



Marine Resources

Commercial Groundfish Newsletter

October 2025

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www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/commercial/

Many Species, Many Gears

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, thornyheads, midwater and benthic rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, and greenling. 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.

The infographic below displays the total groundfish landings into Oregon for 2024, encompassing all groundfish fisheries. Pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue in 2024 were down from 2023, which many think is due to disruptions in international markets and a lack of a strong domestic market for many of our Oregon species. Pounds landed also shifted away from Newport and into Astoria, largely due to availability and capacity of processing plants.

2024 Season Summary

All Groundfish Totals

179 million pounds landed

\$37 million ex-vessel value

75% of the five-year average pounds (2019-2023)

276 commercial vessels

Percent of Total Pounds Landed

86%

Astoria

<1%

Garibaldi/Pacific City

13%

Depoe Bay/Newport

<1%

Florence/Winchester Bay

<1%

Charleston

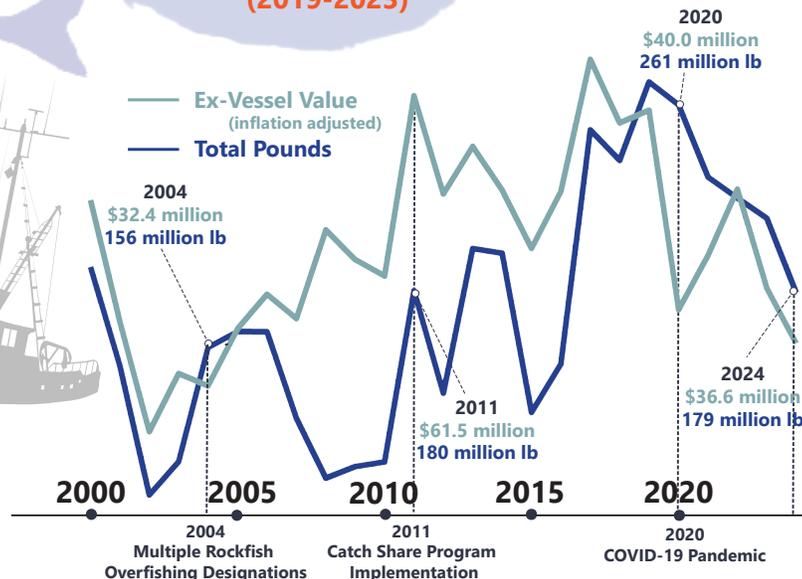
<1%

Bandon/Port Orford

<1%

Gold Beach/Brookings

Ex-Vessel Value (inflation adjusted)
Total Pounds



2024 Season Summary (cont'd)

Between 2023 and 2024 there was a decrease in price per pound for sablefish (a highly sought after species). Additionally, total pounds landed of all groundfish species combined decreased, which resulted in a decrease in ex-vessel revenue. Figure 1 shows the total pounds landed and the ex-vessel revenue (adjusted for inflation) for all commercial groundfish fisheries from 2011 through 2024.

In this newsletter, we highlight the dory fleet in Pacific City, one of the last remaining in the United States. We will discuss 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.

