

The Commercial Groundfish Integration Program: *Management*

The Commercial Groundfish Integration Program (CGIP) was developed in response to significant conservation concerns for inshore rockfish. Before the program was in place:

- Harvesters were required to release incidental catch, which could result in associated mortality.
- Harvesters had no incentive to report incidental catches and releases.
- The lack of accurate incidental catch reporting and insufficient monitoring resulted in depleted stocks and overfishing of specific groundfish species.
- As a result, the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for some species was being consistently exceeded.

The Inshore Rockfish Conservation Strategy (2002) also identified significant conservation issues relating to inshore rockfish species (i.e. yelloweye, quillback, etc). A sustainable management plan to address these concerns.

The Commercial Industry Caucus (CIC) developed a pilot proposal for a new integration program in 2005. Since 1997, the groundfish trawl fishery, which is multi-species, had operated under a fishing plan that addressed incidental catches. Given their experience with an integrated program, the groundfish trawl sector played a key role in the development of the Program. The Commercial Groundfish Integration Program commenced as a pilot in 2006 and permanently implemented in 2010.



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The Commercial Groundfish Integration Program applies to all seven commercial groundfish fisheries including: Groundfish trawl, Halibut, Sablefish, Inside Rockfish, Outside Rockfish, Lingcod and Dogfish. The foundation of the program is a set of management arrangements based on the following principles:

1. All groundfish catch must be accounted for.
2. All groundfish catch is managed according to established groundfish management areas.
3. Fish harvesters are individually accountable for their catch.
4. All species and stocks of concern are closely examined. Actions such as reducing TACs, and other catch limits are taken to achieve management objectives as required.
5. New monitoring standards have been implemented to meet these objectives.

How does the program operate?

- The implementation of Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) makes individual harvesters accountable for all their catch, both kept and released. It also allows vessel owners to trade their quota amongst each other for all species and all licence types.
- Instead of being required to release incidental catch in many instances, harvesters are now able to retain them.
- Mortality associated with all catch must be covered by quota, including released-legal catch. Vessels are required to acquire this quota to continue fishing. Those who do not are unable to continue fishing. The mortality for released catch varies by species and gear type.
- To allow vessels to acquire quota to cover their catch and released mortality, quota needs to be transferable. Quota can now be temporarily transferred between fisheries.
- Prior to integration, each fishery was managed by different areas. Now all groundfish fisheries are managed using the same areas which improves stock assessment and eases the transfer of quota.