

Well Designed Catch Shares Incorporate Community Benefits



All fishing communities depend on healthy, productive fish stocks. Catch share management programs benefit fishing communities by helping to stabilize fisheries. Fishing is inherently unpredictable, because it depends so much on ever-changing conditions in the oceans.

Well-designed catch share systems give fishermen more flexibility to time their fishing activities and also include tools and mechanisms that benefit communities, things you won't find under traditional management.

Over the years, thousands of fishing jobs have been lost due to declining fishing opportunities. Under conventional management, fishermen face ever-increasing limits on harvest levels, and shorter and shorter fishing seasons. When fishing is allowed,

conventional management often forces fishermen into a dangerous and inefficient race for fish.

By contrast, the catch share program that went into place in 2011 for the groundfish fishery includes fair allocation, limits on consolidation of fishing rights, and opportunities for new entrants. Those elements directly benefit coastal communities and the small businesses that support fishermen.

Specifically, the Pacific groundfish catch share program includes:

- Strict ownership caps for each species, to ensure that no individual fishermen or entity can accumulate excessive amounts of quota. There are also caps on the amount of species quota that any entity can control through business arrangements.
- An [Adaptive Management Program](#) designed to stabilize fishing communities and maximize benefits of the program while protecting against unanticipated consequences.
- In addition, the [Pacific Fishery Management Council](#) has authorized community fishing associations and collective fishing arrangements to hold quota. These entities will provide communities with the opportunity to maintain access to groundfish, opportunities that do not exist under status quo management.
- Opportunities for new entrants – Quota is divisible down to the single pound level, meaning that young fishermen can buy in gradually, accumulating small amounts of quota. As other fishermen leave the fishery, permits will become available for purchase. In addition, quota from the Adaptive Management Program mentioned above could be leased or loaned to new entrants to enable them to enter the fishery at reduced cost.