



Marine Resources

Commercial Groundfish Newsletter

June 2024

What's Inside

- 2023 Commercial Season 1-2
- How We Regulate. 2
- Live Fish Fishery. 3
- Catch Share Program 4
- Sablefish and Research Update. . 5
- Port Biologist Corner. 6
- Non-Trawl RCA. 7
- Other Updates and Reminders. . 8

Visit Our Website

<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/commercial/>

It's Complicated

Unlike other fisheries in Oregon, commercial groundfish is made up of many different target species and many different gear types. Species targeted include whiting, sablefish, flatfish, and midwater rockfish. The range of gear types used include hook and line, longline, pots, and trawl gear. Diversity in both species targeted and gear types used makes Oregon's commercial groundfish fishery uniquely challenging to summarize within one newsletter. However, this newsletter aims to provide a summary of Oregon's 2023 commercial groundfish season.

The infographic below displays the total groundfish landings into Oregon for 2023, encompassing ALL groundfish fisheries. Pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue in 2023 were down from last year, which many think is due to disruptions in international markets and a lack of a strong domestic market for many of our Oregon species.

2023 Season Summary

All Groundfish Totals

212 million pounds landed

\$41 million ex-vessel value

87% of the five-year average (2018-22)

286 commercial vessels

Percent of Total Pounds Landed

66%

Astoria

<1%

Garibaldi/Pacific City

32%

Depoe Bay/Newport

<1%

Florence/Winchester Bay

1%

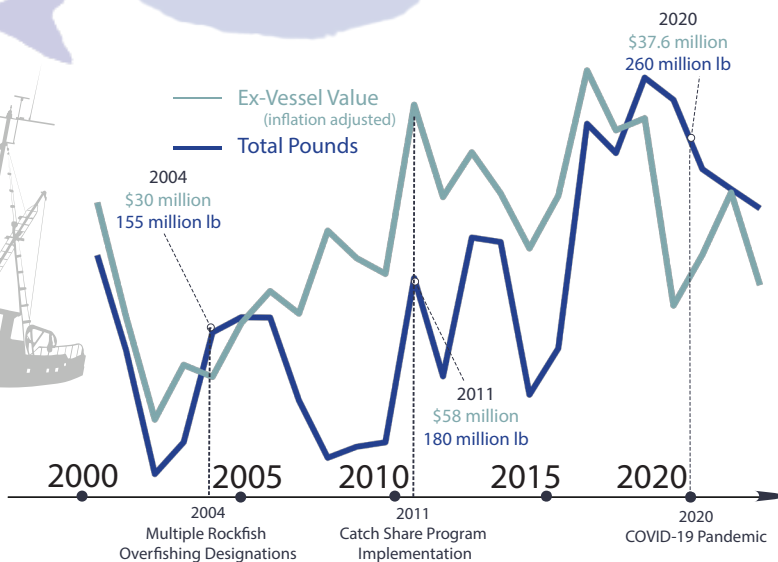
Charleston

<1%

Bandon/Port Orford

<1%

Gold Beach/Brookings



It's Complicated (cont'd)

Between 2022 and 2023 there was a decrease in price per pound for many of our most sought-after species (like sablefish and whiting). Figure 1 shows the total pounds landed and the ex-vessel revenue (adjusted for inflation) from 2010 through 2023.

In this newsletter, we will explore the live rockfish fishery that is primarily caught with hook and line under our state permit system. We will showcase the Catch Share Program, which includes bottom trawl, midwater trawl for Pacific whiting, and midwater trawl for rockfish, as well as those who gear switch to catch their quota. We will also cover the sablefish fishery which will contain information about fish caught in the Catch Share Program (trawl and gear switchers), the Primary Tier fishery, Limited Entry (LE) trip limit fishery, and the Open Access fishery.

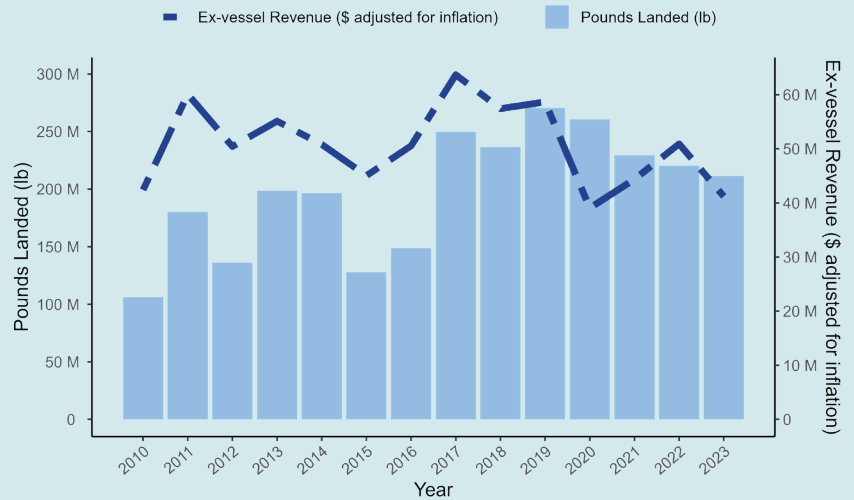


Figure 1: Total pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue for all commercial groundfish fisheries, 2010-2023.

