

Fishery Management Report No. 24-16

**Fishery Management Plan for the Aleutian Islands
State-Waters Sablefish Season, 2024**

by

Asia Beder

May 2024

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Divisions of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries



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Weights and measures (metric)		General		Mathematics, statistics	
centimeter	cm	Alaska Administrative Code	AAC	<i>all standard mathematical signs, symbols and abbreviations</i>	
deciliter	dL	all commonly accepted abbreviations	e.g., Mr., Mrs., AM, PM, etc.	alternate hypothesis	H_A
gram	g	all commonly accepted professional titles	e.g., Dr., Ph.D., R.N., etc.	base of natural logarithm	e
hectare	ha	at	@	catch per unit effort	CPUE
kilogram	kg	compass directions:		coefficient of variation	CV
kilometer	km	east	E	common test statistics	(F, t, χ^2 , etc.)
liter	L	north	N	confidence interval	CI
meter	m	south	S	correlation coefficient	
milliliter	mL	west	W	(multiple)	R
millimeter	mm	copyright	©	correlation coefficient	
		corporate suffixes:		(simple)	r
Weights and measures (English)		Company	Co.	covariance	cov
cubic feet per second	ft ³ /s	Corporation	Corp.	degree (angular)	°
foot	ft	Incorporated	Inc.	degrees of freedom	df
gallon	gal	Limited	Ltd.	expected value	E
inch	in	District of Columbia	D.C.	greater than	>
mile	mi	et alii (and others)	et al.	greater than or equal to	≥
nautical mile	nmi	et cetera (and so forth)	etc.	harvest per unit effort	HPUE
ounce	oz	exempli gratia	e.g.	less than	<
pound	lb	(for example)		less than or equal to	≤
quart	qt	Federal Information Code	FIC	logarithm (natural)	ln
yard	yd	id est (that is)	i.e.	logarithm (base 10)	log
		latitude or longitude	lat or long	logarithm (specify base)	log ₂ , etc.
Time and temperature		monetary symbols		minute (angular)	'
day	d	(U.S.)	\$, ¢	not significant	NS
degrees Celsius	°C	months (tables and figures): first three letters	Jan, ..., Dec	null hypothesis	H_0
degrees Fahrenheit	°F	registered trademark	®	percent	%
degrees kelvin	K	trademark	™	probability	P
hour	h	United States	U.S.	probability of a type I error	
minute	min	(adjective)		(rejection of the null hypothesis when true)	α
second	s	United States of America (noun)	USA	probability of a type II error	
		U.S.C.	United States Code	(acceptance of the null hypothesis when false)	β
Physics and chemistry		U.S. state	use two-letter abbreviations (e.g., AK, WA)	second (angular)	"
all atomic symbols				standard deviation	SD
alternating current	AC			standard error	SE
ampere	A			variance	
calorie	cal			population	Var
direct current	DC			sample	var
hertz	Hz				
horsepower	hp				
hydrogen ion activity	pH				
(negative log of)					
parts per million	ppm				
parts per thousand	ppt, ‰				
volts	V				
watts	W				

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STATE-WATERS SABLEFISH SEASON, 2024**

by

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ABSTRACT

The Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish (*Anoplopoma fimbria*) season is prosecuted in state waters west of Scotch Cap Light (164° 44.72'W longitude and south of Cape Sarichef 54° 36'N latitude). Legal gear for the state-waters season include pot, longline, jig, and hand troll. The 2024 season guideline harvest level is 2,706,000 pounds, which is 5% of the combined estimated sablefish acceptable biological catch for the federal Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Subareas. Vessels participating in the federal Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) or Community Development Quota (CDQ) sablefish fisheries may participate in the state-waters sablefish fishery. Harvest inside state waters by IFQ and CDQ holders accrues towards the state-waters GHl and towards the permit holders IFQ/CDQ quota.

Keywords: Sablefish, *Anoplopoma fimbria*, guideline harvest level, state-waters season, Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands

INTRODUCTION

AREA DESCRIPTION

The State of Alaska's Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Area for groundfish management consists of all state waters of Alaska (0–3 nmi) in the Bering Sea and a portion of the North Pacific Ocean adjacent to the Aleutian Islands west of 170°W long. The South Alaska Peninsula (SAP) groundfish registration area consists of all waters between a line extending 135° southeast from Kupreanof Point (lat 55°33.98'N, long 159°35.88'W) and long 170°W near western Chuginadak Island.

The Aleutian Islands District consists of all state waters of Alaska in the BSAI Area south of the latitude of Cape Sarichef (54°36'N lat). The Western District of the SAP Area consists of all state waters of Alaska west of the longitude of Scotch Cap Light at 164° 44.72'W long. The Aleutian Islands (AI) state-waters sablefish fishery consists of all state waters in both the Western District of the SAP Area and the Aleutian Islands District of the BSAI Area (Figure 1).

