

§ 660.373

owner is still unable to be onboard a fishing vessel. An emergency exemption will be conveyed in a letter from NMFS to the permit owner and is required to be on the vessel during fishing operations.

(c) *Limited entry and open access daily trip limit fisheries both north and south of 36° N. lat.* (1) Before the start of the primary season, all sablefish landings made by a vessel authorized under paragraph (a) of this section to participate in the primary season will be subject to the restrictions and limits of the limited entry daily and/or weekly trip limit fishery for sablefish, which is governed by routine management measures imposed under § 660.370(c).

(2) Following the start of the primary season, all landings made by a vessel authorized under paragraph (a) of this section to participate in the primary season will count against the primary season cumulative limit(s) associated with the permit(s) registered for use with that vessel. A vessel that is eligible to participate in the primary sablefish season may participate in the daily trip limit fishery for sablefish once that vessels' primary season sablefish limit(s) have been taken, or after the end of the primary season, whichever occurs earlier. Any subsequent sablefish landings by that vessel will be subject to the restrictions and limits of the limited entry daily and/or trip limit fishery for sablefish for the remainder of the calendar year.

(3) No vessel may land sablefish against both its primary season cumulative sablefish limits and against the daily and/or weekly trip limit fishery limits within the same 24 hour period of 0001 hours l.t. to 2400 hours l.t. If a vessel has taken all of its tier limit except for an amount that is smaller than the daily trip limit amount, that vessel's subsequent sablefish landings are automatically subject to daily and/or weekly trip limits.

(4) Vessels registered for use with a limited entry, fixed gear permit that does not have a sablefish endorsement may participate in the limited entry, daily and/or weekly trip limit fishery for as long as that fishery is open during the year, subject to routine management measures imposed under § 660.370(c). Daily and/or weekly trip

50 CFR Ch. VI (10–1–06 Edition)

limits for the limited entry fishery north and south of 36° N. lat. are provided in Tables 4 (North) and 4 (South) of this subpart.

(5) Open access vessels may participate in the open access, daily trip limit fishery for as long as that fishery is open during the year, subject to the routine management measures imposed under § 660.370(c). Daily and/or weekly trip limits for the open access fishery north and south of 36° N. lat. are provided in Tables 5 (North) and 5 (South) of this subpart.

(d) *Trip limits.* Trip and/or frequency limits may be imposed in the limited entry fishery on vessels that are not participating in the primary season under § 660.370(c). Trip and/or size limits to protect juvenile sablefish in the limited entry or open-access fisheries also may be imposed at any time under § 660.370(c). Trip limits may be imposed in the open-access fishery at any time under § 660.370(c).

[69 FR 42352, July 15, 2004, as amended at 69 FR 77032, Dec. 23, 2004; 70 FR 16149, Mar. 30, 2005; 70 FR 23045, May 4, 2005; 71 FR 10624, Mar. 2, 2006; 71 FR 24604, Apr. 26, 2006]

§ 660.373 Pacific whiting (whiting) fishery management.

(a) *Sectors.* The catcher/processor sector is composed of catcher/processors, which are vessels that harvest and process whiting during a calendar year. The mothership sector is composed of motherships and catcher vessels that harvest whiting for delivery to motherships. Motherships are vessels that process, but do not harvest, whiting during a calendar year. The shore-side sector is composed of vessels that harvest whiting for delivery to shore-based processors.

(b) *Seasons.* The primary seasons for the whiting fishery are: For the shore-based sector, the period(s) when the large-scale target fishery is conducted (when trip limits under paragraph (b) of this section are not in effect); for catcher/processors, the period(s) when at-sea processing is allowed and the fishery is open for the catcher/processor sector; and for vessels delivering to motherships, the period(s) when at-sea processing is allowed and the fishery is open for the mothership sector. Before and after the primary seasons,

trip landing or frequency limits may be imposed under § 660.370(c). The sectors are defined at § 660.370(a).

(1) *North of 40°30' N. lat.* Different starting dates may be established for the catcher/processor sector, the mothership sector, catcher vessels delivering to shoreside processors north of 42° N. lat., and catcher vessels delivering to shoreside processors between 42°-40°30' N. lat.

(i) *Procedures.* The primary seasons for the whiting fishery north of 40°30' N. lat. generally will be established according to the procedures of the PCGFMP for developing and implementing harvest specifications and apportionments. The season opening dates remain in effect unless changed, generally with the harvest specifications and management measures.

(ii) *Criteria.* The start of a primary season may be changed based on a recommendation from the Council and consideration of the following factors, if applicable: Size of the harvest guidelines for whiting and bycatch species; age/size structure of the whiting population; expected harvest of bycatch and prohibited species; availability and stock status of prohibited species; expected participation by catchers and processors; environmental conditions; timing of alternate or competing fisheries; industry agreement; fishing or processing rates; and other relevant information.