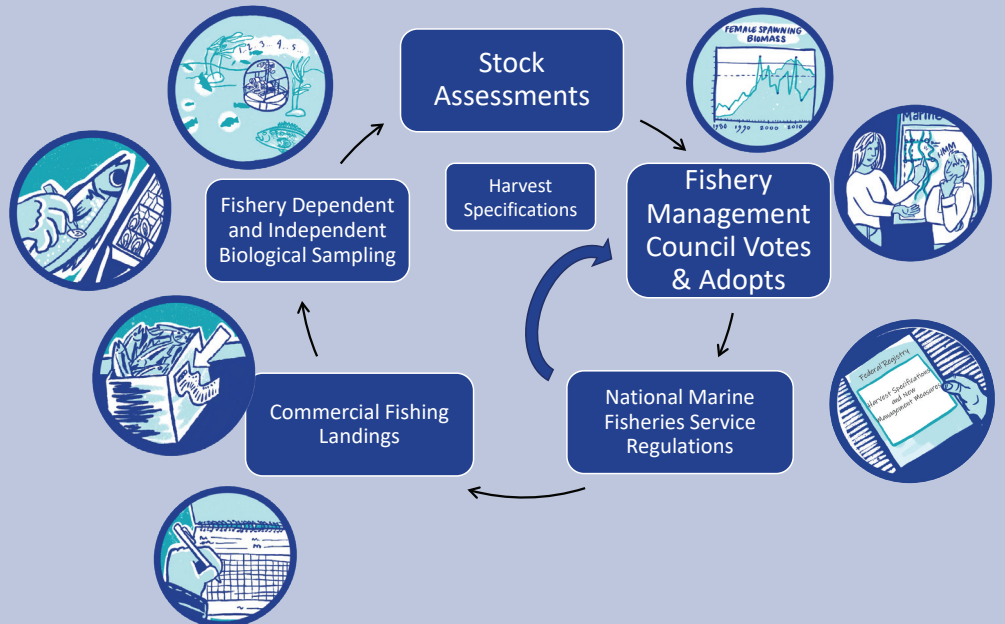
How Do We Regulate Fisheries?

ODFW staff participate in the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), the management body that regulates federal fisheries coastwide.

The Council makes decisions based on recommendations from advisory bodies which include scientists, managers, industry, environmental organizations, and public comment.

The Council meets five times a year, typically in March, April, June, September, and November.

To see what the Council is discussing next, visit www.pcouncil.org



The Council process takes time to incorporate input from technical and public stakeholders. ODFW wants to hear from you about things that are or aren't working in your fisheries. With that knowledge, we can help improve our management system.

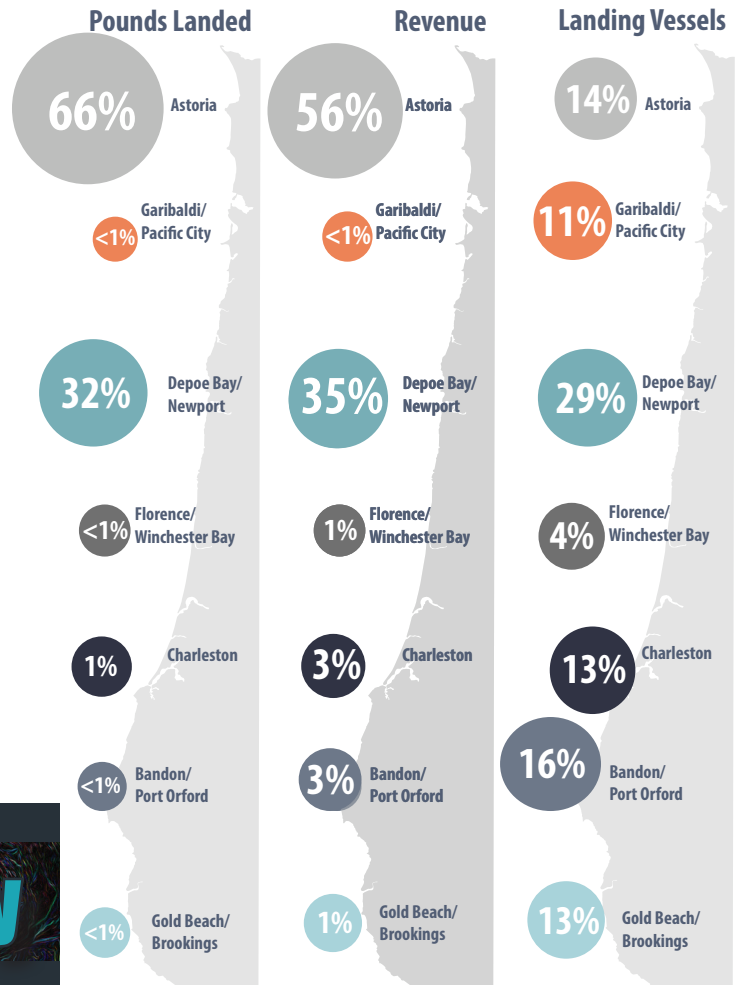
If you are interested in getting more involved in this process and learning about how decisions are made, get involved with the [Marine Resource Education Program \(MREP\)](#). The next workshop is in Newport, OR from October 21-25, 2024, and you need to apply. The workshops are free for accepted participants. Apply [here](#).