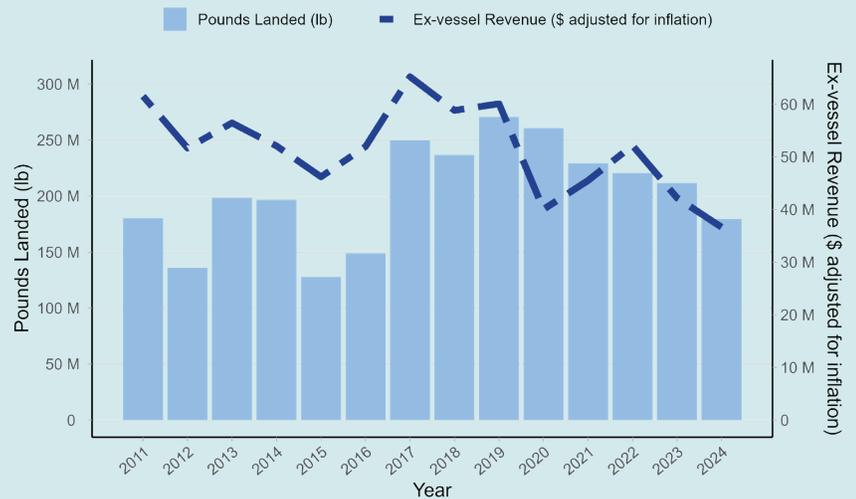


Figure 1: Total pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue (adjusted for inflation) for all commercial groundfish fisheries, 2011-2024.

How Do We Regulate Fisheries?

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

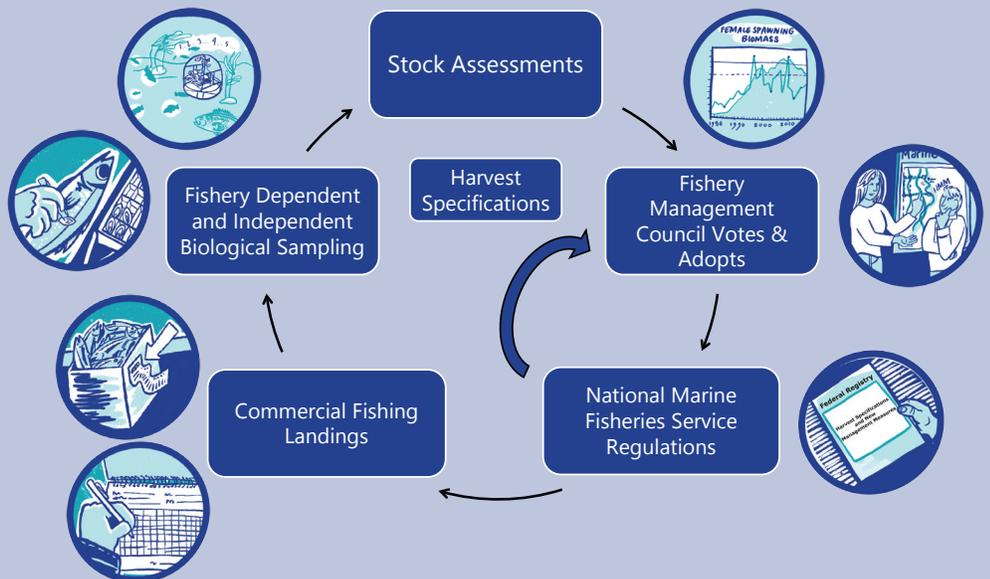
The Council makes decisions based on recommendations from advisory bodies which include scientists, managers, industry, environmental organizations, and public comment.

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, consider attending a workshop hosted by the [Marine Resource Education Program \(MREP\)](#). This program is organized by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute and has been serving fisheries of the West Coast since 2016. Be on the look out for information about the next West Coast workshop in 2026. The workshops are free for accepted participants, but you need to apply [here](#).

