



PRELIMINARY SABLEFISH SURVEY RESULTS

NOTE: The numbers below are preliminary and have not yet been run through the sablefish stock assessment model. These numbers indicate the direction and potential magnitude of 2016 quota reductions but not yet actual numbers.

In early October the sablefish stock assessment team released *preliminary* results of the 2015 sablefish stock assessment survey. ALFA members gathered in the ALFA office to walk through a presentation of the survey results with sablefish team members Dana Hanselman and Chris Lundsford.

Stock wide relative population numbers are down 21% from 2014 and are now at historic low levels. Declines were greatest in the Western Gulf and Bering Sea, but significant across all areas. These NUMBERS of fish still need to be translated into pounds of fish using survey weights and stock assessment models before catch limits are set, but the outlook for 2016 is bleak.

Continued on the next page...

EM SIGN-UP PERIOD EXTENDED

Up to 60 vessels will be allowed to “opt-in” to the electronic monitoring (EM) pool in 2016. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council sent a call for EM vessels this summer and 56 signed up before the July 27 deadline. There is still room for a few more as the list is finalized and last minute changes occur. Interested vessels must register with NMFS by **NOVEMBER 20, 2015** to be considered!

Not all vessels in the EM selection pool will actually carry cameras. The calendar year has been divided into 4 time periods: Jan-Feb, March-June, July-Oct, and Nov-Dec. In each deployment time period, 30% of vessels that are registered would be selected and required to carry EM systems.

Whether selected or not, EM vessels will not be required to register each trip in the ODDS system or carry observers.

All interested fishermen are encouraged to register, however preference will be given to vessels 40-57.5 feet LOA that have trouble accommodating an observer due to bunk space or life raft limitations. To register, contact Liz Chilton at (206) 526-4197, or by email at elizabeth.chilton@noaa.gov, by Nov 20th.

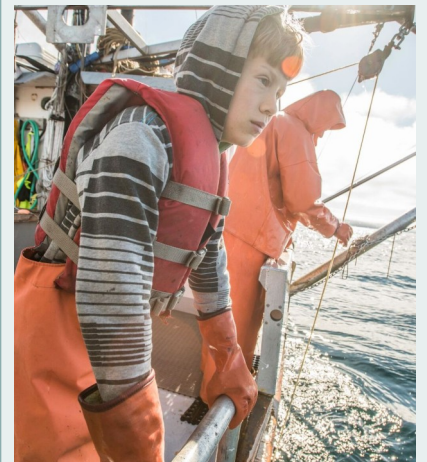


Photo courtesy of ASMI, Josh Roper

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ALFA is a fishermen-run organization. We count on our members to inform decisions and guide our work. Call, text, email or show up for ALFA meetings. We are always eager to hear from you!

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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 **now mugs!**



You will find some of our merchandise at Murray Pacific. The full selection of styles and sizes is at our office - located on the second floor of the Sitka Sound Science Center.



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Stomp on by!

SABLEFISH SURVEY Continued...

On the positive side, reports have poured in from across the Gulf documenting a remarkable abundance of one and two year old sablefish. Trawl surveys, tagging surveys and reports from seiners, trollers and gillnetters all indicate two strong year classes are swimming in near shore areas from Southeast to Kodiak Island. If these year classes remain strong they will start showing up in the sablefish fishery in three years and will really make a difference in the fishery in five years. In the meantime, expect quota reductions.

Stock assessment scientists are reviewing area apportionments and were expected to recommend a new basis for divvying up sablefish between management areas for 2016. The team was also expected to recommend a new methodology for factoring sperm whale and killer whale predation into the quota setting process. Because work on these two issues is not yet completed to the satisfaction of the team, no changes from existing protocols will be implemented in 2016. In other words, quota reductions are likely to be equal across all areas again this year, killer whale depredated skates will be dropped from the survey analysis, and sperm whale depredated sets will be noted but not deducted from survey results. Changes to these current practices can be expected in 2017.

This spring the sablefish stock assessment will be peer reviewed by an independent council of experts, which could lead to small or large changes to the stock assessment process. ALFA will participate in that review and keep members informed of the outcomes.

HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

Halibut Bycatch: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's action on halibut bycatch last June left a bitter feeling for many. After NOAA disqualified two Alaska Council members from voting and one Alaskan choose to vote against bycatch reductions, the remaining Council members adopted a minimal reduction but promised this was “just the first step.” At their October meeting, Council members approved a Halibut Management Framework to direct next steps. You can view the whole framework motion on the Council's website, but key elements include:

- Clarify goals and objectives for halibut and groundfish management.
- Develop an integrated decision-making framework that addresses biological, economic, and social issues.
- Develop abundance-based approaches to halibut and halibut bycatch management, in particular Dr. Martell's Mortality Per Recruit (MPR) approach, and implications for Council and IPHC decision-making. (*more on this below!*)

Integrated Model and Mortality Per Recruit: IPHC scientist Dr. Steve Martell spent the summer stewing on the existing management model that ignores the size composition of halibut bycatch. Dr. Martell focused on the impact to the resource of juvenile halibut, or “recruits,” being killed at increasingly high rates as the abundance of halibut declines, which is exactly what happens under existing bycatch management. His research suggests that bycatch and wastage could threaten the stock with recruitment overfishing, since bycatch is tallied in pounds instead of numbers of fish and millions of recruits are killed before bycatch caps trigger closures. Because this concept seems critical to protecting the future of the halibut resource, ALFA is working with other industry groups to fund development of a model that accounts for mortality of recruits and integrates biological, economic and social impacts of halibut catch and bycatch on the resource, the fishing industry, and the fishing communities.

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HALIBUT MANAGEMENT Continued...

The combination of this new model and new approach could revolutionize halibut bycatch management, creating a new paradigm that incentivizes meaningful bycatch reductions on a sector specific basis. Expect to learn more about this project in the near future!

Halibut/Sablefish IFQ Program Review : At the direction of Congress, NOAA is conducting a review of the halibut/sablefish quota share program. The review probes the effect of vessel size classes, caps on quota consolidation, and other measures designed to control quota consolidation to determine if these measures impede economic efficiency. The Council requested NOAA extend the comment period for this review, which will allow the Council to take public testimony in December.

Halibut Charter Compensated Re-allocation: Segments of the halibut charter fleet continue to pursue a publically funded mechanism to purchase commercial quota for transfer to the Area 2C and 3A halibut charter “common pools.” Charter operators are not interested in self-funding the transfer of quota, but have proposed taxing their clients or securing a federal appropriation. Although commercial QS sellers would be compensated, commercial crew, processors, support sectors, and communities would not be. ALFA has urged charter operators to invest in quota themselves if their clients want to catch more halibut, and argued that compensated reallocation should be able to flow both ways, if it is allowed at all—i.e., longline fishermen should also be allowed to purchase charter licenses with the accompanying quota for use in the commercial fishery. This issue will be before the Council for initial review in December.

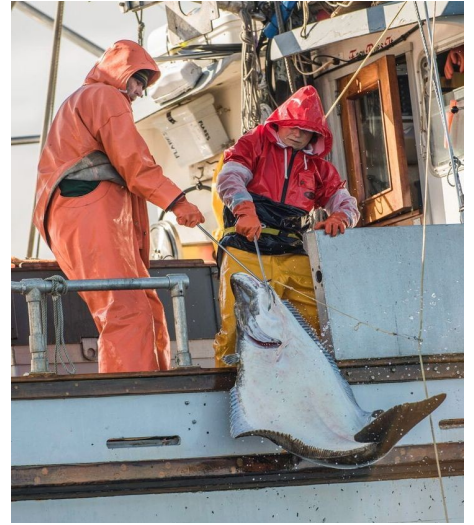


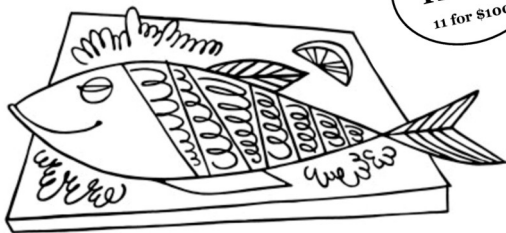
Photo courtesy of ASMI, Josh Roper

**Watch for ALFA
Action Alert!**

Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association

Annual

Fish Raffle



RAFFLE REMINDER

Time is running out to buy tickets! The drawing will be held on November 8, 2015.

