

IFQ Omnibus Analysis

March 2022

Enforcement Committee

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Purpose and Need

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IFQ stakeholders, the IFQ Committee, and NMFS have identified regulatory revisions that could increase operational efficiency, reduce administrative burden, and clarify how harvesters can meet existing regulatory requirements. In addition, the Council is considering revisions to pot limits and gear tending restrictions also identified through the recent 3-year GOA sablefish pot review to determine whether they are serving their intended purpose.



Alternatives- Additions to the April 2021 motion are shown in **bold underline** and deletions shown in ~~striketrough~~.

Alternative 1: No action

Alternative 2: Revise IFQ program regulations to address the following regulatory clarifications:

Element 1: Clarify that “slinky pots” are a legal gear for the IFQ ~~fishery~~ **and CDQ fisheries**, and revise regulations to allow the use of biodegradable twine in the door latch or pot tunnel.

Element 2: Remove buoy configuration, **radar reflector**, and flagpole requirements in regulation but retain “LP” marking requirement.

Element 3: Authorize jig gear as a legal gear type for the harvest of sablefish IFQ **and CDQ**.

Element 4: Revise the pot gear configuration requirements to remove the nine-inch maximum width of tunnel opening so it does not apply when a vessel **begins a trip with** ~~has~~ unfished halibut IFQ onboard.

Option: Remove the nine-inch maximum width of the tunnel opening for vessels targeting IFQ sablefish.

Element 5: Pot Limits

Option 1: Change the Pot Limit for Western Yakutat and/or Southeast Outside to

Suboption a) 160 pots per vessel

~~Suboption a) 180~~ **200** pots per vessel

~~Suboption b) 300~~ pots per vessel

Element 6: Gear Retrieval requirements

Option 1: Remove the gear retrieval requirement

Option 2: Modify the gear retrieval requirement to 7 days for all GOA areas

Suboption: 3 days in SEO

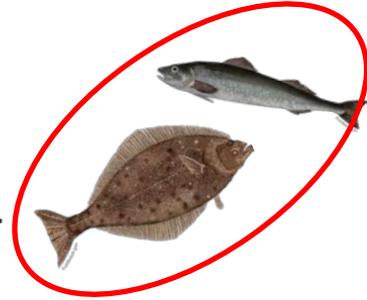
Alternative 3: Remove Adak CQE residency requirement for a period of five years.

Note: Alternatives 2 and 3 are not mutually exclusive.



History of Action (Alt 2)

- April 2015- Council final action on GOA Am 101
 - Implemented in 2016, pot fishing legal for 2017 IFQ season
 - Allowed retention of incidentally-caught halibut, linked to sablefish IFQ.
- October 2018- Council final action on BSAI Am 118
 - Implemented in 2020
 - Directed halibut pot fishery in BSAI (not linked to sablefish IFQ)
- April 2021- GOA sablefish pot review, Council initiated current action
- October 2021- IFQ Omnibus initial review
- April 2022- IFQ Omnibus final action