(iii) *2005 and 2006 primary whiting seasons.* After the start of a primary season for a sector of the whiting fishery, the season remains open for that sector until the quota is taken and the fishery season for that sector is closed by NMFS. In both 2005 and 2006, the primary seasons for the whiting fishery start on the same dates as follows:

(A) Catcher/processor sector – May 15;

(B) Mothership sector May 15;

(C) Shore-based sector June 15 north of 42° N. lat.; April 1 between 42° – 40°30' N. lat.

(2) *South of 40°30' N. lat.* The primary season starts on April 15 south of 40°30' N. lat.

(3) *2005–2006 trip limits in the whiting fishery.* The “per trip” limit for whiting before and after the regular (primary) season for the shore-based sector

is announced in Table 4 of this subpart, and is a routine management measure under § 660.370(c). This trip limit includes any whiting caught shoreward of 100 fathoms (183 m) in the Eureka, CA area. The “per trip” limit for other groundfish species before, during and after the regular (primary) season are announced in Table 3 (North) and Table 3 (South) of this subpart and apply as follows:

(i) During the groundfish cumulative limit periods both before and after the primary whiting season, vessels may use either small and/or large footrope gear, but are subject to the more restrictive trip limits for those entire cumulative periods.

(ii) During the primary whiting season for a sector of the fishery, then the midwater trip limits apply and are additive to the trip limits for other groundfish species for that fishing period (i.e., vessels are not constrained by the lower midwater limits and can harvest up to a footrope-specific trawl limit plus the midwater trawl limit per species or species group for that cumulative limit period).

(4) *2005–2006 bycatch limits in the whiting fishery.* The bycatch limits for the whiting fishery may be used inseason to close a sector or sectors of the whiting fishery to achieve the rebuilding of an overfished or depleted stock, under routine management measure authority at § 660.370 (c)(1)(ii). These limits are routine management measures under § 660.370 (c) and, as such, may be adjusted inseason or may have new species added to the list of those with bycatch limits. For 2005, the whiting fishery bycatch limits for the sectors identified § 660.323(a) are 4.7 mt of canary rockfish and 212 mt of widow rockfish. For 2006, the whiting fishery bycatch limits are 4.7 mt of canary rockfish, 200 mt of widow rockfish, and 25 mt of darkblotched rockfish.

(c) *Closed areas.* Pacific whiting may not be taken and retained in the following portions of the fishery management area:

(1) *Klamath River Salmon Conservation Zone.* The ocean area surrounding the Klamath River mouth bounded on the north by 41°38'48" N. lat. (approximately 6 nm north of the Klamath River mouth), on the west by 124°23' W.

long. (approximately 12 nm from shore), and on the south by 41°26'48" N. lat. (approximately 6 nm south of the Klamath River mouth).

(2) *Columbia River Salmon Conservation Zone.* The ocean area surrounding the Columbia River mouth bounded by a line extending for 6 nm due west from North Head along 46°18' N. lat. to 124°13'18" W. long., then southerly along a line of 167 True to 46°11'06" N. lat. and 124°11' W. long. (Columbia River Buoy), then northeast along Red Buoy Line to the tip of the south jetty.

(d) *Eureka area trip limits.* Trip landing or frequency limits may be established, modified, or removed under § 660.370 or § 660.373, specifying the amount of Pacific whiting that may be taken and retained, possessed, or landed by a vessel that, at any time during a fishing trip, fished in the fishery management area shoreward of the 100-fathom (183-m) contour (as shown on NOAA Charts 18580, 18600, and 18620) in the Eureka area (from 43°00' to 40°30' N. lat.).

(1) *2005–2006 whiting trip limits.* No more than 10,000 lb (4,536 kg) of whiting may be taken and retained, possessed, or landed by a vessel that, at any time during a fishing trip, fished in the fishery management area shoreward of the 100 fm (183 m) contour (as shown on NOAA Charts 18580, 18600, and 18620) in the Eureka management area (defined at § 660.302).

(2) [Reserved]

(e) *At-sea processing.* Whiting may not be processed at sea south of 42°00' N. lat. (Oregon-California border), unless by a waste-processing vessel as authorized under paragraph (i) of this section.

(f) *Time of day.* Pacific whiting may not be taken and retained by any vessel in the fishery management area south of 42°00' N. lat. between 0001 hours to one-half hour after official sunrise (local time). During this time south of 42°00' N. lat., trawl doors must be on board any vessel used to fish for whiting and the trawl must be attached to the trawl doors. Official sunrise is determined, to the nearest 5° lat., in *The Nautical Almanac* issued annually by the Nautical Almanac Office, U.S. Naval Observatory, and available from the U.S. Government Printing Office.