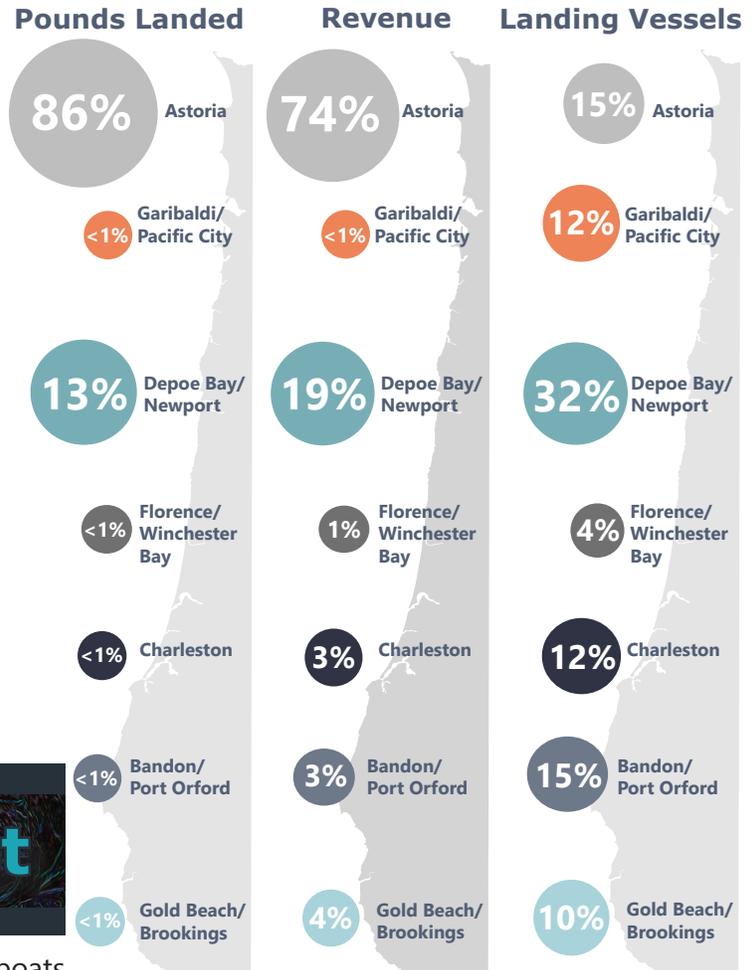


The Pounds Don't Tell the Whole Story

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, while 41 percent of Oregon vessels are operating and landing* from Florence to Brookings, those vessels account for less than one percent of the pounds landed and 11 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. 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, providing important revenue with a higher price per pound to our state and local communities.

Figure 2 (right): Percentage of pounds landed, revenue, and landing vessels* by port for 2024.
* Vessels that land fish in more than one port during the year are counted in each port where they landed fish.



Pacific City Dory Fleet

Since the early 1900's, Dorymen have proudly launched their boats from the beach at Cape Kiwanda in Pacific City, home to one of the last remaining dory fleets in the United States. These distinctive dory boats—flat-bottomed for beach launches, with sharp bows and high sides—are designed to carry heavy loads through surf and swell. Launching and landing require teamwork and precision: the boat is pushed into the surf until deep enough to lower the engine, while returning to shore demands careful timing, cutting the engine at just the right moment to glide safely onto the sand.

The [Pacific City Dorymen's Association](#) embodies the strong sense of community among Dorymen, supporting scholarships, freshwater fishery enhancement programs, school lunches, fire and rescue services, and the Linfield College Dory History Program. They also do yearly events such as Dory Days in July and Trick o' Treat the Dory Fleet in October.

In 2024, 17 dory boats made groundfish landings including seven different species of rockfish. While black rockfish had the largest total pounds among rockfish species, lingcod was the top species overall by weight, yielding three times the total pounds of black rockfish. Although the total pounds landed for each species were lower than 2023, market prices for all species held steady.

Pictures (right): Two dory boats—Cuz (top) and Sea Q (bottom) on the beach at Cape Kiwanda. Photo credit Rachel Bruce.



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 a 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 requirement for 100 percent observer/video monitoring 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 pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue for these different sectors in the Trawl Catch Share Program.

