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# C5: Halibut in Pots in the BSAI



# [Recent] History of Action

## Section 1.2, p13-16

- APRIL 2018: Initial Review on halibut retention in sablefish pots in the BSAI
- Expanded scope
- JUNE 2018: 2<sup>nd</sup> Initial Review on halibut retention in pots in the BSAI

# Description of Alternatives

Section 2, p18

Alternative 1: No action

Alternative 2: Allow retention of legal-sized halibut in single or long-line pot gear used to fish for halibut or sablefish IFQ/ CDQ in the BSAI provided the IFQ/ CDQ holder holds sufficient halibut IFQ

Element 1: Gear retrieval

Element 2: Tunnel opening

Element 3: VMS/ Logbooks

Element 4: Escapement mechanisms

Element 5: Process for in-season closures

# Additionally, examine....

## Section 2, p18-19

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- *How fishing for IFQ/CDQ halibut and sablefish is defined, and whether additional regulatory clarifications are required to define IFQ/CDQ halibut and sablefish fishing for pot gear.*
- *Whether additional regulations (e.g., pot tags) are needed to account for IFQ/CDQ halibut and sablefish fishing with pot gear.*
- *The need and potential options for escapement mechanisms and gear modifications for pots intended to be used to fish halibut IFQ/CDQ.*
- *Potential gear conflict from the use, storage, retrieval, or loss of IFQ/CDQ halibut and sablefish pots and potential management measures to reduce gear conflict.*
- *The potential implications of allowing retention of IFQ/CDQ halibut and sablefish by vessels directed fishing for Pacific cod, crab, or other groundfish species.*
- *The potential scope of closure areas for pot gear (e.g., the Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Zone) that may be required to minimize the risk of overfishing Pribilof Islands Blue King Crab.*

## **§ 679.7 Prohibitions**

In addition to the general prohibitions specified in §600.725 of this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to do any of the following:

(11) Discard halibut or sablefish caught with fixed gear from any catcher vessel when any IFQ permit holder aboard holds unused halibut or sablefish IFQ for that vessel category and the IFQ regulatory area in which the vessel is operating, unless:

- (i) Discard of halibut is required as prescribed in the annual measurement measures published in the ***Federal Register*** pursuant to §300.62 of Chapter III of this title;
- (ii) Discard of sablefish is required under §679.20 or, in waters within the State of Alaska, discard of sablefish is required under laws of the State of Alaska; or
- (iii) Discard of halibut or sablefish is required under other provisions

# Impacts from “surprise” halibut fishing

Section 4.7.1, p124-125

- Minimal overlap between halibut and crab fishing (and different seasons)
- Some overlap between halibut and pcod fishing (B season)
- Lots of overlap between halibut and sablefish fishing (matching seasons)

**Table 23** Percent of vessels from each fishery that have also participated in halibut IFQ fishing in the BSAI

Year	BSAI sablefish IFQ with HAL	BSAI halibut CDQ with HAL	BSAI Pcod with pot gear	BSAI sablefish CDQ with HAL	BSAI sablefish IFQ with pot gear	BSAI crab (IFQ and state)
2011	90%	7%	17%	80%	44%	2%
2012	81%	11%	26%	83%	60%	3%
2013	89%	9%	19%	86%	0%	1%
2014	86%	26%	20%	88%	25%	2%
2015	82%	30%	23%	100%	33%	2%
2016	80%	29%	25%	75%	100%	2%

Source: ADF&G/CFEC Fish Tickets, data compiled by AKFIN in Comprehensive\_FT

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# Magnitude of change

Section 4.7.2.1.1, p126-129

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- Increased uncertainty in the magnitude of potential change with expanded scope of action.
- BUT we think most hook-and-line vessels fishing halibut in the BSAI will continue to use hook-and-line gear, because:

#1. Not all Area 4 halibut harvesters deal with whale depredation

#2. For those that do, access to the gear and a vessel that can safely store, deploy, and haul pots will be a barrier to entry

#3. CPUE

# “New entrants”

Section 4.7.2.1.1, p126-129  
(Table page 106)

