



## FAQs for non-trawlers interested in leasing quota (2023)

The following FAQs are intended to help fishermen understand some of the requirements of participating in the West Coast groundfish trawl fishery using traps/pots, longline, or other non-trawl gear. Regulations are complex and change regularly. Please use this information as a starting point, and then **do your own research** to ensure you have the most current and up-to-date information.

### 1. Can I lease groundfish quota from the Trust if I use traps/pots, longline, or other non-trawl gear?

Yes. The West Coast Groundfish Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program has a provision known as *gear switching* which allows vessels to use non-trawl gear to harvest IFQ. This provision is currently under review by the Pacific Fishery Management Council ([PFMC](#)), with [alternatives being considered](#) that may affect gear switching opportunities in the future.

### 2. What do I need to get started?

#### a) A limited entry trawl permit registered to your vessel

If you do not already have one, you will need to purchase or lease a limited entry trawl permit. The Trust has two permits available for lease to qualified vessels. Vessels can only register a limited entry permit to their vessel on a bi-monthly basis (beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, March 1<sup>st</sup>, May 1<sup>st</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup>, September 1<sup>st</sup>, November 1<sup>st</sup>).

#### b) A vessel account

Details on how to establish a vessel account can be found at the [Vessel Accounts page](#) on the NOAA fisheries website.

#### c) Quota Pounds

If you do not currently hold your own quota shares then you will need to lease quota pounds from someone else. The Trust holds quota pounds for a variety of species. We offer first priority leasing to fishermen who land in Monterey Bay Ports (Monterey, Moss Landing and Santa Cruz) and to fishermen who are working to support our social, economic, and environmental objectives (see more details below). The Trust also manages quota held by the City of Monterey. The City offers first priority leasing to fishermen who land in Monterey. You can also lease or trade quota with other quota holders, or you can lease quota through online auction sites, such as [Jefferson State Trading](#).

Constraining Species: As of 2021, yelloweye rockfish is the last remaining species to be rebuilt, with a target date of 2029. The Trust and the City do not hold any quota for yelloweye rockfish, nor do we hold much quota for other species with low allocations like cowcod. You will need to consider the risk of encountering these species in your operations, since this quota is more difficult and expensive to acquire. The California Groundfish Collective is a group of fishermen along the coast of California that have pooled their overfished species quota and collaborate in other ways to reduce the risk of catching these species. Read more about the [California Groundfish Collective](#).

**d) A vessel monitoring system (VMS) installed on your vessel**

The VMS must have a NMFS type-approved transmitter that automatically determines a vessel's position and a NMFS-approved communications service provider to receive and relay transmissions. For more information visit the [VMS page](#) on the NOAA Fisheries website.

**3. What are the rules of harvesting trawl IFQ using non-trawl gear?**

You are subject to many of the same rules that trawlers are subject to, including:

**a) 100% Human Observer or Electronic Monitoring**

The groundfish trawl IFQ program requires that participating vessels have an observer on board or electronic monitoring (EM) at all times. Fishermen must cover the costs. For an observer, this averages \$500-\$600 per day or more if travel is required. Visit the [Observer Program section](#) of the NOAA Fisheries website for more information on observers. Starting in 2021, it is also an option for fixed gear fishermen to use electronic monitoring. [Learn more here.](#)

**b) All trawl landings must be landed with an IFQ First Receiver**

An IFQ first receiver is a person or company that receives, purchases, or takes custody, control, or possession of catch onshore from a vessel that harvested IFQ species. All buyers of IFQ must hold a first receiver site license for each physical landing site, and each IFQ first receiver must also have a certified catch monitor present for the entire duration of the landing. A catch monitor is someone who is land-based at IFQ first receiver facilities and confirms that total landings are accurately sorted, weighed, and recorded on electronic fish tickets. For more information visit the [IFQ First Receivers and Catch Monitors section](#) of the NOAA Fisheries website.

**c) Recordkeeping and reporting**

You are required to complete and submit the following reports (also note that all records must be retained, and made available upon request, for three years from the end of the year in which the records were made):

- New declarations to establish the gear/fishery within which a vessel is participating, including a declaration for gear switching.
- Economic data collection, including cost and revenue information, must be submitted to NMFS on an annual basis. NMFS will send out a survey around May 1<sup>st</sup> each year, but if you do not receive it, you must contact NMFS for a copy. All surveys must be submitted to NMFS no later than September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

**d) Closed areas, prohibitions, and gear restrictions**

You are subject to the closed areas (e.g. non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Areas), prohibitions, gear restrictions, and some management measures for the [fixed gear fisheries](#). For more information, visit the [Compliance Guides](#) on the NOAA Fisheries Website or contact NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region at (206) 526-6147.

**4. What are the costs of participating in the groundfish trawl IFQ program?**

**a) 3.5 % Buyback Program Fee**

There is currently a 3.5 % fee for all landings in the Shorebased IFQ Program to repay the [buyback reduction loan](#). This fee is collected by the IFQ first receiver, and is deducted from your net trip proceeds. In 2020, the federal government approved a spending bill to reduce \$10 million in loan interest. [Learn More.](#)

**b) 3% Cost Recovery Fee**

In 2022, NMFS will collect a 3% fee from all landings in the Shorebased IFQ Program to cover part of the costs of management, data collection, and enforcement of the trawl rationalization program.

**c) At least \$500-\$600 in Daily Observer Fees – or EM fees**

You must pay to have an [observer](#) on board at all times unless you are part of the [electronic monitoring](#) (EM) program. Observers average \$500-600 per trip or more, plus travel expenses if needed. EM also carries its own costs.

**d) Cost of Quota and Permit Leasing**

If you do not own your own quota or permit, you will need to factor lease rates in your expenses. For information on market value lease rates, [Jefferson State Trading](#) lists the auction site’s average lease rate broken down by IFQ species for the current year and over the past several years (please note that many trades are done privately and this data is not included here).

**5. Who does the Trust lease to?**

The Trust offers prioritized leasing to fishermen who land in Monterey Bay ports (Monterey, Moss Landing and Santa Cruz), and the City of Monterey prioritizes leasing to fishermen who land in Monterey. We also consider fishermen’s history in the West Coast groundfish trawl fishery, the diversity of species targeted, and involvement with conservation and research. [View our 2023 Lease Policy.](#)

**6. What species and permits are available for lease?**

The Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust and the City of Monterey hold a diversity of IFQ species for lease. [Visit our website to view our 2023 allocations.](#)

The Trust also has two trawl permits (endorsed for 52 and 59 foot vessels) and may have access to additional permits from our partners.

**7. What does the Trust charge for leasing quota and permits?**

The goal of the Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust is to offer below market lease rates to qualifying fishermen who land locally. The degree of discount offered depends on the financial viability of the Trust in a given year.

**8. How do I apply?**

If interested, contact the Trust’s Quota Manager, Dwayne Oberhoff, at (805) 440-6137, or call our Executive Director, Melissa Mahoney, at 831-233-3101, or [info@mbfishtrust.org](mailto:info@mbfishtrust.org). For more information about the Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust, visit our website at: [www.montereybayfisheriestrust.org](http://www.montereybayfisheriestrust.org).