Don't miss your chance to win 10 lbs of fresh-frozen, vacuum packed, locally caught fish: King Salmon, Halibut, Blackcod, and Rockfish. **Prize includes FREE Fed-ex shipping to any US address! Which means you could send your winnings to friends or family for free!

The cause is great and your odds are good: less than 750 tickets are sold & 5 prizes are awarded!

Permit# 2655

BUSINESS MEMBERS

BE SURE TO THANK THESE BUSINESSES WHEN YOU SHOP LOCALLY:

Seafood Producers Cooperative (Highliner Member)

- Orion Sporting Goods – Venneberg Insurance – Troller Point Fisheries – Petersburg Fishermen's Services
Samson Tug & Barge Company – Sitka Boat Watch – Coastal Collision Repair – Sitka Salmon Shares
Sitka Sound Seafoods – Petro Marine Services – Precision Boatworks – Channel Club – First Bank Sitka
Sitka Dental Clinic – Delta Western – AMSEA – Sea Mart Quality Foods – Sitka Salmon Shares – ALPS FCU
Murray Pacific – Foreign Automotive Repair – City of Port Alexander – Serka's Welding & Fabrication

SOUTHEAST ALASKA SPERM WHALE AVOIDANCE PROJECT

The Southeast Alaska Sperm Whale Avoidance Project (SEASWAP) is a collaborative effort between commercial fishermen, researchers, and fisheries managers to understand and prevent sperm whales from taking sablefish off longline gear.

Founded in 2003, SEASWAP has successfully developed acoustic listening, photo identification, and satellite tagging techniques to better understand natural sperm whale foraging patterns and the interactions of sperm whales with fishing vessels. The most recent SEASWAP project focuses on building a communication network among Chatham Strait black cod longliners, allowing participants to send and receive real time updates on sperm whale location and activity.

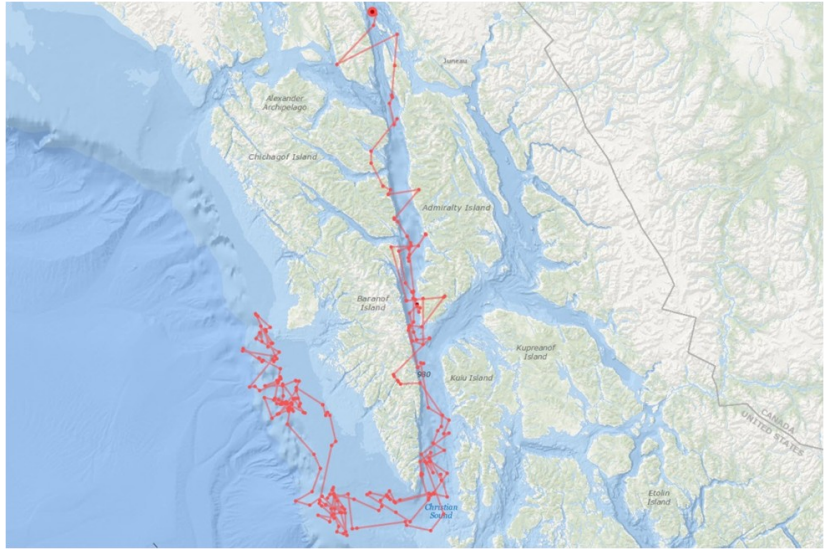
To assist Chatham Strait fishermen with avoiding sperm whales during this fall's fishery, SEASWAP participants are providing voluntary reports of whale activity and are receiving twice-daily updates on sperm whale movements. These updates are shared in near real time using cell and satellite communications to help fishermen set and haul gear away from whales. For this project, Delorme industries, the maker of the InReach satellite communicator, worked with SEASWAP to loan fishermen InReach devices, thus allowing skippers to send and receive whale reports even in areas with no cell service.

Using funds from a Saltonstall-Kennedy grant, SEASWAP researchers also satellite-tagged a sperm whale near Takatz Bay in Chatham Strait on September 13th, 2015. The tagged whale has been identified as GOA-091, a male that has been previously seen in Chatham Strait.



