



## NOAA FISHERIES

National Marine  
Fisheries Service

Sustainable  
Fisheries

National Marine Fisheries  
Service, West Coast Region

7600 Sand Point Way NE

Seattle, WA 98115

[www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/west-coast](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/west-coast)

### Public Notices

Available at:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/rules-and-announcements/bulletins>

To receive notices by email visit:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USNOAAFISHERIES/subscriber/new>

After entering your contact information, check your lists of interest (i.e. "Groundfish" and/or "Whiting") under "West Coast Updates".

## PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY

### EMERGENCY ACTION TO TEMPORARILY EXTEND THE PRIMARY SABLEFISH FISHERY 2021 SEASON

This emergency rule temporarily extends the 2021 season for vessels using bottom longline gear in the Limited Entry Fixed Gear sablefish primary fishery, from October 31, to December 31, 2021. This action also extends the incidental halibut retention allowance for the sablefish primary fishery North of Point Chehalis, Washington, until December 7, 2021.

The full emergency rule can be found at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-23650>

#### *For Information Contact:*

Groundfish Branch (206) 526-6140

Fisheries Permit Office (206) 526-4353

## Overview

This emergency action extends the 2021 season for vessels using bottom longline gear in the limited entry, fixed gear (LEFG) sablefish primary fishery (also known as the tier fishery) North of 36° N. lat., until 12 noon local time on December 31, 2020. Sablefish primary vessels using bottom longline gear will be allowed to continue to harvest their 2021 tier allocation through this date, up to their individual cumulative tier limits. This emergency rule also extends the incidental halibut allowance North of Point Chehalis, Washington (46°53.30' N. lat.) from November 1, through December 7, 2021; the latest date allowed by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC).

### **2021 Extended Sablefish Primary Season Under Emergency Measures.**

The November 1- December 31 timeframe is a new “major” cumulative period (period 6) as defined in regulations at §660.11 *Trip Limits*. Any vessels using bottom longline gear currently registered to one or more LEFG sablefish-endorsed permits that have not reached their individual cumulative tier limit do not need to take any action in order to continue fishing in the extended season. **Observer coverage and notification is required for all permits selected for coverage in 2021 during the extended period.**

The sablefish primary season will close to vessels using pot gear at 12 noon local time on October 31, 2021. For vessels with tier limit remaining, pot gear must be out of the water by the closure. For vessels seeking to continue fishing under the limited entry daily trip limit (DTL) fishery with pot gear, all fish from the tier limits must be landed first and then the vessel may commence a new trip under the DTL fishery.

Included in this emergency rule is a temporary provision to allow multiple transfers for LEFG sablefish-endorsed permits for the year. Additionally, this emergency rule temporarily suspends the permit stacking limit in this fishery and the restriction on gear endorsements in this fishery. As such, sablefish-endorsed limited entry permits with a pot gear endorsement can be fished using bottom longline gear during this temporary extension of the season. Vessels that seek to use the gear flexibility may use pot gear until the primary season closure for pot gear at 12 noon local time on October 31, 2021, then commence longline fishing off of their tier permit(s). All vessels using bottom longline gear are subject to seabird avoidance measures at § 660.21.

All permits selected for observer coverage carry that requirement for the entire season, even if the permit is transferred to another vessel. If you transfer your permit

that was selected for coverage, please provide that information to the transfer recipient.

### **To submit a permit transfer request:**

- Download the Change of Vessel Registration and/or Permit Owner Application from our website: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/groundfish-limited-entry-change-ownership-vessel-registration>
- Complete the form and email it and any supplemental documents to the Fisheries Permits Office at: [WCR-Permits@noaa.gov](mailto:WCR-Permits@noaa.gov).
- We encourage permit holders to submit requests early to ensure they can be processed in the desired timeframe.
- Need help? Call or email us at (206) 526-4353 or [WCR-Permits@noaa.gov](mailto:WCR-Permits@noaa.gov).

### **Incidental halibut retention**

Until December 7, 2021, vessels in the sablefish primary fishery, and licensed by the IPHC for commercial fishing in Area 2A (waters off Washington, Oregon, California), and with longline gear north of Pt. Chehalis, may possess and land up to 225 pounds (102 kg) dressed weight of Pacific halibut for every 1,000 pounds (454 kg) dressed weight of sablefish landed and up to 2 additional Pacific halibut in excess of the 225-pounds-per-1,000-pound limit per landing. Pacific halibut taken and retained in the sablefish primary fishery north of Pt. Chehalis may only be landed north of Pt. Chehalis and may not be possessed or landed south of Pt. Chehalis. **After December 7, any incidental halibut would need to be discarded as a prohibited species.**