Pots in the IFQ Fisheries

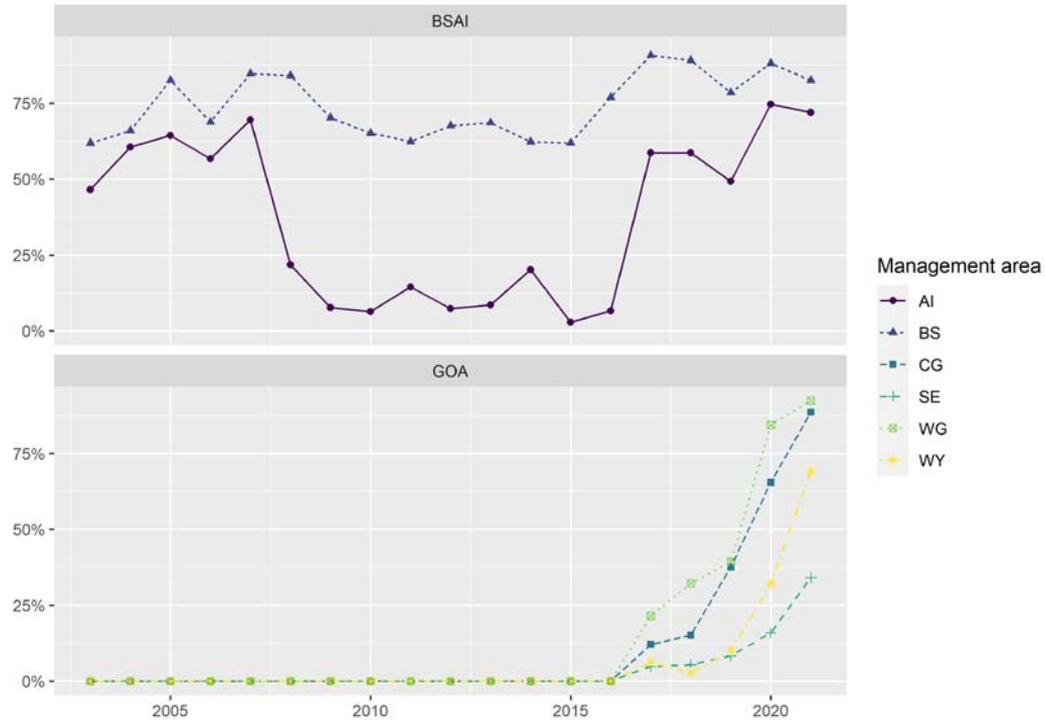


Figure 4-3 Percentage of IFQ/CDQ sablefish catch by pot gear by FMP and management area.
Source: AKRO/AKFIN (COUNCIL.COMPREHENSIVE_BLEND_CA accessed Jan 21, 2022)



Pots in the IFQ Fisheries

Table 4-6 Percent of sablefish IFQ landed by pots versus HAL gear in each GOA subarea

Source: NMFS Alaska Region Catch Accounting System, data compiled by AKFIN in Comprehensive_BLEND_CA

Year	WG		CG		WY		SE	
	% Pot	% HAL						
2017	22%	78%	12%	88%	7%	93%	5%	95%
2018	33%	67%	16%	84%	2%	98%	5%	95%
2019	37%	63%	31%	69%	9%	91%	8%	92%
2020	86%	14%	67%	33%	33%	67%	17%	83%
2021	93%	7%	90%	10%	71%	33%	35%	65%



Slinky pots



Photo courtesy of Jane Sullivan, AFSC

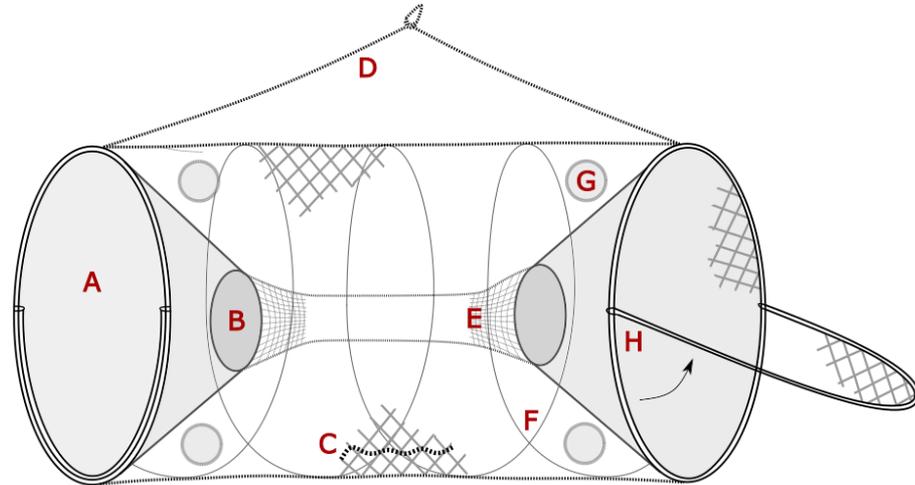


Figure 4-8 Diagram of a slinky pot and components. Courtesy of Jane Sullivan, AFSC.

A = pot end (composed of closed helical spring)

B = tunnel opening / tunnel entrance (rigid/hard or flexible/soft)

C = bio twine/escape panel (aka “rotten cotton”)

D = bridle.

E = fine mesh tunnel entrance (aka “sock tunnel”).

F = slinky/spring coil, which serves as the frame of the pot and also allows it to collapse.

G = escape ring (note that there are four escape rings in this diagram).

H = door hinge (note that there are doors on both pot ends).



