

PROPOSAL 3

5 AAC 28.230. Lawful Gear for Prince William Sound Area.

Modify Prince William Sound groundfish pot specifications, as follows:

(c) A groundfish pot may be attached to a line connected to another groundfish pot. Groundfish pots may be connected if each end of the buoy line is marked as specified in 5 AAC 28.050. **Groundfish pots as defined in 5 AAC 28.050 may have individual tunnel eye openings with a perimeter greater than 36 inches in the Prince William Sound regulatory area if unused Halibut IFQ is on board.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Fishermen in the halibut fishery in Prince William Sound fish in the area using IFQ quota from the federal 3A region of which PWS is a part. Those fishermen may wish to fish for halibut with pots to avoid whale depredation issues and reduce bycatch both of which are problems in PWS. The removal of the maximum perimeter size for groundfish pot openings for the PWS area will allow fishermen to better and more effectively fish for halibut with pots and will have an additional benefit of reduced bycatch.

This issue was considered at the federal level recently for the halibut IFQ fishery and regulations there were changed to allow for larger pot openings when fishing for halibut. This change would bring regulations in PWS state waters into coordination with the new federal regulations in the halibut fishery.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. I discussed this issue with other some other fishermen and mentioned it to the area Fish and Game groundfish manager but did not discuss in detail.

PROPOSED BY: Brett Roth

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