



Marine
Resources

Commercial Groundfish Newsletter

August 2026

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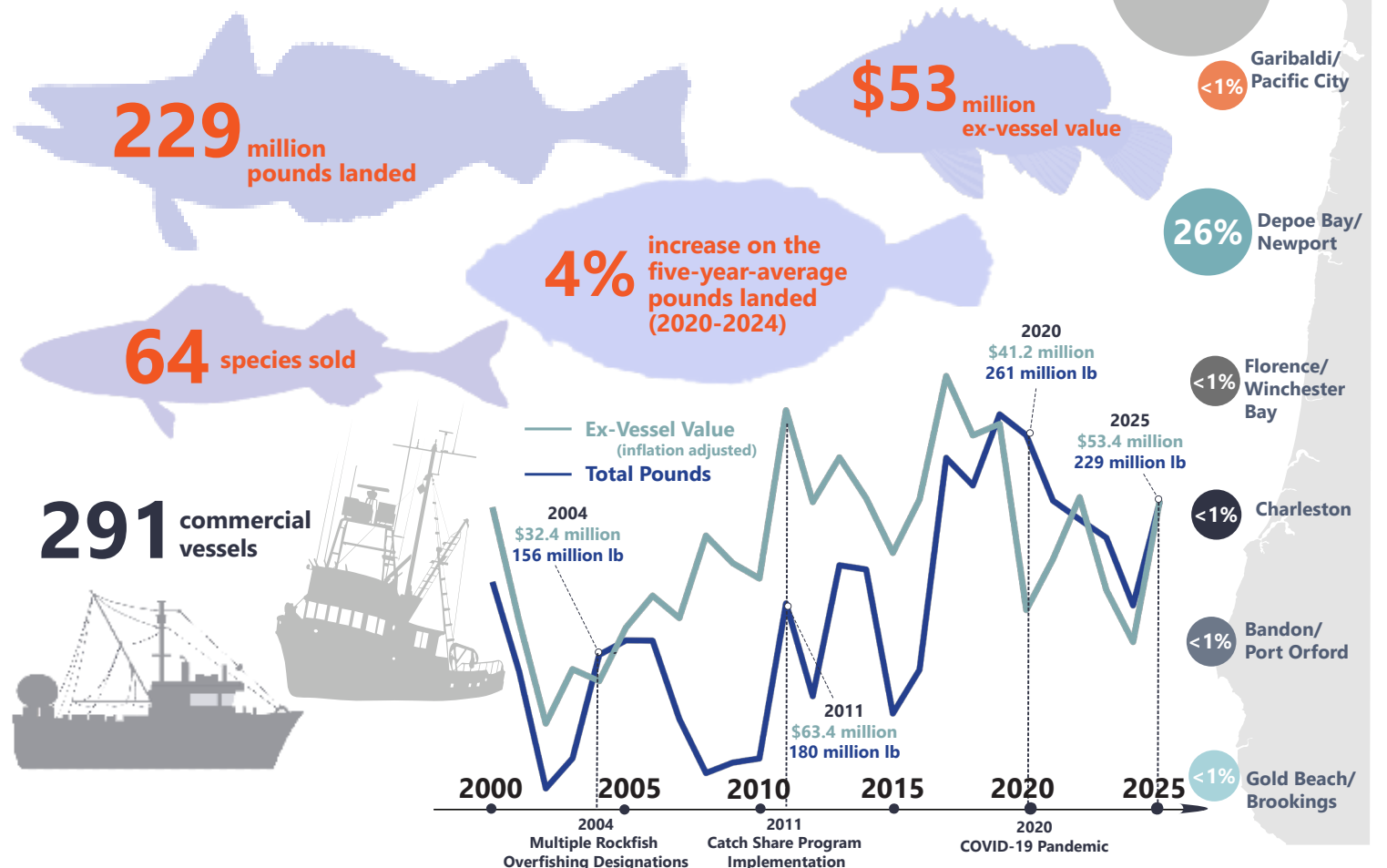
Many Species, Many Gears

Unlike other fisheries in Oregon, commercial groundfish is made up of many different target strategies 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 ports for 2025, encompassing all groundfish fisheries. Pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue in 2025 were up substantially from 2024, and more in line with 2021 through 2023 values. The majority of the pounds were again landed into Astoria, largely due to availability and capacity of processing plants, particularly for whiting.

2025 Season Summary

All Groundfish Totals



2025 Season Summary (cont'd)

Between 2024 and 2025 there was a dramatic increase in the limits for sablefish (a highly sought after species), which resulted in high sablefish landings. This likely contributed to the increase in total pounds landed of all groundfish species combined in 2025, which resulted in an increase 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 2016 through 2025.

