
My name is David Lawler. I was one of the original 5 black cod pot fishermen in SE Alaska, starting in 1973 out of Ketchikan and delivering in Petersburg to Whitney -Fidalgo Seafoods.

Unlike the other fishermen I harvested black cod in 3 separate seasons that year. By that I mean I made trips on a salmon seine with pots in April - June a longliner during July and August and a tender vessel in November and December.

Therefor I was able to witness distinct seasonal changes in the black cod stock in Clarence Straits North and West of Ketchikan.

We started in April and averaged 12-14 fish per pot fishing in the average depths of the trench from shore to shore. the fish averaged around 4.5 # Japanese cut.

After leasing another boat and returning to the same general area in July I noticed that distinct changes in the population had occurred. 1) The fish average size was larger and had grown to 5.2 #. 2) There was an appearance of more Japanese hooks in the fish which had been lost in the offshore fishery by them 3) the fish were present "up the edge" in shallower water in as shallow as 150 fthm. 4) the average number of fish per pot had risen to over 30 fish per pot. We quit in early September for a break.

When we returned for the end of the season we found that the fish numbers and size had returned to the approximate size and number seen in the spring and were in the deepest holes in the area in the highest number. jap hooks had disappeared for the most part.

It is very evident to me that the black cod population in Clarence Strait is just a portion of the larger outside stock and can be managed utilizing Federal studies thereby saving unnecessary research "inside". subsequent fishing in other diverse areas revealed black cod present in deep water elsewhere around Ketchikan, Cordova bay, east and west behm canal and other deep water.

I lost my rights to fish with pots in SE ALASKA when pots were outlawed in favor of hook and line fishing.

Thank you, David Lawler

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