Element 1: Clarify that “slinky pots” are a legal gear for the IFQ and CDQ fisheries, and revise regulations to allow the use of biodegradable twine in the door latch or pot tunnel. **WOULD APPLY TO BSAI AND GOA**



Photo courtesy of Alexander Stubbs

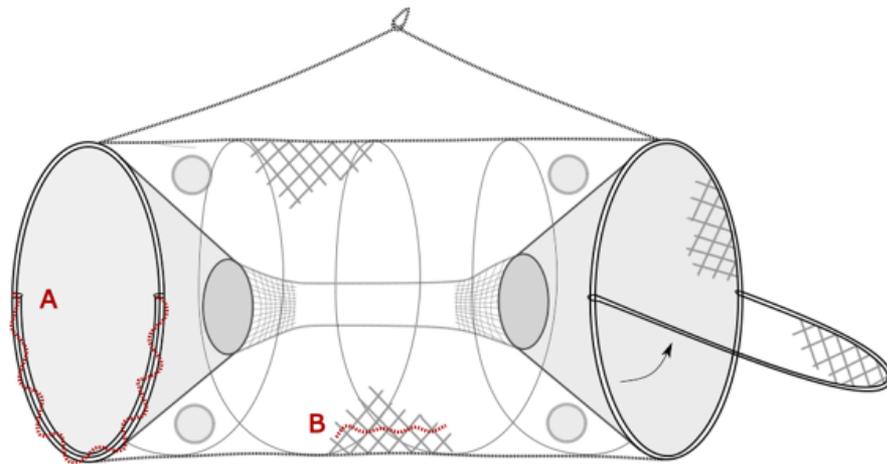


Figure 4-11 Slinky pot with biodegradable twine. Courtesy of Jane Sullivan, AFSC.

A = Proposed element 1. Cotton biodegradable twine (aka bio twine, rotten cotton) laced around the hinged door opening on the end cap.

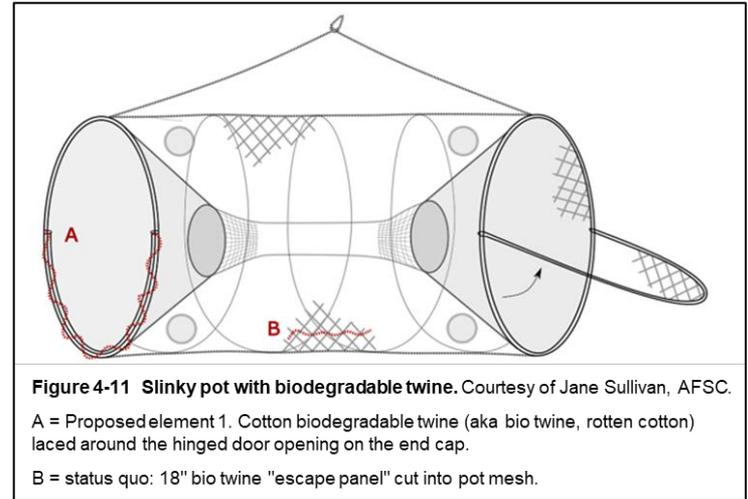
B = status quo: 18" bio twine "escape panel" cut into pot mesh.



MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, AND ENFORCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Element 1: Clarify that “slinky pots” are a legal gear for the IFQ and CDQ fisheries, and revise regulations to allow the use of biodegradable twine in the door latch or pot tunnel.

- Slinky pots are a legal gear type for Federally managed groundfish fisheries.
- For the biodegradable panel requirement, this element would add an exception to authorized fishing gear definitions under 679.2, specific only to IFQ/CDQ fisheries. Vessels could not use this provision if they do not have IFQ/CDQ onboard.
- If a vessel were to use pots to fish non-IFQ/CDQ groundfish (e.g., Pacific cod), they would still have to comply with the status quo biodegradable panel requirement, shown in “B”.



Element 2: Remove buoy configuration, radar reflector, and flagpole requirements in regulation but retain “LP” marking requirement.

- Change to GOA ONLY, would provide consistency with BSAI regulations.



MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, AND ENFORCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Element 2: Remove buoy configuration, radar reflector, and flagpole requirements in regulation but retain “LP” marking requirement

Enforcement considerations:

- This element would remove the above requirements from 679.24(a)(3) but retain the requirement for one hard buoy ball marked with the capital letters “LP”
- This element would apply across all longline pot gear deployed to fish IFQ sablefish in the GOA only



Element 4: Revise the pot gear configuration requirements to remove the nine-inch maximum width of tunnel opening so it does not apply when a vessel begins a trip with unfished halibut IFQ onboard. WOULD APPLY TO GOA

Option: Remove the nine-inch maximum width of the tunnel opening for vessels targeting IFQ sablefish. WOULD APPLY TO GOA AND BSAI

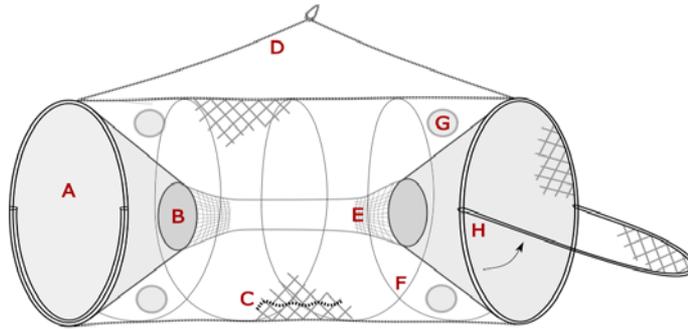
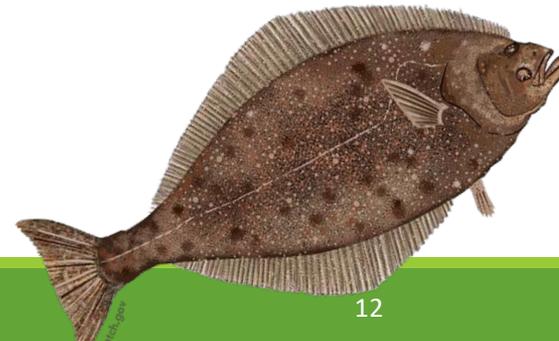


Figure 4-8 Diagram of a slinky pot and components.

Courtesy of Jane Sullivan, AFSC.

- A = pot end
- B = tunnel opening / tunnel entrance
- C = bio twine/escape panel (aka "rotten cotton")
- D = bridle
- E = fine mesh tunnel entrance (aka "sock tunnel")
- F = slinky/spring coil
- G = escape ring
- H = door hinge



How do you tell the difference between a groundfish pot and a pot gear used to fish IFQ?

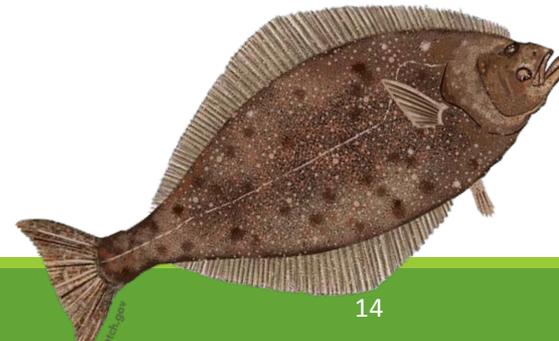
- No such thing as an “IFQ pot”



Element 4: Revise the pot gear configuration requirements to remove the nine-inch maximum width of tunnel opening so it does not apply when a vessel begins a trip with unfished halibut IFQ onboard.

Currently, pot gear used to fish IFQ is authorized as a legal gear type for:

- the retention of sablefish IFQ/CDQ in the GOA and BSAI;
- the retention of legal-size halibut IFQ/CDQ in the BSAI; and
- the retention of legal-size *incidentally-caught* halibut IFQ in the GOA, meaning the vessel must possess sablefish IFQ and halibut IFQ on board to retain halibut. Halibut are required to be discarded if caught by a vessel using pot gear with only halibut IFQ on board.



