

Figure 1. Map of the Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish fishery area.

PROPOSAL # 218 - Codify existing management practices for the Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish fishery, and specify gear types allowed as follows:

5 AAC 28.605(e). DESCRIPTION OF BERING SEA-ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AREA DISTRICTS. The Aleutian Islands District encompasses all territorial waters of Alaska in the Bering Sea – Aleutian Islands Area south of Cape Sarichef (54° 36' N. lat.). (f) The Bering Sea District encompasses all territorial waters of Alaska in the Bering Sea – Aleutian Islands Area north of Cape Sarichef (54° 36' N. lat.).

5 AAC 28.606(c). BERING SEA-ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AREA REGISTRATION. A vessel owner, vessel operator or owner's agent, shall validly register each vessel for the taking of sablefish in state waters of the combined Aleutian Islands District and the Western District of the South Alaska Peninsula Area (5 AAC 28.55X) with the department office in Dutch Harbor or at other designated locations prior to participating in the fishery.

Substitute language in italics

5 AAC 28.610. FISHING SEASONS FOR BERING SEA-ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AREA... (b) *Sablefish may be taken in the combined Aleutian Islands District and the Western District of the South Alaska Peninsula Area (5 AAC 28.55X) only from 12:00 noon May 15 until 12:00 noon November 15, unless closed by emergency order.* (c) *There is no open season for sablefish in the Bering Sea District.*

5 AAC 28.629(f). LAWFUL GEAR FOR BERING SEA-ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AREA. *In the combined Aleutian Islands District and the Western District of the South Alaska Peninsula Area (5 AAC 28.55X), sablefish may be taken with pots, longlines, mechanical jig and hand troll gear. Pots may be longlined in the Aleutian Islands District, however pots may not be longlined in the Western District of the South Alaska Peninsula Area.*

5 AAC 28.6XX. LANDING REQUIREMENTS FOR BERING SEA-ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AREA Notwithstanding 5 AAC 28.020, prior to departure from the combined Aleutian Island District and the Western District of the South Alaska Peninsula Area (5 AAC 28.55X), the vessel operator must notify the department of the landing location and the amount of sablefish onboard.

5 AAC 28.6XX. ALEUTIAN ISLANDS SABLEFISH MANAGEMENT PLAN. This plan governs the harvest of sablefish in the Aleutian Islands District and that portion of the South Alaska Peninsula Area, west of 164° 44' W. longitude (Western District). (1) The guideline harvest level for sablefish is a maximum of 5 percent of the estimated total allowable catch for sablefish for the combined National Marine Fisheries Service Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands sablefish regulatory areas. (2) Each processor of sablefish will report to the department's Dutch Harbor office each week or other predetermined schedule necessary for fishery management as determined by the department. (3) All vessel operators will maintain a logbook of all state waters fishing activity. (4) Vessels may be required to carry an observer at the discretion of the department.

5 AAC 28.56X(b). SOUTH ALASKA PENINSULA SABLEFISH FISHERY. Sablefish may be taken in the Western District based on 5 AAC 28.610(b) Fishing Seasons for Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Area, 5 AAC 28.6XX Aleutian Islands Sablefish Management Plan, 5 AAC 28.606(c) Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Area Registration, 5 AAC 28.629(f) Lawful Gear for Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Area, and 5 AAC 28.6XX Landing Requirements for Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Area.

5 AAC 28.56X CLOSED WATERS. The Eastern District is closed to sablefish fishing.

Narrative of Pro's and Cons: The Aleutian Islands sablefish fishery occurs in the South Alaska Peninsula area, west of Scotch Cap Light and in the Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Area south of Cape Sarichef.

The proposed fishing season mirrors the adjacent federal season, March 15 – November 15. However several public panel members asked about opening the season later. Reasons cited for moving the season later in the spring were the availability of larger fish and improved weather for smaller vessels. Adjacent state and federal fisheries with different quotas may result in possible enforcement and catch reporting issues.

Currently all legal groundfish gear may be used. Department is only recommending pot, longline, jig and handline. Trawl gear could have high catch rates, seine gear could lead to unwanted bycatch, and dinglebar is not an effective gear for sablefish. Longlining of pots is not specifically prohibited and the department indicated that they are allowed. The public requested that the regulations state that they be specifically allowed. Another public panel member noted that longlining pots and longlines are not compatible on the fishing grounds. It was requested that if longlining of pots was allowed that the mid-point of the longline be marked with a buoy. Other panel members indicated that because of the depths fished, and the currents in the Aleutians that the buoys would likely be under water. It was noted that pot gear is used to reduce killer whale predation on sablefish. Another requested a pot limit on longlines. The harvest has shifted to the western portion of the area because of killer whale predation in the eastern Aleutians.

The guideline harvest level is based on historic average harvests over the last 11 years. Staff clarified that if a vessel is asked to carry an observer that it would be a department employee not a contract observer. The cost for the vessel is for feeding the observer. Wages would not be charged to the vessel. The department is also requesting a logbook to collect effort and catch data.

Table 2. Economic performance, season length and dates in the Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish fishery, 1995 - 2000.