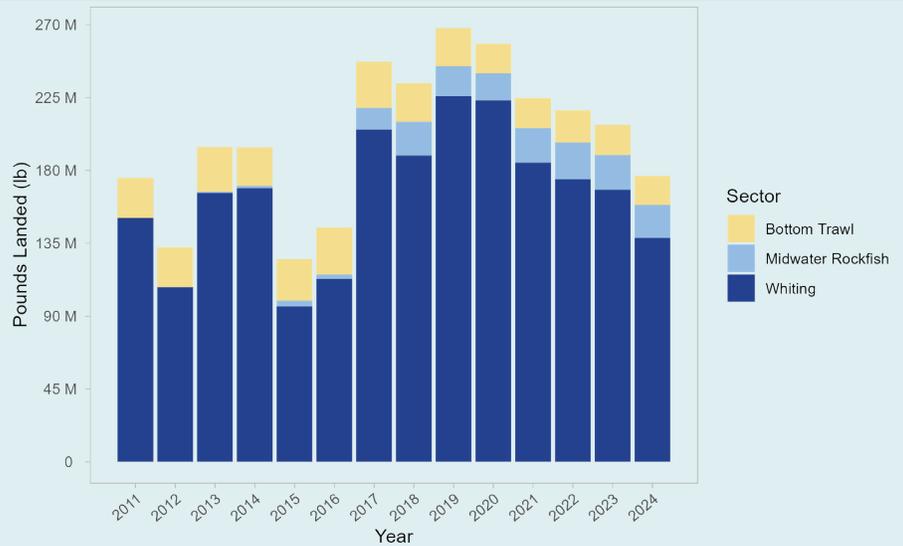


Figure 4: Pounds landed by the Trawl Catch Share Program, 2011-2024.

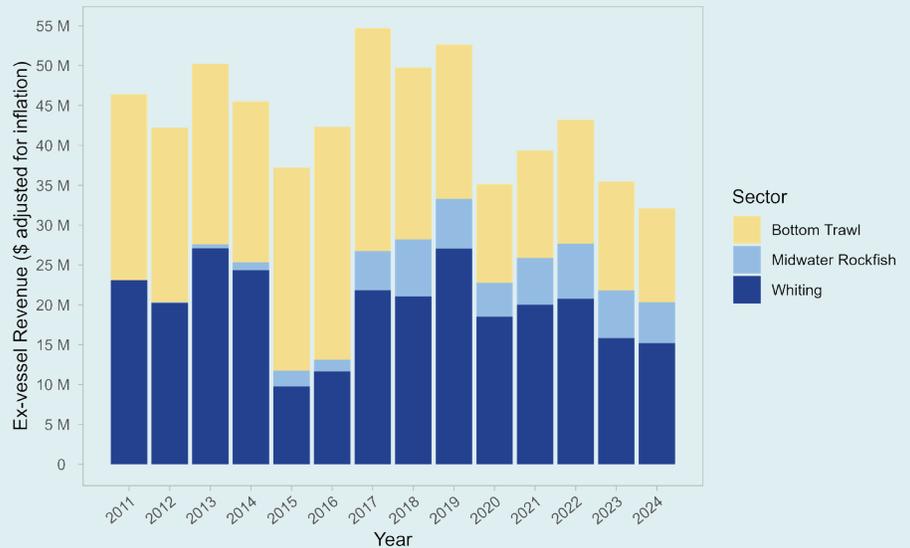
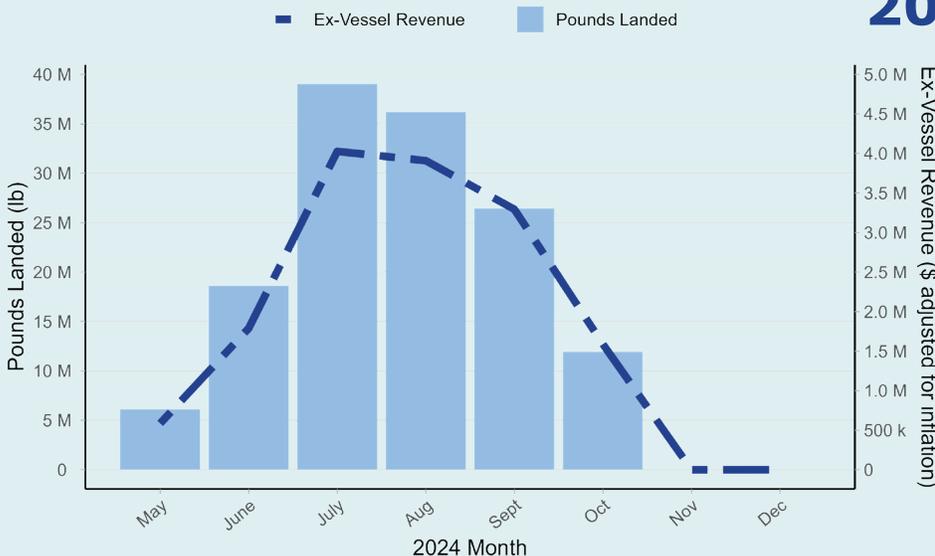


