



POTENTIAL 2018 GROUND FISH FISHING OPPORTUNITY

In 2014, a new non-profit organization, the Morro Bay Community Quota Fund (MBCQF) acquired five trawl permits and a portfolio of quota share (QS) in the West Coast groundfish trawl fishery. The permits and QS acquired by MBCQF were the trawl permits that historically operated in the Morro Bay area during the 1990s to early 2000s, which The Nature Conservancy (TNC) then acquired in 2005 as a part of an effort to establish an industry supported plan for adopting trawl Essential Fish Habitat designations on the west coast. On January 1, 2011, the West Coast trawl fishery transitioned to an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) management system. This transition still requires each participating boat in the fishery to have a trawl permit, but vessels can use fixed gear (e.g. pots, long lines) or trawl gear to catch their quota.

The purpose of forming the MBCQF was to secure, in the community, the historic QS and local fishing permits that TNC had purchased in 2005. The MBCQF is completely independent of TNC and governed by a seven member board of directors comprised of fishermen, community leaders and representatives from science and academia. The long term goal of the MBCQF is to promote a financially stable and environmentally sustainable Morro Bay groundfish fishery, built upon sufficient local landing to support fishing infrastructure and local stewardship of groundfish resources. Further information on how the MBCQF works, the MBCQF mission, history on the fishery and a biography of the Board of Directors can be found at www.morrobaycommunityquotafund.org.

Derived from the QS, the MBCQF receives annual Quota Pounds (QP) for most trawl species and has uncommitted QP and permits in 2018. The MBCQF seeks fishermen who can operate under the conditions of the West Coast trawl IFQ fishery. At this time, that includes taking human observers on every trip (approx. \$500/day cost paid by fisherman), willingness to cooperate with other fishermen/MBCQF on fishing plans that reduce/eliminate overfished species (OFS) interactions, and paying approximately 8% of gross landing revenue for trawl fishery fees (e.g. trawl buyback loan and program cost recovery fee). The MBCQF is working to reduce some of the costs, but at this time the groundfish fishery is an expensive fishery to participate in. Although there are reduced lease rates on QP and permits that are available from the MBCQF, this fishery does require boats to accommodate human observers on 100% of the trips (until such a time those costs are reduced).

If you're interested in this potential opportunity or would like to find out more information about the Morro Bay Community Quota Fund, there are a number of ways to contact us:

Stop by: MBCQF Office, 601 Embarcadero, Suite 11 (located with Morro Coast Audubon Society)

Website: www.morrobaycommunityquotafund.org

Contact the Executive Director, Dwayne Oberhoff:

dwayne@ecologicalmgmt.com or call 805.440.6137