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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Access

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Background

The Pacific Coast groundfish specifications and management measures for the 2003 fishing year (January 1–December 31, 2003) were initially published in the **Federal Register** as an emergency rule for January 1–February 28, 2003 (68 FR 908, January 7, 2003) and as a proposed rule for March 1–December 31, 2003 (68 FR 936, January 7, 2003). The emergency rule was amended at 68 FR 4719, January 30, 2003, and the final rule for March 1–December 31, 2003 was published in the **Federal Register** on March 7, 2003 (68 FR 11182). The final rule has been subsequently amended at 68 FR 18166 (April 15, 2003), at 68 FR 23901 (May 6, 2003), at 68 FR 23924 (May 6, 2003), at 68 FR 32680 (June 2, 2003), 68 FR 35575 (June 16, 2003) and at 68 FR 40187 (July 7, 2003).

Management measures for the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery, effective March 1–December 31, 2003 (68 FR 11182, March 7, 2003), contain errors in which species are subject to the limited entry fixed gear and open access Pt. Fermin/Newport South Jetty area (also known as Huntington Flats) opening during July through August. The inseason action published on May 6, 2003 (68 FR 23901), initially corrected the Pt. Fermin/Newport South Jetty area opening from applying to all Federal groundfish species to applying to all Federal groundfish species, except all rockfish and lingcod. The correction in the inseason action published on May 6, 2003, stated, "The intent of California's California Rockfish Conservation Area proposal presented to the Pacific Council at its September 2002 meeting, as well as language in California's Code

of Regulations at Title 14, Section 27.82 (d)(2), was that this area should be open to limited entry fixed gear and open access fixed gear for all Federal groundfish species, except all rockfish, lingcod and ocean whitefish (Note: Ocean whitefish is managed by the State of California). This area is intended to be open during July–August to allow vessels to intercept California scorpionfish that are spawning on the sandy flats." However, language allowing California scorpionfish to be retained in the Pt. Fermin/Newport South Jetty area during the July through August opening was inadvertently left out of the May 6, 2003 correction. Since California scorpionfish is a species of rockfish, the language in the May 6, 2003 inseason action prohibits fishing for all rockfish in the Pt. Fermin/Newport South Jetty area, including mistakenly prohibiting fishing for California scorpionfish. This document corrects the error by specifying that fishing for California scorpionfish is permitted during the Pt. Fermin/Newport South Jetty opening.

In addition, regulatory language in the open access fishery section of the management measures (paragraph IV.C.(1)) referring to exempted prawn trawl in the open access fishery is clarified in this document to only allow fishing inside and retention of groundfish caught in the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) north of 40°10' N. lat. as stated in the trip limit tables (Table 5 (North) and Table 5 (South)).

NMFS Actions

■ For the reasons stated herein, NMFS announces the following corrections to the 2003 specifications and management measures (68 FR 11182 (March 7, 2003), as amended at 68 FR 18166 (April 15, 2003), at 68 FR 23901 (May 6, 2003), at 68 FR 23924 (May 6, 2003), at 68 FR 32680 (June 2, 2003) at 68 FR 35575 (June 16, 2003) and at 68 FR 40187 (July 7, 2003)) to read as follows:

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PART 660—[CORRECTED]

■ 1. On page 11206, in section IV., under A. General Definitions and Provisions, paragraph (19)(e)(ii) is corrected to read as follows:

(ii) The 75–fm (137–m) depth contour used north of 40°10' N. lat. as an eastern boundary for the trawl RCA is defined by straight lines connecting all of the following points in the order stated:

* * * * *

(19) 48°05.91' N. lat., 125°08.30' W. long.;

(20) 48°07.00' N. lat., 125°09.80' W. long.;

(21) 48°06.93' N. lat., 125°11.48' W. long.;

(22) 48°04.98' N. lat., 125°10.02' W. long.;

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■ 2. On page 11217, in section IV., under B. Limited Entry Fishery, paragraph (1) is revised to read as follows:

IV. NMFS Actions

B. Limited Entry Fishery

(1) *General.* Most species taken in limited entry fisheries will be managed with cumulative trip limits (see paragraph IV.A.(1)(d).), size limits (see paragraph IV.A.(6))., seasons (see paragraph IV.A.(7))., and areas that are closed to specific gear types. The trawl fishery has gear requirements and trip limits that differ by the type of trawl gear on board (see paragraph IV.A.(14)). Cowcod retention is prohibited in all fisheries and groundfish vessels operating south of Point Conception must adhere to CCA restrictions (see paragraph IV.A.(19)). Yelloweye rockfish retention is prohibited in the limited entry fixed gear fisheries. Most of the management measures for the limited entry fishery are listed above and in the following tables: Table 3 (North), Table 3 (South), Table 4 (North), and Table 4 (South).

A header in Table 3 (North), Table 3 (South), Table 4 (North) and Table 4 (South) generally describes the Rockfish Conservation Area (i.e., closed area) for vessels participating in the limited entry fishery. The RCA boundaries are defined by latitude and longitude coordinates (See paragraph IV.A.(19), earlier) [Note: Between a line drawn due south from Point Fermin (33°42' 30" N. lat.; 118°17' 30" W. long.) and a line drawn due west from the Newport South Jetty (33°35'37" N. lat.; 117°52'50" W. long.) vessels fishing for all Federal groundfish species, except lingcod and all rockfish other than California scorpionfish, with hook-and-line and/or trap (or pot) gear may operate from shore to a seaward boundary line which approximates 50 fm (91 m) in the months of July and August.]

Management measures may be changed during the year by announcement in the **Federal Register**. However, the management regimes for several fisheries (nontrawl sablefish, Pacific whiting, and black rockfish) do not neatly fit into these tables and are addressed immediately following Table 3 (North), Table 3 (South), Table 4 (North), and Table 4 (South).

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