Year	Fishery Value	Exvessel Value ^a	Season Length ^b	Season Dates	
				Opened	Closed
1995	\$500,000	\$2.96	245	15-Mar	15-Nov
1996	\$642,000	\$2.54	133	15-Mar	26-Jul
1997	\$710,000	\$3.55	127	15-Mar	20-Jul
1998	\$350,000	\$2.18	245	15-Mar	15-Nov
1999	\$474,000	\$2.69	154	15-Mar	16-Aug
2000	\$835,000	\$3.04	122	15-Mar	15-Jul

^aPer pound dressed weight.

^bIn days.

Table 3. Percent of the fleet, deliveries and harvest in the Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish fishery by non-quota and quota vessels, 1995 - 2000.

Year	Non-quota Vessels ¹			Quota Vessels ²		
	Fleet	Deliveries	Harvest	Fleet	Deliveries	Harvest
1995	22%	48%	41%	78%	52%	59%
1996	26%	48%	51%	74%	52%	49%
1997	51%	64%	57%	49%	36%	43%
1998	68%	83%	63%	32%	17%	37%
1999	25%	24%	44%	75%	76%	56%
2000	20%	45%	74%	80%	55%	26%
Average	37%	57%	56%	63%	43%	44%

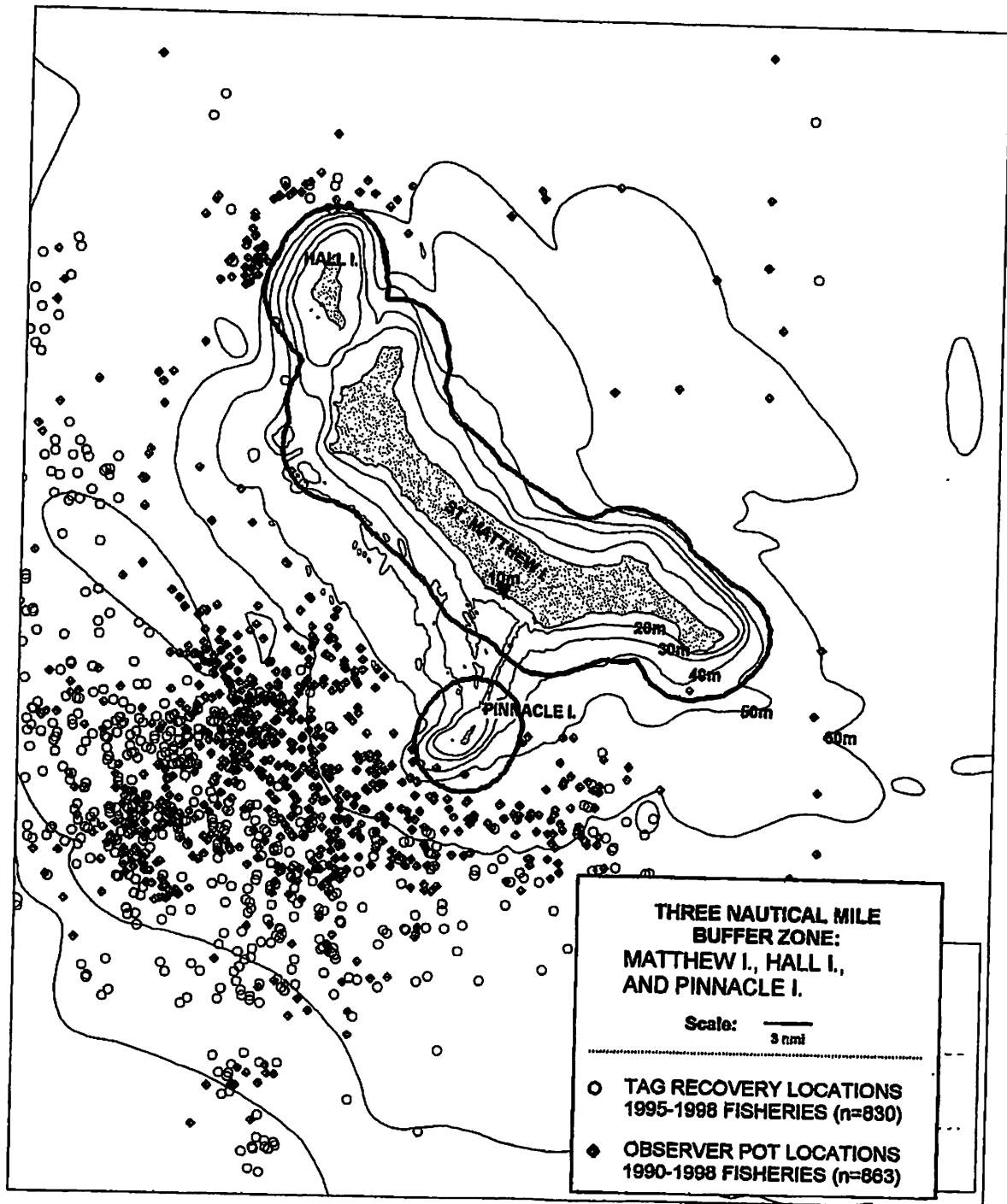
¹Vessels without individual fishing quota or community development quota shares.