In this newsletter, we will discuss the lingcod fixed gear fishery, the Catch Share Program, and the sablefish fishery, including a new threshold-based rule on gear switching. We will also provide a summary of the most recent harvest specifications for the 2027 and 2028 cycle. Finally, we provide some updates on the Limited Entry Fixed Gear follow-on actions and the fixed gear marking and entanglement risk reduction proposed rule.

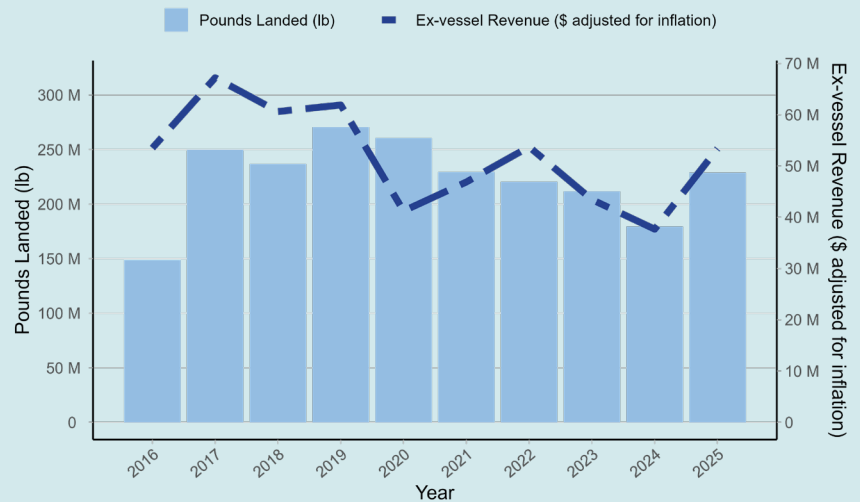


Figure 1. Total pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue (adjusted for inflation) for all commercial groundfish fisheries, 2016-2025.

How Do We Regulate Fisheries?

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

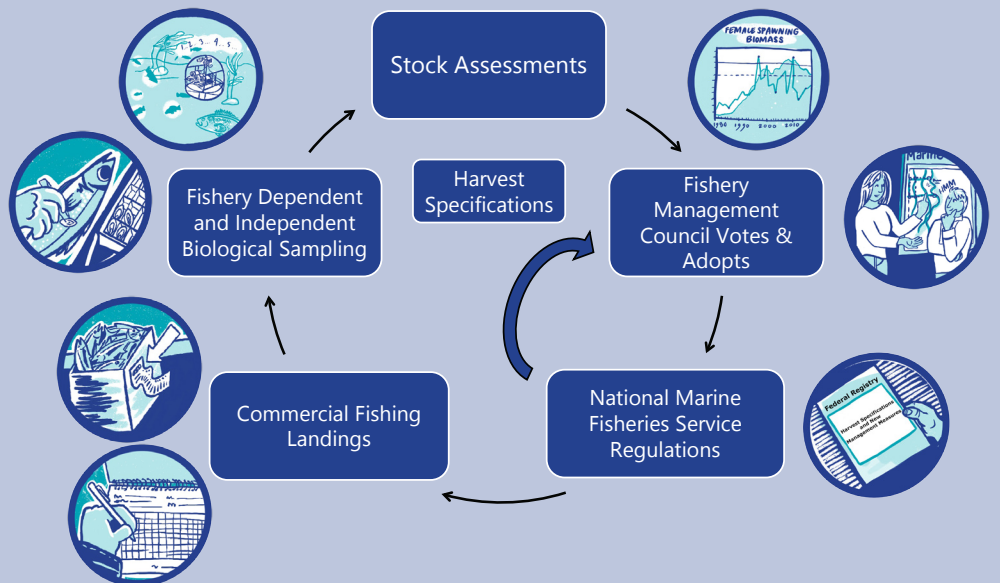
The Council makes decisions based on recommendations from advisory bodies which include scientists, managers, industry, environmental organizations, and public comment.

The Council meets five times a year, 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. The next West Coast workshop will be December 7-11, 2026 in La Jolla, California. The workshops are free for accepted participants, but you need to apply [here](#).



