

Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program Entry Level Fishery Frequently Asked Questions

What is the entry level fishery allocation?

The annual Rockfish Program fishery allocations are posted on the NMFS website at <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/goarat/default.htm>.

Who can fish in the entry level fishery?

The entry level fishery is limited to persons using catcher vessels that are not assigned to a Rockfish cooperative or limited access fishery. In addition, a person cannot use a vessel in the entry level fishery if that vessel is designated on an LLP license with Rockfish QS assigned to it.

How does NMFS calculate the entry level allocation?

After subtraction for the incidental catch amounts, the entry level allocation is equal to 5% of the Central GOA TAC for Pacific ocean perch, northern rockfish, and pelagic shelf rockfish. Trawl and fixed gear entry level each receive 50 percent of the 5%, or 2.5 % of the TAC. Allocations to trawl entry level are first made from the allocation of Pacific ocean perch available to the rockfish entry level fishery.

If 5% of the Pacific ocean perch TAC available for allocation to the total entry level fishery is greater than the 2.5 % of the TAC allocated to trawl catcher vessels in the rockfish entry level fishery, the trawl entry level fishery is allocated only Pacific ocean perch. The fixed gear entry level fishery is allocated the remaining Pacific ocean perch and all the northern rockfish and pelagic shelf rockfish.

What happens if some of the entry level rockfish are not harvested?

Any amount of entry level trawl fishery allocation that has not been harvested by trawl vessels on September 1 may be made available to harvest by fixed gear after September 1. Similarly, any amount of entry level fixed gear allocation that has not been harvested by fixed gear vessels on September 1 may be made available for harvest by trawl vessels after September 1. NMFS will issue openings and closures for the entry level allocations in the Federal Register and post them as “Information Bulletins” on our website at <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/catchstats.htm>.

The entry level fixed gear fishery opens on January 1. The entry level trawl fishery opens on May 1.

What happens if I incidentally catch non-target rockfish in the entry level fishery?

If a fishery is closed to directed fishing, vessels will still be subject to the maximum retainable amount (MRA) limits that apply in our regulations. You can see if a fishery is open by checking the “Status of Fisheries” on our website at <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/catchstats.htm>. The MRA limits are on our website at <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/rr/tables/tab10.pdf>. As an example, only Pacific ocean perch is open to directed fishing for entry level trawl vessels. If an entry level trawl vessel incidentally catches pelagic shelf rockfish while directed fishing for POP, that trawl vessel could retain pelagic shelf rockfish (e.g., dusky rockfish) up to the pelagic shelf rockfish MRA, which is 15 % of the total groundfish open for directed fishing retained onboard the vessel.

Because all three rockfish fisheries are open for entry level fixed gear vessels, those vessels fishing in the entry level fixed-gear fishery are not subject to an MRA limit until the directed fixed gear fishery

closes. As an example, if a vessel is fishing primarily for pelagic shelf rockfish, but catches a substantial amount of northern rockfish, that northern rockfish catch is not subject to an MRA limit as long as the entry level fixed gear northern rockfish fishery is open.

Can I fish in Federal waters if I did not register for the entry level fishery?

No, only the trawl vessels that have registered can fish in Federal waters for the entry level trawl allocation. Only a fixed gear vessel that has registered can fish in Federal waters for the entry level fixed gear allocation. If you want to fish in the entry level fishery in Federal waters, you must register by March 1 of that year. The registration application is on the NMFS website at: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/goarat/default.htm>.

If I didn't register, can I fish for entry level rockfish "inside three miles" in the State of Alaska parallel fishery?

Yes, but any vessels that did not register for the entry level fishery can fish only in State of Alaska waters during the "parallel fishery" if the vessel is not listed on a Federal Fishery Permit (FFP) or a License Limitation Program (LLP) license. If your vessel is Federally permitted with an FFP or LLP, you can't fish for the entry level fishery with that vessel unless you registered.

Is catch from vessels in the parallel fishery deducted from the entry level allocation?

Yes, any catch by vessels within State waters during the parallel fishery would be deducted from the entry level allocation. So, if jig vessels directed fish for pelagic shelf rockfish inside State waters during the parallel fishery, that catch will be deducted from the entry level fixed gear allocation.

Are there limits on where I can deliver my entry level rockfish?

There are two rules that apply, one for vessels with Federal permits, and one for vessels that are fishing in the State water parallel fishery without a Federal permit.

If you are fishing exclusively inside State waters and you are not Federally permitted (i.e., do not have an FFP or an LLP for your vessel) you can deliver to any processor.

However, if you are Federally permitted (i.e., you have an FFP and an LLP for your vessel) and you are fishing in either State or Federal waters, you cannot deliver rockfish caught in the directed entry level fishery to specific rockfish processors in Kodiak. The rockfish processors you cannot deliver to are: International Seafoods (ISA), North Pacific Seafoods, Ocean Beauty, Trident, and Western Alaska Fisheries.

Why am I limited to delivering my entry level rockfish to specific processors if I am a Federally permitted vessel?

Because Congress specifically intended that persons who are participating in the Federally managed entry level fishery must deliver to entry level processors. In Section 802 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-199), Congress clarified that entry level vessels that are subject to Federal management "shall be delivered to shore-based fish processors not eligible to participate in the pilot program." NMFS has adopted regulations that meet Congress' intent (see regulations at [50 CFR 679.7\(n\)\(1\)\(vi\)](#)). Vessels that are harvesting fish exclusively in State waters and are not under Federal management are not subject to this requirement.

Can I operate my vessel as a catcher/processor in the entry level fishery?

No, In Section 802, Congress limited the entry level fishery to catcher vessels, and required that catch be delivered to "shore-based fish processors."

What happens if I incidentally catch rockfish while fishing for other species, do I have to deliver that to a non-rockfish processor?

No, as long as you are not directed fishing in the entry level rockfish fishery, you are not required to deliver to a specific processor. So, if you catch pelagic shelf rockfish while you fish under the State of Alaska black rockfish fishery, you can deliver that rockfish to the processor of your choice.

What if I am targeting other species, such as black rockfish, and I accidentally catch more than the minimum retainable amount of entry level rockfish?

That means you fall under the definition of directed fishing. In that case, you can retain that rockfish and deliver it only to the appropriate processor.

Remember, if you are a Federally permitted vessel, you will have to deliver that entry level rockfish to an entry level processor. This may require you to split your loads. If you are not Federally permitted, and you were fishing only within State waters when you caught your black and entry level rockfish, then you can deliver that catch to the processor of your choice.

Does the Rockfish Program affect the black rockfish fishery managed by the State?

No, the black rockfish fishery openings and closings will be established by the State of Alaska. The black rockfish fishery is managed according to regulations established by ADF&G.