OVERVIEW

The AI sablefish (*Anoplopoma fimbria*) state-waters season is an open-access fishery managed exclusively by Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) under the *Aleutian Islands District and Western District of the South Alaska Peninsula Area Sablefish Management Plan*, 5 AAC 28.640. The purpose of this document is to provide summary fishery management information for the 2024 AI state-waters sablefish season.

STATE-WATERS SABLEFISH SEASON

The AI state-waters sablefish fishery is guided by 5 AAC 28.640, the *Aleutian Islands District and Western District of the South Alaska Peninsula Area Sablefish Management Plan*. The following regulations are in effect for the 2024 season.

2024 GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVEL

The guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2024 AI state-waters sablefish season is 2,706,000 pounds, which is 5% of the combined estimated acceptable biological catch of sablefish in the federal Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands subareas.

INSEASON OPENINGS AND CLOSURES

The AI state-waters sablefish season will open concurrently with the adjacent federal individual fishing quota (IFQ) sablefish season. The state-waters season will close when the GHL is achieved or concurrently with the adjacent IFQ sablefish season, whichever occurs first.

At the time of closure, all longline and jig gear must be fully out of the water. All groundfish pots must be empty and in storage condition with all bait and bait containers removed, and doors secured fully open at the time of the closure. Harvesters are not permitted to pull pots after the time of the closure until their final delivery has been completed.

VESSEL LENGTH AND GEAR TYPES

There are no vessel length restrictions for the AI state-waters sablefish fishery; however, sablefish may be taken only with pots, longlines, mechanical jigging machines, and hand troll gear. Pot gear may be longlined in the Aleutian Islands and Western Districts. Vessels may use pot and longline gear concurrently and dual target Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*).

During the state-waters season, groundfish pots of any size may be used to take sablefish, although pot gear individual tunnel eye openings must be 36 inches in perimeter or less (5 AAC 28.050(e)). All pots must be equipped with a biodegradable escape mechanism (5 AAC 39.145), located on a sidewall, and placed within 6 inches of the bottom of the pot leaving an opening 18 inches or greater in length that must be laced, sewn, or secured together by a single length of untreated 100% cotton biodegradable twine no larger than 30 thread count.

BUOY MARKING REQUIREMENTS

Buoys attached to groundfish gear must be marked with the permanent ADF&G vessel number that corresponds with the ADF&G vessel number operating that gear (5 AAC 28.050(b)). The buoy containing the 5-digit ADF&G number may not be marked with any additional numbers; however, symbols and letters are acceptable on this buoy. Trailer buoys used to mark ownership or string sequence may be marked with any desired numbers, symbols, or letters.

Each end of the groundfish pot longline must have a buoy attached and each buoy must be marked with the permanent ADF&G vessel number of the vessel operating the longlined groundfish pot gear. Each buoy must have the letters LP to designate the gear as longlined groundfish pot gear and each buoy may bear only the number of the vessel operating the gear. Numbers and letters must be marked on the top one-half of each buoy in numbers and letters that are at least 4 inches high, ½ inch wide, and in a color that contrasts with the color of each buoy. All buoy markings must be visible on the buoys above the water's surface when the buoys are attached to the longline groundfish pot gear.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

All vessels harvesting sablefish in state waters, including those participating in the federal IFQ or Community Development Quota (CDQ) sablefish fisheries, must register with ADF&G prior to participating in the AI state-waters sablefish season. Registrations may be obtained at ADF&G offices in Dutch Harbor and Kodiak. Harvesters must possess a 2024 Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) interim use statewide sablefish permit card for pot gear, longline gear, mechanical jigging machines, hand troll, or fixed gear pot & longline prior to registration. Contact information for ADF&G offices and CFEC is listed in Appendix A1.

LOGBOOKS

ADF&G will manage the AI state-waters sablefish season using fish ticket data and logbooks. Harvesters will be required to maintain an accurate logbook of all fishing operations for each type of gear used. Harvesters must report date, specific fishing locations of harvest by latitude and longitude, type and number of gear, average depth, hours fished, and round weight of sablefish retained and discarded on their logbooks. A copy of each logbook page must be submitted to the department within 7 days of each landing. In the absence of reliable logbook data, ADF&G will adopt conservative management measures which may result in a loss of fishing opportunity.

POT STORAGE AND LANDING REQUIREMENTS

Following closure of the AI state-waters sablefish season, groundfish pots may be stored with all bait and bait containers removed and doors secured fully open in waters greater than 25 fathoms for a maximum of 7 days. After 7 days, groundfish pots must be removed from the water or in storage condition in waters 25 fathoms or less. Contact NOAA Fisheries Enforcement (Appendix A1) regarding gear storage in federal waters.