The Pounds Don't Tell the Whole Story

Part of the groundfish fishery is the whiting fishery, a high-volume fishery that inflates pounds landed. Although Astoria is the highest volume and revenue port due to whiting, the majority of the groundfish fleet land their catch in Newport as shown by Figure 2. Interestingly, 46 percent of Oregon vessels are operating and landing from Florence to Brookings. More boats land to the South Coast, which accounts for less than two percent of the pounds landed and eight percent of the state's revenue.

What does this mean? Niche markets in the southern half of the state allow for different types of targeted species, such as the live fish fishery (see more below). Greater numbers of smaller boats from the nearshore fishery and the fixed gear Open Access fishery catch less volume, compared to the whiting fishery up north, but still provide important revenue to our state and local communities.

Figure 2 (right): Percentage of pounds landed, revenue, and landing vessels by port.



2023 Live Fish Fishery

The live fish fishery is a unique component of the state permitted Nearshore Fishery (which does not include lingcod), where fish are landed, transported, and sold live.

In 2023, there were 60 vessels that landed live fish to the Oregon coast. The ex-vessel revenue between Charleston and Brookings was \$843 thousand, which represented 97 percent of the coastwide revenue from the live fish fishery. However, this was nine percent less than the ex-vessel value in that area in 2022. In 2023, the vessels landing into Garibaldi and Newport earned \$19 thousand, which was about half of the ex-vessel value in those ports in 2022.

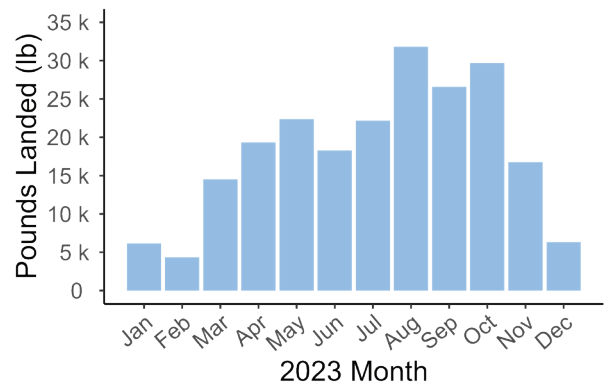
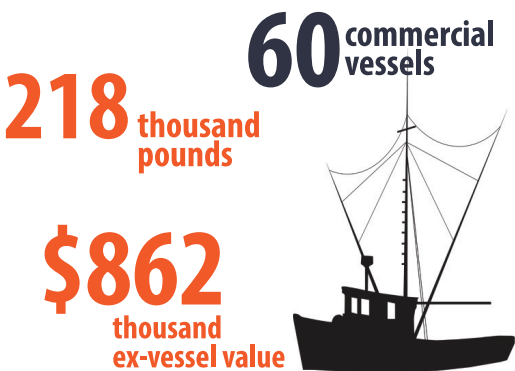
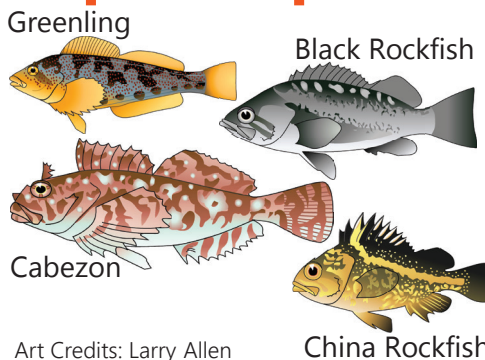


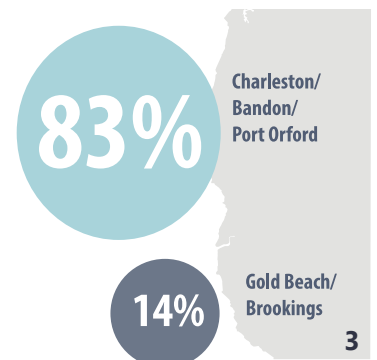
Figure 3: Pounds landed from the live fish fishery by month.



