any fishing conducted with open access gear, even if the vessel has a valid limited entry permit with an endorsement for another type of gear, except such provisions do not apply to IFQ species defined at §660.140(c), for vessels that are declared into the Shorebased IFQ Program (see §660.13(d)(5)(iv)(A) for valid Shorebased IFQ Program declarations). A vessel that fishes in both the open access and limited entry fisheries is not entitled to two separate trip limits for the same species. If a vessel has a limited entry permit registered to it at any time during the trip limit period and uses open access gear, but the open access limit is smaller than the limited entry limit, the open access limit may not be exceeded and counts toward the limited entry limit. If a vessel has a limited entry permit registered to it at any time during the trip limit period and uses open access gear, but the open access limit is larger than the limited entry limit, the smaller limited entry limit applies, even if taken entirely with open access gear.

- (B) Limited entry permit restrictions for vessels fishing in the open access fishery
- (1) Vessel registered to a limited entry trawl permit. To participate in the open access fishery, described at part 660, subpart F, with open access gear, defined at §660.11, a vessel registered to a limit entry trawl permit must make the appropriate fishery declaration, as specified at §660.14(d)(5)(iv)(A). In addition, a vessel registered to a limit entry trawl permit must remove the permit from their vessel, as specified at §660.25(b)(4)(v), unless the vessel will be fishing in the open access fishery under one of the following declarations specified at §660.13(d):
    - (i) Non-groundfish trawl gear for pink shrimp,
    - (ii) Non-groundfish trawl gear for ridgeback prawn,
    - (iii) Non-groundfish trawl gear for California halibut,
    - (iv) Non-groundfish trawl gear for sea cucumber,
    - (v) Open access Dungeness crab pot/trap gear,
    - (vi) Open access HMS line gear,
    - (vii) Open access salmon troll gear,
    - (viii) Open access Coastal Pelagic Species net gear.
  - (2) Vessel registered to a limited entry fixed gear permit. To participate with open access gear, defined at §660.11, subpart C, a vessel registered to a limit entry fixed gear permit must make the appropriate open access declaration, as specified at §660.14(d)(5)(iv)(A).