Vessels participating in the AI state-waters sablefish season must deliver their catch within 72 hours after a season closure. Vessels may have sablefish onboard after the 72-hour period following a closure only when the vessel has been delayed due to extraordinary circumstances, and the vessel operator has contacted an ADF&G representative within 72 hours following the closure to be granted additional time.

CORAL HABITAT PROTECTION AREAS DURING STATE-WATERS SEASON

During the 2024 AI state-waters sablefish season, current Aleutian Islands coral habitat protection areas will be in effect and are available from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) offices in Alaska. Aleutian Islands coral habitat protection areas can be found in Table 23 from Title 50, Part 679 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).¹

STELLER SEA LION CLOSURES DURING STATE-WATERS SEASON

During the 2024 AI state-waters sablefish season, current federal Steller sea lion no-transit areas will be in effect. Descriptions of closures in effect during a state-waters season and their coordinates can be found in Table 12 of Title 50, Part 679 of the CFR.¹

BYCATCH DURING STATE-WATERS SEASON

During the state-waters sablefish season, ADF&G adopts NMFS maximum retainable bycatch allowances applicable in the adjacent exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for species not actively managed by the State of Alaska. For groundfish species without a specified bycatch limit, up to 20% by weight of sablefish onboard the vessel may be retained. State-managed black rockfish (*Sebastes melanops*) and dark rockfish (*S. ciliatus*) may only be retained up to 20% by weight of sablefish onboard the vessel. Federal BSAI retainable bycatch percentages are located in Table 11 of Title 50, Part 679 of the CFR.¹

¹ The Code of Federal Regulations is available at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-VI/part-679> (accessed October 11, 2023).

Sablefish bycatch is not allowed prior to or after the directed fishery. Sablefish may be taken as bycatch in state waters of the Aleutian Islands District and the Western District of the South Alaska Peninsula Area when the directed state-waters fishery is open. Sablefish bycatch by vessels not validly registered for the directed fishery may not exceed 1% by weight of the directed groundfish species and directed halibut on board, except groundfish vessels operating pelagic trawl gear inside state waters shall retain all sablefish taken during a fishing trip from January 1 through December 31, 2024. All proceeds from the sale of sablefish by pelagic trawl gear vessels, in excess of 1% by weight of the directed groundfish species onboard, shall be surrendered to the state. All vessels retaining sablefish, even as bycatch species, must obtain a 2024 interim-use permit card for sablefish from CFEC.

INSEASON ANNOUNCEMENTS

All inseason management actions during the state-waters season will be distributed via the ADF&G advisory announcement system (<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>) relayed through participating processors, and communicated to the fleet. ADF&G will make every effort to provide sufficient time for harvesters to configure gear for storage or to place gear onboard before a closure; however, the potential exists for short advance notice of a closure.

Non-confidential harvest updates are available inseason on the ADF&G website at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareaaleutianislands.groundfish#harvest> or by contacting ADF&G.