Top Four Species



Percent Revenue



Trawl Catch Share Program

A Little History

Since 2011, when the trawl sector was rationalized, groundfish trawl fisheries have been managed under an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) system. Individuals and/or businesses each own a certain percentage, called Quota Share, of the overall trawl sector's allocation for each species. This entitles them to an individual allocation of Quota Pounds each year that they can either fish or lease to someone else.

The IFQ system allows vessels more flexibility in where and when they fish, as long as all of their catch (including discards) is covered by their Quota Pounds. A 100 percent observer/video monitoring requirement ensures that catches and discards are fully accounted for and that everyone stays within their individual quotas. Area closures are used to protect sensitive habitats, such as rocky reef and corals, and can be used to reduce bycatch of non-IFQ species such as Chinook salmon.

Oregon vessels participate in bottom trawl, whiting, and midwater rockfish trawl fisheries. Figures 4 and 5 show metric tons landed and ex-vessel revenue for these different sectors in the Trawl Catch Share Program.

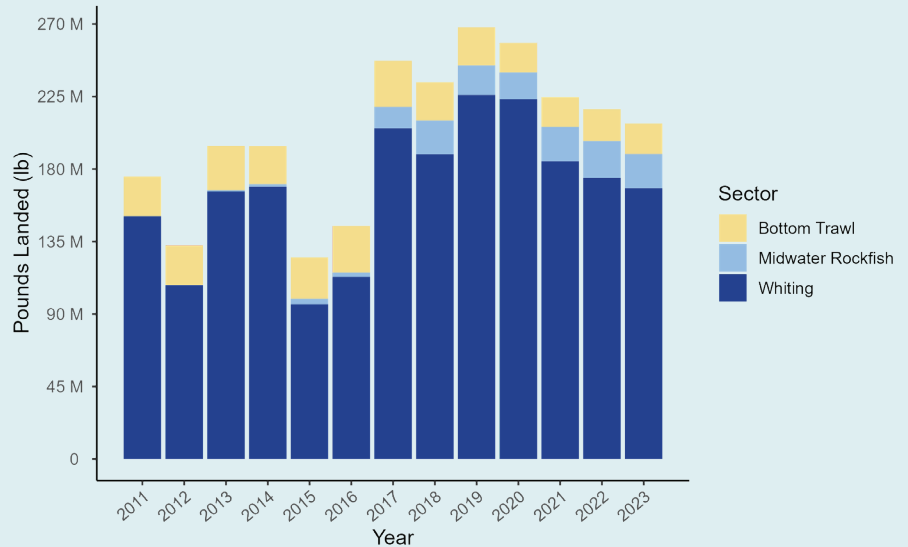


Figure 4: Pounds landed by the Trawl Catch Share Program, 2011-2023.

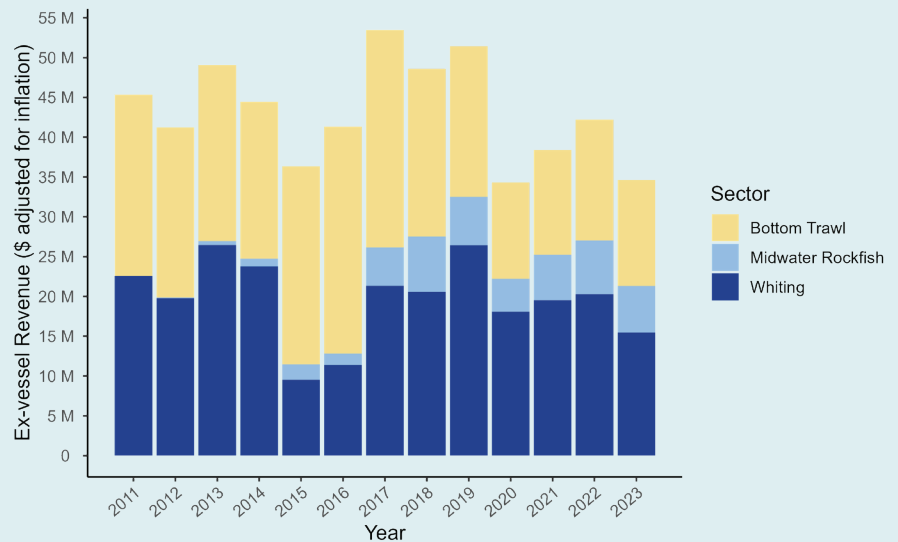


Figure 5: Ex-vessel revenue from the Trawl Catch Share Program, 2011-2023.