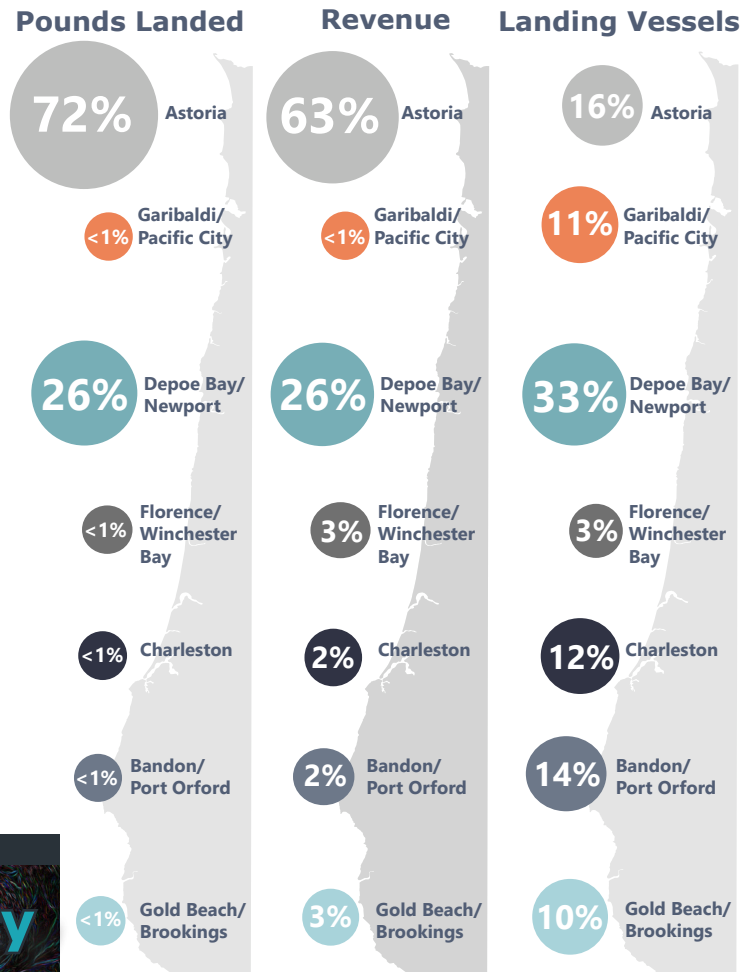
The Pounds Don't Tell the Whole Story

Although Astoria is the highest volume and revenue port, the majority of the groundfish-targeting vessels land their catch in Newport as shown by Figure 2. This is due to the whiting fishery, a high-volume fishery that inflates pounds landed and revenue. Interestingly, while 39 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 10 percent of the state's revenue.

What does this mean? Specialty markets in the southern half of the state allow for different types of targeted species, such as nearshore rockfish, cabezon, and lingcod in the live fish fishery. Greater numbers of smaller boats from the nearshore and the fixed gear Open Access sectors catch less volume, compared to the whiting fishery up north, but these vessels provide important revenue, with a higher price per pound to the state and local communities.

Figure 2 (right). Percentage of pounds landed, revenue, and landing vessels* by port for 2025.

* Vessels that land fish in more than one port during the year are counted in each port where they landed fish.



Lingcod Fixed Gear Fishery

An example of a specialty fishery that provides revenue throughout the state is the lingcod fishery. Lingcod is targeted in the fixed gear sectors, which includes the Limited Entry Trip Limit, Limited Entry Fixed Gear Primary Tier (Primary Tier), Open Access, and state-managed nearshore sectors.

The Open Access sector has a low barrier to entry since a limited entry permit is not required. This is beneficial because it provides an opportunity for fishery participants who may not have the capital necessary to purchase a limited entry permit. Meanwhile, participants with a state nearshore permit (primarily in southern Oregon) are able to sell lingcod to live markets, such as those in the San Francisco Bay Area, for a higher price per pound.

For these reasons, among others, the state nearshore and Open Access sectors typically land the majority of the lingcod within Oregon's fixed gear fishery. This was still the case in 2025, with an increase in landings in those sectors compared to 2024. There were very minimal landings from the Limited Entry Trip Limit sector. Ex-vessel revenue also increased in 2025.



Photo: Lingcod caught in the fixed gear fishery. Credit ODFW.

