

for the "B" platoon, unless otherwise specified.

(b) A vessel authorized to operate in the "B" platoon may take and retain, but may not land, groundfish from January 1, 2003, through January 15, 2003.

(c) A vessel authorized to operate in the "B" platoon will have the same cumulative trip limits for the November 16, 2003, through December 31, 2003, period as a vessel operating in the "A" platoon has for the November 1, 2002, through December 31, 2003 period.

(16) *Permit transfers.* Limited entry permit transfers are to take effect no earlier than the first day of a major cumulative limit period following the day NMFS receives the transfer form and original permit (50 CFR 660.335(e)(3)). Those days in 2003 are January 1, March 1, May 1, July 1, September 1, and November 1, and are delayed by 15 days (starting on the 16th of a month) for the "B" platoon.

(17) *Exempted fisheries.* U.S. vessels operating under an exempted fishing permit (EFP) issued under 50 CFR part 600 are also subject to these restrictions, unless otherwise provided in the permit. EFPs may include the collecting of scientific samples of groundfish species that would otherwise be prohibited for retention.

(18) *Application of requirements.* Paragraphs IV.B. and IV.C. pertain to the commercial groundfish fishery, but not to Washington coastal tribal fisheries, which are described in Section V. The provisions in paragraphs IV.B. and IV.C. that are not covered under the headings "limited entry" or "open access" apply to all vessels in the commercial fishery that take and retain groundfish, unless otherwise stated. Paragraph IV.D. pertains to the recreational fishery.

(19) *Rockfish Conservation Areas.* For 2003, the Council has introduced several RCAs and a YRCA and has retained the CCAs used in 2001 and 2002. Collectively, any closed area intended to protect a particular groundfish species or species group or intended to protect a complex of species is referred to as a Groundfish Conservation Area. The YRCA, the CCAs, and the larger depth-based RCAs are Groundfish Conservation Areas. Larger RCAs intended to protect a complex of species, such as overfished shelf rockfish species, have boundaries defined by a series of latitude and longitude coordinates. The boundaries are intended to approximate particular depth contours, such as 100 fm (183 m), 150 fm (274 m), 250 fm (457,) etc. Different gear types or fishing sectors may have RCAs with differing boundaries.

(a) *Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area.* The latitude and longitude coordinates defining the boundaries of the YRCA are defined at § 660.304(d). Recreational fishing for groundfish is prohibited within the YRCA. It is unlawful for recreational fishing vessels to take, retain, possess, or land groundfish inside the YRCA.

(b) *Cowcod Conservation Areas.* The coordinates of the Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCAs) are defined at § 660.304(c). Recreational and commercial fishing for groundfish is prohibited within the CCAs, except that recreational and commercial fishing for rockfish and lingcod is permitted in waters inside 20 fathoms (36.9 m). It is unlawful to take and retain, possess, or land groundfish inside the CCAs, except for rockfish and lingcod taken in waters inside the 20-fathom (36.9 m) depth contour, when those waters are open to fishing. Commercial fishing vessels may transit through the Western CCA with their gear stowed and groundfish on board only in a corridor through the Western CCA bounded on the north by the latitude line at 33°00'30" N. lat., and bounded on the south by the latitude line at 32°59'30" N. lat.

(c) *Limited Entry Groundfish Trawl Coastwide and Open Access Exempted Trawl South of 40°10' N. lat. Rockfish Conservation Area.* (i) The trawl RCA is closed to limited entry groundfish trawl fishing coastwide and to open access exempted trawl fishing (except for pink shrimp trawling) south of 40°10' N. lat. Fishing with limited entry groundfish trawl gear is prohibited within the trawl RCA north of 40°10' N. lat. and fishing with any trawl gear is prohibited within the trawl RCA south of 40°10' N. lat., unless that vessel is trawling for pink shrimp. Coastwide, it is unlawful to take and retain, possess, or land groundfish taken with limited entry groundfish trawl gear in the trawl RCA. South of 40°10' N. lat., it is unlawful to take and retain, possess, or land any species of fish taken with any type of trawl gear in the trawl RCA. Trawl vessels may transit through the trawl RCA, with or without groundfish on board, provided all groundfish trawl gear is stowed either: (1) below deck; or (2) if the gear cannot readily be moved, in a secured and covered manner, detached from all towing lines, so that it is rendered unusable for fishing; or (3) remaining on deck uncovered if the trawl doors are hung from their stanchions and the net is disconnected from the doors. The above restrictions in this paragraph do not apply to vessels fishing with midwater trawl gear for Pacific whiting during the primary season, or to taking and retaining yellowtail rockfish or

widow rockfish in association with Pacific whiting caught with midwater trawl gear during the primary whiting season, or to taking and retaining yellowtail or widow rockfish with midwater trawl gear when trip limits are authorized for those species (November-December 2003.) If a vessel fishes in an RCA, it may not participate in any fishing on that trip that is inconsistent with the restrictions that apply within the RCA. For example, if a vessel participates in the pink shrimp fishery within the RCA, the vessel cannot on the same trip participate in the DTS fishery outside of the RCA. Nothing in these Federal regulations supercede any State regulations that may prohibit trawling shoreward of the 3 nm State waters boundary line.

(ii) Between the U.S. border with Canada and 40°10' N. lat., the trawl RCA is defined along its eastern, inshore boundary by latitude and longitude coordinates approximating 100 fm (183 m) in January through June and October through December, and approximating 75 fm (137 m) in July and August. Between 40°10' N. lat. and 34°27' N. lat., the trawl RCA is defined along its eastern, inshore boundary by coordinates approximating 50 fm (91 m) in January and February and 60 fm (110 m) in March through December. Between 34°27' N. lat. and the U.S. border with Mexico, along the mainland coast of California, the trawl RCA is defined along its eastern, inshore boundary by coordinates approximating 100 fm (183 m) throughout the year. Between 34°27' N. lat. and the U.S. border with Mexico, adjacent to the islands offshore of California, the trawl RCA is defined along its inshore boundary by coordinates approximating 20 fm (37 m) throughout the year. Specific coordinates that define the eastern inshore boundaries of the trawl RCA are provided below at paragraph (e) of this section.

(iii) Between the U.S. border with Canada and 38° N. lat., the trawl RCA is defined along its western, offshore boundary by latitude and longitude coordinates approximating 250 fm (457 m) in March through October, and by coordinates approximating 250 fm (457 m) with some modifications to provide open areas to allow winter petrale sole fishing in January, February, November, and December. Between 38° N. lat. and the U.S. border with Mexico, the trawl RCA is defined along its western, offshore boundary by coordinates approximating 150 fm (274 m) throughout the year. Specific boundary coordinates that define the western, offshore boundaries of the trawl RCA