

UPDATE ON THE WIDOW REALLOCATION RULEMAKING

NMFS is currently working on a rulemaking to reallocate widow rockfish quota shares (QS) in the shorebased individual fishing quota (IFQ) sector of the groundfish catch share program, based on the Council's final action in April 2015. We plan to publish the proposed rule in May 2016 and the final rule in fall 2016, to be effective with a reallocation for January 1, 2017. Consistent with the process for initial allocations in 2010, we intend to use landings data from the Pacific State Marine Fishery Commission's PacFIN database to calculate the reallocated widow rockfish QS, and we plan to provide permit owners the opportunity to review their widow catch data before we take a snapshot of the database for the purpose of reallocation. While we think is likely that limited entry permit holders already corrected the data, if necessary, in 2009 for the initial allocation, we want to provide an additional opportunity.

While working on the reallocation rulemaking, NMFS identified an issue and would like to notify the Council of our plan. In the shorebased IFQ program, vessel limits cap the amount of quota pounds (QP) that a vessel may catch or hold in its vessel account during the year (annual vessel limits), and the amount of unused overfished species QP that a vessel account can hold on a given day (daily vessel limits). Please see Table 1 below for a list of all current vessel limits (the row for widow rockfish is highlighted gray).

Although widow rockfish has been successfully rebuilt, it continues to have an overfished species daily vessel limit specified in regulation. NMFS plans to propose removing the daily vessel limit for widow rockfish through the widow reallocation rulemaking. The Council and NMFS originally intended the daily vessel limits to prevent hoarding of unused overfished species QP. Since widow rockfish has been rebuilt, and the ACL has significantly increased, the daily vessel limit is no longer needed. The annual QP vessel limit will remain in place. In the future, the Council may also want to consider removing the IFQ daily vessel limit for canary rockfish through a separate action, and/or creating a process to automatically remove the daily vessel limit when an overfished IFQ species becomes rebuilt.

Table 1. Shorebased IFQ Annual & Daily Vessel Limits currently specified in regulation,

with 2016 QP Equivalents – widow rockfish is highlighted gray because NMFS plans to propose removing the daily vessel limit through the widow reallocation rulemaking

IFQ Species	2016 IFQ Allocation (lbs)	Annual Vessel Limit (%)	Annual Vessel Limit (lbs)	Daily Vessel Limit (%)	Daily Vessel Limit (lbs)	
Arrowtooth flounder	6,687,458	20.0%	1,337,492			
Bocaccio rockfish South of 40°10' N.	187,437	15.4%	28,865	13.2%	24,742	
Canary rockfish	98,062	10.0%	9,806	4.4%	4,315	
Chilipepper rockfish South of 40°10' N.	2,637,280	15.0%	395,592			
Cowcod South of 40°10' N.	3,175	17.7%	562	17.7%	562	
Darkblotched rockfish	645,536	6.8%	43,896	4.5%	29,049	
Dover sole	101,370,312	3.9%	3,953,442			
English sole	14,631,287	7.5%	1,097,346			
Lingcod North of 40°10' N.	2,388,422	5.3%	126,586			
Lingcod South of 40°10' N.	929,491	13.3%	123,622			
Longspine thornyheads North of 34°27' N.	6,206,189	9.0%	558,557			
Minor shelf rockfish North of 40°10' N.	2,417,413	7.5%	181,306			
Minor shelf rockfish South of 40°10' N.	423,993	13.5%	57,239			
Minor slope rockfish North of 40°10' N.	2,711,554	7.5%	203,367			
Minor slope rockfish South of 40°10' N.	937,516	9.0%	84,376			
Other flatfish	13,922,412	15.0%	2,088,362			
Pacific cod	2,273,870	20.0%	454,774			
Pacific halibut (IBQ) North of 40°10' N.*	154,444	14.4%	22,240	5.4%	8,340	
Pacific ocean perch North of 40°10' N.	273,704	6.0%	16,422	4.0%	10,948	
Pacific whiting*	38,667,317	15.0%	5,800,098			
Petrale sole	5,805,653	4.5%	261,254			
Sablefish North of 36° N.	5,315,874	4.5%	239,214			
Sablefish South of 36° N.	1,736,140	15.0%	260,421			
Shortspine thornyheads North of 34°27' N.	3,446,795	9.0%	310,212			
Shortspine thornyheads South of 34°27' N.	110,231	9.0%	9,921			
Splitnose rockfish South of 40°10' N.	3,634,827	15.0%	545,224			
Starry flounder	1,674,080	20.0%	334,816			
Widow rockfish	3,131,931	8.5%	266,214	5.1%	159,728	
Yelloweye rockfish	2,381	11.4%	271	5.7%	136	
Yellowtail rockfish North of 40°10' N.	9,648,906	7.5%	723,668			
Non-whiting groundfish species	193,251,928	3.2%	6,184,062			

*Interim sector allocation