

Commercial Groundfish

PROPOSAL 1

5 AAC 28.2XX. New section.

Establish a longline skate fishery in Prince William Sound, as follows:

Open a directed longline skate fishery in PWS allocate 25% of longnose and bigskate from the federal eastern gulf tac. Open the fishery with PWS state water longline Pacific cod opening date. If the pacific cod is not open before halibut IFQ season then the PWS state water skate fishery will open with the IFQ season.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Open a longline directed skate fishery in PWS state waters allocate 25% of the eastern gulf federal tac longnose skate and bigskate to PWS state waters. Open the skate fishery concurrent with the PWS longline state water Pacific cod fishery. Before the federal pacific cod quota reduction and shutdown with decreased skate bycatch allowance from 20% to 5% now there is a lot less skate being harvested. Now there is more than 50% of the federal skate tac being unharvested. With reduced ground fish quotas in the gulf the skate harvest is very minimal now. It would give more opportunities for the mostly small vessel boat fleet and the local economies a needed boost.

PROPOSED BY: Dia Kuzmin (EF-F20-019)

PROPOSAL 2

5 AAC 28.271. Landing Requirements for Prince William Sound Area.

Add a 6-hour prior notice of landing requirement for the Prince William Sound Area directed lingcod fishery, as follows:

Add a new subsection (b) to read:

(b) At least six hours before landing lingcod, an operator of a vessel participating in the Prince William Sound Area directed lingcod fishery must notify the department by telephone, to a telephone number specified in writing by the department on the registration forms at the time of registration, the following information:

- (1) vessel name and ADF&G number;**
- (2) date and location of landing, and estimated time of arrival;**
- (3) name of fish buyer or processor;**
- (4) estimated number of pounds of lingcod on board the vessel.**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There is no prior notice of landing (PNOL) regulatory requirement for vessels participating in the Prince William Sound Area (PWS) directed lingcod fishery. Biological sampling of the lingcod and rockfish bycatch harvested during the fishery is coordinated out of the Homer ADF&G office. Although the majority of landings have historically occurred in Cordova, there has been an increase in recent years of deliveries occurring in Seward across time. Staff must travel by state vehicle from Homer to Seward in order to meet landings, which takes approximately 4 hours for the drive alone. Additionally, Cordova staffing is limited and having a PNOL would assist in ensuring sampling coverage. Offloading happens quickly

and the opportunity to sample landings may easily be missed if there is no notification beforehand. Therefore, having a PNOL in place for this fishery would assist in achieving sampling goals. Additionally, a PNOL requirement allows Alaska Wildlife Troopers to be notified about upcoming deliveries, providing a coordinated enforcement opportunity. There are PNOL regulations for the PWS sablefish fishery and the Cook Inlet Area (CI) sablefish and directed CI rockfish fisheries; the board also adopted a 6-hour PNOL for CI lingcod in December 2019. Landings during those CI fisheries frequently occur in Seward and are covered by the same Homer staff. Having PNOLs in place for all of these groundfish fisheries maintains consistency between regulations and could also potentially result in higher productivity and efficiency for the Central Region sampling program since it may allow for more deliveries to be covered during a single sampling trip. There is overlap of participants with the PWS and CI lingcod, and rockfish fisheries, and vessels are able to comply with PNOL requirements. Therefore, it would be expected that vessels would also be able to comply with the same requirement for the PWS lingcod fishery.

This proposal seeks to implement PNOL requirements for the PWS directed lingcod fishery.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F20-129)

PROPOSAL 3

5 AAC 28.267. Prince William Sound Pacific Cod Management Plan.

Clarify possession and landing requirements for the parallel Pacific cod fishery in the Prince William Sound Area, as follows:

Add a new subsection (k) to read:

(k) An operator of a vessel participating in a parallel Pacific cod season in the Prince William Sound Area may not operate gear in any other registration area during the same trip.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Within the Prince William Sound Area (PWS), vessels participating in the federal/parallel Pacific cod fishery may fish in both state and federal waters on the same trip, if they meet federal requirements. However, vessels may only be registered for one registration area at a time as provided in 5 AAC 28.020 (b)(1) and are required to register for the PWS parallel Pacific cod fishery. Therefore, if a vessel participates in the parallel Pacific cod fishery, the vessel must remain in the registration area for that trip. If the vessel were to fish in the adjacent Cook Inlet Area during that trip, for example, the vessel registration for the PWS parallel Pacific cod fishery would be invalidated and the vessel would no longer be in compliance with registration requirements. Clarifying allowable fishing activity in regulation under 5 AAC 28.367 would reduce confusion for the public regarding Cook Inlet Area requirements.

A similar regulation was adopted by board for the Cook Inlet Area in December 2019.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F20-130)

PROPOSAL 4

5 AAC 28.272. Sablefish harvest, possession, and landing requirements for Prince William Sound Area.

Clarify possession and landing requirements for the state-managed sablefish fishery in the Prince William Sound Area, as follows:

Add a new subsection (g) to read:

(g) An operator of a vessel retaining sablefish in federal waters may not operate gear in state waters of the Prince William Sound Area during the same trip.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In state waters of the Prince William Sound Area (PWS), sablefish may only be retained during an open directed sablefish season (April 15 – August 31) on board a vessel that is registered to participate in the state-managed PWS sablefish fishery. Retaining sablefish as bycatch is not allowed and the limited entry fishery is managed to a guideline harvest level (GHL). Each registered permit holder receives an annual allowable harvest amount based on vessel categories as described in 5 AAC 28.272. As provided in 5 AAC 28.070 (c)(2), a CFEC permit holder, while taking fish in an area or having taken fish in an area during the same trip, may not have on board an aggregate amount of a groundfish species that exceeds the amount allowed by regulation for that area, regardless of where the groundfish were taken. Therefore, a vessel may not fish in both federal and state waters on the same trip when retaining sablefish at any point during that trip, regardless of fishing order. The issue is when vessels are participating concurrently in federally managed Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) halibut and IFQ sablefish fisheries in federal waters and then also fish inside state waters during the same trip. This could result in sablefish being harvested out of season, or vessels participating in inside state waters without being registered, or harvest locations of sablefish being misreported. During an IFQ halibut trip, vessels may cross the 3 nmi state waters boundary line, and fish both state waters and federal waters; however, vessels retaining sablefish in federal waters may not also fish inside state waters on that trip. Even when sablefish harvest did not occur inside state waters, this has been an enforcement issue, as well as a management issue, because vessel operators often report all harvest by splitting it between the statistical areas (state and federal waters) without specifying the location where sablefish were taken (e.g., federal waters). In addition to potentially violating limits specified in 5 AAC 28.070 (c)(2), inaccurate reporting on fish tickets violates the statistical areas, districts, and subdistrict reporting provisions found in 5 AAC 39.130 (c)(8), indicating that sablefish harvested in federal waters were retained illegally in state waters. Adding the proposed regulatory language would provide clarity and reduce confusion for the public and department staff and also aid enforcement.

A similar proposal was adopted by the board for the Cook Inlet Area sablefish fishery in December 2019.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F20-131)