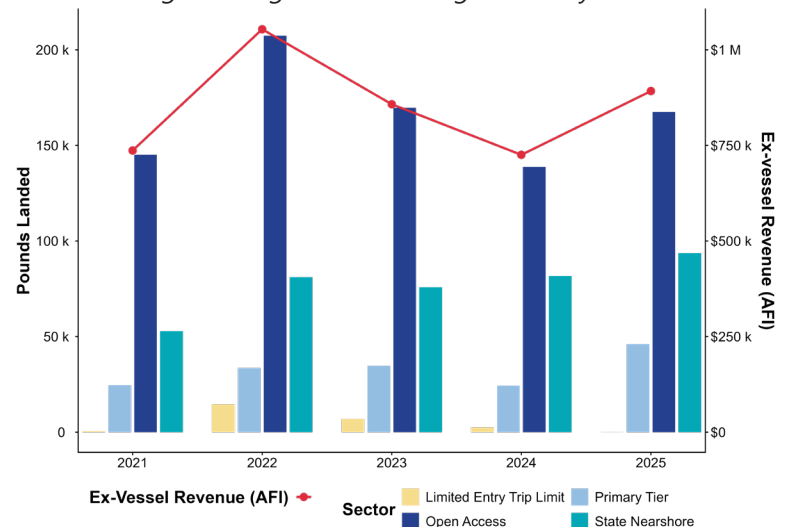


Figure 3. Oregon lingcod fixed gear fishery and state nearshore fishery landings and ex-vessel revenue (adjusted for inflation) by sector, 2021-2025.

Trawl Catch Share Program

Oregon vessels participate in bottom trawl, whiting, and midwater rockfish trawl sectors. Figures 4 and 5 show pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue for these different sectors in the trawl catch share program.

Sablefish Gear Switching

In 2017, after a review of the trawl catch share program, the Council identified an issue related to gear switching in the shoreside individual fishing quota fishery and its possible impact on attainment of trawl allocations. Gear switching is when a trawl-permitted vessel uses non-trawl gear to take trawl allocation. One of the primary concerns with gear-switching vessels is their utilization of the sablefish north of 36° N. latitude trawl allocation. The trawl sector's sablefish north allocation tends to be nearly fully utilized every year, and the vast majority of the catch taken by gear-switching vessels is sablefish.

In April 2024, the Council recommended a limit on gear switching. If approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the amount of sablefish north taken while gear switching would be limited to 29 percent, but only in years when the sablefish north allocation is less than 6,000 mt. More information can be found on the Council's [Gear-Switching webpage](#).

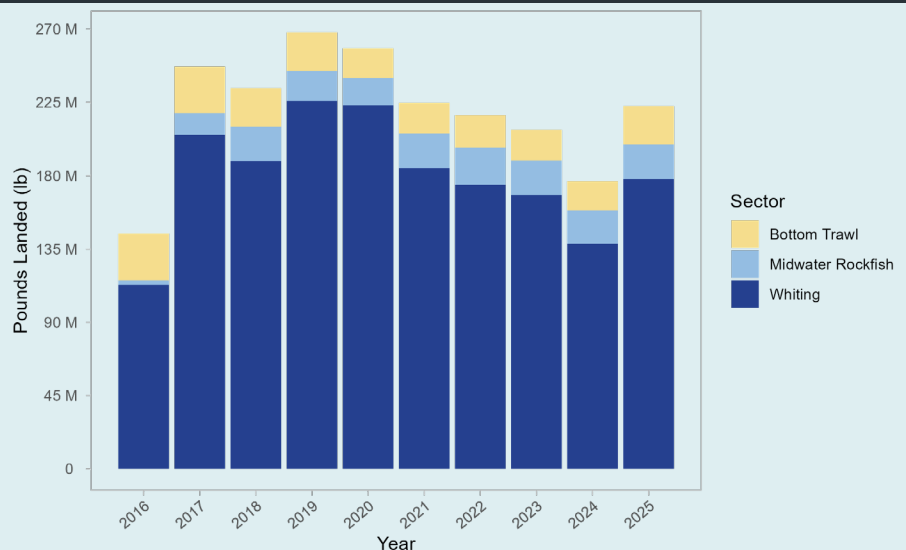


Figure 4. Pounds landed by the trawl catch share program, 2016-2025.

