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**National Marine Fisheries  
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## **PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH FISHERY**

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### **EMERGENCY ACTION TO TEMPORARILY EXTEND THE PRIMARY SABLEFISH FISHERY 2020 SEASON**

This emergency rule temporarily extends the 2020 season for the Limited Entry Fixed Gear sablefish primary fishery, from October 31, to December 31, 2020. This action also extends the incidental halibut retention allowance for the sablefish primary fishery North of Point Chehalis, Washington, until November 15, 2020.

The full emergency rule can be found at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2020-23700>

#### ***For Information Contact:***

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## Overview

This emergency action extends the 2020 season for the limited entry, fixed gear (LEFG) sablefish primary fishery (also known as the tier fishery) North of 36° N. lat., until 12 noon local time on December 31, 2020. Sablefish primary vessels will be allowed to continue to harvest their 2020 tier allocation through this date, up to their individual cumulative tier limits. This emergency rule also extends the incidental halibut allowance North of Point Chehalis, Washington (46°53.30' N. lat.) from November 1, through November 15, 2020; the latest date allowed by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC).

### 2020 Extended Sablefish Primary Season Under Emergency Measures.

The November 1- December 31 timeframe is a new “major” cumulative period (period 6) as defined in regulations at §660.11 *Trip Limits*. Any vessels currently registered to one or more LEFG sablefish-endorsed permits that have not reached their individual cumulative tier limit do not need to take any action in order to continue fishing in the extended season. **Observer coverage and notification is required for all permits selected for coverage in 2020 during the extended period**

For any participants looking to transfer permits in order to fish in the extended season, **any requests to transfer LEFG permits for use through the November 1 - December 31 period must be submitted to WCR Permits by close-of-business on October 30, 2020**, which is the end of the September 1-October 31 cumulative period 5. Requests to transfer LEFG permits received after this date will not take effect until January 1, 2021 (period 1), per existing provisions in regulations at §660.25(b)(4)(vi)(C). Included in this emergency rule is a temporary provision to allow up to two transfers for LEFG sablefish-endorsed permits for the year. On October 15, NMFS issued a public notice to notify participants in the sablefish primary fishery of this deadline for requests to transfer LEFG sablefish-endorsed permits. The public notice and instructions for submitting transfer requests for this emergency action can be found on the West Coast Region website at

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/permit-transfer-deadline-vessels-participating-limited-entry-fixed-gear-sablefish>

Until November 15, 2020, vessels in the sablefish primary fishery, and licensed by the IPHC for commercial fishing in Area 2A (waters off Washington, Oregon, California), and with longline gear north of Pt. Chehalis, may possess and land up to 250 pounds (113 kg) dressed weight of Pacific halibut for every 1,000 pounds (454 kg) dressed weight of sablefish landed and up to 2 additional Pacific halibut in excess of the 250-pounds-per-1,000-pound limit per landing. Pacific halibut taken and retained in the sablefish primary fishery north of Pt. Chehalis may only be landed north of Pt. Chehalis and may not be possessed or landed south of Pt. Chehalis. **After November 15, any incidental halibut would need to be discarded as a prohibited species.**

