

Rockfish Program Guide

OVERVIEW

The Program is a 5-year pilot project effective from 2007 through 2011 which permits harvesters to form voluntary cooperatives and receive an exclusive harvest privilege to groundfish species in the Central GOA. Processors can form associations with inshore harvester cooperatives for exclusive processing opportunities. The Program uses harvests during the 1996-2002 Central GOA rockfish fisheries as the basis for establishing catch history. Catch history is allocated as rockfish quota share (QS) based on vessels with landings of primary rockfish species (northern rockfish, pelagic shelf rockfish, and Pacific ocean perch) that gave rise to limited licenses (LLPs). Holders of LLPs will have their LLPs modified with an endorsement that specifies their QS holdings for each primary rockfish species. **LLP holders received rockfish QS only if they applied to participate in the Program by January 2, 2007. Rockfish processors that wanted to form cooperatives with harvesters also had to apply by this date.**

By March 1 of each year, LLP holders with rockfish QS choose to join a cooperative, limited access fishery, or opt-out of the Program with their catch history. A cooperative receives an exclusive harvest privilege called cooperative quota (CQ) based on the sum of the rockfish QS of the LLPs assigned to the cooperative by its members. LLP holders can receive an exclusive harvest privilege on an annual basis only by joining a cooperative. LLP holders with QS based on harvesting and processing rockfish onboard a catcher/processor (C/P) can only form cooperatives with other C/P LLP holders. LLP holders with QS based on rockfish harvested on a catcher vessel (CV) designation can only form cooperatives with other CV LLP holders. Alternatively, LLP holders can choose to fish in a **limited access fishery** within that sector (C/P or CV). The limited access fishery comprises the annual catch amount for the Program that is left after C/P or CV cooperatives form. Finally, LLP holders in the C/P sector can choose to **“opt-out”** of most of the aspects of the Program.

The Program allocates rockfish in the Central GOA, associated secondary species, and an amount of halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) that can be used while fishing under the Program. The CV and CP sector receive different annual allocations according to the following table...

Central GOA Species	CV Cooperatives	CV Limited Access	C/P Cooperatives	C/P Limited Access	C/P “Opt-out”
Primary Species – (95 %of the TAC) POP, Pelagic Shelf, Northern Rockfish	CQ	CV sector limit (non-coop)	CQ	C/P sector limit (non-coop)	Prohibited from directed fishing in the CGOA rockfish fishery.
Secondary Species – Proportion of July harvest Thornyhead	CQ	Reduced Maximum Retainable Amount (MRA)	CQ	Reduced MRA	Current MRA
Shortraker & Roughey Rockfish	Reduced MRA	Reduced MRA	CQ	Reduced MRA	Current MRA
Trawl Sablefish	CQ	Reduced MRA	CQ	Reduced MRA	Current MRA
Pacific Cod	CQ	Reduced MRA	Reduced MRA	Reduced MRA	Current MRA
Halibut mortality usage (PSC)	CQ	Current GOA PSC limits	CQ	Current GOA PSC limits	Current GOA PSC limits

Use caps limit the holdings or use of Rockfish QS and CQ. Use caps do not apply to secondary species or halibut PSC. Use caps also limit the amount of fish a cooperative and C/P vessel can harvest and the amount of rockfish a processor can process. Use caps apply as follows.

Use cap type	C/P sector	CV sector
Person (“individual”) QS holding cap	20.0 % of the aggregate rockfish QS assigned to the C/P sector	5.0 % of the aggregate rockfish QS assigned to the CV sector
Person CQ use cap	Amount of CQ derived from the QS use cap above	Amount of CQ derived from the QS use cap above
Cooperative CQ cap	N/A	Amount of CQ derived from 30.0 % of the aggregate rockfish QS assigned to the CV sector
Vessel Use cap	Amount of CQ derived from 30.0 % of the aggregate rockfish QS assigned to the CV sector	N/A
Processing cap	N/A	30.0 % of the aggregate rockfish cap.

Cooperatives within a sector can transfer CQ among each other, subject to use cap limits. Two C/P LLP holders are required to form a C/P cooperative. CV LLP holders can form cooperatives only in association with a specific group of eligible processors in Kodiak to whom they have delivered a majority of their catch. At least 75 % of the QS eligible to form a cooperative with a processor must be assigned to the cooperative for it to form. Rockfish and other associated groundfish harvested by cooperatives or under the limited access fishery must be delivered to this group of eligible processors in Kodiak.

Five percent (2.5 % to trawl gear, 2.5% to fixed gear) of the Central GOA rockfish TAC is allocated to an entry-level fishery for LLP holders who aren’t qualified for the Program. Processors that aren’t qualified to receive cooperative and limited access fish can receive entry-level rockfish.

The Program establishes a suite of sideboards that limit LLP holders participating in the Program from expanding their harvests in other fisheries. **Sideboards apply only in July. Sideboards are limits, NOT allocations.** There are two broad categories of sideboards – those that establish catch limits, and those that prohibit directed fishing. Catch limits are divided further: (1) limits on harvests in other GOA rockfish fisheries; and (2) halibut PSC limits on the amount of halibut mortality that can be used in GOA flatfish fisheries. Once sideboard limits are reached, directed fisheries are closed. **Sideboards apply in State waters in the “parallel” fishery.** The tables summarize those sideboard amounts...

This table details the halibut PSC sideboard limit.

