

## SENATOR MURKOWSKI SUPPORTS EM ALTERNATIVE

### Electronic Monitoring Again to be Focus of NMFS

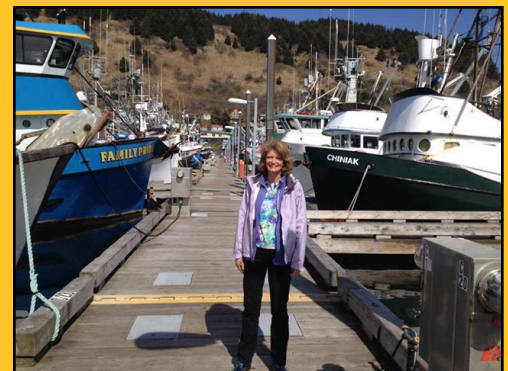
In August Senator Murkowski included report language in the Senate appropriations directives to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that states:

“Beginning in fiscal year 2014, NMFS shall, at a minimum, dedicate 35 percent of the fees collected from fixed gear vessels to the deployment of electronic monitoring systems on these same vessels and shall make such electronic monitoring systems available to these vessels in lieu of observers beginning in 2014. The National Marine Fisheries Service shall work with the fixed gear fleet to develop an Experimental Fisheries Permit for 2014 that contributes to the continued development of a viable electronic monitoring system.”

—Senate mark of the 2014 Justice and Science Budget for NMFS

With this language, Senator Murkowski refocused NMFS on Electronic Monitoring, or EM, as an ALTERNATIVE to observers and identified the mechanism—an Experimental Fisheries Permit—to make the alternative available in 2014. After years of struggle to create this less costly and far less burdensome alternative to observers, ALFA and other longline organizations hailed the language as a lifeline and an opportunity the longline industry must seize. We all owe the Senator a huge thank you!

The Senator provided an opportunity; now we have to do the work. EM will only be an option if the fishing industry develops and secures an EM Experimental Fisheries Permit, or EFP. The EFP application is rigorous and demands a detailed project description complete with experimental design, sampling protocols, data analysis strategies, and measurable outcomes. ALFA staff members Linda Behnken and Dan Falvey quit fishing early this season to initiate discussions with other industry groups and with NMFS on the EFP. ALFA is taking lead on developing the EFP, but is actively seeking the engagement of other fixed gear organizations, fishermen and scientist in the project. Petersburg Vessel Owners Association Director Brian Lynch travelled to Sitka earlier this month for a planning meeting, as did the two statisticians ALFA has hired to develop the sampling design and protocols. Our target for submitting the application to NMFS is October 1<sup>st</sup> and review by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for early December.



Senator Murkowski on the docks in Alaska

EASY  
WAYS TO  
HELP

page 2

cont. page 2

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **SAY THANKS:** Drop a note to Murkowski's fisheries staff person, Jay Sterne: jay\_sterne@murkowski.senate.gov
- **DONATE:** We need funds and Alaska Airline miles for travel and presentations. Consider how important EM is to you and make an extra donation.
- **SPREAD THE WORD:** Encourage other fishermen to carry EM in 2014. Let us know that you are willing to participate if selected.



## WANT TO DONATE?

ALFA makes it easy to support our projects! Here's how:

- Through the "DONATE" button on our website—[www.alfafish.org](http://www.alfafish.org)
- Call the office—747-3400
- Mail in a donation—ALFA  
PO Box 1229  
Sitka, AK 99835

## MURKOWSKI & EM...

The goal of the EM EFP will be to collect representative data on catch and bycatch from fixed gear vessels (starting with sablefish/halibut boats and then moving to the pacific cod pot and longline fleet) that: 1) cannot accommodate an observer; or 2) where EM is a more cost effective alternative. Our hypothesis is that EM can collect the data fishery managers *need* from fixed gear vessels at less cost and with far less disruption to normal fishing operations than observers, and that deploying EM on fixed gear boats will allow more observers to be deployed on trawl boats. The EFP will advance EM from the pilot program stage to an actual at-sea monitoring alternative.

## HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN

### Sharing Information Across the Nation

The public comment period on the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) closed in mid August. NMFS is now working on responses to comments and preparing the final rule to implement the plan. NMFS' target for final rule publication is early December to allow the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to make appropriate recommendations to the International Pacific Halibut Commission on 2014 charter management measures. Because the charter industry has fought every conservation and management action by the Council, a lawsuit against the CSP is likely. The Halibut Coalition is considering intervening, if a lawsuit is filed, on the side of the federal government and in defense of the CSP. Please watch for updates from ALFA and the Halibut Coalition. And speaking of halibut:

**Bruce Leaman, IPHC Director will be in Sitka on October 7<sup>th</sup>** to meet with fishermen and provide an update on halibut stocks and halibut management during the ALFA meeting, details on Page 3.

