



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

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## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

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### **Trawl Rationalization Program** **Midwater Trawl Requirements**

NMFS published a final rule on December 11, 2015 that clarifies the regulatory requirements for vessels using midwater trawl gear in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota Program. The action was taken to eliminate inconsistencies and reduce confusion in the current regulations. For vessels targeting Pacific whiting, the action clarifies that the retention of prohibited and protected species is allowed until landing. The disposition of prohibited and protected species is specified consistent with the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan, and other applicable law. The final rule becomes effective on January 13, 2016.

- The final rule is available at [www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/frn/groundfish\\_frns.html](http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/frn/groundfish_frns.html)
- The small entity compliance guide and environmental assessment are available at [www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/groundfish\\_catch\\_shares/index.html](http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/groundfish_catch_shares/index.html)