

MOVING TRAWL GEAR EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS INTO REGULATIONS;
UPDATING DECLARATION REQUIREMENTS; REMOVING DUPLICATIVE
RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS – FINAL ACTION

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduled to adopt the final preferred alternative (FPA) for the three action items under this agenda item. The first action would modify certain trawl fishery time/area/gear restrictions in regulation that have been exempted under trawl gear exempted fishing permit (EFP) since 2018. The second action would allow midwater shorebased individual fishing quota (IFQ) or mothership catcher vessel (MSCV) to change fishing declarations while at sea and the third action would modify Federal regulations related to the sale of recreational fish waste that are duplicative of existing state regulations. At the June 2025 meeting, the Council adopted their preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) for each of these action items. An impact analysis was completed for the PPA and is available as Attachment 1.

Action Item 1: Exempted Fishing Permits

For Action Item 1, the Council adopted Alternative 1, Option 1 and Option 2 as their PPA. Option 1 would revise trawl regulations to reflect the EFP exemptions for midwater trawl gear to target non-whiting groundfish north of 40° 10' N. lat. outside of primary whiting season. Option 2 would revise trawl regulations to allow bottom trawl vessels fishing between 42° N. lat. and 40° 10' N. lat. and shoreward of the boundary line approximating the 100 fm depth contour to use any legal small footrope trawl gear, including selective flatfish trawl gear, to fish for groundfish.

These EFPs were proposed to improve opportunity and flexibility for IFQ program participants to target rockfish and flatfish on a year-round basis while exempting them from specific gear, area, and timing restrictions, while ensuring that conservation objectives for protected and prohibited species (e.g., Chinook salmon and coho salmon, eulachon, etc.) continued to be met. As indicated in the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) report on Chinook and coho salmon bycatch ([Agenda Item E.5, Attachment 2, June 2026](#)), the risk of the exceeding the non-whiting annual Chinook salmon bycatch threshold from implementing these two components of the Trawl Gear EFP into regulation are consistent with the effects analyzed in the 2017 Biological Opinion.

Action Item 2: Changes in At-Sea Declarations

For Action 2, the Council adopted Alternative 1 as PPA with revisions to the draft Alternative 1 language recommended by the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP, [Agenda Item E.5.a, Supplemental GAP Report 1](#)). Under the PPA, IFQ trawl vessels would be allowed to change fishing declarations while at sea from shoreside Pacific whiting to midwater rockfish (and vice versa) or from mothership sector (catcher vessel) to midwater rockfish. The PPA specifies that monitoring type declarations (i.e., electronic monitoring or observer) could not be changed while at sea and catch would need to be sorted by sector and reported on separate fish tickets (as applicable).

Action Item 3: Commercial sale of recreational fish waste.

For Action Item 3, the Council adopted Alternative 1 with revisions to the draft Alternative 1 language recommended by the Groundfish Management Team

(GMT, [Agenda Item E.5.a, Supplemental Revised GMT Report 1](#)) as their PPA. The PPA would revise Federal regulations regarding the sale of recreationally-caught groundfish skeletal remains and defer to each of the three west coast states regarding its commercial sale of groundfish waste.

Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment

This action requires an Amendment to the FMP. Specifically, Sections 6.6.1 Trawl Gear and 6.6.2 Recreational Fisheries need to be revised to reflect the Action 1 and Action 3. Draft language is provided in Attachment 2. In brief, the entirety of Section 6.6.1 needed clarity to support Action 1 and for consistency with current trawl program requirements and Section 6.6.2 required minor edits to the first sentence to be aligned with Action 3. Additionally, Council staff was informed of changes to scientific nomenclature, i.e., genus and/or species names, for several species. The proposed FMP amendment would also correct these names to comport to the most recently available scientific naming conventions used by the American Fisheries Society. The Amendment will be numbered upon transmittal.

Council Tasks

1. **Adopt the Final Preferred Alternative(s) for each Action, as appropriate.**
2. **Consider and adopt FMP Amendment language, as appropriate.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.2, Attachment 1: Draft Impacts Analysis/Regulatory Impact Review/Regulatory Flexibility Analysis/Magnuson-Stevens Act Analysis for Proposed Amendment to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan: Moving The Midwater Trawl Gear Exempted Fishing Permit Into Regulation (***Electronic Only***).
2. Agenda Item H.2, Attachment 2: Draft Language to Support Amendment [TBD] to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (***Electronic Only***).
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- H.2 Moving Trawl Gear Exempted Fishing Permit into Regulations;
Updating Declaration Requirements; Removing Duplicative
Recreational Regulations - Final Action Todd Phillips
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Preferred Alternative and Fishery Management Plan Revisions

PFMC
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