Questions? Call the ALFA office:  
747-3400

To succeed we need your help. The EFP application process is challenging and unfunded. ALFA has hired two recent graduates from the Master's program at the School of Fisheries and Oceans in Juneau to write the experimental design and sampling protocols; in December, we will ask these graduates to help us present the EFP application to the Council. We need funds and we need Alaska Airlines miles. Please think about what it means to you to have the option of taking a camera when you are selected for observer coverage instead of trying to squeeze an extra person onto your boat and consider making an extra donation to support this work.

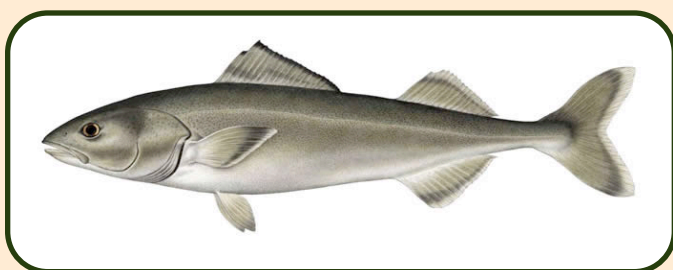


# LEGALIZING POTS IN THE GOA?

A group of longliners have asked the Council to allow Gulf of Alaska sablefish to be targeted with longline pots. Those of you who were fishing in the early 1980s remember the grassroots effort that prohibited pots from the Gulf to prevent gear conflicts and allow small boats access to the then recovering sablefish stocks. Proponents of legalizing pots cite predation by whales as the reason for changing the gear rules, and claim unquantified whale predation might be responsible for weak sablefish stocks. While pots would address whale predation on sablefish sets, the use of pots in the sablefish fishery might increase whale predation on halibut sets and create gear conflicts between pot and longline boats. Longliners should be aware that Bering Sea crab fishermen are closely watching this issue and will be prepared to invest in sablefish quota if the regulations are changed.

A committee has been formed to discuss this issue and the committee's recommendations will be considered by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council in October. To date, ALFA has

opposed the use of pots in the Gulf and focused instead on research to identify predation deterrents. This issue will be discussed at the **OCTOBER 7<sup>th</sup> ALFA MEETING**. Steve Fish will represent ALFA on the sablefish pot committee.



## ALFA MEETING

Join us for our first seasonal meeting, featuring special guest **Bruce Leaman, Executive Director of the International Pacific Halibut Coalition**, who will provide updates on halibut stocks and management. ALFA will provide an issues and project update before turning the meeting over to Bruce. Please bring a friend/deckhand/potential new member and help us spread the word!

**Monday, October 7th**  
**5pm**  
**Sitka Sound Science Center**  
**834 Lincoln Street**  
**Snacks & Coffee Provided**

## RAFFLE

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# SEASWAP UPDATE

## Decoys, Tagging & Camera Systems

This summer the SEASWAP team beta tested decoy devices to deter whales from longline sets. The decoy device is a typical longline buoy line that is anchored to the bottom and marked on the surface with a flag pole and buoys. Attached to the buoy line is a playback device that transmits underwater the sounds of a boat shifting in and out of gear (which SEASWAP research has identified as the "dinner bell" that attracts sperm whales to longline sets), and a recorder, which records whale sounds to determine how many whales are attracted to the decoy and how long they remain in the area. Fishermen set the decoy buoy at least 3 miles from their longline set or sets, then used a remote control to turn the playback device on one hour before hauling their gear. This summer two boats deployed the decoy buoy while hauling thirty sets. Although the analysis is ongoing, preliminary results indicate the decoy buoy distracts some whales when only one or two boats are in the area, but when deployed near a fleet being targeted by an aggressive and seasoned population of predating whales, the decoy is less effective. The full analysis planned will reveal the true effectiveness of this countermeasure.

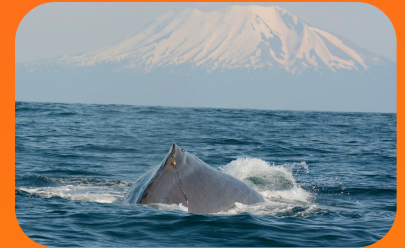
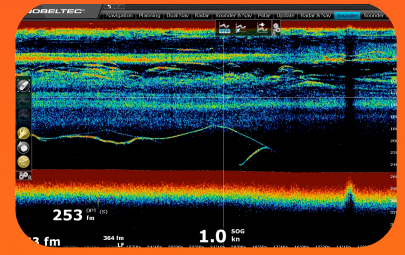
Meanwhile, we have another deterrent in the pipeline that may be tested next summer. This deterrent basically works to confuse or jam the whales' sonar, blocking the whales' ability to effectively "hone in" on a hooked fish. The devices are called "jammers" and are based on the successful strategy tiger moths have evolved to avoid predation by bats. More on this research soon!

With funding from ADF&G and the Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (CBSFA), the SEASWAP team also successfully satellite tagged five sperm

whales this spring. Some tags transmitted the whales' position for only a few days while others continued transmitting into August. You can view mapped track lines of the satellite tagged whales on the ALFA website (type "Tracking" in the search box). Stephen Rhoads (*F/V Magia*) helped with the tagging, and was also able to detect whales on his sounder, following a longline at 200 fathoms, which can be seen in the photo below.