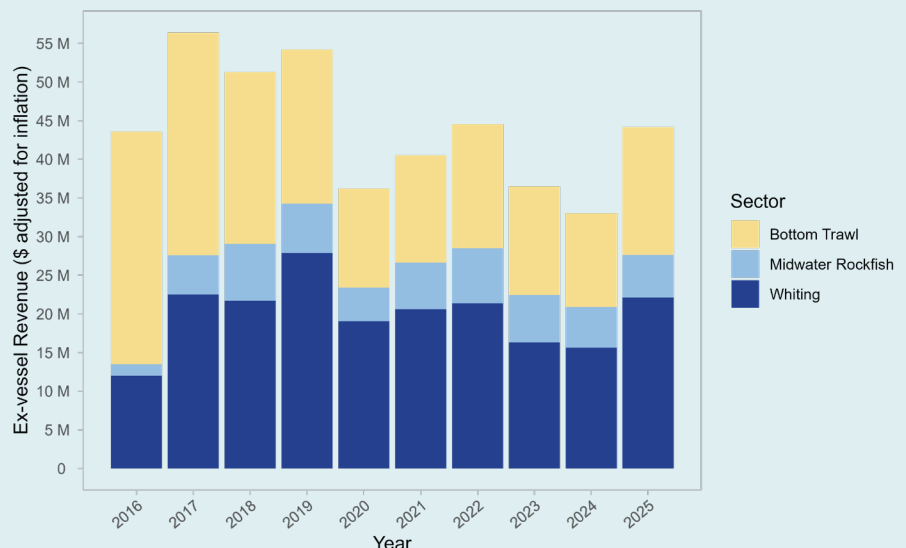
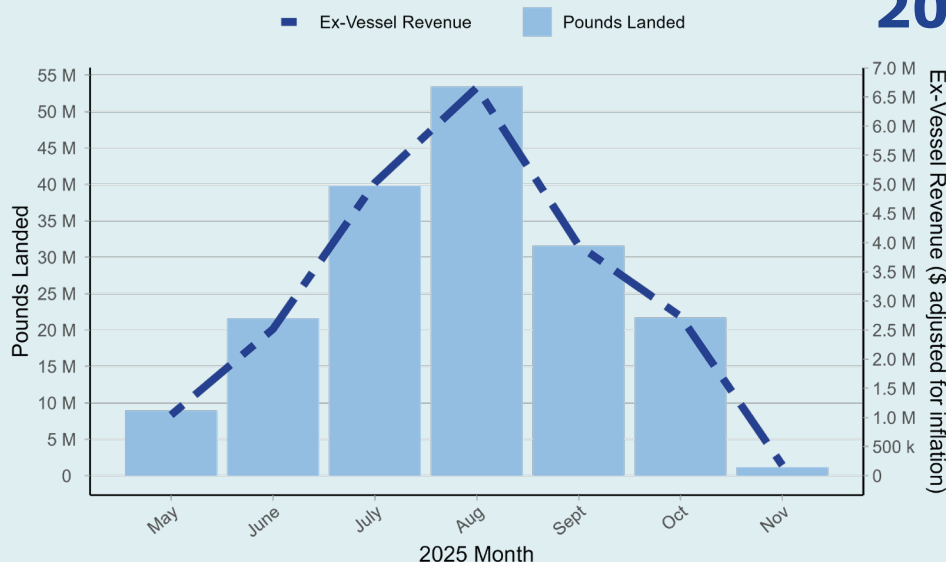


Figure 5. Ex-vessel revenue from the trawl catch share program, 2016-2025.

2025 Whiting Season



The 2025 shoreside whiting season landed 178 million pounds in Oregon, which is closer to the 10-year average of 180 million pounds, compared to the lower landings in 2024. The Oregon shoreside whiting fishery produced \$22.1 million in ex-vessel revenue. Figure 6 shows the pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue from this fishery in 2025 by month.

Figure 6 (left). Pounds landed and ex-vessel revenue from Oregon's 2025 shoreside whiting season by month.

2025 Sablefish Season Recap

Sablefish has historically been a high-value fish that is caught in almost every groundfish sector along the Oregon coast. While this fish is primarily shipped to Asian markets, there has been an increase in domestic markets more recently. The Trawl Catch Share Program values sablefish as part of their portfolio because it is targeted in the bottom trawl sector 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 of sablefish. 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 Astoria and Newport, with over eight million total pounds landed in those two ports in 2025 as shown in Figure 7. However, sablefish landings occur across the entire Oregon coast.

The majority of landings in the Open Access sector were in Newport, and the greatest number of landings outside of Newport came from Port Orford. Participants also utilized the Limited Entry Trip Limit sector, though it saw fewer landings than other sectors, with activity concentrated primarily in the ports of Newport, Port Orford, and Winchester Bay. In the Primary Tier sector, Newport had both the highest number of vessels and the most landings.

