



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region
7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115
www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/index.html



PUBLIC NOTICE

For Information Contact:
Karen Palmigiano (206) 526-4491

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Proposed Rule for Trawl Gear Changes Available for Comment **Public comments must be received by October 9, 2018.**

NMFS is seeking public comment on a rule that proposes to eliminate restrictions on the use and configuration of groundfish bottom and midwater trawl gear for vessels fishing in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery's Trawl Rationalization Program.

The proposed measures would adjust a suite of restrictions related to how nets are configured, including eliminating minimum mesh size restrictions, changing the definition of mesh size, removing chafing gear placement restrictions, and removing restrictions on using double-walled codends from groundfish bottom and midwater trawl vessels fishing under the Trawl Rationalization Program. The rule would also remove the requirement to use selective flatfish trawl gear north of 40° 10' N. lat. and shoreward of the trawl RCA, and adjust a number of provisions related to vessel operations on a single fishing trip, including allowing vessels that fish in the Shorebased IFQ Program under the Trawl Rationalization Program to carry and fish groundfish bottom and midwater trawl gears on the same trip, fish across IFQ management lines, and bring a new haul on deck before the catch from a previous haul is stowed.

View or download the proposed rule on the NMFS West Coast Region website at:
http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/frn/groundfish_frns.html

Submit your comments online via the Federal electronic rulemaking portal:
<https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2018-0081>