

## NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT

### **Groundfish Management**

#### *Regulatory Updates*

#### ***Final Rule to Revise Vessel Movement, Monitoring, and Declaration Management for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery***

On June 11, 2020, NMFS published a final rule ([85 FR 35594](#)) to implement revisions for Vessel Movement, Monitoring, and Declaration Management for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery. This rule was effective on July 13, 2020, except for the amendments to Sec. 660.14 (changes to the ping rates), which are effective September 9, 2020. The final rule summary and compliance guide can be found [here](#).

#### ***Emergency Action to Temporarily Remove Seasonal Processing Limitations for Pacific Whiting Motherships and Catcher-Processors***

On June 19, 2020, NMFS published an emergency rule ([85 FR 37027](#)) to allow eligible Mothership and Catcher-Processor vessels to operate as either type of processing platform during the 2020 Pacific whiting season. This emergency rule is effective for 180 days, from June 19, 2020, to December 16, 2020. No public comments were received during the 30 day comment period for this rule. The emergency rule and compliance guide can be found [here](#).

#### ***Final Rule to Implement 2020 Harvest Specifications for Pacific Whiting, Cowcod and Shortbelly Rockfish and 2020 Pacific Whiting Tribal Allocation***

On June 18, 2020, NMFS published a final rule ([85 FR 36803](#)) to establish 2020 harvest specifications and management measures for Pacific whiting, shortbelly rockfish, and cowcod. For Pacific whiting, this rule established the 2020 adjusted U.S. Total Allowable Catch level, tribal and non-tribal allocations, and research and bycatch set-asides. This final rule also adjusted the 2020 harvest specifications for shortbelly rockfish and cowcod. The final rule and compliance guide can be found [here](#).

### **Highly Migratory Species Management**

#### *Regulatory Updates*

#### ***Final Rule to Announce Date of Effectiveness for Collection-of-Information Requirements for Final Rule on Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), Silky Sharks, and Observer Safety***

On August 17, 2020, NMFS published a final rule to announce approval by the Office of Management and Budget of collection-of-information requirements contained in regulations published in a previous final rule ([85 FR 49975](#)). NMFS reported at the June 2020 Council meeting the publication of a final rule on May 18, 2020 ([85 FR 29666](#)). This rule implements provisions in Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Resolutions C-19-01 (*Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)*), C-19-05 (*Conservation of Silky Sharks*), and C-18-07 (*Improving Observer Safety At Sea: Emergency Action Plan*), and Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) Resolution A-18-03 (*Improving Observer Safety At Sea*):

*Emergency Action Plan*). The rule revised existing regulations for FAD data collection to remove the reporting requirements for captains of large purse seine vessels fishing on FADs in the IATTC Convention Area that have observers onboard. Captains are still required to provide observers with the FAD identification code and, as appropriate, other information in the standard format. The rule prohibited the retention of silky shark caught by U.S. longline vessels in the IATTC Convention Area. The rule also designated a protocol for retention of silky shark on purse seine vessels fishing in the IATTC Convention Area, and requires reporting of these incidents. Finally, the rule strengthened protections for observers in longline and transshipment observer programs required by the IATTC, and on purse seine vessels required by the AIDCP.

The prohibition of retention of silky shark caught on longline vessels became effective on June 17, 2020, and the remaining rule amendments became effective on August 17, 2020.

***Final Rule to Announce Date of Effectiveness of Collection-of-Information Requirements for IATTC and International Maritime Organization (IMO) Requirements***

NMFS is publishing a final rule to announce the date of effectiveness for collection-of-information requirements for the final rule to implement new IMO requirements in IATTC Resolution C-18-06 (Resolution (Amended) on a Regional Vessel Register), and amend existing regulations related to the IATTC Regional Vessel Register for purse seine vessels fishing in the eastern Pacific Ocean. The final rule published on December 20, 2019, ([84 FR 70040](#)) and became effective January 21, 2020, except for collection of information requirements, which will become effective upon publication expected September 2020.

***Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Updates***

On Monday, August 10, 2020, NMFS published a notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate EFPs to fish with pelagic longline gear in federal waters off the U.S. West Coast, and requested public input through September 9th ([85 FR 48205](#), August 10, 2020). This EIS will reconsider potential impacts of the longline EFP that the Council recommended NMFS approve in 2015.

**Administrative Matters**

*Communications Transition*

We are in the process of transitioning away from the platform we use to distribute our groundfish, salmon, HMS, and halibut emails to a new system. The email addresses that these notices are sent from will change to [noaafisheries@public.govdelivery.com](mailto:noaafisheries@public.govdelivery.com), and some of the format of the messages will change. We expect to make the move sometime this fall, making a smooth transition and continuing to provide timely information alerts to all interested parties.