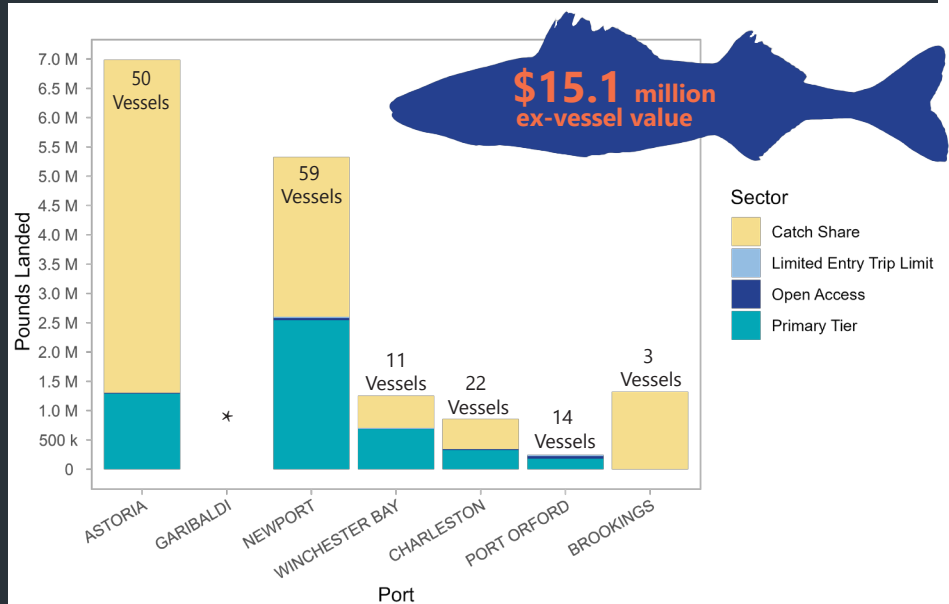


Figure 7. Sablefish pounds landed in each sector by port in 2025. * Indicates confidential data.

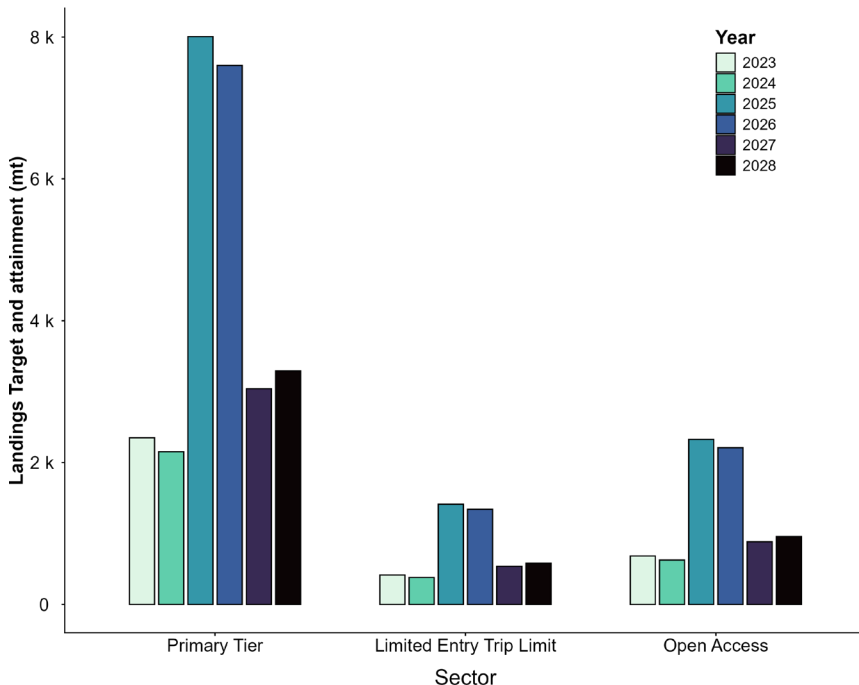


Figure 8. Landing targets for the Primary Tier, Limited Entry Fixed Gear Daily Trip Limit (Limited Entry Trip Limit) and Open Access sablefish north of 36° sectors with the amount landed overlaid (mt) in the darker shades of the bars. Landings targets for 2026 and 2027-2028 (under Alt. 1) are shown for comparison. Data source: PacFIN.

Harvest Specifications

The Council adopted the groundfish harvest specifications and management measures for 2027-2028 at the June 2026 meeting. Below is a summary of some of the relevant changes that will impact Oregon's commercial groundfish fisheries in the upcoming biennium. **One of the substantial changes is that yelloweye rockfish has officially been declared rebuilt!** Note that 2025, or "No Action", is used as a baseline with which to compare updated regulations for 2027. For more information, go to the [Council's harvest specifications 2027-2028 summary webpage](#).

Photo (right): A yelloweye rockfish. Credit: Taylor Frierson.



