

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE ON EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is providing this report to update the Pacific Fishery Management Council on three exempted fishing permits (EFPs) including (1) the 2018 trawl gear EFP, (2) The Nature Conservancy EFP, and (3) 2018 San Francisco Community Fishing Association (Emley/Platt) EFP. Additionally, NMFS has provided information from the last catch update on the 2017 trawl gear EFP.

Trawl Gear EFPs

The 2017 Trawl Gear EFP concluded on December 31, 2017. Vessels fishing under this EFP were able to target groundfish with limited interaction with Chinook salmon. By the end of 2017, 11 vessels caught 5 Chinook salmon, no eulachon or sturgeon, and just under 3 million pounds of groundfish on 63 trips. The 16 non-EFP boats fishing non-whiting midwater trawl have caught 37 Chinook salmon, no eulachon or sturgeon, and 12.5 million pounds of groundfish on 154 trips. See Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of trawl gear EFP and non-EFP, non-whiting midwater trawl catches for the 2017 fishing year.

Group	# of Vessels	Trips	Chinook (#)	Eulachon	Sturgeon	Groundfish Weight (lbs)	Groundfish Revenue (\$)
2017 Trawl Gear EFP	11	63	5	0	0	2,989,298	1,613,178.38
Non-EFP Non-whiting midwater trawl	16	154	37	0	0	12,515,714	3,542,498.11

The 2018 Trawl Gear EFP began on January 1. NMFS held an open enrollment period for the EFP from November 15-30, 2017. A total of 42 vessels notified NMFS of their interest to participate in the 2018 trawl gear EFP and all vessels were permitted. Eight of the 42 vessels said they would consider fishing south of 42° North latitude.

As of February 12, 2018 nine vessels have participated in the Trawl Gear EFP during the 2018 fishing year, with one vessel switching gears on their EFP trip. These nine vessels have caught two Chinook salmon, no eulachon or sturgeon, and more than two million pounds of groundfish. Of the two Chinook salmon caught so far in 2018, one was caught north of 42° North latitude and one south of that line (See Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of trawl gear EFP catches for the 2018 fishing year (as of February 12, 2018).

Region	Group	# of Vessels	Trips	Chinook (#)	Eulachon	Sturgeon	Groundfish Weight (lbs)	Groundfish Revenue (\$)
N of 42	Bottom Trawl Vessels	3	5	0	0	0	275,528	170,308.70
	Midwater Trawl Vessels	5	21	1	0	0	2,075,214	596,731.80
S of 42	Bottom Trawl Vessels	1	3	1	0	0	189,883	114,529.80
	Midwater Trawl Vessels	1	1	0	0	0	39,288	11,961.84

The Nature Conservancy EFP

The Nature Conservancy seeks an EFP to test modified and control pot gear to target lingcod in the non-trawl rockfish conservation area off Washington and Oregon. NMFS published a *Federal Register* notice announcing receipt of the EFP application on November 15, 2017 (82 FR 52882). The public comment period closed on November 30, 2017. NMFS received one comment from the Center for Biological Diversity. NMFS is evaluating the public comment related to humpback whale interactions in pot gear, coordinating with the applicant, and drafting Terms and Conditions.

San Francisco Community Fishing Association (Platt/Emley) EFP

NMFS issued the 2018 EFP on January 24, 2018 to seven vessels. NMFS revised the Terms and Conditions for 2018 to allow vessels to retain and sell canary rockfish because the stock is rebuilt. The EFP will test the selectivity of vertical hook-and-line commercial fishing gear designed to target underutilized, abundant semi-pelagic rockfish species (e.g., yellowtail rockfish), while keeping bycatch of benthic overfished species (e.g. yelloweye rockfish) low. The EFP exempts participating vessels from cumulative trip limits and the depth-based non-trawl RCA. The EFP is effective through December 31, 2018.