



NMFS Shifts Unused Alaska Pacific Cod From Trawlers to Small Pot and Hook-and-Line Boats in the Bering Sea and Western Gulf of Alaska, Effective October 13

Public paper · October 12, 2026 · Ocean desk · Ryan Standley / Record of Sale, LLC / Notice Nearby

Two NOAA Fisheries temporary rules publishing October 13 move 350 metric tons of Bering Sea Pacific cod to catcher vessels under 60 feet using pot or hook-and-line gear, and 650 metric tons in the Western Gulf of Alaska to hook-and-line and pot boats, so the 2026 catch limits can be fully harvested.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), part of NOAA, is moving Pacific cod that trawl boats are not expected to catch this year over to smaller fixed-gear fishermen in two Alaska fishing areas. Both temporary rules appear in the Federal Register on October 13, 2026 and take effect at noon Alaska time that day, running through December 31, 2026.

NMFS says the moves are needed so the full 2026 total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific cod can be harvested.

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (FR Doc. 2026-20860)

- NMFS found that catcher vessels using trawl gear will not be able to harvest 350 metric tons of their 2026 Pacific cod TAC.

- It found that catcher vessels under 60 feet using hook-and-line or pot gear can harvest an extra 350 metric tons.

- New 2026 amounts: 25,706 mt for trawl catcher vessels and 4,557 mt for the under-60-foot pot and hook-and-line fleet.

Western Gulf of Alaska (FR Doc. 2026-20870)

- Trawl catcher vessels will not harvest 550 mt, and trawl catcher/processors will not harvest 100 mt, NMFS found.
- Hook-and-line catcher vessels can take an extra 250 mt, and pot-gear vessels an extra 400 mt.
- New 2026 amounts: 1,956 mt trawl catcher vessels, 57 mt trawl catcher/processors, 341 mt hook-and-line catcher vessels and 2,880 mt pot vessels.

Why there was no comment period

NMFS waived advance notice and comment. It says the newest catch data only became available about October 7, 2026, and waiting would keep the fishery from being fully harvested. The fisheries are managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act with plans prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Who this affects

Small-boat cod fishermen working out of Alaska ports get more room to fish before year end. Trawl sectors give up cod they were not expected to catch. Seafood processors and coastal towns that depend on fall cod landings may see more deliveries.

Contacts

- Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands: Andrew Olson, NMFS Alaska Region, 907-206-5813.
- Western Gulf of Alaska: Adam Zaleski, NMFS Alaska Region, 907-586-7228.

Sources

- Federal Register, FR Doc. 2026-20860, "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area," October 13, 2026 (federalregister.gov).
- Federal Register, FR Doc. 2026-20870, "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Reallocation of Pacific Cod in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska," October 13, 2026 (federalregister.gov).

Notes

- Image: Kodiak harbor, Alaska, in July 2021 (file photo). Photo: James Brooks via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 2.0).
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