Figure 5: Ex-vessel revenue from the Trawl Catch Share Program, 2011-2024.

2024 Whiting Season



The 2024 shoreside whiting season had less landings than 2023 and the lowest pounds landed since 2016. The Oregon shoreside whiting fishery produced \$15.2 million in ex-vessel revenue. Figure 6 shows the pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue from this fishery in 2024.

Figure 6 (left): Pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue from the 2024 shoreside whiting season by month.

2024 Sablefish Season Recap

Sablefish has historically been a high value fish that is caught in almost every groundfish fishery sector along the Oregon coast. While this fish is primarily shipped to Asian markets, there has been an increase in domestic markets more recently. 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 targeted in the bottom trawl fishery with Dover sole and shortspine thornyhead as well as by the participants who use fixed gear. The Limited Entry Fixed Gear Primary Tier (Primary Tier) fishery applies to boats that either have a longline or a pot endorsement to catch a certain poundage. Once tier limits are reached, these vessels can participate in the Limited Entry Fixed Gear Trip Limit fishery. Sablefish are also caught in the Open Access sector.

The Trawl Catch Share Program landings are primarily in Newport and Astoria, with just under four million total pounds being landed to those two ports in 2024 as shown in Figure 7. However, sablefish landings occur across the entire Oregon coast. In 2024, the majority of landings for the Limited Entry Trip Limit sector were from Newport to the Oregon/California border, and the greatest number of landings outside of Newport came from Port Orford. 2024 participants took advantage of the Open Access sector along the coast, with concentrations of landings and vessels in the ports of Port Orford, Newport, and Charleston. In the Primary Tier fishery, Newport had both the highest number of vessels and the most landings.