The 2023 Whiting Season

The 2023 shoreside whiting season started off with higher landings than 2022. However, the price of whiting was lower throughout the season. By the end of the season, the whiting catch coastwide was roughly 60 percent of the whiting total allowable catch for all three sectors (Catcher-Processor, Mothership, and Shoreside whiting). The Oregon shoreside whiting fishery produced \$15.5 million in ex-vessel revenue. Figure 6 shows the pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue from this fishery in 2023.

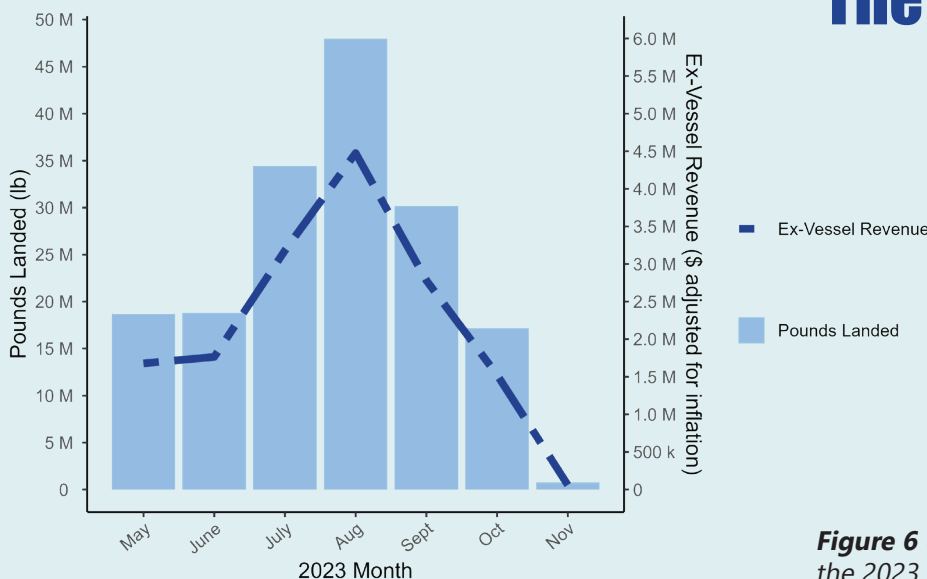


Figure 6 (left): Pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue from the 2023 shoreside whiting season by month.

Sablefish 2023 Season Recap

Sablefish has historically been a high value fish that is caught in almost every groundfish fishery sector along the Oregon coast. It is one species that is caught by multiple gear types. The Trawl Catch Share Program values sablefish as part of their portfolio because it is caught in the trawl fishery with Dover sole and shortspine thornyhead as well as by the participants who use fixed gear. The Primary Tier permit fishery applies to boats that either have a longline or a pot endorsement to catch a certain poundage. Outside of that permit season, there is also a Limited Entry fixed gear trip limit fishery that operates in Oregon. Sablefish are also caught in the Open Access sector.

The primary market is Asian markets, although more recently there has been an increase in local markets. The Catch Share Program landings are primarily in Newport and Astoria, with almost 6 million pounds being landed to those two ports in 2023 as shown in Figure 7. However, sablefish landings occur throughout the Oregon coast. In 2023, the majority of landings for the Limited Entry daily limit sector were from Newport to the Oregon/California border, and the greatest number of landings outside of Newport came from Port Orford. 2023 participants took advantage of the Open Access sector along the coast, with concentrations of landings and vessels in the ports of Charleston, Port Orford, and Brookings. The largest 2023 landings in the Primary Tier fishery occurred in Newport, which also had the greatest number of vessels landing there.

