

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[Docket No. 241022–0278; RIN 0648–BO14]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; 2025–2026 Biennial Specifications and Management Measures; Inseason Adjustments; Correction

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.
ACTION: Final rule; inseason adjustments to biennial groundfish management measures; correction.

SUMMARY: NMFS is taking inseason action to correct its prior omissions in implementing the routine inseason adjustments to management measures in commercial groundfish fisheries published on August 20, 2026. This action revises regulations to include adjusted limited entry and open access sablefish trip limits between 40°10' North latitude (N lat.) and 36° N lat., which were inadvertently omitted.

DATES: This final rule is effective September 29, 2026.
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Megan Mackey, Fishery Management Specialist, at 206–526–6140 or *megan.mackey@noaa.gov*.
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
Need for Inseason Action

NMFS published the final rule to implement harvest specifications and management measures for the 2025–2026 biennium for most species managed under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (Groundfish FMP) on December 16, 2024 (89 FR 101514). That final rule was effective on January 1, 2025. Since January 2025, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has recommended, and NMFS has implemented, several inseason adjustments to management measures. The Council recommended an inseason action at its June 2026 meeting in Spokane, Washington. That action included two inseason adjustments: (1) an increase in sablefish trip limits in the limited entry (LE) and open access (OA) sectors north and south of 36° N lat., and (2) a reduction in vermilion/sunset rockfish sub-trip limits within the shelf rockfish complex in the LE and OA sectors south of 34°27' N lat. That inseason action was published in a final

rule on August 20, 2026 (91 FR 53737) (August 2026 final rule). After publication of that August 2026 final rule, NMFS noted the need for corrections to accurately implement the sablefish trip limits as evaluated by the Council and approved by NMFS.
Corrections

The August 2026 final rule inadvertently omitted sablefish trip limits between 40°10' N lat. and 36° N lat. in Table 2b South to 50 CFR part 660 subpart E and Table 3b South to 50 CFR part 660 subpart F. The limit for “Sablefish (40°10' N lat. – 36° N lat.)” in Table 2b South to part 660 subpart E will now read “7,000 lb/week not to exceed 14,000 lb/2 months.” rather than the current incorrect “5,500 lb/week not to exceed 11,000 lb/2 months.” The limit for “Sablefish (40°10' N lat. – 36° N lat.)” in Table 3b South to part 660 subpart F will now read “5,000 lb/week not to exceed 10,000 lb/2 months.” rather than the current incorrect “4,000 lb/week not to exceed 8,000 lb/2 months.” These corrections accurately reflect the Council’s recommended trip limit increases for LE and OA sablefish 40°10' N lat. – 36° N lat., as shown in table 1, which were intended to be approved by NMFS in the August 20, 2026 final rule (91 FR 53737).

TABLE 1—NEW LE AND OA SABLEFISH TRIP LIMITS (40°10' N LAT. –36° N LAT.)

Fishery	Area	New trip limits
LE	40°10' N lat. – 36° N lat	7,000 lb (3,175 kg)/week not to exceed 14,000 lb (6,350 kg)/2 months.
OA	40°10' N lat. – 36° N lat	5,000 lb (2,268 kg)/week not to exceed 10,000 lb (4,536 kg)/2 months.

Classification

This final rule makes routine inseason adjustments to groundfish fishery management measures, based on the best scientific information available, consistent with the Groundfish FMP and its implementing regulations. This action is taken under the authority of 50 CFR 660.60(c) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the NMFS Assistant Administrator for Fisheries (AA) finds there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment would be unnecessary and contrary to public interest in clear and accurate regulations. This action corrects inadvertent errors and implements the original intent of the August 2026 final rule. Expeditious correction of the errors

and clarification is necessary to prevent confusion among participants in the fishery, which has already begun. In addition, notice and comment is unnecessary because this action makes only minor changes to correct inadvertent errors and routine inseason adjustments related to the final rule implementing harvest specifications and management measures for the 2025–2026 biennium (89 FR 101514, December 16, 2024). That rule was subject to notice and comment rulemaking, as well as opportunity for public comment through the Council development process, including at meetings in June 2023, September 2023, November 2023, March 2024, April 2024, and June 2024. These inseason adjustments to trip limits will not affect the results of analyses conducted to support management decisions in the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. The

adjustments are consistent with the public process regarding the regulations and to accurately implement the 2025–2026 specifications as evaluated by the Council and approved by NMFS in December 2024, and as intended to be adjusted by the Council and approved by NMFS through inseason action in August 2026. Accordingly, the public expects the regulations to be written as in this inseason rule. No change in operating practices in the fishery is required. Similarly, the AA has determined good cause exists to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d). The changes in this action should be effective immediately to prevent further confusion among participants in the fishery. This notice makes only minor, routine adjustments to the final rule which was effective January 1, 2025, consistent with the

inseason rule which was effective August 20, 2026. Delaying effectiveness of this action would result in perceived conflicts in the regulations and confusion among fishery participants.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 660

Fisheries, Fishing, Indian fisheries.

Dated: September 24, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, NMFS amends 50 CFR part 660 as follows:

PART 660—FISHERIES OFF WEST COAST STATES

■ 1. The authority citation for part 660 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*, and 16 U.S.C. 7001 *et seq.*

■ 2. Amend table 2b (South) to part 660, subpart E by revising the entry for “Sablefish (40°10’ N lat. – 36° N lat.)” to read as follows:

TABLE 2b (SOUTH) TO PART 660, SUBPART E—TRIP LIMITS FOR LIMITED ENTRY NON-TRAWL SOUTH OF 40°10’ N LAT.

Species	Trip limit
* * *	* * *
Sablefish (40°10’ N lat. – 36° N lat.).	7,000 lb/week not to exceed 14,000 lb/2 months.
* * *	* * *

■ 3. Amend table 3b (South) to part 660, subpart F by revising the entry for “Sablefish (40°10’ N lat. – 36° N lat.)” to read as follows:

TABLE 3b (SOUTH) TO PART 660, SUBPART F—TRIP LIMITS FOR OPEN ACCESS SOUTH OF 40°10’ N. LAT.

Species	Trip limit
* * *	* * *
Sablefish (40°10’ N lat. – 36° N lat.).	5,000 lb/week not to exceed 10,000 lb/2 months.
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