**Table 21** Count of vessels that fished BSAI halibut IFQ/ CDQ by length overall, 2011-2016

Year	LOA category	HAL gear		
		BSAI halibut (IFQ)	BSAI halibut (CDQ)	Unique vessels (CDQ and IFQ)
2011	<50ft	42	228	264
	≥ 50ft and < 60ft	39	8	40
	≥ 60ft	34	4	35
	<b>Total ≥ 50ft</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>75</b>
2012	<50ft	38	228	249
	≥ 50ft and < 60ft	36	10	37
	≥ 60ft	28	3	30
	<b>Total ≥ 50ft</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>67</b>
2013	<50ft	33	236	253
	≥ 50ft and < 60ft	34	8	37
	≥ 60ft	25	7	31
	<b>Total ≥ 50ft</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>68</b>
2014	<50ft	39	89	109
	≥ 50ft and < 60ft	27	6	27
	≥ 60ft	23	5	27
	<b>Total ≥ 50ft</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>54</b>
2015	<50ft	33	56	75
	≥ 50ft and < 60ft	30	8	32
	≥ 60ft	23	7	29
	<b>Total ≥ 50ft</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>61</b>
2016	<50ft	31	56	75
	≥ 50ft and < 60ft	30	8	31
	≥ 60ft	24	6	29
	<b>Total ≥ 50ft</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>60</b>
Total unique vessels < 50ft, 2011-2016		81	370	419
Total unique vessels ≥ 50ft, 2011-2016		93	34	104

