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FISHERIES**

PUBLIC NOTICE

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NMFS-SEA-19-09
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 12, 2019

Excessive Allocation of 2019 Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) for Minor Slope Rockfish South of 40°10' N

NMFS issued 2019 minor slope rockfish south of 40°10' N. latitude quota pounds (QP) based on an incorrect shorebased trawl allocation for this stock complex. NMFS issued QP based on an incorrect Shorebased IFQ Program allocation of 1,049.1 mt rather than the correct shorebased trawl allocation of 456 mt, resulting in excess QP being issued. The allocated QP exceeded both the 2019 acceptable biological catch and overfishing limit for this stock complex (856 mt and 744 mt, respectively). In addition, because the incorrect Shorebased IFQ Program allocation was used, the IFQ database generated incorrect vessel limits for minor slope rockfish south of 40°10' N. latitude and for the non-whiting aggregate limit.

To minimize disruption to the fishery, NMFS has decided to allow quota holders to retain the excess QP, but will implement and enforce the correct vessel limits for minor slope rockfish south of 40°10' N. latitude and the non-whiting aggregate limit as a means to partially mitigate potential overharvest and impacts to other sectors. NMFS will monitor the progress of the fishery inseason and, if needed, implement management measures to ensure catch remains within the trawl allocation. Given the consistently low attainment of this allocation, on average less than 20 percent of the southern shelf QP is harvested, we do not expect inseason action to be necessary. NMFS has corrected the annual vessel limits in the IFQ database, effective immediately. No vessel account will be able to transfer additional QP in excess of the correct vessel limits (see Table 1 for the correct vessel limits). No regulatory changes are required for this fix.

No vessel accounts are currently over the corrected non-whiting aggregate limit. The vast majority of vessel accounts have balances below the correct minor slope rockfish south of 40°10' N. latitude vessel limit and will be unaffected by this change. If your account is not in excess of the correct vessel limits, no action is required. NMFS will individually notify those account holders whose accounts have balances exceeding the correct vessels limits. If your vessel account is found to have exceeded the correct vessel limits, NMFS will issue an Initial Administrative Decision explaining your options and appeal rights. You may transfer the excess pounds to another vessel account at any time.

If you have any questions please contact the Fisheries Permits Office at 206-526-4353.

Table 1. Correct 2019 vessel limits.

IFQ Category	2019 Shorebased Trawl Allocation (mt)	Total Pounds for Shorebased IFQ Program	Annual QP Vessel Limit (%)	Annual QP Vessel Limit (pounds)
Minor slope rockfish South of 40°10' N.	1,049.10	2,312,870	**	90,478
Non-whiting Groundfish Species	114,775.200	251,728,440	***	8,055,310

** Vessel limit based on 9% of the 456 mt shorebased trawl allocation of Minor slope rockfish South of 40°10' N (allocation less 1307562 lb). Shorebased trawl allocation and total pounds shown as allocated.

*** 3.2% aggregate non-whiting limit when corrected for updated Minor slope rockfish South of 40°10' N annual QP vessel limit (allocation less 1307562 lb).