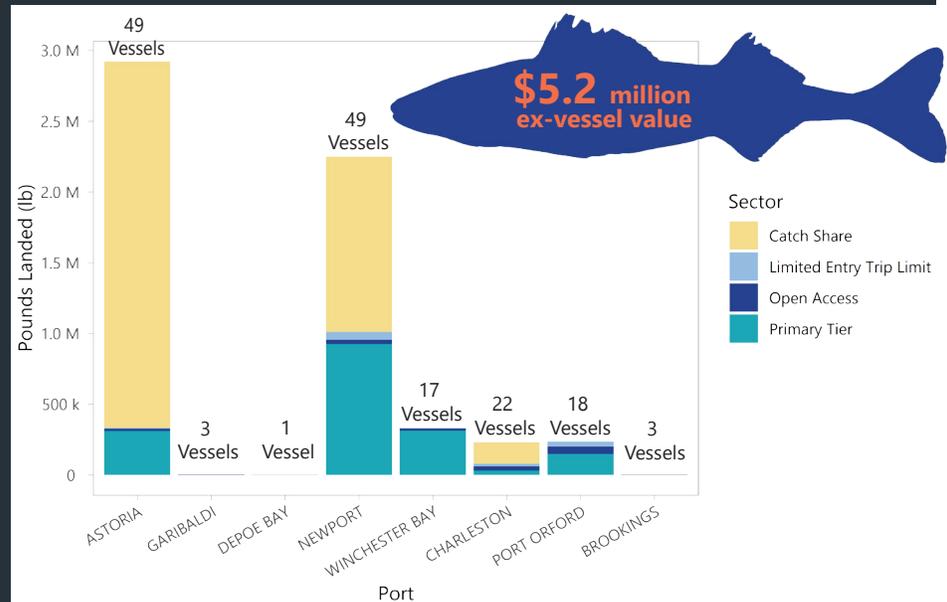


Figure 7: Sablefish pounds landed in each sector (Trawl Catch Share Program, Limited Entry Fixed Gear Trip Limit, Open Access, and Limited Entry Fixed Gear Primary Tier) by port in 2024.

What's New With Our Research Team?

ODFW's [Marine Fisheries Research team](#) completed a [statewide black rockfish survey](#) in 36 days between August and September 2025. The team of 14 scientists conducted 321 video drops and [203 conductivity, temperature, and depth casts](#). The goal of the survey was to better understand the population status of black, blue, and deacon rockfishes—three species that form the foundation of Oregon's nearshore recreational, charter, and commercial fisheries. This is the second coastwide, fishery-independent study of its kind. The first, [conducted August-October 2021](#), filled longstanding data gaps and helped provide fishery independent data to inform the most recent 2023 stock assessment. Historically, fish population estimates were based on commercial and recreational fisheries catch data. These data were the only data used in the stock assessment (a model that uses fishery and survey information to create a population estimate) to inform quotas in both fisheries. But the fishing community, managers, and scientists alike have pushed for including fishery-independent data into the stock assessments. In response, ODFW researchers developed a survey approach using scientific fish finders and underwater video cameras to count fish in nearshore waters.

This survey method, reviewed and validated by international experts, generates credible data that is expected to increase the accuracy of the next black rockfish stock assessment. The survey includes all of the Oregon coast's rocky reef nearshore habitat. After the researchers have finalized the data, the team will present the data at a free online webinar that will be open to the public. If you would like to know more about this project, please reach out to Leif Rasmuson at 541-270-5561 or leif.k.rasmuson@odfw.oregon.gov.

Port Biologist Corner

How Does ODFW 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) and the project leader, Cam, also have many assistants who work with them. Shout out to Jim, Maria, Sharon, Jonathan, Sarah, Shawn, Ally, 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.



2024 Notes from the Field



Sheryl noted that Astoria's groundfish landings rose by about 5,700 mt in 2024, largely due to Newport whiting vessels shifting north after processing facility closures. Bottom trawlers continued targeting petrale, Dover, thornyhead, sablefish, and lingcod, with lingcod landings reaching levels not seen since the 1990s.

However, lower trawl lingcod prices meant ex-vessel value fell. Garibaldi's nearshore fixed gear fleet saw the opposite: lingcod prices held steady while doubled trip limits and a new wholesale fish dealer helped to double ex-vessel value.

In Newport, Scott remarked that all of the largest fisheries were down substantially: shoreside hake was down 75 percent, with only 12 million pounds delivered to Newport, widow was down 53 percent, sablefish volume and ex-vessel value were down 20 percent, petrale volume was down about 33 percent, and Dover volume was down 42 percent.



Joel notes that in Charleston the lack of markets and low prices kept fixed gear trips down, and sablefish was primarily very weak. Bottom trawl fishing was again limited as more effort has shifted to other parts of the state. The nearshore fishery was fairly steady and there were some new landings occurring with some boats fishing in the Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area with the new gear types (see page 7).



Valerie observed that in Brookings, Gold Beach, and Port Orford there was a 20 percent decrease in total pounds landed compared to the previous year. Brookings had a single bottom trawl landing and 11 nearshore vessels. Although landings from the sablefish fixed gear fishery in Port Orford were comparable to the 10-year average, the ex-vessel value was the second lowest in a decade due to low market prices. Gold Beach and Port Orford continue to have robust live fisheries for black rockfish, lingcod, China rockfish, and cabezon. As a final note, the Brookings Field Station moved to a new office on Lower Harbor Road.



Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area

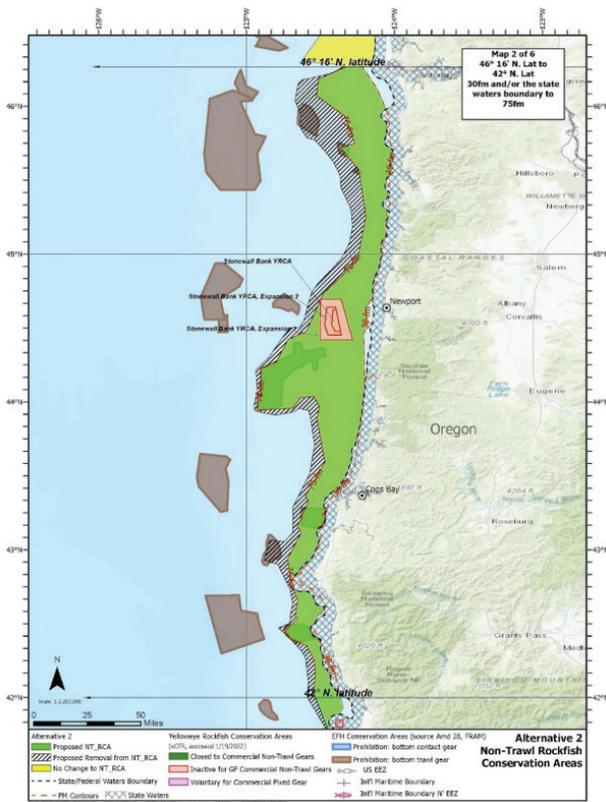


Figure 8: Map of the Non-Trawl RCA.

The Non-Trawl RCA is also now 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 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Law Enforcement.

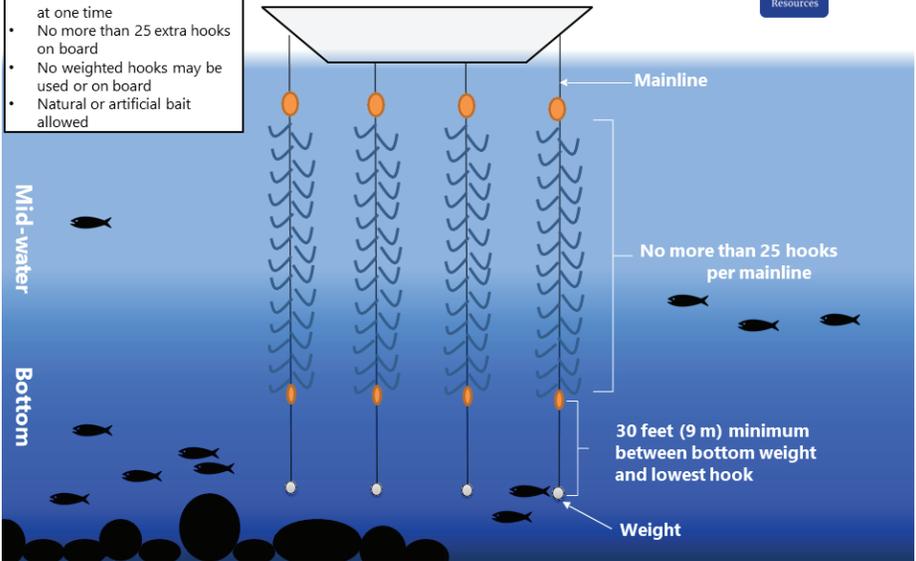
For more information, please review the NMFS Compliance Guide, at www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2023-11/ComplianceGuide-Amendment32-groundfish-nontrawl.pdf or check out the [Non-Trawl Area Management Measures Story Map](#).