Finally, SEASWAP has been funded by the Bycatch Reduction Program (BREP) to build camera systems that attach directly to the longline gear to catch sperm whales and killer whales in taking fish. Initial cameras were built and tested with the *F/V Alexandria* skippered by Brad Wichmann out of Whittier in Prince William Sound, but no whales were around during the deployments. Later in the summer, a GoPro was bought and tested by the *F/V Magia* in a compact deep water housing attached to the gear via longline snaps. This deployment proved very promising, and SEASWAP is testing possible deep-water dive beacons to illuminate more of the gear while at depth to increase the chances of capturing a whale removing fish from the gear. These data would allow comparison of visuals with acoustic vocalizations during depredation to pinpoint the extent to which animals use acoustics and/or visual means to target fish on the lines.

This ongoing research on sperm whales and potential deterrents would not be possible without the support of the Oak Foundation, CBSFA, NOAA, UAS and the North Pacific Research Board. It would also not be possible without the active engagement of FCN fishermen, who contribute ideas, ship time, and deterrent testing. We appreciate all of you--THANK YOU!!



If you have ideas for depredation deterrents or want to get involved in the whale research, please contact the ALFA office or call Jan or Lauren at 747-7779.



### TEAM SEASWAP:

- ALFA's Fishery Conservation Network
- **University of Alaska: Southeast & Fairbanks**
- Sitka Sound Science Center
- **Scripps Institution of Oceanography**
- Alaska SeaLife Center
- **Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association**
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- **NOAA Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute**

Support  
SEASWAP  
today!

# WEATHERBLUR **Get Involved!**

Last year Maine's Island Institute asked ALFA for suggestions of Alaskan schools and fishermen that would want to work with schools and fishermen in Maine on a weather project. (Of course your executive director enthusiastically volunteered Sitka schools and ALFA fishermen!) The project, WeatherBlur, aims to blur the distinction between classroom and community, while engaging both in investigations of weather, climate, storms and oceanography.

ALFA is looking for fishermen who will make weather observations and record them on Weatherblur.com. Observations will also be made by children from four schools in Maine, children from Rebecca Himshoot's KGH Stream Team, and kids from the SEER School. The kids will get to review and interpret the data fishermen post, while scientists lend their perspectives and help guide the investigations. Using the website, Maine and Sitka kids will interact on a regular basis to share scientific information and learn about island life on the other side of the country.

For October, Sitka teachers identified the following question for investigation:

**HOW DO AIR PRESSURE, WIND SPEED & DIRECTION,  
AND CLOUDS HELP US PREDICT WEATHER?**

Want to participate? You can help make observations or talk to kids in school! Just let us know:

Linda ([alfafish@acsalaska.net](mailto:alfafish@acsalaska.net) or 738-3615)  
or Ashia ([alfastaff@gmail.com](mailto:alfastaff@gmail.com)).

ALFA members planning to fish in October are particularly needed. Entering weather data is easy and fun, and will only take a few minutes. With a push of a button you can record your location or upload photos.

Let's make this a success for Sitka and Maine students!



## PROJECT GOALS

- To develop an online interactive-learning platform for coastal communities to share weather-related data and observations, and to explore the impacts of climate change on their communities.
- To provide professional development to and facilitate communication among teachers, students, fishermen, and scientists in order to deepen participant understanding of earth science concepts.
- To develop a non-hierarchical, trans-generational, online learning community that brings together diverse learners from around the world to discuss climate change.

## HALIBUT CHEEKS WITH ORANGE-GINGER SAUCE

4 Halibut Cheeks  
1/4 c orange juice (Fresh is best!)  
2tsp minced cilantro  
1tsp minced ginger root  
1clove garlic minced  
1T soy sauce  
1tsp sesame oil  
1/4tsp red pepper flakes  
1T olive oil

- Mix juice, cilantro, ginger, garlic, soy, sesame oil and pepper flakes together in a small bowl.
- Heat olive oil in a skillet to medium high heat. Cook halibut cheeks until golden brown, add juice mixture and bring to boil.
- Reduce heat and simmer until fish flakes easily and sauce thickens slightly.
- Serve cheeks over rice, drizzle pan sauce on top.



# FALL IS A GREAT TIME TO GIVE!

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## ALASKA LONGLINE FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

PO Box 1229

Sitka, AK 99835

### CALENDAR

### SEPTEMBER

### OCTOBER

### DECEMBER



**Federal  
Subsistence  
Board Rural  
Determination**  
Sept. 27th  
Sitka, AK

**ALFA Open  
Meeting with  
IPHC**  
October 7th  
Sitka, AK  
**NPFMC Meet.**  
Sept.30-Oct.8  
Anchorage

**NPFMC  
Meeting**  
December  
9-17  
Anchorage