*GOA-091 near the F/V Republic on September 13th, 2015 in Chatham Strait, shortly before being satellite-tagged by SEASWAP researchers.
Photo by Katy Pendell.*

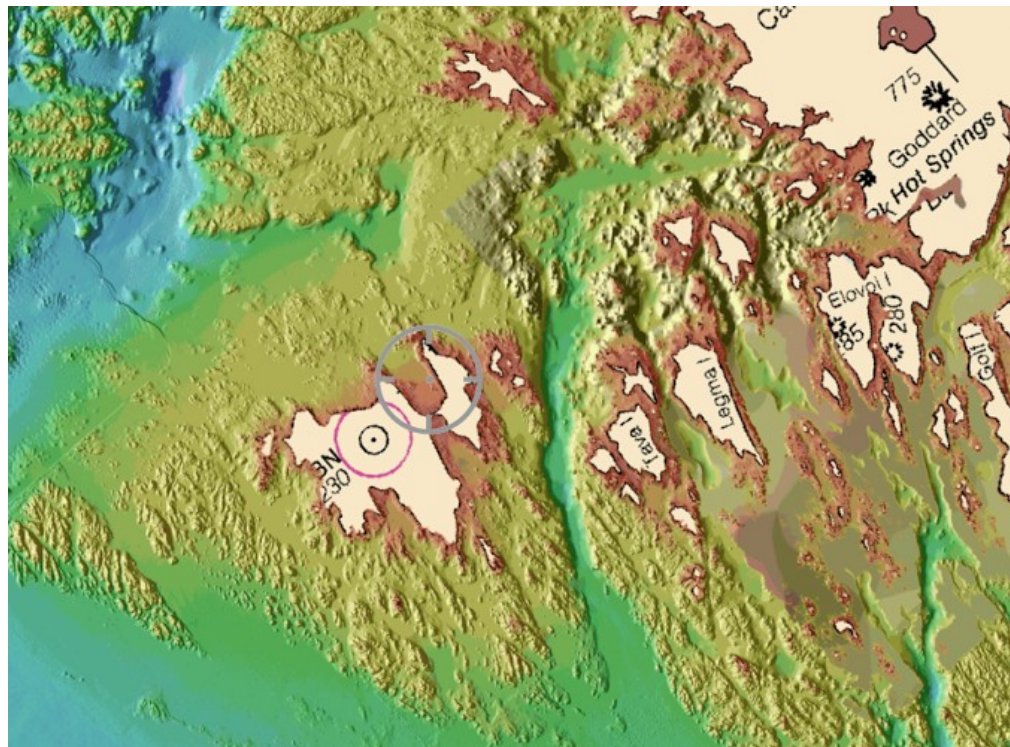
GOA-091 is one of SEASWAP's "serial depredators" – one of ten sperm whales that have been repeatedly documented removing sablefish from longlines. Since being tagged, GOA-091 has traveled over 1,200 miles, averaging about 40 miles per day! Over the past month, GOA 91 has entered the inside waters of Chatham Strait multiple times, traveling as far as 100 miles up the fjord, and as this newsletter goes to press GOA-091 had exited Chatham thru Icy Strait and is now off Yacobi Island. Visit www.SEASWAP.info/whaletracker/ or www.SEASWAP.info to view the whale's track-line and learn more about this project.



SEASWAP hopes to expand the whale avoidance network to off-shore Sitka next spring, so ALFA will be looking for boats willing to report whale activity. We will have DeLorme InReach Device available for sablefish fishermen to borrow for this purpose. To participate in the SEASWAP communication network or for more info, please contact (907) 738-4494 or seaswap03@gmail.com.



ALFA'S BATHYMETRIC MAPS



Want these maps on your boat computer?
Join ALFA's FCN bathymetric mapping network today!

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

FISHERY CONSERVATION NETWORK

ALFA FCN members continue to map habitat, share rockfish bycatch rate data, and collaborate with scientists on whale avoidance, fuel efficiency and electronic monitoring. The unique engagement of fishermen in this network allows ALFA to secure research funding which, in turn, allows us to do more to assist fishermen with doing what they do best: catching fish efficiently and cleanly.

This fall ALFA received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to spearhead EM implementation in the Gulf of Alaska. ALFA was also awarded a four-year core capacity grant by the Oak Foundation to advance research projects, assist with inter-generational transfer of quota share, and train new leadership. ALFA is a key collaborator in the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation's fuel efficiency project, and coordinating with scientists and other industry groups to address halibut bycatch. Last but not least, ALFA is developing ideas for observer/EM cooperatives to reduce observer program costs and improve data collection. If you are interested in any of these projects, want to get involved or have ideas of other issues we should tackle—call, email or stop by the ALFA office. We are always eager to hear from members.