Starting in 2024, the seaward boundary of the Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) was moved from 100 fathoms to 75 fathoms (Figure 8), allowing non-trawl commercial groundfish sectors and the directed commercial (DC) Pacific halibut fishery to use bottom contact gear in an area that was previously closed to these gears types.

Groundfish Stationary Vertical Jig Gear

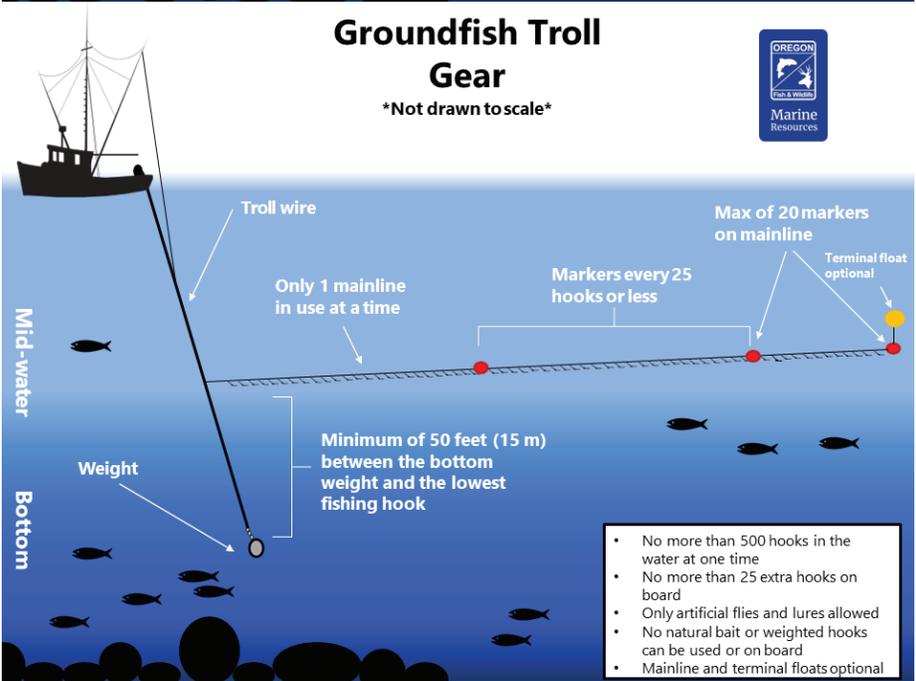
Not drawn to scale

- 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



Groundfish Troll Gear

Not drawn to scale



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

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[www.dfw.state.or.us/
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For Federal Regulations:

[www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/
chapter-VI/part-660?toc=1](http://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 about your fishery and the issues that are important to you. Please contact us using the information below.

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OPEN ACCESS PERMIT

Effective January 1, 2025, a new directed Open Access fishery permit is required as part of the 2025-2026 Harvest Specifications and new Management Measures package. This permit is tied to existing declarations that represent the directed Open Access fishery at [50 CFR 660.13\(d\)\(4\)\(iv\)\(A\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50-chapter-VI-part-660-subpart-D-section-660.13(d)(4)(iv)(A)) in the federal regulations.

The permit has 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 is an administrative fee associated. 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. For more information, see the description on pages 14-17 of the [Compliance Guide for Participating in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Open Access Fishery Sector](#).

FEDERAL NON-TRAWL LOGBOOKS

Effective January 2025, a new Federal Non-Trawl Electronic Logbook replaced the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fixed Gear Logbook.

As a reminder:

- **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.
- All other vessel operators fishing in the non-trawl directed groundfish fisheries are required to fill out this federal 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: www.psmfc.org/program/electronic-logbooks/

To stay up-to-date with new federal regulations, sign up for [federal regulation notices](#). After entering your contact information, check the boxes for the "Groundfish" and/or "Pacific Whiting" topics under "West Coast Updates".