FIGURES

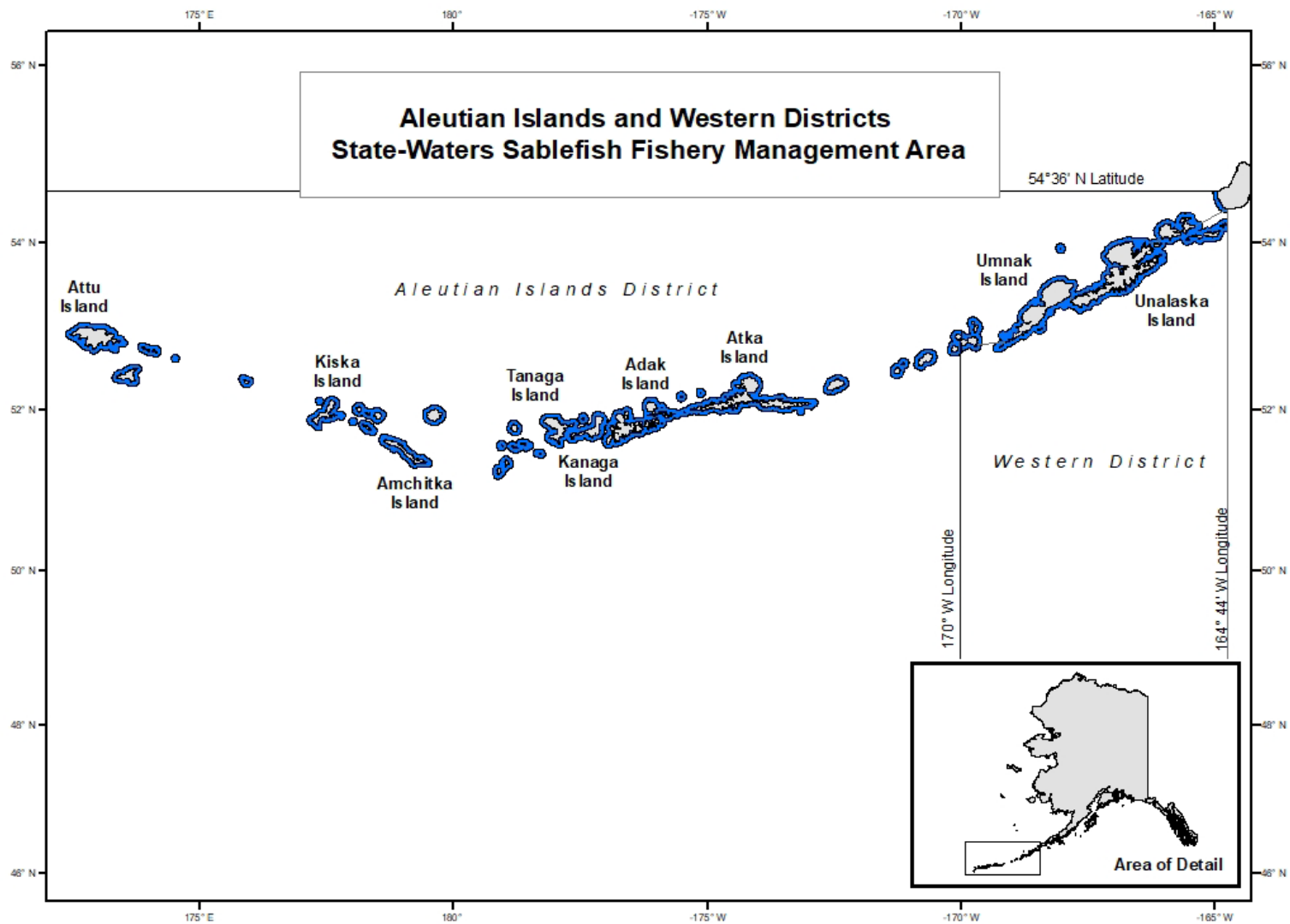


Figure 1.—Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish fishery management area.

**APPENDIX A. LIST OF FISHERY CONTACTS BY AGENCY
AND LOCATION**

Appendix A1.–List of fishery contacts by agency and location.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game		website: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/
<u>Dutch Harbor Office</u>		
Mail Address: P.O. Box 920587 Dutch Harbor, Alaska 99692	Physical Address: 2315 Airport Beach Road 2nd floor, Suite 207 Dutch Harbor, Alaska	Phone: (907) 581-1239 Cell: (907) 512-7234 Fax: (907) 581-1572 E-mail: dfg.dutchharbor@alaska.gov Dispatch: #1234
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Asia Beder, Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Asst. Area Management Biologist		E-mail: asia.beder@alaska.gov
<u>Kodiak Office</u>		
Mail Address: 351 Research Court Kodiak, Alaska 99615	Physical Address: 351 Research Court Kodiak, Alaska	Phone: (907) 486-1840 Fax: (907) 486-1824
Mark Stichert, Regional Groundfish Management Biologist		E-mail: mark.stichert@alaska.gov
Nat Nichols, Kodiak, Chignik, Alaska Peninsula Area Management Biologist		E-mail: nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov
Cassie Whiteside, Kodiak, Chignik, Alaska Peninsula Asst. Area Management Biologist		E-mail: cassandra.whiteside@alaska.gov
Alaska Wildlife Troopers		website: https://dps.alaska.gov/AWT/Home
<u>Dutch Harbor Office</u>		
Mail Address: P.O. Box 920848 Dutch Harbor, Alaska 99692	Physical Address: 2315 Airport Beach Road, Suite 101 Dutch Harbor, Alaska	Phone: (907) 581-1432 Fax: (907) 581-1407
Jeremiah Baum: Post Sergeant		E-mail: jeremiah.baum@alaska.gov
Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC)		website: http://www.cfec.state.ak.us/
Mail Address: P.O. Box 110302, Juneau, Alaska 99811-0302	Physical Address: 8800 Glacier Highway #109 Juneau, Alaska	Phone: (907) 789-6150 Fax: (907) 789-6170
National Marine Fisheries Service – Alaska Region		website: http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/
<u>Sustainable Fisheries Division</u>		
Krista Milani, Dutch Harbor Office		Phone: (907) 581-2062
Mary Furuness, Juneau Office		Phone: (907) 586-7447
<u>NOAA Fisheries Enforcement</u>		
Dutch Harbor Office		Phone: (907) 581-2061
Anchorage Office		Phone: (907) 586-7225
<u>NOAA Observer Program</u>		
Dutch Harbor Office		Phone: (907) 581-2060
Seattle Office		Phone: (206) 526-4195