

PROPOSAL 121

5 AAC 28.110. Sablefish fishing seasons for Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area.

Allow Southern Southeast Inside permit holders the option of using longline or pot gear for sablefish, as follows:

Allow all Southern Southeast Inside permits the option of using longline or pot gear for sablefish. Any permits choosing to continue using longline gear are subject to a quota reduction of 50% to account for higher bycatch and loss to the biomass due to marine mammal predation.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Reduce the quota allocation for sablefish permit holders in the Southern Southeast Inside Subdistrict to account for marine mammal depredation.

Depredation by marine mammals on Southern Southeast Inside sablefish from vessels using longline gear. Marine mammals have learned to associate the sound of longline gear hauling sablefish. These mammals are concentrating near the working longlines and stripping the hooked sablefish from the lines. This results in losses of up to 80% of the sablefish on the line, depleting the stocks of sablefish far more rapidly per caught pound than by vessels using pot gear. This requires the longline vessels to catch more fish in order to land their quota. It also greatly increases the bycatch rates and sea bird bycatch. Marine mammals are unable to prey upon sablefish caught using pot gear.

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