

PROPOSAL 25

5 AAC 77.XXX. New section.

Establish a personal use sablefish fishery in Prince William Sound, as follows:

Adapt current regulations from the SE personal use sablefish fishery into a new personal use permit program or adapt the existing permit to include PWS.

(Adapted from regulations for the Southeast Personal Use Groudfish Fishery)

Regulations Specific to Personal Use Sablefish Fishery

In the PWS Area, personal use sablefish may be taken as follows:

- A personal use fishing permit issued by the department is required to take sablefish; only one permit will be issued per household per year.
- Permit holder or a household member listed on the permit must have permit in possession when fishing.
- Pot gear may not exceed two pots per permit holder or eight pots per vessel when four or more permit holders are present.
- Personal use sablefish pots may not be longlined and a buoy is required for each pot.
- Pots must comply with escape mechanism requirements in 5 AAC 39.145.
- The personal use annual limit is 50 sablefish per household permit.
- No more than 200 personal use sablefish may be retained on board a vessel when four or more sablefish permit holders are present on board that vessel.
- A permit holder shall record fishing activity on the permit Fishing Report prior to leaving the fishing site.
- A vessel or person on board a vessel commercial fishing for sablefish in the PWS may not operate subsistence or personal use longline gear for bottomfish from that vessel until all commercial sablefish are offloaded from the vessel.

Note: Longline gear was excluded to address potential bycatch issues with sensitive non-pelagic rockfish species such as: shortraker, roughey and yelloweye rockfishes.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Current personal use finfish regulations for Prince William Sound do not address opportunity for a personal use sablefish fishery similar to that in the Yakutat/SE Alaska areas. Data I was able to find from the ADF&G website indicate a 2023 GHF for PWS sablefish of 269000 lbs. with a harvest of 136000 lbs. This leaves a surplus of 133000 lbs. to support a personal use sablefish fishery in PWS. Sablefish are not split out from other groundfish in the PWS for personal and/or sport utilization. Current regulations for PWS personal and sport groundfish fisheries, for practical reasons, restrict the targeting of sablefish to hand rods and electric reels to reach sablefish in the depths they inhabit of 1000+ feet. With the limited number of hooks and the depth to be fished this becomes a very inefficient means of harvest. Allowing the use of slinky pots would give residents a more efficient means of harvest to access this under utilized resource. Overall harvest for this fishery is likely to be of minimal impact to commercial interests due to the amount and cost of specialized gear required.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain. This proposal was not developed in coordination with the local Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

PROPOSED BY: Robert Swanson

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