

**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT ON THE TRAWL GEAR
 EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is providing this report to update the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) on the 2018 trawl gear exempted fishing permit (EFP), as well as provide some preliminary comments on the application for a year-round coastwide midwater rockfish EFP (Agenda Item E.5).

2018 Trawl Gear EFP

The Trawl Gear EFP in 2018 began on January 1 of this year. NMFS previously held an open enrollment period 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 like to fish south of 42° North latitude.

At its March 2018 meeting, the Council recommended that NMFS reopen enrollment to allow interested vessels to join the EFP in the area north of 42° North latitude only. NMFS once again held an open enrollment from March 15-30, 2018. An additional five vessels joined the trawl gear EFP for the 2018 bringing the total number of vessels to 47. All five vessels were permitted to fish north of 42° North latitude only.

As of May 30, 2018, 16 vessels have participated in the Trawl Gear EFP during the 2018 fishing year. These vessels have caught 177 Chinook salmon¹, no eulachon or sturgeon, and more than 11 million pounds of groundfish. Of the 177 Chinook salmon caught so far in 2018, three were caught north of 42° North latitude and 174 south of that line (See Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of trawl gear EFP and non-EFP, non-whiting midwater trawl catches to for the 2018 fishing year (as of May 30, 2018).

Region	Group	# of Vessels	Trips	Chinook (#)	Eulachon	Sturgeon	Groundfish Weight (lbs)	Groundfish Revenue (\$)
N of 42	Bottom Trawl Vessels	6	25	0	0	0	1,222,467	\$798,786
	Midwater Trawl Vessels	9	109	3	0	0	9,243,178	\$2,648,384
S of 42	Bottom Trawl Vessels	1	10	174 ¹	0	0	417,236	\$246,759
	Midwater Trawl Vessels	1	5	0	0	0	191,632	\$63,961

Year-Round Midwater Rockfish EFP Application

¹ 174 Chinook salmon have been taken by bottom trawl vessels south of 42 North latitude in the 2018 EFP. This includes 173 Chinook salmon which were caught seaward of the trawl RCA using legal gear in this area. The Council recommended at its March meeting that this take of salmon not count against the 80 salmon cap for vessels fishing south of 42° North latitude.

NMFS supports the Council forwarding this application to its September meeting for final action. As is mentioned above and in previous NMFS reports, vessels fishing in both the 2017 and 2018 trawl gear EFP have been able to harvest a large amount of groundfish without much salmon bycatch. Collecting information on potential impacts from removing these gear restrictions has been very helpful to the development of a robust analysis for the proposed trawl gear changes. Additionally, NMFS supports having the time over the summer for staff to work with the applicants to further refine their proposal based on the publication of the proposed rule for the trawl gear changes.