



ALFA HERO

Member Robbie Bruce (F/V Ginny C, F/V Northwind) donated 68 stakes of longline gear to ALFA to use in the sperm whale deterrent research. Thanks Robbie! The donation is HUGELY appreciated!!!

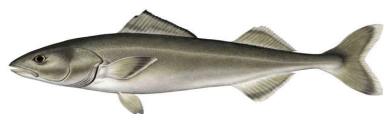


(The Hero's Hook)

SITKA SABLEFISH SUMMIT

On March 8th, state and federal sablefish stock assessment scientists and managers convened in Sitka to provide fishermen with an overview of sablefish stock trends and management. The meeting was teleconferenced to Juneau and Petersburg, and well attended. In general, sablefish stocks are thought to be at low levels, although catch per unit effort (CPUE) is increasing in Chatham Strait (NSEI) and some parts of the Gulf. (2011 Clarence CPUE data has not yet been analyzed). Federal sablefish stocks are still expected to decline in the near term, but the 2008 class looks strong and could reverse the trend in the longer term. Meeting presentations are on the ALFA website (www.alfafish.org).

Sablefish fishermen have requested that state and federal managers annually meet with stakeholders to review stock trends and any proposed changes to management models or strategies. State permit holders have requested that quotas be announced in the spring, instead of mid-summer, and that ADFG managers meet with stakeholders in advance of Board of Fisheries meetings during the Southeast cycle to discuss relevant proposals. The earlier quota announcement is challenging due to time constraints on staff, but managers understand the requests and have agreed to work towards fulfilling them. ◇



FISHERY CONSERVATION NETWORK: EMPOWERING STEWARDSHIP INNOVATION THROUGH RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION

ALFA's Fishery Conservation Network (FCN) engages fishermen in research and conservation initiatives. We recognize that fishermen are among the most innovative and resourceful people on the planet, and look to our membership to identify solutions to re-

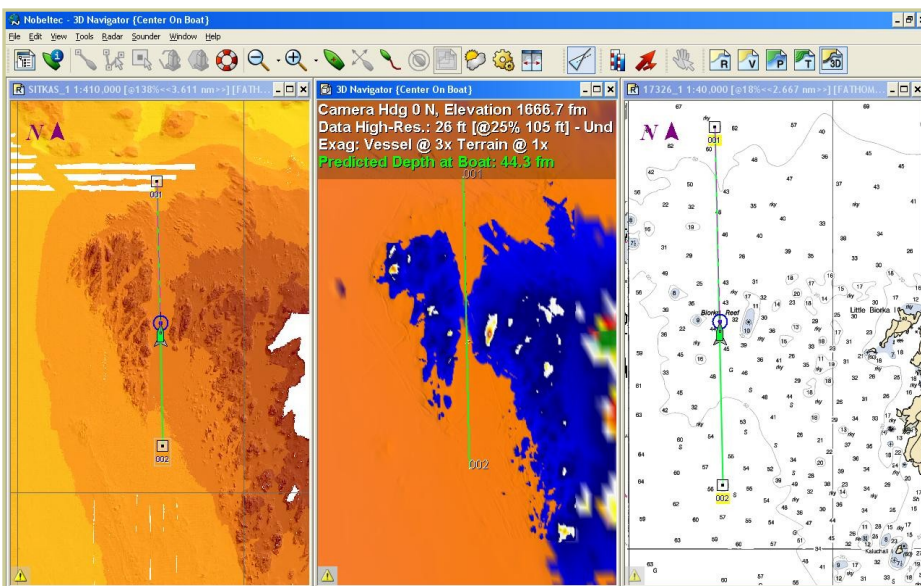
search challenges. With fishermen-generated ideas, we design tools that assist the fleet in mentoring other fishermen and improving best fishing practices. A brief update of the ongoing projects is on pages 2-4. If you have contributed to these projects—THANK YOU!! If you

have not yet joined the FCN—DO IT TODAY!! All it costs is an ALFA membership; if you are already a member joining the FCN is FREE! We are eager to engage more fishermen in ongoing and new projects. Just call the ALFA office and we will sign you up!

FCN PROJECTS: Bathymetric Mapping

ALFA-FCN members use Nobeltec software to collect bathymetric data while fishing, then provide that data to ALFA. Our goal is to compile the data into a user-friendly format and provide it to all FCN members. The amount of data we have collected has challenged the capacity of the Nobeltec system, but we are working with Nobeltec staff to create a base layer from FCN data which could be further enhanced by additional data collection on each vessel. This technology is hopefully coming soon to FCN members like you!