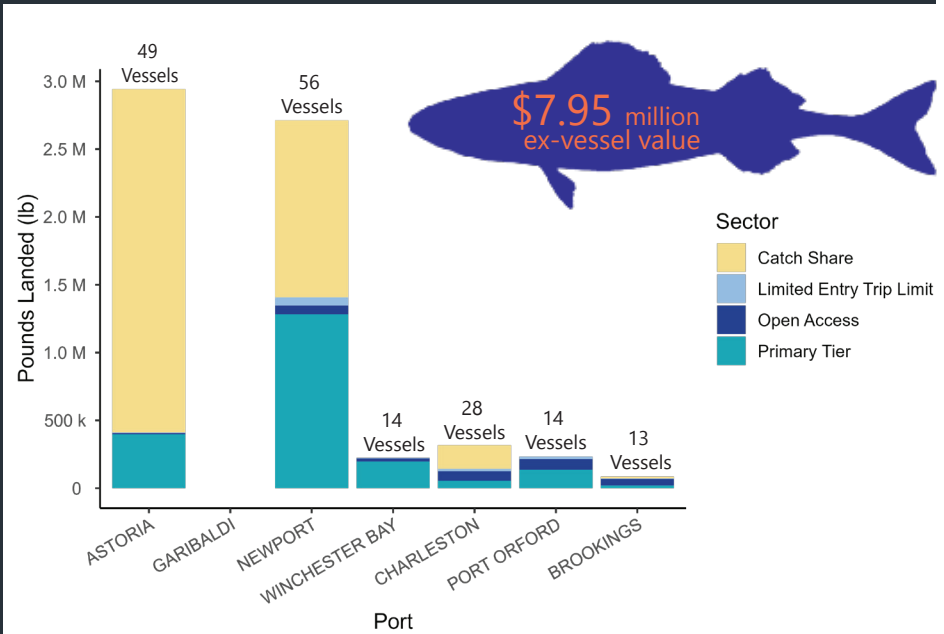


Figure 7: Sablefish pounds landed in each sector (Catch Share, Limited Entry Trip Limit, Open Access, and Primary Tier) by port in 2023.

What's New With Our Research Team?

Pacific spiny dogfish (*Squalus suckleyi*; hereafter, "dogfish") are found throughout the Pacific Ocean in large schools that can occur from the surface all the way to the sea floor. Schools are usually segregated by sex and age, where adult males and females form separate schools, and juveniles school together regardless of sex. The tendency of this species to travel in large, segregated schools at unpredictable depths makes it a difficult species to manage in two main ways: 1. Large volumes of dogfish are unintentionally caught and landed as bycatch and 2. Scientific uncertainty in movement of dogfish introduces uncertainty in the population assessment. To increase our understanding about dogfish movement and improve the population assessment, ODFW has teamed up with research partners from Oregon State University and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Fishery Science Center to put satellite tags on over 100 dogfish throughout the summer/fall of 2024.

If you would like to know more about this project or would like to contribute to this research by inviting us to join you on your fishing boat to tag and release dogfish please reach out to Leif Rasmuson at 541-270-5561 or Leif.k.rasmuson@odfw.oregon.gov.

Port Biologist Corner

How Does MRP Monitor the Groundfish Fisheries?

ODFW's Marine Resources Program (MRP) port biologists sample offloads and collect biological samples that are used in stock assessments. They are your best interface with ODFW. The four port biologists (to the right) also have many assistants who work with them. Shout out to Jim, Alexis, Joel, Alondra, Meaghan, Jake, Jonathon, and Trinity! And shout out to all the captains, deckhands, fish dealers, and dock crews too!

Commercial Monitoring



MRP port biologists conduct dockside sampling of commercial groundfish fishery vessels in the major ports.

Trawl and Fixed Gear Logbook data are collected, which includes species caught, incidental catch, trip dates, fishing area, and landing port. These are used to estimate effort and go directly to the National Marine Fisheries Service.



MRP port biologists collect length information and biological samples from several hundred vessels throughout the year to describe the year-classes that are being landed.

MRP staff review fish ticket data on catch counts, weights, grade, and value to calculate the ex-vessel revenue for the fishery.



2023: Notes from the Field

Sheryl in Astoria notes that despite varying decreases in average price for the target species (Dover, petrale, lingcod, and sablefish), the bottom trawl fleet had higher annual revenue for those species due to the increased volume landed. The downturn in the sablefish market was a primary reason that Open Access fixed gear sablefish effort decreased; most of the Astoria landings came from the higher volume LE and IFQ vessels.



In Newport, Scott remarked that the hake fishery slowed way down due to lots of Russian pollock surimi being added to the global market. The price of sablefish was the lowest in decades due to high inventories. Petrale and Dover markets generally maintained volume and prices.