Element 4: Revise the pot gear configuration requirements to remove the nine-inch maximum width of tunnel opening so it does not apply when a vessel begins a trip with unfished halibut IFQ onboard. WOULD APPLY TO GOA

Option: Remove the nine-inch maximum width of the tunnel opening for vessels targeting IFQ sablefish. WOULD APPLY TO GOA AND BSAI

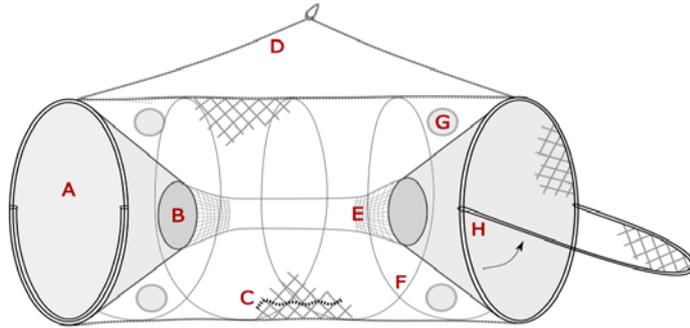


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- H = door hinge





Bering Sea

Gulf of Alaska

**+Sablefish
IFQ
Permit #
48290**
[Signature]


Element 4: Revise the pot gear configuration requirements to remove the nine-inch maximum width of tunnel opening so it does not apply when a vessel begins a trip with unfished halibut IFQ onboard.

Option: Remove the nine-inch maximum width of the tunnel opening for vessels targeting IFQ sablefish.

To summarize the current interpretation of Element 4, pots used to fish IFQ/CDQ could be used with a tunnel opening larger than nine inches in the following situations:

- Without option: Fishing sablefish IFQ with unfished halibut on board. This would indicate someone on board holds sablefish IFQ and halibut IFQ. (This change would be specific to GOA, as it is already authorized in the BSAI).
- With option: Fishing sablefish IFQ/CDQ **with or without** halibut IFQ/CDQ on board. This would allow IFQ fishermen **in the GOA and IFQ/CDQ fishermen in the BSAI** to use larger tunnel openings if they have only sablefish IFQ/CDQ, or if they have both sablefish and halibut IFQ/CDQ.

Fishermen would **not be authorized** to use pots with a tunnel opening larger than nine inches in the following situations:

- Targeting pacific cod or any other groundfish other than sablefish. This would be any trip without sablefish IFQ/CDQ on board as well as any trip where pacific cod catch was so substantial it pushed the trip into the Pacific cod target. This could be problematic, as vessels would be in violation if they were using pots with larger tunnel openings, and accidentally caught a substantial amount of Pacific cod. **Enforcement officials would likely not be able to determine a target fishery on the dock or at sea. NMFS OLE may only be able to enforce the tunnel opening requirement if there is no IFQ sablefish onboard.**
- Targeting IFQ halibut in the GOA without sablefish IFQ onboard. (The analysts have referred to this as a “directed” halibut pot fishery.)



MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, AND ENFORCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Element 4: Revise the pot gear configuration requirements to remove the 9-inch max width of tunnel opening so it does not apply when vessel begins a trip with unfished halibut IFQ onboard.

Option: Remove the 9-inch max width of the tunnel opening for vessels targeting IFQ sablefish.

Enforcement considerations:

- Current definition does not differentiate between pots used to fish groundfish and pots used to harvest IFQ/CDQ sablefish and halibut
- Element 4 without the option: specific to GOA, a similar exception already exists for the BSAI
- Element 4 with the option: both GOA and BSAI, regardless of if the vessel has halibut IFQ/CDQ onboard. This would likely result in a more consistent exception across both areas and IFQ species.



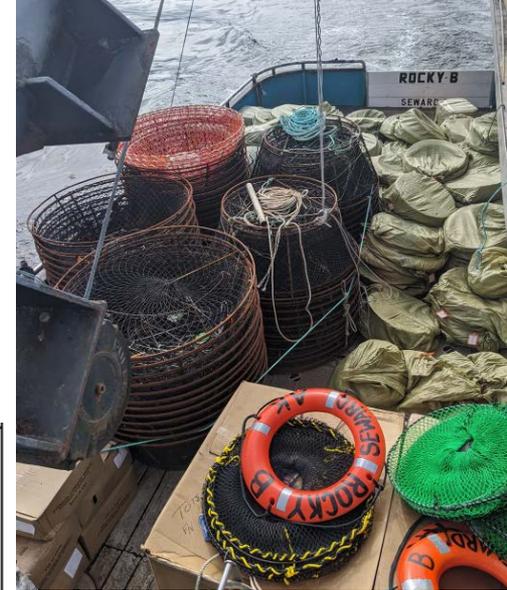
Element 5 (GOA): Change the pot limit for WY and/or SEO to:

Suboption a) 160 pots per vessel

Suboption b) 200 pots per vessel

Suboption c) 300 pots per vessel

	GOA status quo	BSAI status quo	Proposed Alt 2
<u>Element 5: Pot limits</u>	Current pot limits: SE- 120 WY- 120 WG – 300 CG- 300	No pot limits	GOA pot limits: SE- 160/200/300 WY- 160/200/300 WG-300 CG-300 BSAI – no limits



Element 6: Gear retrieval requirements (GOA)

Option 1: Remove the gear retrieval requirement

Option 2: Modify the gear retrieval requirement to 7 days for all GOA areas

Suboption: 3 days in SEO



	GOA status quo	BSAI status quo	Proposed Alt 2
<u>Element 6:</u> Gear retrieval requirements	SEO CPs 5 days SEO CVs must remove the gear from the fishing grounds when making a sablefish landing WY/CGOA CV/CPs 5 days WGOA CV/CPs 7 days BSAI no requirements	No gear retrieval requirements	Option 1 – No gear retrieval requirements GOA/BSAI wide. Option 2: GOA- 7 days. BSAI- no requirement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Suboption</u>: 3 days in SEO



MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, AND ENFORCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Element 5: Pot Limits for Western Yakutat and/or Southeast Outside

- 160 or 200 or 300 pots per vessel

Element 6: Gear retrieval requirements

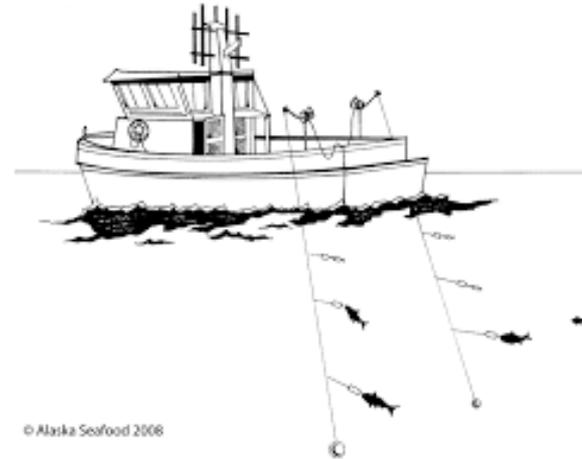
- **Remove, modify current requirement to 7 days for all areas, or 3 days for SEO only**

Enforcement considerations:

- Current pot limits are 300/vessel for WG and CG and 120/vessel for SE and WY
- Current gear retrieval requirements vary by area
- Analysis cites previous enforcement committee meetings which discussed review of changes to pot limits and gear retrieval requirements under Amendment 101



Element 3: Authorize jig gear as a legal gear type for the harvest of sablefish IFQ and CDQ.
WOULD APPLY TO GOA AND BSAI



MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, AND ENFORCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Element 3: Authorize Jig Gear as a legal gear type for the harvest of sablefish IFQ/CDQ

Enforcement considerations:

- Currently authorized for IFQ/CDQ halibut in GOA and BSAI
- Would authorize for IFQ/CDQ sablefish and require modifications to regulations at 679.20 for allocations, 679.2 for definitions, and remove restrictions at 679.21 and 679.24
- Observer or EM coverage for vessels using Jig gear could be adjusted under the ADP



MANAGEMENT, MONITORING, AND ENFORCEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Additional Considerations

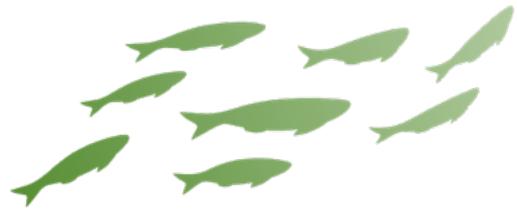
Daily Fishing Logbook requirements for vessels less than 60 ft LOA using more than one gear type

- NMFS would clarify these regulations so that vessels may record trip information for both pot and hook-and-line gear in the same DFL

Fishing effort information recorded in the Daily Fishing Logbook

- Fixed gear regulations are challenging to interpret for gear deployment and gear retrieval
- NMFS is conducting an in-depth review of regulations to address this issue and clarify how to record spatial data in the DFL for hook-and-line gear





Questions?



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