The commitment of FCN members to research and stewardship has provided access to multi-beam sonar data of the seafloor off Southeast Alaska. Thanks to ALFA techno-wizards Dan Falvey and Stephen Rhoads, ALFA has compiled this data into bathymetric maps compatible with FCN members' laptop computers and iPhones. Combined with the bycatch data, the bathymetry maps assist fishermen with effectively harvesting target species while controlling bycatch. Salmon trollers are also using the maps to fish effectively near pinacles and reefs without hitting the bottom or losing gear. ◇



Left to right: Multi-beam map, Nobletec map, NOAA chart

Want these charts
on your computer
or iPhone??? Call
us and join the FCN!
(907) 747-3400.

FCN PROJECTS: Electronic Monitoring

Two years ago, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council approved an expanded observer program that will allow the Council to prioritize observer coverage in specific fisheries and allows NMFS to assign observers (through a random selection process) to halibut and groundfish vessels down to 40 ft. in length. Because so many vessels between 40 and 58 ft. cannot accommodate an additional person on the boat without leaving behind a crewman or changing their fishing strat-

egy, ALFA designed a pilot program to develop cost effective electronic monitoring (EM) for small longline vessels. ALFA secured a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, developed a partnership with the AK Fisheries Science Center, and contracted with Archipelago Marine to install EM cameras on longline boats. The goal is to provide longliners with the option of EM or a human observer to fulfill at-sea monitoring requirements when the expanded ob-

server program is implemented in 2013. In the past two years, cameras have been installed on 6 ALFA-FCN members' boats; later this spring, cameras will also be installed on 6 Homer vessels. The next steps are to ensure NOAA is prepared to incorporate EM data into their observer database, and ensure the Council allows vessel owners the monitoring options. Many thanks to Dick Curran (Cherokee), Greg Beam (Ida June) Dan Falvey (Myriad), Jay Skordahl (Kelly Marie), Kelsey Skordahl (Tamarack) and Mike Daly (Nikka) for participating! ◇

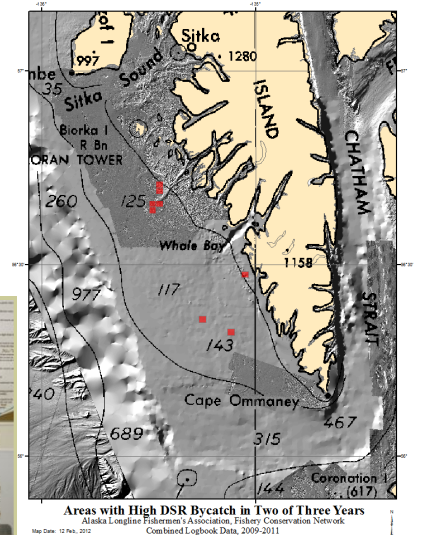
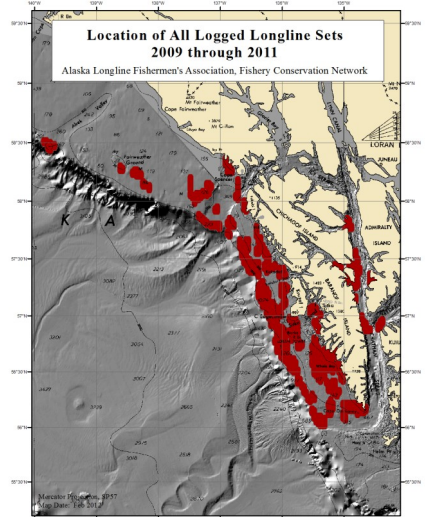
FCN PROJECTS: Rockfish Bycatch

This winter we compiled and summarized three years of rockfish bycatch rate data from the halibut and sablefish fisheries. Since 2009, FCN fishermen have contributed bycatch data from over 500 sets (and over 2,000 set segments). Between 2009 and 2010, FCN fishermen reduced bycatch rates in the halibut fishery by 20% and in the sablefish fishery by 6%. Bycatch rates rose slightly in 2011 relative to 2010, but remain below the 2009 level and below bycatch allowances permitted in the halibut and sablefish target fisheries. Rockfish are a valuable component of the longline fisheries, hence harvesting bycatch allowances is economically important; the FCN goal is to assist fishermen with controlling bycatch rates to ensure allowances are not exceeded and rockfish stocks are protected from overharvest.

The bycatch rate data is summarized in the right-column maps (with a two mile buffer around sets to protect confidentiality). The top summary map establishes the area covered by FCN fishermen. The bottom map identifies the areas with high bycatch rates in 2 out of 3 years—**no areas had high bycatch rates in all three years**. In the next month, each FCN fisherman will receive maps identifying bycatch rates by set quadrant for each of his/her individual sets. This data is also confidential, so individuals will only receive maps from their sets. ◇

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Caution is a most valuable asset in fishing, especially if you are the fish. -Unknown



VMS REQUIREMENTS FOR LONGLINERS: EXPRESS YOUR THOUGHTS

The **North Pacific Fishery Management Council** is scheduled to review a discussion paper on expanding requirements for **Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)** in the North Pacific and Bering Sea fisheries. The Council considered expanding VMS requirement four years ago, and was convinced that expanded requirements were unnecessary. The recent enforcement actions against high profile longliners mis-reporting areas fished has once again raised the issue. The discussion paper states the benefits of VMS coverage fall into five categories: (1) enforcement, (2) in-season management, (3) safety, (4) scientific benefits, and (5) other benefits. The Seattle-based Fishing Vessel's Owners Association is a proponent of VMS on halibut and sablefish boats; in the past other associations have opposed the measure. You can express your views on VMS requirements to the Council by sending comments via email to: npfmc.comments@noaa.gov or via fax (907) 271-2817. Please also send a copy of your comments to the ALFA office (alfastaff@gmail.com). This issue will be reviewed by the IFQ implementation team later this month and by the Council in early April. ALFA representatives will be at both meetings to provide comment. ◇

FCN PROJECTS: Whale Research & Deterrent Testing

ALFA has collaborated with Jan Straley (University of Alaska), Aaron Thode (Scripps Institute of Oceanography) and, in recent years, the Sitka Sound Science Center and Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (CBSFA) to understand whale predation on longline gear, quantify its effect, and develop effective deterrents. The collaboration has yielded a wealth of information about Alaska's sperm whales (they are almost all immature male whales and repeat offenders are generally responsible for predation) and the whales techniques for honing in on hooked sablefish (sonar clicks identify the target; sonar creaks followed by a pause signify predation success). With the support from CBSFA, in 2011 the project expanded to include killer whale predation on longline gear.

During the 2011 research season, participating FCN members deployed hydroacoustic recorders and whale deterrents, including playback devices and decoy buoys, and recording the whales' reactions. Although the whales ignored playback sounds of killer whales, white noise and static, whales were lured and retained for over two hours at a decoy buoy with a playback device broadcasting an underwater recording of a boat engaging hydraulics and shifting in and out of gear. While the whales waited by the decoy buoy, a longline boat hauled a nearby string of blackcod gear.

This season we will be testing bead deterrent gear and the Jay Skordahl inspired/Dan Falvey designed bubbler device that activates as the gear is hauled (at 100 fathoms) and creates a curtain of bubbles around the hooked fish. This winter we hired "Super-baiter Joe" to build 36 skates of bead deterrent gear and 32 skates of non-beaded gear. **We are looking for fishermen to use the gear to harvest their IFQ sablefish.** Norm Pillen (Sherri Marie) will be setting the gear on opening day; Phil Wyman, Frank Balovich, Stephen Rhoads, Kelsey Skordahl and Mike Daly have agreed to set the gear later in the year. If you have sablefish to catch and want to try out the deterrent gear, please give us a call. The gear only works if it is fished! ◇



One-Dish Rockfish

Recipe from allrecipes.com



- ◆ 5 cups fresh spinach
- 2 (6 ounce) fillets rockfish
- 10 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup vegetable broth
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh dill
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 2 slices lemon slices
- 2 slices onion slices
- 1 teaspoon butter

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).
2. Layer the spinach in the bottom of a 2 quart baking dish. Lay the rockfish atop the spinach. Scatter the tomatoes around the fish. Pour the broth into the dish. Season the fillet with the dill, garlic powder, lemon pepper, onion powder, salt, and pepper. Place the lemon, onion, and butter on the rockfish. Cover the entire dish with aluminum foil.

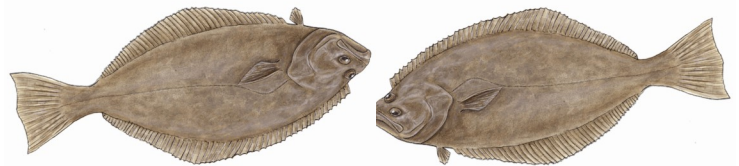
Bake in preheated oven until the fish flakes easily, 20 to 25 minutes. ◇

Last fall, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) placed the Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) on hold after receiving thousands of comments both in support and opposition to the CSP. NMFS subsequently asked the Council to clarify aspects of their CSP decision, which has also opened the door for the Council to revise aspects of the CSP. On April 1st, the Council is scheduled to review supplemental analysis of the CSP and to consider revisions. Council decisions relative to these revisions will determine the time frame for CSP implementation.

Analyses requested by the Council to guide the CSP revisions were posted to the Council website on March 16th (<http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc/>); written comments due on March 20th. The revisions could include revisiting the allocations between the charter and commercial sectors; they could also include substantial delays while the charter fleet develops its compensated reallocation program (CATCH) and attempts to find a federal or client-supported funding mechanism that allows a charter organization to purchase commercial QS. Please submit your comments on the CSP to the Council at npfmc.comments@noaa.gov. A few key

points:

1. The CSP allocations were set in 2008 to provide a measure of stability to the halibut industry. The CSP allocations **SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED**.
2. The CSP fairly ties both sectors to the same index of halibut abundance and ensures both sectors share in resource conservation. This GHL disproportionately burdens the commercial fleet with conservation reductions during times of low abundance.
3. The CSP provides a mechanism for QS transfer between individual commercial and charter fishermen. If and when the CATCH program becomes a feasible option, it could be incorporated into the halibut charter management plan. The CSP should not be held hostage to the CATCH program. ◇



HALIBUT BYCATCH

Two years ago the North Pacific Fishery Management Council initiated action to address halibut bycatch caps in the Gulf of Alaska. Halibut is designated as a Prohibited Species; when trawl or fixed gear fisheries reach Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) caps, those PSC caps close the fisheries. Initially the Council focused on reducing the PSC caps through the annual quota specification process. Opposition from the National Marine Fisheries Service convinced the Council to address PSC adjustments through a regulatory amendment process instead. The regulatory amendment that will be considered by the Council in June includes options to reduce trawl and fixed gear PSC caps by 5 to 15%. ALFA representatives will be at the meeting supporting the 15% reduction as a necessary step towards protecting halibut stocks and the halibut fishery. **Please watch for action alerts to send letters** to the Council in support of halibut PSC reductions!

The Council has also launched analysis of a more comprehensive bycatch management plan, which will likely include individual bycatch quotas (IBQ). Canada implemented an IBQ system three years ago; the system requires vessels to count all halibut against their individual quota (retained halibut) or IBQ (released/discarded halibut). All catch is electronically monitored. IBQs dramatically reduced halibut bycatch in the Canadian fisheries. ◇

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES FINISHES SE CYCLE

This winter the Board of Fisheries reviewed management proposals for Southeast shellfish, crab, shrimp, finfish and groundfish. The finfish/groundfish meeting was held in Ketchikan February 24-March 4th. At this meeting, the Board addressed over 250 proposals—and members were clearly challenged to understand the full implication of each action. Chairman Johnstone is trying a new process where a Board “Committee of the Whole” reviews and then deliberates on the more controversial proposals directly after conclusion of public testimony. While this approach saves time and insures all Board members hear discussions that take place in committee, the controversial proposals are decided relatively quickly, which limits opportunities to discuss the proposals with Board members.

Proposals 210 and 211: Release at-depth of Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR) in sport fishery

After initial opposition to this proposal was expressed by a number of BOF members, the sport fish division drafted language to exempt non-guided sport operators from the proposed regulation that will require charter operators to have a deep water release mechanism on board and to use it to improve survival of any discarded DSR. The revised proposal was supported by both charter and longline representatives and **passed unanimously**.

Proposal 212: Reallocate DSR from commercial to charter/sport fisheries

After much debate and extensive education, the BOF voted **unanimously against** the Southeast Alaska Guide Organization (SEAGO) proposal to reallocate Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR) from the commercial to the charter/sport industry. Board members understood that the commercial fleet has lost access to the by-catch component of their DSR allocation due to the 75% reduction in Area 2C halibut catch limits; BOF members were also impressed by ALFA's Fishery Conservation Network (FCN) and the engagement of fishermen in developing strategies to control rockfish bycatch. **Many thanks to everyone who has participated in the FCN by contributing bathymetric and bycatch data!!**

Proposal 216: Remove annual limit for sport sablefish

Board member Bill Brown built a record that annual limits were inappropriate in the sablefish fishery because: a) no conservation concern exists; and b) the sport harvest is 4% of the state-waters sablefish quota. Both these facts are suspect given that the NSEI commercial quota has been reduced 70% over the past 10 years, the stock trend reported by ADFG is still declining, and the sport sablefish harvest is unverified and self-reported. The Board amended the proposal to remove the annual limit from all areas except ADFG stat area 12 north of Point Gardiner, which excludes SSEI, Southern Chatham, Icy Strait, Peril Strait, Fredrick Sound, and Lynn Canal. **The BOF then adopted this amended proposal on a 6-1 vote** (John Jensen opposed). Off record Captain Cain stated that the revised proposal was not enforceable; BOF member John Jensen tried to then bring the issue up for reconsideration but Chair Karl Johnstone disallowed reconsideration.

Proposal 270: Require licensing and reporting of personal use sablefish harvest

There are currently no limits on gear or harvest of personal use sablefish, and accounting for harvest is poor. ADFG submitted this proposal to require licensing and reporting of personal use harvested sablefish. **The Board approved this proposal 5-2.**

Ling cod reallocation proposals were all voted down, other than the proposal to establish a troll lingcod allocation in the Icy Bay sub district. In this area the available lingcod is harvested by the directed fishery and as bycatch in the longline fishery prior to the July opening of the troll fishery. As a result, troll retention of lingcod was disallowed. **The BOF approved lingcod allocations in this sub district of 8% troll, 12% longline, and 46% directed.**

Other Board action on groundfish proposals

- Proposal #200** – Clarify the use of post-processed and reported commercial fish as bait. PASSED 7/0/0
- Proposal #208** – Establish commercial fishing seasons for Pacific Cod for the Eastern Gulf of Alaska area – PASSED 7/0/0
- Proposal #209** - Establish commercial fishing seasons for black rockfish for the Eastern Gulf of Alaska area – PASSED 7/0/0
- Proposal #213** – Establish a point system for sport rockfish - FAILED 0/7/0
- Proposal #214** - Standardize sablefish retention and reporting requirements in regulations – PASSED 7/0/0
- Proposal #215** – Amend the sablefish fishing season to allow permit holders to participate in stock assessment surveys. PASSED 7/0/0
- Proposal #271** – Clarify prohibitions to commercial, subsistence, and personal use fishing by commercial sablefish permit holders. PASSED 7/0/0
- Proposal #199** – Amend groundfish registration to specify registration by vessel (Super-exclusive registration in Icy Bay) – AMENDED – PASSED 7/0/0
- 5 AAC 28.106. Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area registration.** Apply super exclusive directed fishery registration for lingcod in the Icy Bay Sub district apply to both vessels and permit holders as follows:
- (f) The Icy Bay Sub district is a super exclusive registration area for the directed commercial lingcod fishery. Notwithstanding 5AAC 28.020(b), a CFEC permit holder who participates in the directed commercial taking of lingcod in the Icy Bay Sub district may not participate or have participated in the directed commercial taking of lingcod as a CFEC permit holder in any other registration area or portion of a registration area during that calendar year. **A vessel used in the directed commercial taking of lingcod in the Icy Bay Sub district may not be used or have been used in the directed commercial taking of lingcod in any other registration area or portion of a registration area during that calendar year.**
- Proposal #218** – Allow for retention of lingcod bycatch in other commercial fisheries. FAILED 0/7/0
Board action on finfish proposals can be found on the Board of Fisheries or

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First Bank ~ Yakutat Seafoods ~ Precision Boatworks

ALPS Federal Credit Union ~ Sitka Boat Watch ~ SeaMart Quality Foods

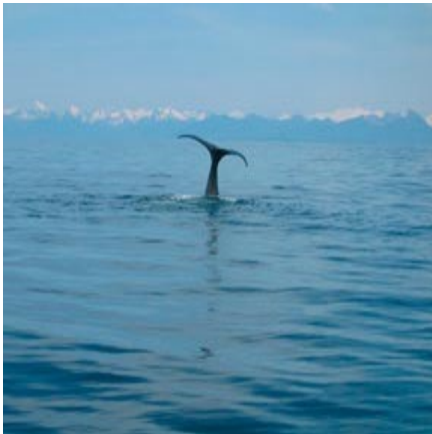
Alaska Longline

FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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TO:



COAST GUARD ADVISORY SEATS OPEN!

The CG Commercial Fishing Safety Advisory Committee has opened membership for the following seats:

- 4 commercial fishermen
- 1 fishing community representative
- 1 naval architect or marine engineer

Applications accepted through April 30, check the Federal Register CFSAC website for more details: www.federalregister.gov

Have you renewed your membership? Stay in the loop!

Dues are on a calendar year basis Jan. 1—Dec. 31 (but it's never too late!)

Deckhand: \$100 ___ Basic: \$250 ___ Supporting: \$600 ___ Highliner: \$1,000 or more ___

Name: _____ Vessel: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone/Cell: _____