Annual Catch Limit and Fishery Harvest Guideline Changes between 2025 and 2027

Table 1. Stocks relevant to Oregon with an annual catch limit (ACL) changing by 25 percent or more between 2025 and 2027. Adapted from [Table 1-3 of Draft 2027-28 Groundfish Harvest Specifications and Management Measures, Analysis of the Management Measures under the Preliminary Preferred Alternative](#) (Chapter 1, page 6).

Stock	Fishery Management Unit	ACL (mt)		Difference (mt)	Increase/Decrease (percent)
		No Action (2025)	Final Preferred Alternative (2027)		
Yelloweye rockfish	Coastwide	56	113	+ 57	+ 101.8
Arrowtooth flounder	Coastwide	11,193	7,947	- 3,246	- 29.0
English sole	Coastwide	8,884	3,168	- 5,716	- 64.3
Widow rockfish	Coastwide	11,237	6,238	- 4,999	- 44.5
Sablefish	North of 36° N. latitude	26,688	10,962	- 15,726	- 58.9
Slope rockfish complex north	North of 40° 10' N. latitude	1,488	1,090	- 398	- 26.7

Table 2. Fishery Harvest Guidelines (HGs) after off-the-top deductions (Tribal, experimental fishing permits, research, and incidental open access) are removed for these relevant species. Adapted from [Appendix 2 of Agenda Item E.6.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, June 2026](#) (page 11). The * denotes that this HG is after a set-aside of 50 mt is deducted for recreational fisheries.

Stock	Fishery Management Unit	2027 ACL (mt)	2027 HG (mt)
Yelloweye rockfish	Coastwide	113	97
Arrowtooth flounder	Coastwide	7,947	5,880
English sole	Coastwide	3,168	2,956
Widow rockfish	Coastwide	6,238	6,137
Sablefish	North of 36° N. latitude	10,962	9,775*
Slope rockfish complex north	North of 40° 10' N. latitude	1090	1039

Changes in Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocations between 2025 and 2027

Table 3. Stocks relevant to Oregon with a shorebased IFQ allocation (after at-sea set-asides and non-trawl allocations are deducted) changing by 25 percent or more between 2025 and 2027. Note that these allocations are shared by both shoreside whiting and non-whiting trawl fisheries. Adapted from Tables 12-2, 12-3, and 12-5 of [Draft 2027-28 Groundfish Harvest Specifications and Management Measures, Analysis of the Management Measures under the Preliminary Preferred Alternative](#) (Chapter 12, page 50).

Stock	Fishery Management Unit	IFQ Allocation (mt)		Increase/Decrease (percent)	Projected Attainment of 2027's Allocation (percent)
		No Action (2025)	Final Preferred Alternative (2027)		
Yelloweye rockfish	Coastwide	3.2	7.7	+ 141	23
Arrowtooth flounder	Coastwide	8,543	5,486	- 36	18
English sole	Coastwide	8,236	2,808	- 66	5
Widow rockfish	Coastwide	10,419	5,537	- 47	102
Sablefish	North of 36° N. latitude	13,091	4,832	- 63	58
Shortspine thornyhead	Coastwide	406	527	+ 30	50
Slope rockfish complex north	North of 40° 10' N. latitude	858	542	- 37	30

Changes in Trip Limits between 2025 and 2027

Table 4. Stocks relevant to Oregon with a Limited Entry Fixed Gear Trip Limit North of 40° 10' N. latitude changing between 2025 and 2027. Note while the overall ACL is decreasing for stocks like Widow rockfish, a fixed gear trip limit is possible within the non-trawl allocation of the ACL. For the complete trip limit tables, see [Appendix 3 of Agenda Item E.6.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, June 2026](#).

Stock	No Action (2025)	Adopted Trip Limit (2027)	Increase/Decrease (percent)
Shelf rockfish complex	1,600 lb. per 2 months	8,000 lb. per 2 months (no more than 300 lb. may be vermillion/sunset rockfish)	+ 400
Widow rockfish	4,000 lb. per 2 months	12,000 lb. per 2 months	+ 200
Yelloweye rockfish	Prohibited	75 lb. per 2 months	N/A
Yellowtail rockfish	6,000 lb. per 2 months	7,000 lb. per 2 months	+ 17

Table 5. Stocks relevant to Oregon with an Open Access Non-Trawl Trip Limit North of 40° 10' N. latitude changing between 2025 and 2027. Note while the overall ACL is decreasing for stocks like Widow rockfish, a non-trawl trip limit increase is possible within the non-trawl allocation of the ACL. For the complete trip limit tables, see [Appendix 4 of Agenda Item E.6.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, June 2026](#).