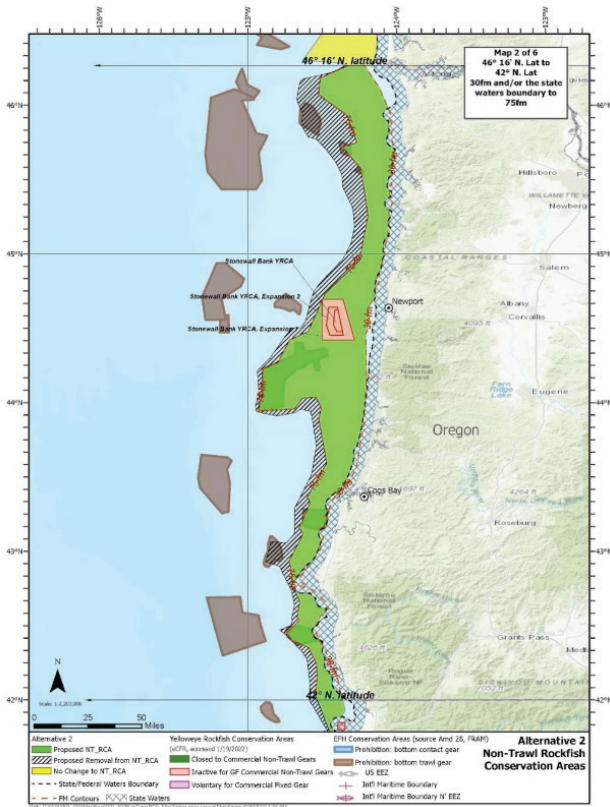
Katlyn in the South Central Coast notes that, due to the low price and market demand, much of the commercial groundfish fishery saw a decrease in pounds landed and annual revenue. The pounds landed by the bottom trawl fishery was about 11 percent lower than in 2022. However, the nearshore and lingcod fishery saw a slight increase in landed pounds and a larger increase in annual revenue.



In Brookings, Valerie observed that the bottom trawl fishery in that port only saw one landing compared to an average of 33 landings in the previous 5 years. Cost of trucking and landings into alternate ports are the main causes for the decline. As other opportunities decreased (i.e., salmon), there was an increase in Open Access fixed gear landings. Gold Beach and Port Orford continue to have a strong live nearshore fishery, but total pounds landed in Port Orford with fixed gear and hook and line decreased.



Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area

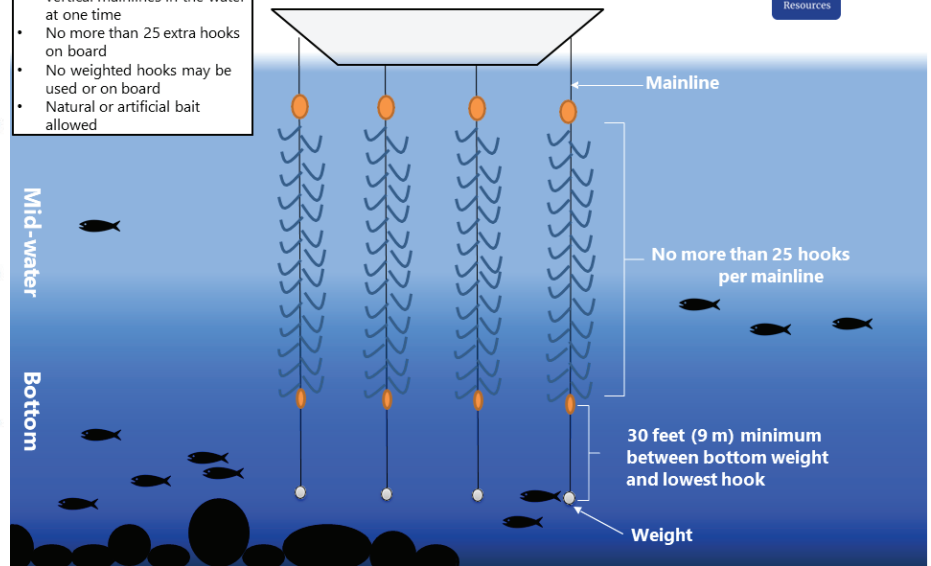


New for 2024 are changes to the boundaries of the Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA). Off Oregon, from 46°16' N. lat. to 42° N. lat., the new boundary is from 30 fathoms to 75 fathoms, opening approximately 1,361 square miles.

Groundfish Stationary Vertical Jig Gear

Not drawn to scale

- No more than 100 hooks or 4 vertical mainlines in the water at one time
- No more than 25 extra hooks on board
- No weighted hooks may be used or on board
- Natural or artificial bait allowed