(g) *Bycatch reduction and full utilization program for at-sea processors (optional).* If a catcher/processor or mothership in the whiting fishery carries more than one NMFS-approved observer for at least 90 percent of the fishing days during a cumulative trip limit period, then groundfish trip limits may be exceeded without penalty for that cumulative trip limit period, if the conditions in paragraph (g)(1) of this section are met. For purposes of this program, "fishing day" means a 24-hour period, from 0001 hours through 2400 hours, local time, in which fishing gear is retrieved or catch is received by the vessel, and will be determined from the vessel's observer data, if available. Changes to the number of observers required for a vessel to participate in the program will be announced prior to the start of the fishery, generally concurrent with the harvest specifications and management measures. Groundfish consumed on board the vessel must be within any applicable trip limit and recorded as retained catch in any applicable logbook or report. [Note: For a mothership, non-whiting groundfish landings are limited by the cumulative landings limits of the catcher vessels delivering to that mothership.]

(1) *Conditions.* Conditions for participating in the voluntary full utilization program are as follows:

(i) All catch must be made available to the observers for sampling before it is sorted by the crew.

(ii) Any retained catch in excess of cumulative trip limits must either be: Converted to meal, mince, or oil products, which may then be sold; or donated to a bona fide tax-exempt hunger relief organization (including food banks, food bank networks or food bank distributors), and the vessel operator must be able to provide a receipt for the donation of groundfish landed under this program from a tax-exempt hunger relief organization immediately upon the request of an authorized officer.

(iii) No processor or catcher vessel may receive compensation or otherwise benefit from any amount in excess of a cumulative trip limit unless the overage is converted to meal, mince, or oil products. Amounts of fish in excess of

Fishery Conservation and Management

§ 660.373

cumulative trip limits may only be sold as meal, mince, or oil products.

(iv) The vessel operator must contact the NMFS enforcement office nearest to the place of landing at least 24 hours before landing groundfish in excess of cumulative trip limits for distribution to a hunger relief agency. Cumulative trip limits and a list of NMFS enforcement offices are found on the NMFS, Northwest Region homepage at www.nwr.noaa.gov.

(v) If the meal plant on board the whiting processing vessel breaks down, then no further overages may be retained for the rest of the cumulative trip limit period unless the overage is donated to a hunger relief organization.

(vi) Prohibited species may not be retained.

(vii) Donation of fish to a hunger relief organization must be noted in the transfer log (Product Transfer/Offloading Log (PTOL)), in the column for total value, by entering a value of "0" or "donation," followed by the name of the hunger relief organization receiving the fish. Any fish or fish product that is retained in excess of trip limits under this rule, whether donated to a hunger relief organization or converted to meal, must be entered separately on the PTOL so that it is distinguishable from fish or fish products that are retained under trip limits. The information on the Mate's Receipt for any fish or fish product in excess of trip limits must be consistent with the information on the PTOL. The Mate's Receipt is an official document that states who takes possession of offloaded fish, and may be a Bill of Lading, Warehouse Receipt, or other official document that tracks the transfer of offloaded fish or fish product. The Mate's Receipt and PTOL must be made available for inspection upon request of an authorized officer throughout the cumulative limit period during which such landings occurred and for 15 days thereafter.

(h) *Additional restrictions on catcher/processors.* (1) A catcher/processor may receive fish from a catcher vessel, but that catch is counted against the catcher/processor allocation unless the catcher/processor has been declared as

a mothership under paragraph (h)(3) of this section.

(2) A catcher/processor may not also act as a catcher vessel delivering unprocessed whiting to another processor in the same calendar year.

(3) When renewing its limited entry permit each year under §660.335, the owner of a catcher/processor used to take and retain whiting must declare if the vessel will operate solely as a mothership in the whiting fishery during the calendar year to which its limited entry permit applies. Any such declaration is binding on the vessel for the calendar year, even if the permit is transferred during the year, unless it is rescinded in response to a written request from the permit holder. Any request to rescind a declaration must be made by the permit holder and granted in writing by the Regional Administrator before any unprocessed whiting has been taken on board the vessel that calendar year.

(i) *Processing fish waste at sea.* A vessel that processes only fish waste (a "waste-processing vessel") is not considered a whiting processor and therefore is not subject to the allocations, seasons, or restrictions for catcher/processors or motherships while it operates as a waste-processing vessel. However, no vessel may operate as a waste-processing vessel 48 hours immediately before and after a primary season for whiting in which the vessel operates as a catcher/processor or mothership. A vessel must meet the following conditions to qualify as a waste-processing vessel:

(1) The vessel makes meal (ground dried fish), oil, or minced (ground flesh) product, but does not make, and does not have on board, surimi (fish paste with additives), fillets (meat from the side of the fish, behind the head and in front of the tail), or headed and gutted fish (head and viscera removed).