Stock	No Action (2025)	Adopted Trip Limit (2027)	Increase/Decrease (percent)
Shelf rockfish complex	1,600 lb. per 2 months	6,400 lb. per 2 months (no more than 300 lb. may be vermillion/sunset rockfish)	+ 300
Widow rockfish	2,000 lb. per 2 months	8,000 lb. per 2 months	+ 300
Yelloweye rockfish	Prohibited	50 lb. per 2 months	N/A
Yellowtail rockfish	3,000 lb. per 2 months	5,000 lb. per 2 months	+ 67

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. Shoutout to Jim, Maria, Sharon, Jonathan, Sarah, Shawn, Ally, and Trinity! And shoutout 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.



2025 Notes from the Field



Sheryl noted that for Astoria, the incredible increase in sablefish quota, coupled with quota reductions for shortspine thornyhead, petrale, and canary, caused a shift in fishing behavior for bottom and midwater fleets. Bottom trawlers made more deep-water sablefish trips, while midwater rockfish trawlers and the hake fleet avoided canary, reduced yellowtail bycatch, and resulted in nearly 394 mt less yellowtail landed compared to 2024. Fixed gear effort surged with the higher sablefish limits, generating four times the 2024 revenue. Unfortunately, widespread sablefish targeting led to gear conflicts between bottom trawlers and fixed gear fleets in some areas.

In Newport, Scott remarked that most notably, sablefish volume increased dramatically with the increase in Tier Limits. However, prices remained the same and the grade was slightly smaller. Hake returned to more normal volume, however, that was still on the low side. The widow fishery remained steady in volume, size, and price.



Joel notes that in Charleston, there was also an increase in sablefish landings due to high quotas. Price improved slightly but was still down. There was a noticeable lack of fixed gear and nearshore effort. Bottom trawl effort was in line with recent years but continues to be marred by low prices for fish. Other fisheries, such as tuna, supplemented groundfish landings.



Valerie notes that the total landed volume in Brookings rose 80 percent in 2025 compared to the five-year average, driven by the sablefish fixed gear fishery, despite record low groundfish volume in 2024. Port Orford's nearshore and fixed gear fisheries remained steady but slightly below the 10-year average. The Port of Port Orford completed a \$2.3 million crane replacement, adding two new cranes capable of hoisting vessels up to 50 tons. Gold Beach continued to show a strong nearshore fishery, with ex-vessel value exceeding the 10-year average.



Other Updates and Reminders

Want More Information?

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

For Federal Regulations:

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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LIMITED ENTRY FIXED GEAR FOLLOW-ON ACTIONS

Effective August 6, 2026, there are new federally adopted regulations ([91 FR 46000](#) and [91 FR 50728](#)) for the commercial Limited Entry Fixed Gear (LEFG) sablefish primary (tier) fishery. The regulations:

1. Allow LEFG vessels to use any legal non-trawl gear (other than entangling nets) to harvest their quota/trip limits;
2. Remove the "base permit" regulation since there is already another federal regulation in place to enforce the vessel length requirement;
3. Remove the time-of-day requirement for the start and end of the season;
4. Directs the National Marine Fisheries Service to establish a cost recovery plan which is required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act for any Limited Access Privilege Program ([16 U.S.C. §§ 1853a\(e\)](#) and [1854\(d\)\(2\)](#)).

The compliance date will be **no earlier than December 1, 2027**.

FIXED GEAR MARKING & ENTANGLEMENT RISK REDUCTION

Recent increases of whale entanglements off the West Coast pose significant challenges for fisheries management because of the difficulty to differentiate between gear types and fisheries that could be the source of an entanglement. In June 2024, the Council adopted a final preferred alternative that would apply to vessels using bottom longline or pot gear in the limited entry fixed gear, directed open access or shorebased individual fishing quota sector, and a proposed rule ([91 FR 5408](#)) was published on February 6, 2026. The proposed rule requires:

- Only one vertical line instead of one at each terminal end (voluntary choice)
- Gear-specific color coding on portions of the vertical ropes
- Color-coded and marked tags on buoys
- Gear to be marked at the surface on at least one terminal end, with a pole, flag, light, radar reflector and a buoy that is marked with vessel identification, per current regulations at §§ 660.219 and 660.319
- The amount of surface line used between the first and last buoys to be 60 ft
- Escape panels not to be positioned on the bottom of the pot and the maximum untreated cotton twine for closing escape panels not to exceed number 30

To allow for flexibility in complying with these requirements, NMFS is proposing a 3-year allowance after the final rule is effective for temporary line markings.

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".