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

IMPORTANT FCN REMINDERS

Logbook Pages - Those of you who are collecting bycatch data for us, please turn in your logbook pages today!

Bathy Data - We need your bathy data! Let us know when we can come by to collect YOUR data. We are still working with Nobeltec to create an accurate and interactive base-layer from the ALFA database. Before that layer can be created, the existing ALFA database has to be "cleaned" of bad data. This is a tedious job but an ALFA board member is working away on it. More on that soon!

NOBLETEC WORKSHOP DURING FISH EXPO

Nobeltec is hosting training sessions at the Seattle FishExpo November 18th and 19th from 2-4. They are introducing Nobeltec Professional V3, which is designed for commercial fishermen and with a lot of input from ALFA's Fishery Conservation Network members. The most exciting new features are unlimited color pallet and editing of imported data. The software will not be released until the first of the year, but this is a good opportunity for ALFA members to see what is coming down the pike.

Nobeltec developers and salesmen visited Sitka last summer and were impressed by ALFA FCN members' use of their software. They understand that our organization is a valuable partner and would welcome additional feedback from any of you. If you plan to attend Expo, please swing by one of these sessions.

ALASKA DAY EVENT A TASTY SUCCESS!

ALFA's first annual Alaska Day event celebrated all the fishermen who have contributed to ALFA's Fishery Conservation Network research and conservation initiatives. In particular, ALFA and SEASWAP recognized the efforts of DEWEY TORGESON, FV Republic, for his assistance with satellite tagging Sperm Whale GOA-091 during the Chatham fishery. Dewey also received a special legislative citation, presented by Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, for his legendary contribution to Alaska fisheries.

The event also featured a smoked fish tasting competition. Sixteen "smokers" entered the competition with products that ranged from Dolly Varden lox to freshly smoked king salmon. The judges, who enjoyed taste-tasting responsibilities immensely, awarded the first through third prizes to:



JKT presenting Dewey with his citation



1st Prize Winner, Brian McNitt

Brian McNitt—Little Chief Smoker donated by Murray Pacific and staff
Zach Heathman—fresh winter king salmon from Eric Jordan, FV I Gotta
Harold Kalve—ALFA SEASWAP sweatshirt.

Big thanks to ALFA Winter Fellows Anya Grenier and Alyssa Russell for planning and executing this outstanding event, and to ALFA outstanding staff Brandie Cheatham who keeps all things ALFA on track. Many thanks also to Murray Pacific and SeaMart for their generous donations, and to fishermen Terry Perensovich, Dick Curran, and Kent Barkhau who donated or cooked blackcod for the event. Don't miss this event next year!



ALFA WELCOMES SITKA SERVICE FELLOWS ABOARD!

Anya Grenier and Alyssa Russell joined the ALFA team in September. Anya will be working full-time with ALFA on outreach/communication and ALFA's community supported fishery program, Alaskans Own. Alyssa is working on *Then & Now: stories of a changing ocean in SE Alaska*.

Then & Now will illustrate the observations of fishermen and those who interact with the natural world each and every day. We are looking for stories or ideas that can help us to show how oceans are changing in SE Alaska and the effects the changes may have on local livelihoods.

Please contact Linda Behnken or Alyssa Russell (aruss947@gmail.com) for more information or to tell us your story. Stay tuned for more updates about this project and a photo/story contest with prizes!



The natural world is changing, and the voices of those most intimately affected by that change often go unheard.
Tell your story!



Anya Grenier



Alyssa Russell

ALFA in a nutshell:

Mission: Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association is a non-profit association committed to continuing the sustainable harvest of sablefish, halibut, and groundfish, while supporting healthy marine ecosystems and strong coastal communities.

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. Since then, ALFA has played a lead role in halibut management, electronic monitoring and programs to support the next generation of commercial fishermen.

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Basic \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> Deckhand \$100
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS
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NOVEMBER
Pacific Marine Expo
Seattle, Nov. 18-20

DECEMBER
IPHC Interim Meeting
Seattle, Dec. 1-2
North Pacific Fishery
Management Council
Anchorage, Dec.7 -15

JANUARY
Alaska Young
Fishermen's Summit :
*weaving a network of
future leaders*
Juneau, Jan. 27-29