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PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY

2020 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for Pacific Whiting, Cowcod, and Shortbelly Rockfish Final Rule

The final rule regarding the 2020 harvest specifications and management measures for Pacific whiting, cowcod south of 40°10' N. latitude, and shortbelly rockfish published on June 18, 2020. This rule also establishes the 2020 tribal allocation for Pacific whiting.

Regulations contained in this rule are effective **June 18, 2020**.

The final rule can be found at:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/2020-harvest-specifications-pacific-whiting-cowcod-and-shortbelly-rockfish-and-2020-pacific>

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Summary of the Rule

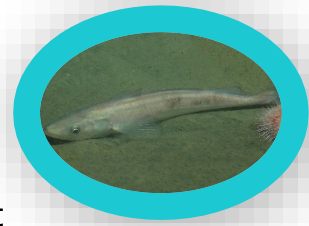
NMFS issues this final rule to establish 2020 harvest specifications and management measures for Pacific whiting, shortbelly rockfish, and cowcod south of 40°10' N latitude. These actions are combined into one final rule because they all relate to establishing catch limits and management measures for Pacific Coast groundfish stocks in 2020.

This rule:

- Announces the 2020 Pacific whiting coastwide Total Allowable Catch (TAC)
- Establishes the Pacific whiting U.S. TAC based on the coastwide TAC
- Establishes the 2020 Pacific whiting tribal allocation
- Establishes the Pacific whiting allocations for three commercial whiting sectors
- Establishes the set-asides for research and incidental mortality of Pacific whiting
- Increases the 2020 annual catch limit (ACL) for shortbelly rockfish
- Eliminates the 2020 annual catch target (ACT) and reduces the research set-aside for cowcod, therefore increasing the trawl and non-trawl allocations and annual individual vessel limit

The adjusted catch limits for cowcod south of 40°10' N. latitude and shortbelly supersede those put in place for 2020 through the 2019-2020 Pacific Coast Groundfish Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures.

Pacific Whiting



This final rule announces the Pacific whiting coastwide TAC of 575,000 mt and establishes the Pacific whiting U.S. TAC of 424,810 mt. The rule also establishes a tribal allocation of 74,342 mt and a set-aside for research and bycatch of 1,500 mt. The allocations of Pacific whiting to the non-tribal fishery for 2020 are shown below.

| 2020 Pacific Whiting Harvest Specifications (mt) | |
|--|---------|
| U.S. TAC | 424,810 |
| Research and Incidental Mortality Set-Aside | 1,500 |
| Tribal Allocation | 74,342 |
| Catcher/Processor (C/P) Coop Program Allocation | 118,649 |
| Mothership (MS) Coop Program Allocation | 83,752 |
| Shorebased IFQ Program Allocation | 146,567 |



Shortbelly Rockfish

This final rule implements the Council recommendation from its November 2019 meeting to increase the 2020 ACL for shortbelly rockfish to 3,000 mt. The remaining shortbelly rockfish catch limits for 2020, including the OFL and ABC, are unchanged from those implemented in the 2019-2020 Pacific Coast Groundfish Biennial Harvest Specifications. The catch limits are summarized in the table below.

| 2020 Shortbelly Rockfish Harvest Specifications (mt) | |
|---|-------|
| OFL | 6,950 |
| ABC | 5,789 |
| ACL | 3,000 |
| Fishery Harvest Guideline | 2,983 |



Cowcod South of 40°10' N. Latitude

This final rule implements the Council recommendation from its November 2019 meeting to remove the cowcod ACT of 6 mt and reduce the research catch set-aside to 1 mt for cowcod south of 40° 10' N. latitude in 2020. The ACL will remain at 10 mt. Cowcod allocations increase from 2.2 mt to 3.2 mt to the trawl sectors, and from 3.8 mt to 5.8 mt to the non-trawl sectors. The 2020 cowcod annual vessel limit increases from 858 pounds (0.4 mt) to 1,264 pounds (0.6 mt) for affected participants in the limited entry trawl fishery south of 40° 10' N. latitude. The measures are summarized in the table below.

| 2020 Cowcod South of 40°10' N Lat. Harvest Specifications | |
|--|--------------|
| OFL | 76 mt |
| ABC | 68 mt |
| ACL | 10 mt |
| Research Set-aside | 1 mt |
| Fishery HG | 9 mt |
| ACT | Removed |
| Non-Trawl Allocation (64 percent of the Fishery HG) | 5.8 mt |
| Trawl Allocation (36 percent of the Fishery HG) | 3.2 mt |
| Annual Vessel Limit (17.7 percent of trawl allocation) | 1,264 pounds |
| Increase in vessel limit | 406 pounds |
| Percent increase in vessel limit | 47 percent |