(2) The amount of whole whiting on board does not exceed the trip limit (if any) allowed under §660.370(c).

(3) Any trawl net and doors on board are stowed in a secured and covered manner, and detached from all towing lines, so as to be rendered unusable for fishing.

§ 660.380

(4) The vessel does not receive codends containing fish.

(5) The vessel's operations are consistent with applicable state and Federal law, including those governing disposal of fish waste at sea.

[69 FR 42353, July 15, 2004, as amended at 69 FR 57882, Sept. 28, 2004; 69 FR 77033, Dec. 23, 2004; 70 FR 13119, Mar. 18, 2005; 70 FR 22812, May 3, 2005; 70 FR 58071, Oct. 5, 2005; 71 FR 29262, May 22, 2006; 71 FR 37844, July 3, 2006]

§ 660.380 Groundfish harvest specifications.

Fishery specifications include ABCs, the designation of OYs (which may be represented by harvest guidelines (HGs) or quotas for species that need individual management,) and the allocation of commercial OYs between the open access and limited entry segments of the fishery. These specifications include fish caught in state ocean waters (0–3 nm offshore) as well as fish caught in the EEZ (3–200 nm offshore). Specifications and management measures are provided as Tables 1a and 1b, and 2a and 2b of this subpart.

[69 FR 77033, Dec. 23, 2004]

§ 660.381 Limited entry trawl fishery management measures.

(a) *General.* Limited entry trawl vessels include those vessels registered to a limited entry permit with a trawl endorsement. Most species taken in limited entry trawl fisheries will be managed with cumulative trip limits (see trip limits in Tables 3 (North) and 3 (South) of this subpart), size limits (see § 660.370 (h)(5)), seasons (see Pacific whiting at § 660.373), gear restrictions (see paragraph (b) of this section) and closed areas (see paragraph (d) of this section and §§ 660.390 through 660.394). The trawl fishery has gear requirements and trip limits that differ by the type of trawl gear on board and the area fished. Federal commercial groundfish regulations are not intended to supersede any more restrictive state commercial groundfish regulations relating to federally-managed groundfish. Cowcod retention is prohibited in all fisheries and groundfish vessels operating south of Point Conception must adhere to CCA restrictions (see paragraph (d)(1) of this section and § 660.390). The trip limits in Table 3

50 CFR Ch. VI (10–1–06 Edition)

(North) and Table 3 (South) of this subpart apply to vessels participating in the limited entry groundfish trawl fishery and may not be exceeded. Federal commercial groundfish regulations are not intended to supersede any more restrictive state commercial groundfish regulations relating to federally-managed groundfish.

(b) *Trawl gear requirements and restrictions.* Trawl nets may be fished with or without otter boards, and may use warps or cables to herd fish.

(1) *Codends.* Only single-walled codends may be used in any trawl. Double-walled codends are prohibited.

(2) *Mesh size.* Groundfish trawl gear must meet the minimum mesh size requirements in this paragraph. Mesh size requirements apply throughout the net. Minimum trawl mesh sizes are: bottom trawl, 4.5 inches (11.4 cm); midwater trawl, 3.0 inches (7.6 cm). Minimum trawl mesh size requirements are met if a 20-gauge stainless steel wedge, less one thickness of the metal wedge, can be passed with only thumb pressure through at least 16 of 20 sets of two meshes each of wet mesh.

(3) *Chafing gear.* Chafing gear may encircle no more than 50 percent of the net's circumference. No section of chafing gear may be longer than 50 meshes of the net to which it is attached. Chafing gear may be used only on the last 50 meshes of a small footrope trawl, measured from the terminal (closed) end of the codend. Except at the corners, the terminal end of each section of chafing gear on all trawl gear must not be connected to the net. (The terminal end is the end farthest from the mouth of the net.) Chafing gear must be attached outside any riblines and restraining straps. There is no limit on the number of sections of chafing gear on a net.

(4) *Large footrope trawl gear.* Large footrope gear is bottom trawl gear with a footrope diameter larger than 8 inches (20 cm) (including rollers, bobbins or other material encircling or tied along the length of the footrope).

(5) *Small footrope trawl gear.* Small footrope gear is bottom trawl gear with a footrope diameter of 8 inches (20 cm) or smaller (including rollers, bobbins or other material encircling or tied along the length of the footrope). Other