

## **NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT ON GROUND FISH FIXED GEAR LOGBOOKS**

At the September 2021 Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) presented an update on the groundfish fixed gear logbook action (see [Agenda Item C.1.a Supplemental NMFS Report 2](#)) that originated from the Council's June 2008 motion for the 2009-2010 Groundfish Harvest Specifications and Management Measures action. In that update, NMFS requested confirmation and/or additional guidance on the Council's intended scope for this action in terms of the Federal open access fisheries that would be required to submit a logbook to NMFS. The Council indicated it would like to provide additional guidance on the intended scope. The purpose of this report is to: 1) reset the stage for additional guidance on the logbook action's scope; 2) provide an update on NMFS' progress on this action since the September 2021 meeting; and 3) recommend providing clarification on the 2008 motion, based on the September 2021 Council floor discussion and recent conversations with State representatives.

### *Guidance requested from the Council*

The Council's motion from June 2008 mandated logbooks for the "limited entry and open access fixed gear fleets." The limited entry fixed gear (LEFG) fleets include gear switchers under the Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) program, the sablefish primary fishery, and the limited entry daily trip limit (DTL) fishery. The open access fleets include both targeted and incidental groundfish fisheries. Based on the scope of the Council's original recommendation, NMFS would therefore implement a fixed gear logbook requirement for the three LEFG sectors mentioned above and for both targeted and incidental open access fisheries that use fixed gear in Federal waters (*i.e.*, 3-200 nautical miles from the coast), including the directed halibut fishery that retains incidental groundfish under open access trip limits. The logbook would not be required for vessels that catch groundfish but do not retain it. The logbook would also not be required for salmon troll vessels that catch and retain groundfish under incidental open access trip limits, as the Council's motion specifies "fixed gear fisheries" as opposed to "non-trawl fisheries"; troll vessels are not part of the fixed gear fisheries. If the Council wishes for the logbook to apply to a different scope of sectors than interpreted above, NMFS recommends that the Council provide clarification on the scope of fishery sectors subject to the Federal logbook requirement.

### *Fixed Gear Logbook Update*

Since September 2021, NMFS has begun to coordinate the development of the electronic logbook application with the Pacific States Marine Fish Commission (PSMFC), who will ultimately house and manage the logbook data. NMFS intends the application to be available for download free of charge on smart phones, tablets, and laptop computers, however initial rollout may be limited to a smart phone application, subject to timing constraints. For the first year of implementation, NMFS

will also accept paper logbook forms to provide a grace period for adapting to the electronic application. Transmission of electronic logbook data will be required within 24 hours of landing, and paper logbook submission will be required within one month of a fishing trip. NMFS and PSMFC staff will coordinate appropriately with the States and industry members to collect feedback on the specific information to collect and the layout of the electronic interface.

#### *NMFS' Request for Clarification on the 2008 Motion*

During Council deliberations at the September 2021 meeting, the Council discussed the potential to implement the logbook via a phased approach. Additionally, NMFS has recently initiated conversations with State representatives to inquire as to whether the Council intends for the logbook to apply only to vessels using fixed gear, or also to vessels using non-trawl gear. The reason for this inquiry is that applying the logbook only to sectors that use fixed gear would preclude the Council and NMFS from requiring the logbook for certain other sectors that use non-trawl gears that may be permitted for use inside the Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (NT-RCA) via a management measure proposed in the 2023-2024 Groundfish Harvest Specifications and Management Measures action (*e.g.*, troll gear, which falls within the scope of non-bottom contact hook-and-line gear, but is not fixed gear). Applying the logbook only to fixed gear sectors would also preclude the Council and NMFS from applying this logbook requirement to incidental open access sectors that use non-trawl gear to retain groundfish (*e.g.*, the salmon troll fishery) in the future. The Council has indicated that vessels fishing inside the NT-RCA should be subject to the Federal logbook requirement, and has additionally expressed interest in collecting logbook data in non-trawl fisheries. Based on the September 2021 Council discussion and additional discussions since then, NMFS recommends that the Council provide clarification on the below:

- The logbook requirement would apply to the “non-trawl” groundfish fleets as opposed to the “fixed gear” groundfish fleets.
- The fishery sectors required to submit the Federal logbook to NMFS at initial rollout would include:
  - Directed open access for groundfish<sup>1</sup> (*not* incidental open access for groundfish)
  - LEFG Primary Sablefish
  - LEFG DTL
  - LEFG IFQ Gear Switchers
- The Council may recommend expanding the logbook requirement for additional non-trawl fisheries for groundfish (directed or incidental) in the future.

#### *Additional Considerations*

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<sup>1</sup> *Directed open access means that a fishing vessel lands groundfish under the requirements of 50 CFR 660 Subpart F without landing any other species besides groundfish, except for any prohibited or protected species with retention requirements.*

In order to avoid duplicative reporting requirements, NMFS is discussing an option with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and PSMFC for Oregon vessels that retain groundfish in Federal waters to submit the Federal logbook in lieu of the Oregon state fixed gear logbook to meet the state requirement. Additionally, NMFS is working to determine whether IFQ gear switching vessels using electronic monitoring (EM) will continue recording discard information on the EM Program Fixed Gear Logbook (*see* §660.604(s)) or transition to recording discards on the new Federal fixed gear logbook.