



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region
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EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT ENROLLMENT NOTICE

For More Information Contact:

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Oregon Trawl Commission (541) 469-7830
Midwater Trawlers Cooperative (541) 272-4544

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Seeking Pacific Coast Groundfish Vessels for 2019 Trawl Gear Exempted Fishing Permit

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) seeks federally licensed limited entry groundfish bottom trawl and midwater trawl vessels to participate in an exempted fishing permit (EFP) for 2019. NMFS held an open enrollment period for this EFP from November 28 to December 14, 2018, and registered 42 vessels. **A total of 18 more vessels that intend to fish north of 42° North latitude (N. lat.) may register.**

What is the 2019 Trawl Gear Exempted Fishing Permit?

Vessels participating in the EFP will help collect information on how removing certain gear, time, and area restrictions for the Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program would affect salmon bycatch. This EFP will allow flexibility in targeting pelagic rockfish species, such as widow, chilipepper, and yellowtail rockfish, by exempting participating vessels from federal regulations related to gear configurations, fishing seasons, and fishing areas.

What is the duration of the EFP?

This EFP will be available from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2019, unless revoked due to bycatch concerns.

How do I enroll in the 2019 Trawl Gear EFP?

To enroll, contact the NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division at (562) 436-2462 by March 15, 2019.

How do I know if my vessel is eligible to enroll?

To be eligible to participate in this EFP, you must meet the following criteria:

- Have a valid Pacific Coast Groundfish trawl limited entry permit
- Have a valid vessel account set up to receive quota pounds under the Shorebased IFQ program
- Have a current and valid U.S. Coast Guard Vessel Safety Check decal
- Cannot have had a violation for falsification of observer, logbook, or fish ticket data
- Cannot have had a violation of fishing regulations in the last 3 years in which the participant was fined more than \$1,000 for a criminal penalty or \$5,000 for a civil penalty

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All vessels, owners, and captains, would be subject to a review of sanction history through the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement to determine if they meet the eligibility criteria. Specific eligibility criteria may be waived on a case-by-case basis.

Do I have to enroll for the 2019 EFP if I participated in the 2017 or 2018 trawl gear EFPs?

Yes. Even if you participated in the 2017 or 2018 trawl gear EFPs, you must contact us to indicate your interest in participating in 2019.

Are there limits on the number of vessels that can participate in the EFP?

Yes. This EFP is limited to 60 participating vessels. A total of 42 vessels registered during the first open enrollment period from November 28 to December 14, 2018, therefore a total of 18 additional vessels may register. To reduce potential impacts on prohibited and protected species, particularly in the area south of 42° N. lat., moving forward, NMFS can only register vessels that fish north of 42° N. lat.

What exemptions will this EFP provide my vessel?

Vessels participating in the EFP would be exempted from the following regulations when fishing on an EFP trip:

- Selective Flatfish Trawl Gear: Vessels fishing on an EFP trip with bottom trawl gear would be exempt from the requirement to use selective flatfish trawl gear while fishing between 42° N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat. and shoreward of the trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA). Instead, vessels would be permitted to use any groundfish trawl gear that meets the definition of small footrope trawl gear in this area. Additionally, vessels fishing on an EFP trip would be permitted to use both two- and four-seamed selective flatfish trawl nets with up to four-riblines, excluding the codend.
- Area Closures: Vessels fishing on an EFP trip with midwater trawl gear would be permitted to fish inside the boundaries of the trawl RCA, both north and south of 40°10' N. lat. Vessels fishing with bottom trawl gear would still be prohibited from fishing inside the boundaries of the trawl RCA coast-wide.
- Time Closures: Vessels targeting non-whiting species with midwater trawl gear on an EFP trip would be permitted to fish north and south of 40°10' N. lat. in all open areas (*see* Area Closures). These vessels would no longer be constrained to the primary whiting season for the IFQ fishery. **In order to target non-whiting species outside the primary whiting season for the IFQ fishery, the vessel must have a 2019 Trawl Gear EFP even if the vessel also has an Electronic Monitoring EFP.**
- Prohibited and Protected Species: Vessels fishing on an EFP trip would be required to use either electronic monitoring or observers on 100 percent of EFP trips. All vessels would be required to retain all salmon caught on an EFP trip, sorted and landed by haul. All other protected and prohibited species would still be required to be discarded under the conditions of the current regulations.

Do I need this EFP if I participate in the Electronic Monitoring EFP?

Yes. In order to target non-whiting species outside the primary whiting season for the IFQ fishery, the vessel must have a 2019 Trawl Gear EFP even if the vessel also has an Electronic Monitoring EFP.

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To register your interest in participating in this EFP, please contact the NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division at (562) 436-2462 by March 15, 2019.