Sector...	Annual Deep-water complex halibut PSC Sideboard Limit in the GOA is...	Annual Shallow-water complex halibut PSC Sideboard Limit in the GOA is...
Catcher/Processor	3.99 % of the GOA annual PSC limit	0.54 % of the GOA annual halibut PSC limit
Catcher Vessel	1.08 % of the GOA annual PSC limit	6.32 % of the GOA annual halibut PSC limit

This table summarizes how the sideboards apply to specific fisheries in each sector.

July Sideboard Limit	CV Sector	C/P Cooperatives	C/P Limited Access	C/P “Opt-out”
Catch limits ... Western GOA POP, Pelagic Shelf, and Northern Rockfish	CV Sector limit – a collective CV limit for each species in each region	Coop specific limit for each species in each region	C/P sector limit – a collective limit for all non-coop C/Ps for each species in each region.	
West Yakutat POP and Pelagic Shelf Rockfish				
BSAI Pacific cod	CV Sector limit	N/A	N/A	N/A
Halibut mortality limits ... GOA-wide (1) Shallow-water limit, & (2) Deep-water limit.	CV Sector limit. (1) shallow-water flatfish closed in the GOA when limit reached; (2) deep water flatfish closes in the GOA when limit reached.	C/P Coop specific limit. (1) shallow-water flatfish closed in the GOA when limit reached; (2) deep water flatfish closes in the GOA when limit reached.	C/P Non-coop Sector limit (1) shallow-water flatfish closed in the GOA when limit reached; (2) deep water flatfish closes in the GOA when limit reached.	
Prohibited fishing .. BSAI groundfish (except pollock and IFQ sablefish)	July 1 - 31 prohibited fishing for most flatfish and rockfish	July 1- July 14	From July 1- 14; or until C/Ps harvest 90% of the CGOA POP (the earlier date). Only for C/Ps with more than 5% of the total C/P POP history.	N/A
GOA groundfish (except pollock and IFQ sablefish)	N/A	N/A ** (Assuming monitoring requirements met)		July 1 - July 14 – unless past activity

Important Dates for Rockfish Program

January 1

Entry level fixed gear fishery opens.

March 1

- **Deadline to apply for a cooperative, limited access fishery, opt-out (C/P only) or entry level fishery.** Application must be submitted specifying the assignment of the LLP and vessel to a specific fishery.

May 1

- Cooperative fishery opens – vessels fishing under a CQ permit must check in 48 hours prior to starting a trip. Checking-out must occur within 6 hours of the end-of-a-trip. The number of check-in and check-outs is limited to 3x the number of LLPs in the cooperative.
- Entry level trawl gear fishery opens.

July 1

- Limited access fishery opens – anticipated closure in early July.
- Sideboard restrictions begin to apply (until July 31).

September 1

- “Rollover” of unused entry level fixed gear allocation – trawl and fixed gear can target the entire allocation.

November 15

- The cooperative, limited access, and entry level fisheries end.
- All CQ must be fished by this date.

December 15

- Cooperatives submit annual rockfish cooperative report (similar to AFA cooperative report).

Checklist for Rockfish Program

Catcher/Processors – Cooperative or limited access fishery.

- Use e-landings reporting system
- Make sure VMS and computer meet requirements
- Contact observer provider: 200% observer coverage when fishing under a CQ permit, during the limited access fishery, and in the month of July. One observer must be lead level 2.
- Ensure modifications necessary for observer sampling station, factory changes for single operational line, bin monitoring option (no fish in bins, line of sight, or video), and flow scales will be completed before fishing begins.
- Schedule a meeting with the Observer Program/Sustainable Fisheries at least 10 days prior to request date for observer sampling station (includes bin monitoring) approval via the web: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/scales/default.htm>.
- Schedule a flow scale inspection with Sustainable Fisheries. Contact Jennifer Watson at 907-586-7537.
- Schedule a pre-cruise briefing with the Observer Program at least 24 hours prior to departure with an observer who has not previously been deployed on that vessel. Call 907 271-1702 to schedule.

Catcher/Processors – opt out fishery (fishing in the GOA during the month of July)

- Meet the requirements above, except...
- No flow scale or observer sampling station is required.
- A bin monitoring protocol (no fish in bin, line of sight, video) is required and an inspection is required. Schedule an inspection via the web: <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/scales/default.htm>.
- Only 100% observer coverage is required when fishing during July – not lead level 2 observer.

Catcher Vessel – cooperative or limited access fishery

- Get VMS
- Get computer for the observer – basic laptop
- 100% observer coverage is required when fishing under a CQ permit, in the limited access fishery, or during July – does not need to be a lead level 2 observer.

Rockfish Processor

- Use e-landings to report catch
- Make sure that CMCP is in place when receiving deliveries from harvesters fishing under a CQ permit, during the limited access fishery, or in the GOA in July.
- Must submit plan 10 working days before requested inspection date. Inspections will mostly likely occur in late April. Plans and inspection requests must be sent to Jennifer Watson at 907-586-7537.

- Contact your observer provider: A rockfish observer is required for each 12-hour period that rockfish deliveries are received.
- A rockfish observer cannot cover more than one facility in a calendar day.
- Rockfish deliveries are not accounted against delivery requirements for other groundfish fisheries.

Entry Level Fishery

- Get VMS – trawl gear only
- Status quo M&E
- Ensure that LLP is endorsed for the Central GOA if fishing in the EEZ.

Small Entity Compliance Guide: NMFS has provided this small entity compliance guide to satisfy the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, which requires a plain language guide to assist small entities in complying with this rule. This synopsis provides a general overview as a public service. For exact regulatory language, please refer to the final rule for the Rockfish Program at www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov.