

Alaska Longline

FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION



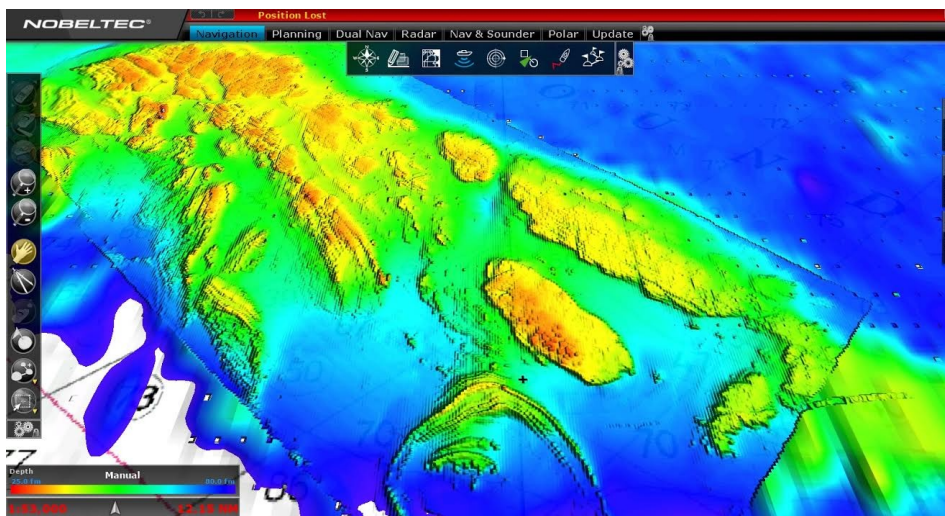
LEGALIZING POTS FOR SABLEFISH

In April 10-12th the North Pacific Fishery Management Council will take final action on an amendment to legalize longlining with pots for Gulf of Alaska sablefish. This amendment was launched at the request of industry members who claim pot gear is needed to reduce predation on longline gear by killer whales and sperm whales. Sablefish stock assessment scientists have clarified that low sablefish numbers are a result of poor recruitment, not whale predation, but pot proponents continue to argue that pots are needed for conservation reasons that also include reducing bycatch and seabird mortality.

In December, ALFA asked the Council to include alternatives in the analysis that allow different decisions to be made in the different Gulf areas relative to allowing pots at all and setting pot limits. Western Gulf fishermen are firmly in support of allowing pots; Central Gulf fishermen are mixed in supporting or opposing pots (with the small boat organizations opposing) and the Eastern Gulf groups, until recently, opposed allowing pots. Last month Petersburg Vessel Owners switched to supporting pots, hence the Eastern Gulf groups are now divided.

Continued on the next page....

NEW MAPS COMING SOON TO FCN MEMBERS!



Above is a Nobletec Catch shot of the Fairweather Grounds. Check out the Fishery Conservation Network article on page 4 to read all about the latest updates to ALFA's mapping project.



Join ALFA today!
www.alfafish.org

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Comments on legalizing sablefish pots are due to the Council by 5 pm March 31st.

NPFMC meets in Anchorage
April 8— April 14

NPFMC meets in Sitka
June 1— June 9

WANT TO DONATE?

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

- Click the “DONATE” option on our website: www.alfafish.org
- Mail in a donation:
PO Box 1229
Sitka, AK 99835
- Buy great merchandise, such as T-shirts, hats and bumper stickers.



You will find these at Murray Pacific and our office—located on the second floor of the Sitka Sound Science Center.



Stomp on by!

LEGALIZING POTS FOR SABLEFISH Continued

ALFA's primary concern with introducing pots is the high potential for gear conflicts and grounds preemption. Sablefish pots are heavy and fished with 3/4 to 1 inch floating poly line between each pot. The breaking strength on the 1" line is 18,000 pounds; for contrast, breaking strength on 3/8" longline is in the 3,600 pound range. In conflicts between pot and longline gear, the longline gear will lose—the longline gear is not strong enough, nor are the hydraulics on most longline boats sufficient to haul tangled pot gear to the surface. In addition, pots can be left on the grounds when boats run in to deliver, preempting those ground from traditional longline gear throughout the season. Overall, ALFA's membership has considered the loss of fish to whales less of a threat in the Eastern Gulf than the gear-loss and dead-loss to conflicts with pots. Converting to pots is not an option for many of the smaller sablefish boats, due to the size and weight of pots, and even for those that can safely and effectively fish pots, the estimated \$150,000 to \$200,000 cost per boat to make the conversion is prohibitive.

As ever, ALFA needs to hear from members on this issue, and members need to share their concerns and recommendations with the Council. Again, the Council will take FINAL ACTION on this issue April 10-12th in Anchorage. Comments to the Council will be due by March 31st. Points to make in your letter:

- The sablefish areas that you fish and the size of your boat.
- Your ability/feasibility to convert your boat to pots.
- Your concerns about gear conflicts, gear-loss and dead-loss.
- Your experience with whale predation and how it compares to fishing near longline pots.
- Specifics of the Eastern Gulf that increase the likelihood of gear conflicts and impacts to small boats (narrowness of shelf/slope; proximity of sablefish grounds to coast/communities).

Comments due to the Council by March 31st

You can submit your comments to: npfmc.comments@noaa.gov or send to alfastaff@gmail.com and we will submit for you. Comments are due to the Council by 5 pm March 31st. Please also consider attending the meeting to testify!

APPOINTMENTS TO THE NPFMC

This winter Washington Council member Jon Henderseidt announced that he was stepping down from the Council to accept a job with NMFS in DC. Freezer longline representative Kenny Down has been appointed to complete Jon's term. In March, Alaska Governor Walker nominated Dan Hull for reappointment and charter operator Andy Mezrow for appointment by the Secretary of Commerce. Appointments are for a three year term and will be announced in mid-April.

NO POTS IN CHATHAM STRAIT

In March, the Alaska Board of Fisheries did not adopt proposals that would have allowed pots for sablefish in both the Chatham and Clarence Strait fisheries. Proposers and supporters claimed sperm whales were an increasing problem in the State sablefish fisheries and that pots were needed to prevent whale predation. The proposer, who fishes with pots in the limited Clarence Strait pot fishery, also claimed pots would eliminate loss to sandfleas and slime eels. ALFA did not support allowing pots in either fishery, but strongly opposed permitting pots in the Chatham Strait fishery. The Department of Law informed the Board that only the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission has the authority to permit additional pots in the limited entry pot fishery, and, since the proposal to permit pots referenced both Clarence and Chatham, the board choose to take no action on any of the SE state water sablefish pot proposals.

In a separate action, the BOF adopted a proposal to establish limits on personal use sablefish at:

50 sablefish annually per household permit,
200 sablefish per vessel, **and**
350 hooks per household permit.

These limits are intended to allow legitimate personal use harvest of sablefish while discouraging abuse. The limits do not apply to subsistence sablefish areas or harvest.



ALFA GREEN BUSINESS AWARD

ALFA was again recognized as a “Green” Business by the Sitka Global Warming Group (SGWG). Each year the SGWG proudly recognizes *“organizations that are doing good things for the environment while also doing good things for our local economy. Through implementing green, environmentally-sustainable business practices, these award-winning businesses are contributing to the sustainability of our community, both in an environmental sense and in a financial and social sense.”*



BUSINESS MEMBERS

BE SURE TO THANK THESE BUSINESSES WHEN YOU SHOP LOCALLY:

Seafood Producers Cooperative (*Highliner Member*)

Sitka Dental Clinic — Foreign Automotive Repair — Samson Tug & Barge Company

Sitka Boat Watch — Coastal Collision Repair— Sitka Bottling Co. — Sitka Sound Seafoods — Yakutat Seafoods
Murray Pacific — Petro Marine Services — Precision Boatworks — Channel Club — Serka’s Welding & Fabrication

Delta Western — Sea Mart Quality Foods — Sitka Salmon Shares — First Bank Sitka — Hoonah Cold Storage

Contributing: ALPS FCU — Fishermen’s Eye Gallery — City of Port Alexander — White’s Inc.

Get Involved!



FCN PROJECTS

- Rockfish bycatch reduction
- Bathymetric mapping
- Whale deterrents
- Fuel Efficiency
- Electronic monitoring

We are always eager to involve more fishermen in ongoing projects. Call 747-3400 or email: alfastaff@gmail.com

BERING SEA HALIBUT BYCATCH

The Bering Sea trawl fisheries annually catch and kill over 5 million pounds of halibut as bycatch. Despite significant declines in halibut abundance and drastic reductions in directed fishery catch limits, BSAI bycatch limits have not been adjusted for 30 years. When projected bycatch/catch numbers for Areas 4CDE were released last fall allocating 93% of the harvestable biomass to bycatch, halibut fishermen and Bering Sea communities called for emergency action to reduce BSAI bycatch caps. NMFS refused to take emergency action, claiming the crisis was not a result of “unforeseen circumstances” (just failure to act) but did unequivocally state that if the Council did not take timely action to reduce bycatch NMFS would. Since then the IPHC has also weighed in with their promise to address BSAI bycatch before the 2016 season if the Council action is not timely or adequate. The stage is set for a Council bycatch showdown.

The showdown will happen at the June Council meeting in Sitka, when the Council is scheduled to take final action on reducing halibut Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) caps by 10 to 50%. Because actual bycatch has been below the caps in recent years (most likely because halibut abundance is low), a 50% PSC reduction will accomplish approximately a 35% actual reduction in bycatch mortality. Everyone who depends on the halibut resource for sustenance or livelihood should plan to comment to the Council, either by submitting written comments, testifying or both. The meeting is scheduled for the first week of June, with the Council starting June 3rd.

Watch for ALFA
Action Alert!

FISHERY CONSERVATION NETWORK

ALFA’s FCN is gearing up for another busy research season. We continue to push ahead with fuel efficiency work, EM development (see related article on next page), sperm whale avoidance/deterrent work (see related article on next page and visit the new SEASWAP website at seaswap.info), and mapping projects.

Mapping Project: Our Winter Service Fellow, Beata Fiszer, has worked relentlessly on both bycatch and bathymetry maps and is nearing the finish line on both. Bycatch maps will include catch and bycatch data from commercial fishermen as well as stock assessment survey data from the IPHC and NMFS. Bathymetry maps will include new NOAA multi-beam data and fleet bathymetry data and will be Nobletec Catch compatible. Although Catch was not without problems when first introduced, the program finally has the processing capacity to deal with the quantity of data our FCN bathymetry members are generating. In other words, ALFA will be able to provide FCN members using Catch with an interactive bathymetric base map to which additional personal bathy data can be added.

At this point, all new data has been uploaded and transmitted to GIS experts at Oregon State University who are generating the actual maps. We expect to have the completed maps back and ready to upload onto the computers of FCN members by the end of March. Maps enriched with NOAA multi-beam data will be provided to all ALFA FCN members; maps that include the NOAA multi-beam data and fleet generated bathy data will ONLY be provided to FCN members who have shared, or contribute in the future, bathy data to ALFA. So! Sign up today with the FCN! All ALFA members are eligible to join and there is no extra cost. We will ask you to be involved in one or more research projects, as needed, but all FCN projects are designed to help you do what you do sustainably and effectively.

ALFA’s Fishery Conservation Network empowers stewardship through research and collaboration.

OBSERVER PROGRAM AND ELECTRONIC MONITORING

ALFA continues to work through all possible channels to improve the observer program and advance electronic monitoring as a viable at-sea monitoring alternative. This year observer coverage on boats over 57.5 feet LOA will increase to 24% while coverage on vessels under 57.5 feet will remain at 12 %. Also new this year, vessels between 40 and 57.5 feet will be trip rather than vessel selected, so will have to log every trip at least 72 hours prior to commencing a trip. Up to three trips can be logged at a time and the dates of trips can be moved if weather or other issues change your departure. You can log trips by calling: 855-747-6377 or on line at: <http://odds.afsc.noaa.gov>. Once a trip is selected for observer coverage, vessel operators will work with AIS, the observer provider, to arrange logistics. AIS, Inc. can be reached at 855-247-6746.

Vessels that volunteered to carry EM systems in 2014 are able to use those EM systems this year instead of carrying an observer. We hope to expand the pool of EM observed boats to 40 by next year, but are still struggling to hit that mark. The challenge is to convince the Council and NMFS that funding appropriated through Congress to EM should be spent on deploying tested state of the art equipment instead of ongoing research and development of not-yet functional technology. Watch for opportunities to testify on this issue during the June Council meeting in Sitka.



ALFA is also soliciting input from fishermen on specifics of the developing EM program. We want to make sure the EM program the Council develops will be workable for our fleet. A few weeks ago ALFA sent a request for comment out to our members and to other fixed gear organizations to share with their members. If you did not yet review these questions or respond with your thoughts, please take a minute to do so. You can also find the EM Request for Comment on the ALFA website here: <http://www.alfafish.org/observer-programelectronic-monitoring.html>



SPERM WHALE AVOIDANCE NETWORK

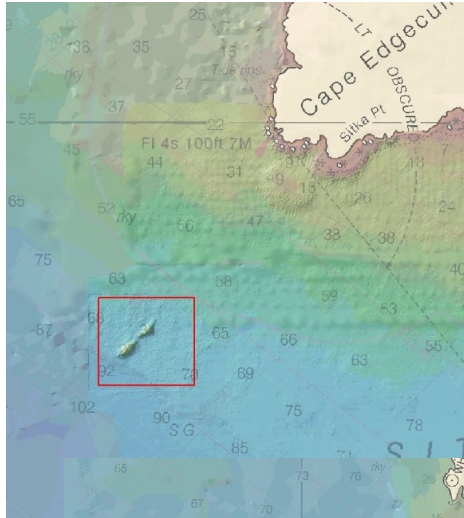
Ever wish you knew where the sperm whales were before you headed out blackcod fishing? Well, ALFA might be able to help! We are expanding our sperm whale avoidance/deterrent work to include a fishermen real-time reporting network and will soon have FREE InReach systems available for ALFA members to take fishing. InReach uses the iridium network to allow vessel to vessel or vessel to shore communication through texting.

If you take an InReach, we will ask you to notify other members of the Network of sperm whale sighting, activity and positions. We will have a shore-based coordinator post whale activity and notify fishermen before they head out on the water. The goal is to avoid or minimize whale depredation, since depredation reinforces “bad” behavior and cuts into fishermen’s catch. If you already have an InReach, you can sign up with the Network and ALFA will provide a stipend to cover two months of service.



© SEASWAP 2009

AREAS CLOSED TO LONGLINERS FOR HABITAT AND CORAL PROTECTION

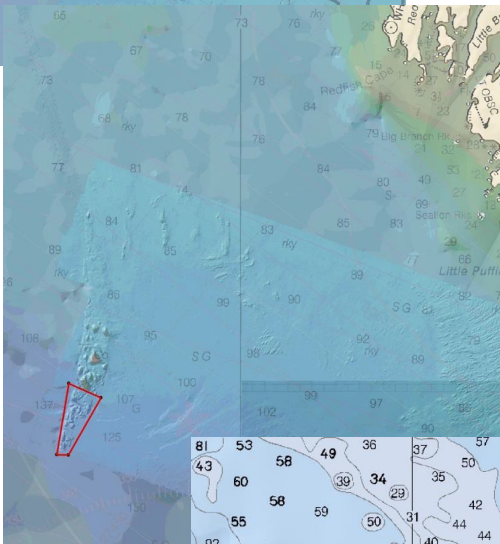


Sitka Pinnacles Marine Reserve

An area totaling 2.5 square nautical miles off Cape Edgecumbe, Alaska, defined by straight lines connecting the following points in a counterclockwise manner.

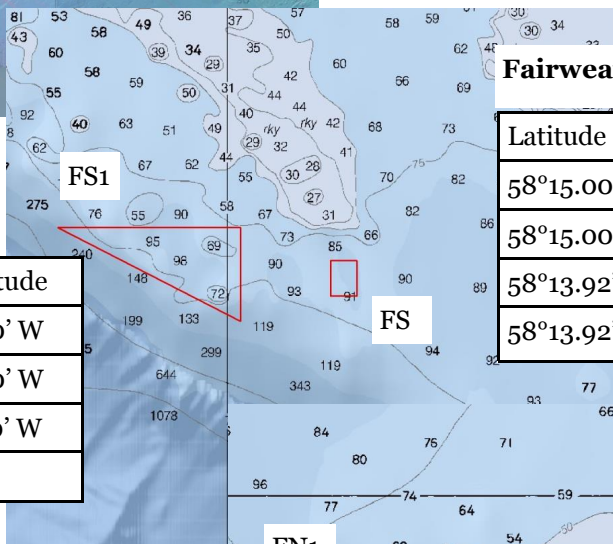
Latitude	Longitude
56°55.5' N	135°54.0' W
56°57.0' N	135°54.0' W
56°57.0' N	135°57.0' W
56°55.5' N	135°54.7' W

Mark these areas on your charts!



Cape Ommaney 1

Latitude	Longitude
56°10.85' N	135°05.83' W
56°11.18' N	135°07.17' W
56°09.53' N	135°07.68' W
56°09.52' N	135°07.20' W



Fairweather FS1

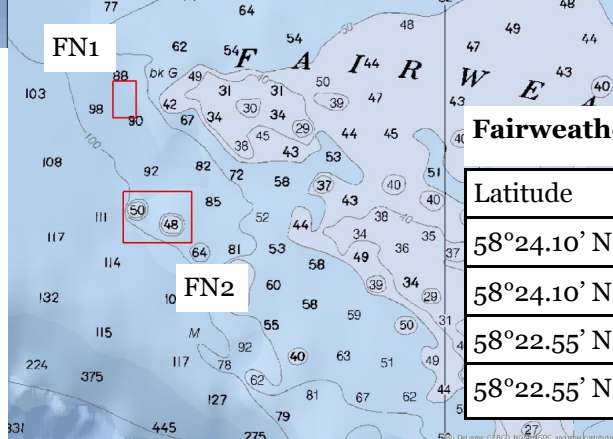
Latitude	Longitude
58°16.00' N	135°54.0' W
58°16.00' N	135°54.0' W
58°13.17' N	135°57.0' W

Fairweather FS2

Latitude	Longitude
58°15.00' N	138°52.58' W
58°15.00' N	138°54.08' W
58°13.92' N	138°54.08' W
58°13.92' N	135°52.58' W

Fairweather FN1

Latitude	Longitude
58°27.42' N	139°17.75' W
58°27.42' N	139°19.08' W
58°26.32' N	139°19.08' W
58°26.32' N	139°17.75' W



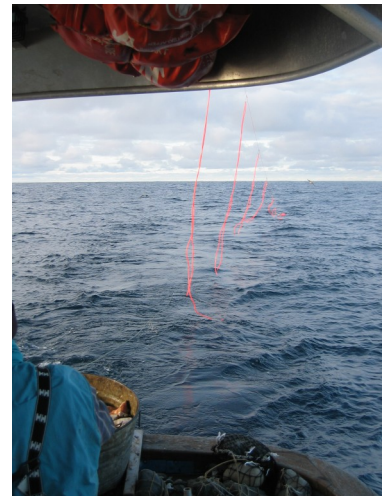
Fairweather FN2

Latitude	Longitude
58°24.10' N	139°14.58' W
58°24.10' N	139°18.50' W
58°22.55' N	139°18.50' W
58°22.55' N	139°14.58' W

SEABIRD AVOIDANCE

Last season one BSAI sablefish vessel hooked and killed two albatross, at least one of which was a short-tailed albatross, while setting longline gear. The year before the hook and line sablefish target took 10 black footed albatross and 58 laysan albatross while observers were on board. These observed seabird mortalities were expanded out to over 360 takes attributed to the sablefish fleet in 2013.

As a result, longliners can expect extra scrutiny of seabird avoidance devices and deployment this year. Please make sure you understand the requirements and are properly deploying your “bird bag.” You can find the official NMFS regulations here: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/frules/74fr13355.pdf>. You can also find an easier to read format of the same regulations on the ALFA website: <http://www.alfafish.org>



IPHC SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The IPHC is currently accepting applications for their scholarship program. The scholarship provides funding for students with a connection to the halibut fishery pursuing undergraduate or technical degrees. Here is the web link : <http://www.iphc.int/opportunities/scholarship.html>

Feel free to contact Tamara Briggie (206-552-7660), Administrative Assistant for the IPHC, if you have any questions.



WILD ALASKA SALMON-QUINOA CAKES

Ingredients

1 can (14.75 ounces) traditional pack canned salmon or 2 cans (6 to 7.1 oz. each) skinless, boneless canned salmon, drained and chunked

4 cups prepared quinoa (white or red)	2 cups sour cream or crème fraiche
8 large eggs, beaten	2 Tablespoons fresh chopped dill (or 2 tsp dried dill weed)
1 cup panko bread crumbs	2 Tablespoons lemon zest
2 cups finely diced fresh bell peppers	2/3 cup canola or olive oil, divided
1 cup finely diced red onion	
1 teaspoon kosher salt	
1 teaspoon black pepper	

Directions

- 1) Combine drained salmon, quinoa, eggs, panko, bell pepper, onion, salt and pepper.
- 2) Form into patties (1/4 cup each). Cover and refrigerate 20 to 30 minutes, to firm.
- 3) In a bowl, blend cream, dill and lemon zest.
- 4) Lightly coat a nonstick pan with oil. Warm over medium heat, then add patties, several at a time, and cook until golden brown on both sides. Keep warm.
- 5) For each serving, place three patties on a plate and drizzle with 2 to 3 tablespoons dill sauce.



Prep Time: 25 min
Cook Time: 15 min
Serves: 8 to 10 appetizer servings

Recipe and photo from Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute: www.alaskaseafood.org

MISSION: Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association (ALFA) is a non-profit association of independent commercial longline vessel owners and crewmembers who are committed to continuing the sustainable harvest of sablefish, halibut, and groundfish, while supporting healthy marine ecosystems and strong coastal communities through resource stewardship and participation in federal, state, and local forums.

BRIEF HISTORY: Founded in 1978, ALFA spearheaded efforts to eliminate foreign fishing on sablefish and rockfish stocks during the 70s, supported an aggressive rebuilding schedule for depleted sablefish stocks during the 80s, and lead the battle to eliminate trawling from Southeast Alaska waters during the 90s.

NOW IS A GREAT TIME TO JOIN OR GIVE!

Support our mission; stay up to date on fisheries news, meetings, and projects with an ALFA membership.

Mail the slip below with your dues to:

ALFA
PO Box 1229
Sitka, AK 99835

Or click "SUPPORT" on
our website:
www.alfafish.org

___ Basic \$250 ___ Deckhand \$100

___ Supporting \$600 ___ Business \$250

___ Highliner \$1,000

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Alaska Longline
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



APRIL

North Pacific Fishery
Management Council
in Anchorage
April 6— April 14

MAY

Deadline for comments
to the Council on by-
catch one week before
June Council meeting

JUNE

North Pacific Fishery
Management Council
in Sitka
June 1— June 9

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE