

Federal Regulation of Bottom Trawling



1. **Caribbean Fishery Management Council**
 - a. Trawling not conducted for any species
 - b. No restrictions on rollers or rockhoppers
 - c. Hind Bank Marine Conservation District closed to all fishing (50 C.F.R. § 622.33(b)(1))
2. **Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**
 - a. Rollers are prohibited in the Reef Fish Stressed Area (50 C.F.R. § 622.34(g))
 - b. Numerous areas closed to trawling to protect habitat or to reduce gear conflicts, including Tortugas Shrimp Sanctuary, Florida Middle Grounds Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC), Flower Garden Banks HAPC, and Madison and Swanson sites and Steamboat Lumps (50 C.F.R. § 622.34)
3. **Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council**
 - a. Rollers restricted to 6” diameter in the “southern management area” of the monkfish fishery to protect deep sea corals (70 Fed. Reg. 21927 (2005))
 - b. Rollers restricted to 18” in scup and black sea bass fisheries (50 C.F.R. §§ 648.123, 648.144(a)(5))
 - c. No restrictions on rollers or rockhoppers in other fisheries
4. **New England Fishery Management Council**
 - a. Rollers restricted to 6” diameter in the “southern management area” of the monkfish fishery to protect deep sea corals (70 Fed. Reg. 21927 (2005))
 - b. Rollers restricted to 12” in the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank Inshore Restricted Roller Gear Area (50 C.F.R. § 648.80(a)(3)(vii))
 - c. Rollers restricted to 18” for the scup and black sea bass fisheries (50 C.F.R. §§ 648.123, 648.144(a)(5))
 - d. No restrictions on rollers or rockhoppers in other areas or fisheries
 - e. Bottom trawling for monkfish prohibited in Lydonia and Oceanographer Canyons to protect deep sea corals (70 Fed. Reg. 21927 (2005))
 - f. Bottom trawling prohibited in other identified areas to protect habitat or fish populations, or to reduce gear conflicts (50 C.F.R. § 648)
5. **North Pacific Fishery Management Council**
 - a. No restrictions on rollers or rockhoppers
 - b. Bottom trawling prohibited in over 90,000 nmi² of the EEZ permanently closed to bottom trawling to protect habitat, fish and Steller sea lion populations, and to reduce gear conflicts; closures amount to about 25% of the Bering Sea and 10% of the Gulf of Alaska (50 C.F.R. § 679.22)
 - c. Bottom trawling prohibited in Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands pollock fisheries (must use “pelagic” trawls that do not touch the seafloor more than 10% of time fished) (50 C.F.R. § 679.24(b))
 - d. Prohibitions on bottom trawling in areas of deep sea coral (finalized by NMFS on 8/8/05)
 - i. Aleutian Islands:
 1. Bottom trawling prohibited in over 95% of the area (277,100 nm²) to address concerns about the impacts of bottom trawling on seafloor habitat,

- particularly deep sea corals; remaining 4%, where bottom trawls fished most intensely from 1990-2001 remain, open
2. 12,423 nm² that supported high catch levels in the past remain open
 3. Six “coral gardens” closed to all bottom-contacting fishing gear (longlines, pots, trawls, etc.) (110 nm²)
 4. Bowers Ridge designated as a HAPC
 - a. Mobile bottom-contacting fishing gear prohibited (5,286 nm²)
 - b. VMS required for all fishing vessels
 - c. Comprehensive research and monitoring plan will be developed
- ii. Gulf of Alaska:
1. Bottom trawling for all groundfish prohibited in 10 areas thought to contain high relief bottom and coral communities (2,086 nm²)
 2. All 16 named seamounts in the Gulf designated as HAPC
 - a. Bottom-contacting fishing gear prohibited (5,329 nm²)
 3. Three areas of recently discovered large aggregations (“thickets”) of *Primnoa* coral off Southeast Alaska designated as HAPC
 - a. 20% (13.5 nm²) closed to bottom-contacting fishing gear
- iii. Bering Sea: Additional analysis will be done on the best approach to minimize effects of fishing on EFH, including an assessment of possible gear modifications

6. Pacific Fishery Management Council

- a. Inshore fisheries (*shoreward* of Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs)) (50 C.F.R. § 660.381)
 - i. Small footrope (equal to or less than 8” in diameter) required
 - ii. Selective flatfish trawl required for inshore areas north of Cape Mendocino
- b. Trawling prohibited in the limited entry trawl fishery in trawl Groundfish Conservation Areas (GCAs) (as defined in 50 C.F.R. § 660.390-394): Cowcod Conservation Areas, Farrallon Islands out to 10 fathoms (18 meters), Cordell Banks out to 100 fathoms (183 meters), Trawl Rockfish Conservation Areas
- c. Essential Fish Habitat designation (finalized by NMFS on March 8, 2006):
 - i. Bottom trawling banned in:
 1. All waters between 700 fathoms (1280 meters) and 3500 meters
 2. Ecologically Important Areas off CA, OR, and WA (13,178 square miles)
 - ii. Bottom trawl footropes restricted to:
 1. 8” in diameter eastward of the 100 fathom line
 2. 19” in diameter in all other waters
 - iii. Dredges and beam trawls prohibited in all waters
 - iv. Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, triggering greater consultation requirements, declared in: all WA state waters, numerous banks and seamounts, Monterey canyon, and portions of the Channel Islands national marine sanctuary

7. South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

- a. No restrictions on rollers or rockhoppers
- b. Oculina Bank HAPC closed to all bottom disturbing activities, including bottom trawling (50 C.F.R. § 622.35(c))
- c. Trawling prohibited for Caribbean reef fish, the snapper/grouper complex and many species of mackerel to protect fish populations and essential fish habitat (50 C.F.R. § 622.41)
- d. Trawling prohibited in significant shrimp trawl closure areas to protect essential fish habitat (50 C.F.R. § 622.35(e))

8. Western Pacific Fishery Management Council

- a. All bottom trawling banned in 1986 due to destructive nature of gear (50 C.F.R. § 660.64)