

**PROPOSAL 220**

**5 AAC 28.130. Lawful gear for Eastern Gulf of Alaska.**

Allow pot gear in the Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict sablefish commercial fishery, as follows:

(f) In the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area, pots may not be longlined, except that pots may be longlined in the Southern Southeast Inside Subdistrict **and Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict** sablefish fishery. At least one buoy on each groundfish pot must be legibly marked with only the permanent department vessel license plate number of the vessel operating the gear. The number must be placed on the top one-third of the buoy in numerals at least four inches high and one-half inch wide, must be in a color contrasting to the color of the buoy, and must be visible above the water surface when the buoy is attached to the groundfish pot. If groundfish pots are longlined under this subsection, a buoy is not required for each pot, but at least one buoy must be attached to the longline, and the buoy must be marked as described in this subsection. In a directed fishery for sablefish, pots used to take sablefish must have at least two circular escape rings with a minimum inside diameter of four inches installed on opposing vertical or sloping walls.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** I am proposing the introduction of longline pot gear in the Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict sablefish fishery as is allowed in the Southern Southeast Inside Subdistrict sablefish fishery.

The careful release of juvenile sablefish is currently allowed in the NSEI fishery. Pot longlining for sablefish in NSEI would allow release of small sablefish with less physical damage to the fish than release from circle hooks. Pot fishing also eliminates the problem of sand fleas in the NSEI area. Another advantage to pot fishing is the elimination of potential depredation from sperm whales.

Some have speculated that there would be a gear conflict with hook longliners if pot longlining was permitted in NSEI. With the long season for catching the allowable catch this is not likely a problem. Last year when my husband, son and I fished our permit in late August, we were the only NSEI fishers in our area. Our pot strings are much shorter than hook longlines (400 fathoms for pot longline vs 2,250 fathoms for hook longlines) making gear conflict less likely between pot/hook strings if there were multiple fishers in one area.

**PROPOSED BY:** Dawn Gillman

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