

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 300

[Docket No. 991220343-0071-02; I.D. 120999D]

RIN 0648-AM52

Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Catch Sharing Plans; Correction

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule; correction.

SUMMARY: This document corrects the final rule, published in the **Federal Register** on March 20, 2000, which contains annual management measures for Pacific halibut fisheries and an approval of catch sharing plans.

DATES: Effective March 15, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James Hale, 907-586-4345, or Yvonne deReynier, 206-526-6140.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A final rule was published in the **Federal Register** on March 20, 2000 (65 FR 14909), to publish annual management measures on behalf of the International Pacific Halibut Commission and to announce approval of modifications to the Catch Sharing Plan and implementing regulations for Area 2A.

An editorial comment was unintentionally added to the preamble of the final rule, which must be removed.

Correction

In the final rule Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Catch Sharing Plans, published in 65 FR 14909, March 20, 2000, FR Doc 00-6837, on page 14912, in the second column, in paragraph (2), the last two sentences are removed.

Dated: March 30, 2000.

Penelope D. Dalton,

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Parts 600 and 660

[Docket No. 991223347-9347; I.D. 032700D]

Fisheries off West Coast States and in the Western Pacific; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Trip Limit Adjustments

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Fishing restrictions; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces changes to trip limits in the Pacific Coast groundfish open access fishery for vessels using pink shrimp trawl gear, and clarifies restrictions for other exempted trawl gears. These actions, which are authorized by the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery management plan (FMP), are intended to help the fisheries achieve optimum yield (OY).

DATES: Effective 0001 hours local time April 1, 2000, unless modified, superseded or rescinded, until the effective date of the 2001 annual specifications and management measures for the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery, which will be published in the **Federal Register**. Comments on this rule will be accepted through April 20, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments to William Stelle, Jr., Administrator, Northwest Region (Regional Administrator), NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., BIN C15700, Bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115-0070; or Rodney McInnis, Acting Administrator, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via email or the Internet.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Katherine King or Yvonne deReynier, Northwest Region, NMFS, 206-526-6140.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The following changes to current management measures were recommended by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), in consultation with the States of Washington, Oregon, and California, at its March 6-10, 2000, meeting in Sacramento, CA. Pacific coast groundfish landings will be monitored throughout the year, and further adjustments to the trip limits will be made as necessary to stay within the

OYs and allocations announced in the annual specifications and management measures for the groundfish fishery, published in the **Federal Register** at 65 FR 221 (January 4, 2000).

At its November 1999 meeting, the Council recommended the following groundfish limits for a vessel using shrimp trawl gear (an open access exempted trawl gear): 500 lb (227 kg) per day (multiplied by the number of days in the fishing trip), not to exceed 2,000 lb (907 kg) per trip. The Council also announced its intent to review and recommend at its March 2000 meeting any additional sublimits that should apply for the pink shrimp fishery which starts April 1, 2000. The groundfish trip limits are intended to provide for a reasonable level of incidental harvest in the pink shrimp fishery: Trip limits that are too high could encourage targeted fishing for groundfish and trip limits that are too low could result in discarding groundfish that exceed the trip limits. At its March 2000 meeting, the Council recommended maintaining the overall groundfish limits announced in January for the pink shrimp trawl fishery, and added the following sublimits that count toward the overall groundfish limits: for canary rockfish—100 lb (45 kg) in April and 300 lb (136 kg) per month May through October, (the same as for limited entry vessels using small-footrope trawl gear); for lingcod—no retention in April, and 400 lb (181 kg) per month in May through October, the same as for limited entry vessels using small-footrope trawl gear, and with a minimum size limit of 24 inches (61 cm) north of 40°10' N. lat. and 26 inches (66 cm) south of 40°1010' N. lat., the same size limits as for open access nontrawl gear; for sablefish, 2,000 lb (907 kg) per month, which is smaller than the open access nontrawl or limited entry trawl cumulative limits for sablefish. These limits are based on landings data for the shrimp fishery, and as consistent as practicable with other limits for the groundfish fishery.

The trip limits are complicated by the fact that many vessels that fish for pink shrimp also participate in other groundfish fisheries. Provisions are added in this document to clarify which limits apply if a vessel participates in both pink shrimp and other groundfish fisheries during the same trip limit period. If a vessel that takes and retains pink shrimp also takes and retains groundfish in either the limited entry or another open access fishery during the same applicable cumulative trip limit period, the vessel may retain the larger of the two limits, but only if the limit(s) for each gear or fishery are not exceeded when operating in that fishery or with