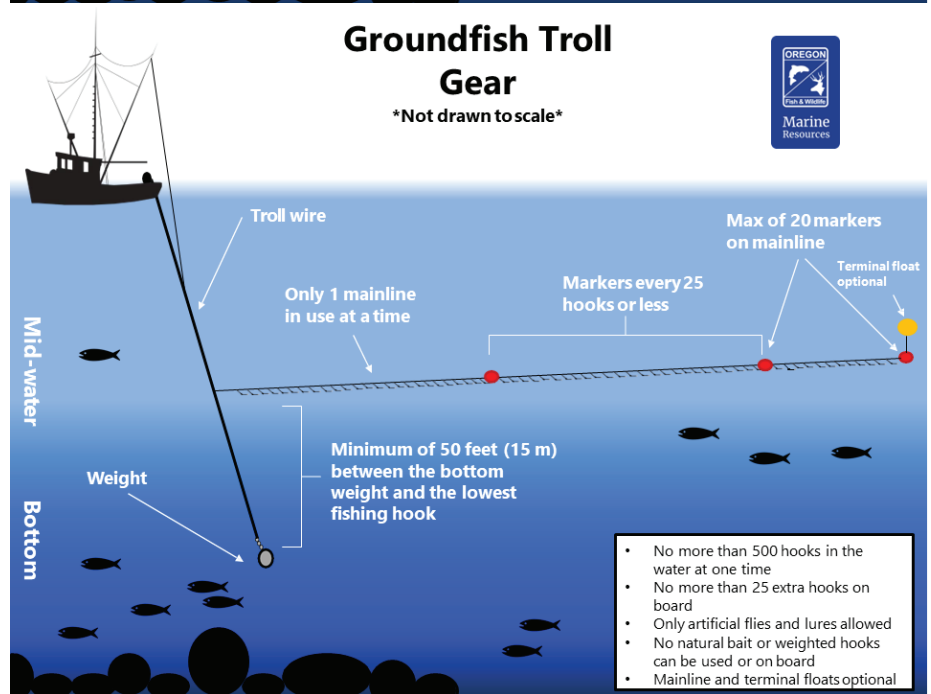
The Non-Trawl RCA is open to two types of non-bottom contact hook and line gear: “stationary vertical jig” and “groundfish troll”. See the diagrams of these two gear types to the right.

On a fishing trip where any fishing will occur inside the Non-Trawl RCA, only one type of legal non-bottom contact gear may be carried on board. No other fishing gear of any type may be carried on board or stowed during that trip.

The vessel may fish inside and outside the Non-Trawl RCA on the same fishing trip, provided a valid declaration report as required in § 660.13(d) has been filed with the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE).

Groundfish Troll Gear

Not drawn to scale



- No more than 500 hooks in the water at one time
- No more than 25 extra hooks on board
- Only artificial flies and lures allowed
- No natural bait or weighted hooks can be used or on board
- Mainline and terminal floats optional

For more information, please review the NMFS Compliance Guide, at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2023-11/ComplianceGuide-Amendment32-groundfish-nontrawl.pdf> or check out the [Non-Trawl Area Management Measures Story Map](#).

For additional information contact:

Lynn Massey, Fishery Management Specialist at NMFS, at 971-238-2514 (office) or 562-900-2060 (cell)

Other Updates and Reminders

Want More Information?

Visit Our Website



<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/commercial/>

For Federal Regulations:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-VI/part-660?toc=1>

For Council Items:

www.pcouncil.org



Marine Resources

We are always interested in hearing from you about your fishery and the issues that are important to you.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife,
Marine Resources Program
2040 SE Marine Science Dr.,
Newport, OR 97365
541-867-4741



New to You: Open Access Permit

As part of the 2025-2026 Harvest Specifications and new Management Measures package that will be **in effect January 1, 2025**, there will be a new directed Open Access fishery permit.

This permit would be tied to existing declarations that represent the directed Open Access fishery at [50 CFR 660.13\(d\)\(4\)\(iv\)\(A\)](#) in the federal regulations.

NMFS expects the permit to have the following features:

- Vessel-based permit (permit tied to the vessel and the vessel owner)
- Rolling electronic permit applications and electronic issuance (no paper)
- Permits will expire on the last day of the month of the vessel owner's birthday
- Expected gear types to be used on the vessel that year
- Non-transferable
- No owner-onboard requirement

There will be an administrative fee associated, but it is expected to be on the lower end of the cost range. This permit will NOT limit those who fish in the Open Access sector but will allow for managers to understand effort better and be able to better predict landings. Sign up for federal regulation notices to learn more and to see the compliance guide when it is posted.

FEDERAL FIXED GEAR LOGBOOKS

In place of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fixed Gear Logbook, a new federal logbook will be required beginning in January 2025.

- Until January 2025, Oregon vessel operators can use either the standard Oregon Fixed Gear Logbook **or the new Federal Logbook** if you are **NOT** fishing inside the Non-Trawl RCA.
- **If fishing in the Non-Trawl RCA**, Oregon vessel operators are required to use the **Federal Non-Trawl Logbook**.
- Oregon Nearshore Permit holders fishing **outside the RCA** in state waters are still only required to use the Oregon Nearshore Logbook.
- Nearshore Permit holders fishing **inside the RCA** are required to fill out **BOTH** the Federal Non-Trawl Logbook and the Oregon Nearshore Logbook.

Electronic logbook: The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) has developed the Federal Non-Trawl Electronic Logbook App, which is now available for download on smartphones (IOS or Android devices). To download the application, please visit the PSMFC's website at:

<https://www.psmfc.org/program/logbooks?pid=17>