²Vessels with individual fishing quota or community development quota shares.

Table 4. Harvest, by gear type, in the Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish fishery, 1995 - 2000.

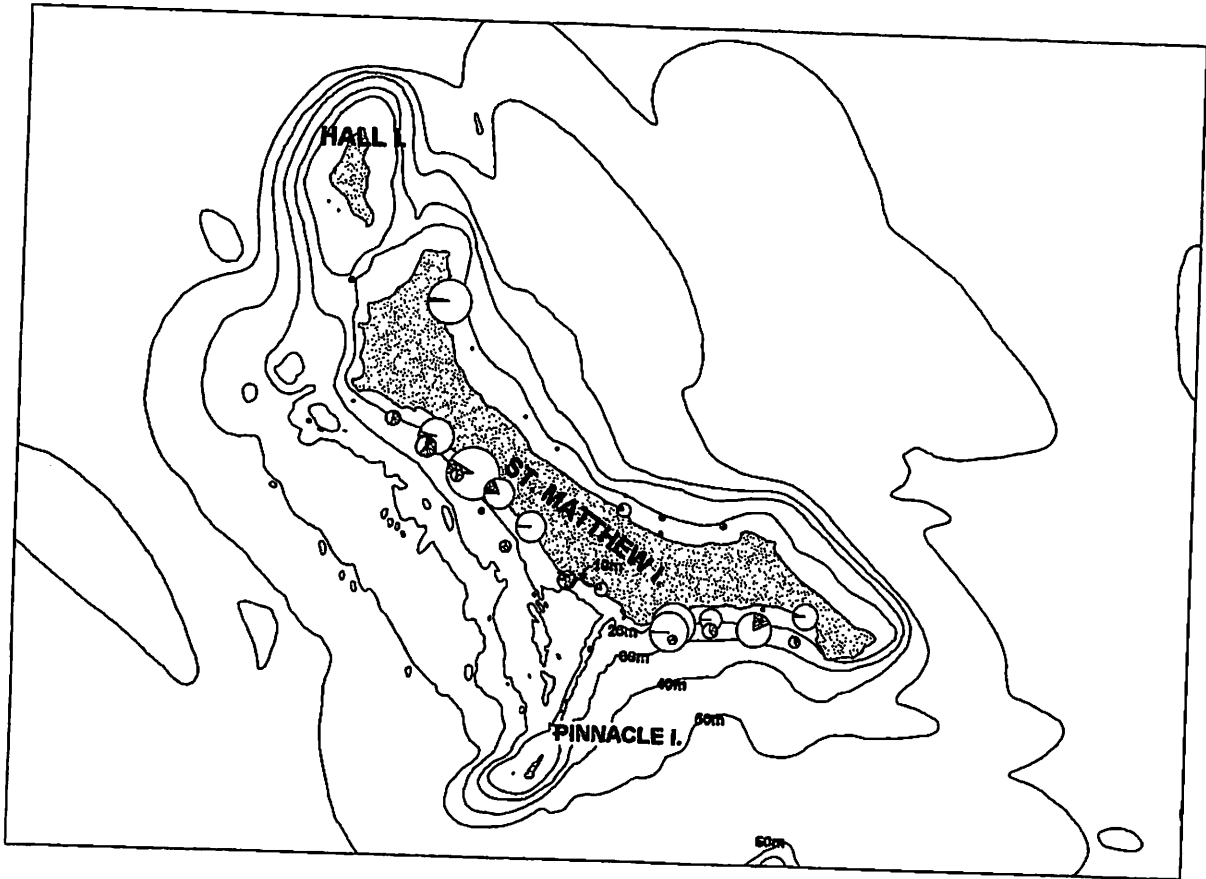
Year	Longline	Trawl	Pot	Total
1995	230,531	41,789	0	272,320
1996	401,294	26	8	401,328
1997	312,353	20	5,035	317,408
1998	252,169	2,179	0	254,348
1999	271,970	6,385	1,294	279,649
2000	435,742	0	448	436,190
Total	1,904,059	50,399	6,785	1,961,243

St. Matthew blue king crab Rebuilding Plans: Habitat Protection



Three nautical mile buffer zone around St. Matthew I., Hall I. and Pinnacle I. to protect ovigerous female blue king crabs.

St. Matthew blue king crab Rebuilding Plans: Habitat Protection



Catch per pot (C/P) by station of female blue king crab by reproductive status in the 1999 ADF&G nearshore St. Matthew I. pot survey. Conical pot C/P shown with horizontal slice: largest circle = 15 crabs. King crab pot C/P shown with vertical slice: largest circle = 44 crabs. Black = barren, clean setae, gray = barren, matted setae; white = ovigerous. Conical pot stations consist of 1 to 7 pots placed perpendicular to the shoreline and spaced at one fathom depth increments; king crab pot stations consist of 9 or 10 pots placed perpendicular to the shoreline and spaced at one fathom depth increments. Ten-meter depth contours are shown.