

PROPOSAL 5

5 AAC 28.210. Fishing seasons for Prince William Sound Area.

Specify that bycatch allowance of lingcod in the Prince William Sound Area is measured as round weight, as follows:

Amend subsection (c)(2) to read:

(c) Lingcod may be taken only from July 1 through December 31, unless closed earlier by emergency order,

(1) in a directed fishery; and

(2) as bycatch up to 20 percent by **round** weight of the directed finfish species on board a vessel, unless the commissioner closes the season and opens another season in which the bycatch is prohibited or further limited[; BYCATCH TAKEN UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH IS COUNTED AS PART OF ANY BYCATCH LIMIT ESTABLISHED UNDER 5 AAC 28.070(b)].

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Prior to 2014, bycatch in Prince William Sound Area (PWS) groundfish fisheries was managed to an overall bycatch cap of 20 percent for all bycatch species combined. This bycatch limit was a department management objective and not in regulation. Beginning in 2014, and in accordance with 5 AAC 28.070 (b), allowable bycatch levels in PWS for each species or species group, where a bycatch allowance is not already specified in regulation, have been established by emergency order as percentages by round weight of bycatch to round weight of target species. There is no longer an overall bycatch cap and each bycatch allowance by species or species group is assessed separately based on harvest of target species. The language proposed to be removed from the regulation is not accurate based on current management of bycatch and is confusing for the public. Additionally, bycatch allowances are based on round weight, which is specified in the proposal language.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F17-101)
