



ATTENTION TRAWL CREW AND CAPTAINS

Groundfish trawl crew and captains may be affected by potential changes to the West Coast trawl fishery. Read below to learn more about what's going on and decide if it could be helpful for you to get involved.

What's going on?

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (or "the Council"), the organization responsible for coordinating management of fisheries off California, Oregon, and Washington, is in the process of considering a new management system for the groundfish trawl fishery. This new system is a **trawl individual quota program** (often called an Individual Transferable Quota, ITQ, or an Individual Fishing Quota, IFQ).

An IFQ is a specific portion of a fishery's total harvest limit that can be harvested solely by the individual or business holding the IFQ. When IFQ is expressed as a percentage it is called a **quota share**. Though the amount of quota pounds given to quota share holders may change as the total allowable harvest increases or decreases, the privilege to harvest the quota pounds is more-or-less guaranteed for the year (though the IFQ program could be canceled or changed by decisionmakers at a future time).

If this program is put in place, the trawl fishery is likely to *consolidate*. That is, it is likely, based on similar programs around the world, that the most efficient vessels will continue fishing and accumulate more quota shares, while the less efficient vessels will leave the fishery. The result is that there may be fewer trawl vessels along the coast, but the remaining vessels may have higher profits and operate for more days each year. In order to enter into the fishery, a person would have to purchase or lease quota from someone else.

One of the reasons that some are in favor of an IFQ system is that it makes fishing more *flexible*. The trawl fishery would no longer be managed by trip limits, at least for target species and possibly for all species. By knowing that their quota of fish is reserved exclusively for them to harvest over the year, fishermen under the IFQ system can fish when it's the best time for them – like when the weather is safest or when market prices are high. IFQs should also allow vessel owners to do more long-term business planning than before, because there will be more certainty about harvest amounts. This may make the West Coast trawl fishery more stable in the long term. Finally, IFQs can provide each vessel with incentive to avoid overfished species.

How could these changes affect YOU?

There are a number of ways that crew and captains could be affected by an IFQ program; people have different opinions on whether these effects are good or bad. Some are listed below. Over the next year, the Council will be deciding exactly how to structure the program. If a program is implemented, how they choose to organize the program could make the impacts to crew and captains lesser or greater.

- There might be fewer vessels and fewer jobs
- Remaining vessels might make more and operate more days a year
- Remaining jobs might be safer and more stable
- Over time, vessels and jobs might be in different ports than they are now
- Crew and captains might be paid more or paid less
- Special entry-level opportunities might be created
- Crew, captains and others could become owners in the fishery by accumulating small amounts of IFQ quota over time

Why is it helpful for crew and captains to get involved?

So far, the Council has heard little from crew and captains during the process of developing the IFQ program. Listening to comments from the public is an important part of how the Council makes decisions. The Council needs to hear how you feel the IFQ program would affect you, and specific options that would lessen negative impacts.

How can crew and captains get involved?

You can get involved on your own or work together with others. There may be organizations already in place that you could become involved with. Here are some different ways to voice your ideas to the Council:

- Present your comments during a Council meeting;
- Talk with someone in your area who is already involved with the Council (such as a Council member or a member of a Council advisory committee);
- Write a letter to the chair of the Council (send to the address below). Your comments are most effective when they are related to the kinds of decisions that the Council is making at that time. See table for a key to that timing.

For more information

- Read more about IFQs and what the Council is proposing at: <http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/ifq.pdf> and <http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gfifq.html>
- Read “Navigating the Council process” for more info on what the Council is and how to get involved in the Council process: <http://www.pcouncil.org/guide/Guide-intropage.html>.
- See the links to trawl and other organizations on the Council’s website at <http://www.pcouncil.org/links.html>
- Call the Council office at (503) 820-2280 Public comments should be sent to: Mr. Donald K. Hansen, Chairman, Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, Oregon 97220-1384, or: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Future Council Meetings

2006

Nov. 12-17 Del Mar, CA (near San Diego)

2007

March 4-9 Sacramento, CA

April 1-6 WA or OR (location TBD)

June 10-15 Foster City, CA (near San Francisco)

Sept. 9-14 WA, OR, or CA (location TBD)

Nov. 4-9 San Diego, CA

Check the Council website or call the Council office for agendas (contact information below). IFQs may not be on the agenda at every Council meeting.

Expected Timeline	What’s going on	Useful kinds of public comment
Now through Fall 2007	Council bodies and staff are continuing discussions on the structure of IFQ program options and analyzing how these options could affect the fishery.	Explain how the IFQ program could affect you; suggest ways that the program could be adjusted to change those impacts
Fall 2007 – Spring 2008	Council releases analysis for public review and makes final decision on the specifics of the IFQ program and whether or not to recommend the IFQ program or other alternatives.	Describe whether the analysis accurately reflects how the IFQ program would affect you; explain which, if any, of the options for how to structure the IFQ program is best in your opinion
Summer – Fall 2008	National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) considers whether or not to implement the IFQ program that the Council developed	Explain to NMFS why you think the program should or shouldn’t be put in place
2010	Earliest date that fishing under the IFQ might begin	
Check Council website (www.pcouncil.org) for updates to this calendar.		