

RE: D1 Pelagic trawl gear definition changes – Review NMFS report

My Name is Rick Quashnick I am 67 years old and I have been a commercial fisherman my whole life, I started out Gillnetting on the Columbia River with my Dad when I was 12, started running Gillnet boats when I was 17 in 1991 I got a chance to go to the Bearing Sea and fish Crab so I had always thought about going so I took a chance. I worked on deck for 2 seasons till I got a chance to run the Maverick. Now 30 years later I still own the Maverick. What I would like to voice my concerns about today is about the bycatch in the bearing sea. when Crab fishing started to decline we got the Maverick involved in different fisheries Aluetian Island Halibut being one of them first year for Halibut for the Maverick was 2000 we had a Quota of 250k pounds of Halibut, now today our Quota is around 50k pounds and some of my crew have purchased more Quota. The Trawl bycatch was 7 million pounds now I beleive its 5 million pounds and our whole Quota for 4-B is right at 1 million Pounds we have lost around 90% of our Quota, my Qs is why has'nt the Trawl Bycatch been lowered as our Quota has. Its the same issue with Crab I have either fished crab or been involved in crab fishing in the bearing sea for 30+ years I hope someone can answer my Qs as our Quota goes down why can't the Trawl bycatch go down like our Quotas do. I do not want to see any user group go out of business especially mine we need to work together on lowering bycatch closing areas for all trawling even midwater since they hit bottom also. The fish will leave closed areas, The Halibut, Crab and Salmon fisheries have suffered far to long and not to forget about the whales. There is only one fishery left that needs to clean up tremendously, as a crab fisherman we have paid the ultimate price and we are not to far away on Halibut. Salmon now thats a whole different issue my concern today is the bottom of our Bearing Sea whats happening down there is just not right, I'm not a number's guy I will let other experts run that by you I'm just trying to give you a look from my eyes somebody that has seen a terrible change and I hope its not to late to try and do something about it. Like I said we are all in this together and its time the trawl industry starts to do more we have given all we can. I am just a small fish in this big pond, Thank You for your time Rick Quashnick Owner F/V Maverick, F/v Cape st James we employ 10 crew pretty much year round.