

GEAR RELATED HOUSEKEEPING CHANGES TO LANGUAGE IN THE GROUND FISH
FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN (FMP)

In Section 6.6.1.2 there is a descriptive history that should be updated to reflect the Council recommendations on gear. That history and the housekeeping changes are as follows (emphasis added):

Section 6.6.1.2 Trawl Gear

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The following discussion of the Council's efforts to modify trawl gear **provides examples** of the types of trawl gear modifications that may be made to meet FMP goals, **but does not limit the range of future trawl gear restrictions.**

In the early-mid 1990s, the Council engaged the trawl industry in a series of discussions on modifying trawl nets to minimize juvenile fish bycatch. ~~Since~~ Starting in 1995, bottom trawl nets ~~have been~~ were required to be constructed with a minimum mesh size of 4.5 inches, and pelagic trawl nets with a minimum mesh size of three inches. Minimum net mesh sizes ~~are~~ were intended to allow immature fish to pass through trawl nets. To ensure the success of minimum mesh size restrictions in allowing juvenile fish to escape trawl nets, the Council also developed restrictions preventing trawlers from using a double-walled codend. ~~A~~ Further restriction related to this objective included a prohibitions on encircling the whole of a bottom trawl net with chafing gear and restrictions on the minimum mesh size of pelagic trawl chafing gear (16 inches). In 2016, taking advantage of the individual accountability and related incentives created by the trawl rationalization program beginning in 2011, the Council recommended eliminating these mesh size and codend restrictions. However, such measures continue to remain within the range of gear restrictions authorized by this FMP.

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In 2005, the Council introduced new trawl gear requirements for small footrope trawl gear north of 40°10' N latitude. Trawlers operating inshore of the Trawl RCA ~~are~~ were required to use selective flatfish trawl gear, which is configured to reduce bycatch of rockfish while allowing the nets to retain flatfish. Selective flatfish trawl nets have an ovoid trawl mouth opening that is wider than it is tall and the headropes on these nets are recessed from the trawl mouth. This combination of a flattened oval shape and a recessed headrope herds flatfish into the trawl net while allowing rockfish to slip up and over the headrope, without entering the net. Groundfish trawlers worked with the State of Oregon to develop these nets in order to have greater access to healthy flatfish stocks. ~~The~~

~~Council is working with the State of California to determine whether the selective flatfish trawl net is also effective at reducing the bycatch of southern overfished species in fisheries targeting more abundant southern stocks. In 2016, again taking advantage of the individual accountability created by the trawl rationalization program, the Council recommended replacing the restriction that requires use of selective flatfish trawl gear inshore of the Trawl RCA in the area north of 40° 10' N latitude with a requirement that small footrope trawl (of any type) be use in that area.~~

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