Source: ADF&G/CFEC Fish Tickets, data compiled by AKFIN in Comprehensive\_FT



Photo credit: Sarah Marrinan



Photo credit: Celeste Leroux/Alaska Sea Grant; KTOO

# Expansion of the EA

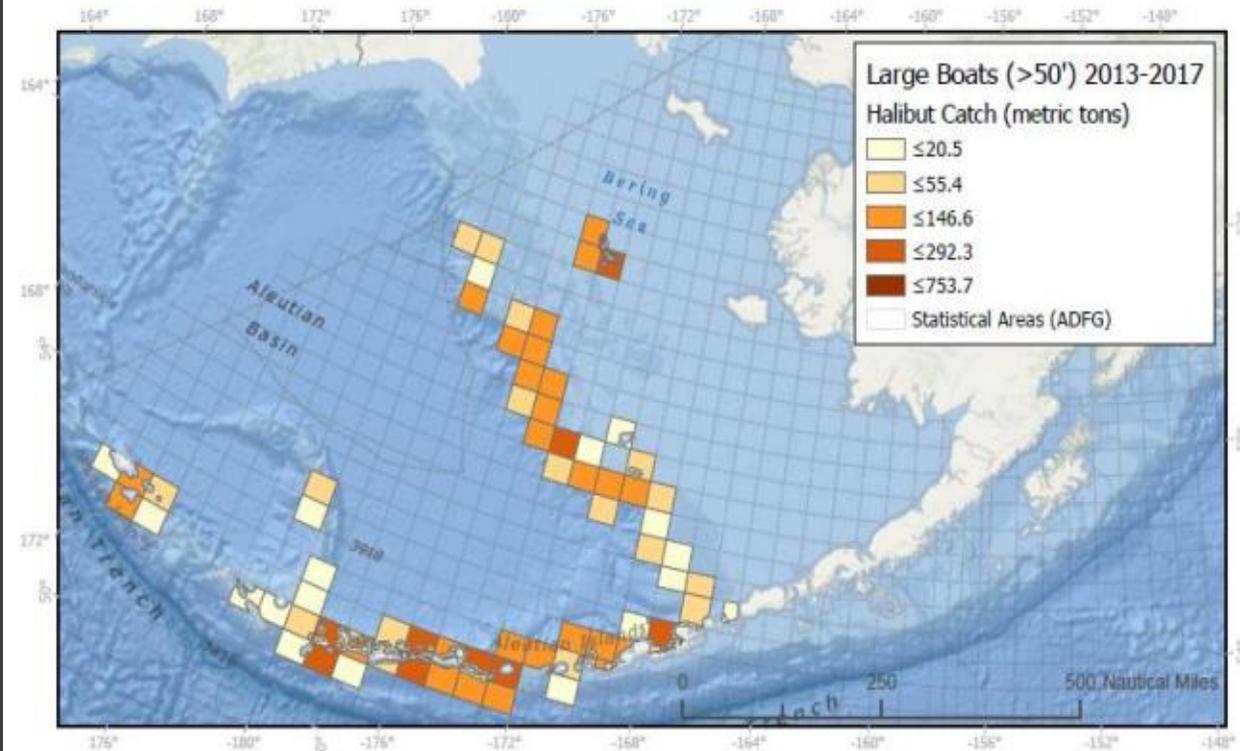
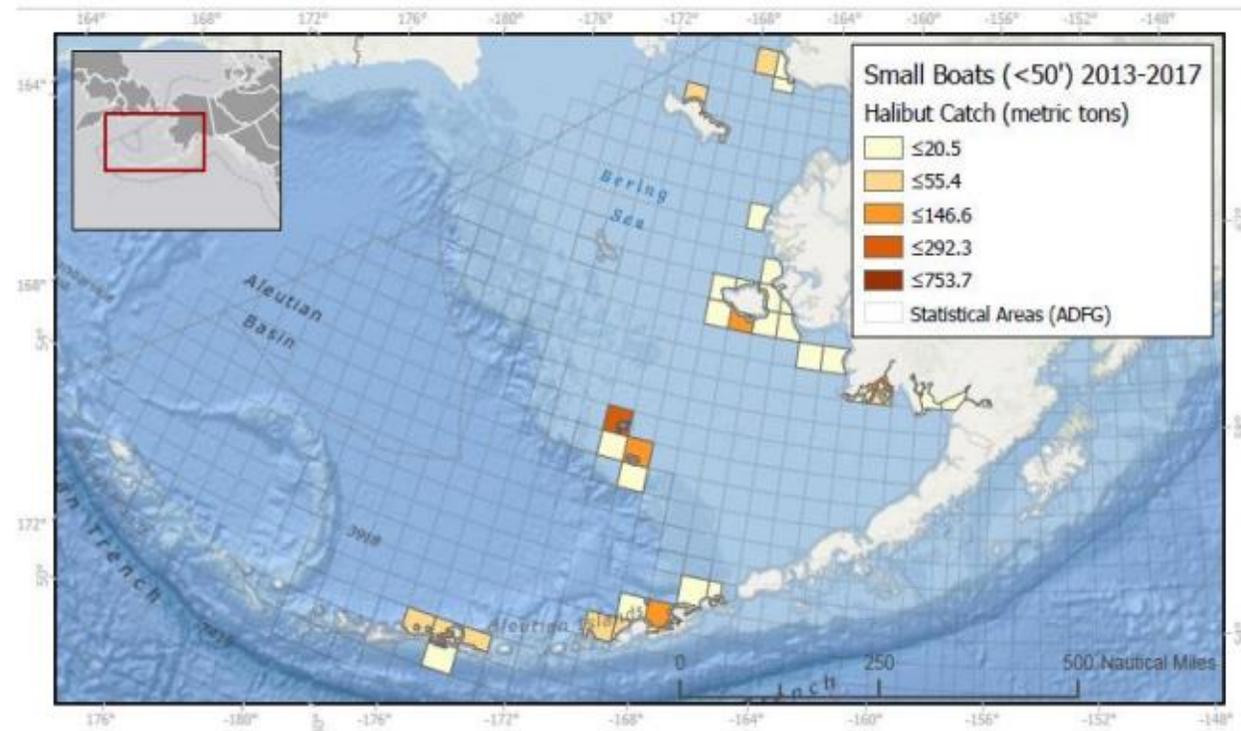
Section 3, p26-92

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# Gear Conflicts and Grounds Preemption Issues

Section 4.7.2.1.4, p131

Figure 31 Halibut IFQ/ CDQ harvest (mt) in the BSAI, 2013- 2017



# Gear Retrieval (Element 1), Gear Storage, Lost Pots

- “Unfished” addresses soak time and in-season grounds preemption issues
- Consideration of gear retrieval restrictions even if gear is unbaited and not actively fishing
- Other federal and state fisheries address off-season storage of gear through restrictions
- Lost gear
- Entanglement issues
- Pot tags
- Difficult to enforce

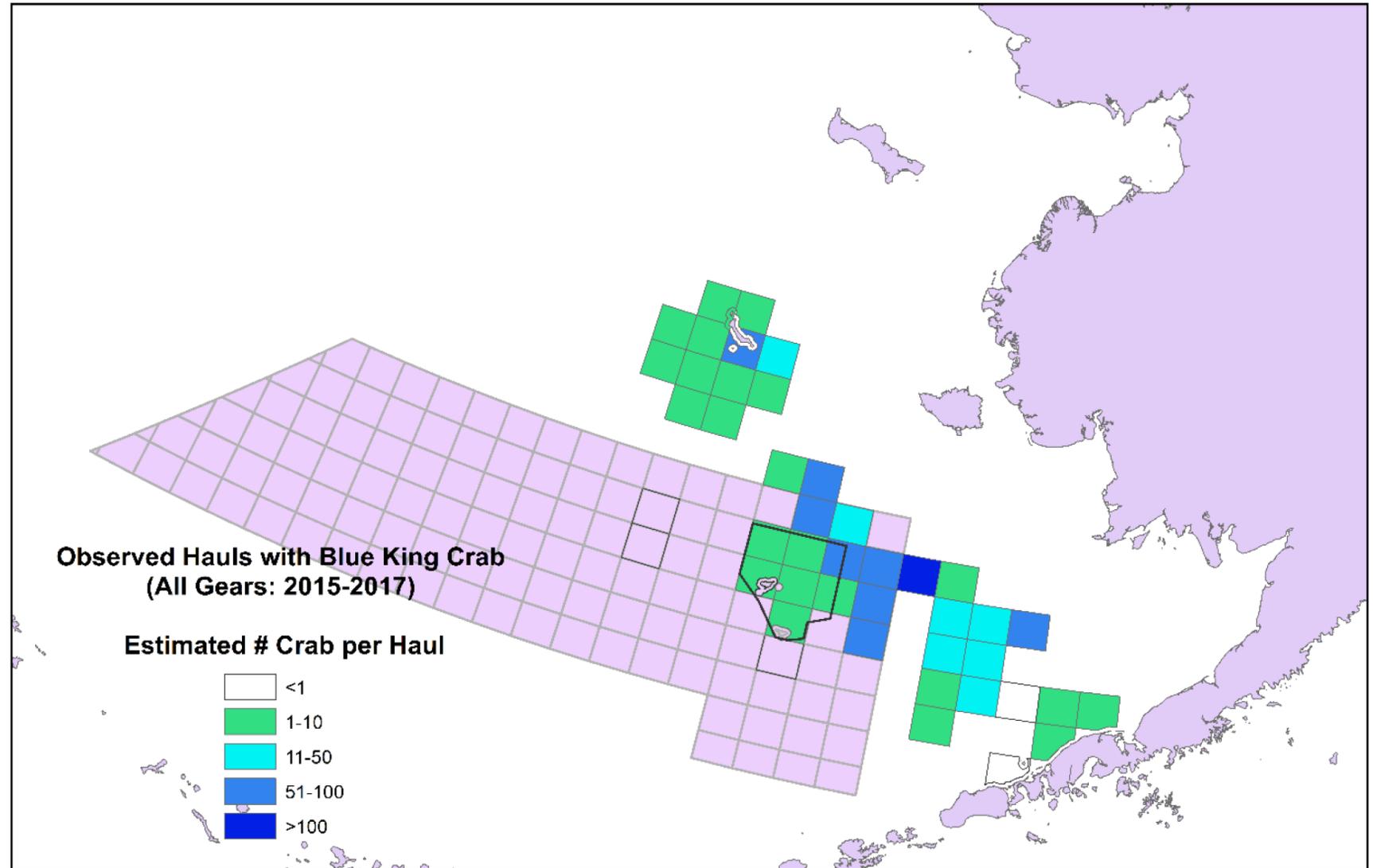


# Gear Specifications

- Tunnel opening (Element 2)
- Biodegradable panel
- Escapement mechanism (Element 4)

Element 5:  
In-season  
Management  
p154  
Halibut Act  
PIHCZ

Figure 14 Observed Groundfish Hauls with Blue King Crab Incidental Catch, 2015-2017



# Decision Points for the Council

## Select a PPA, Elements 1-5

- Element 1: “Unfished” quota qualification
- Element 2: Tunnel opening maximum size
- Element 3: Does “logbooks” mean “DFL”?
- Element 4: Escapement mechanisms/gear modifications
- Element 5: In-season closures, PIHCZ

## Action area options:

- All of Area 4, which overlaps with GOA
- Area 4 only where it overlaps with BSAI.

- **Gear storage? Lost pot requirements?**
- **Additional regulations** to account for IFQ/CDQ halibut and sablefish fishing with pot gear?
- **Scope of the action:** An IFQ permit holder would not be required *nor permitted* to retain halibut on a pot fishing trip while directed fishing in other pot fisheries (such as Pacific cod or crab), even if they hold available IFQ.

**Figure 1** Overlay of Federal groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) areas (BSAI (blue) and GOA (yellow)) with IPHC regulatory areas

