

PROPOSAL 138 - 5 AAC 28.175. Logbooks for Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area. Require groundfish fishermen using dinglebar, mechanical jig, or hand troll gear to report the specific location of fishing operation by latitude and longitude in logbooks and clarify the reporting of amount of hooks fished to be consistent with that information requested in the logbook, as follows:

5 AAC 28.175(b)(2) is amended to read:

(2) for dinglebar **troll gear**, mechanical **jigging machines** [JIG], or hand troll gear must include the date, the specific location of harvest by **latitude and longitude, in degrees and decimal minutes**, [SIX DIGIT STATISTICAL AREA] and nearest headland, the number of lines and **total number of** hooks [PER LINES] used, the average depth fished, the hours fished [FOR EACH LINE], and the number of bycatch fish taken, by species, **for each unique geographic location fished**; for the target species the following is required:

- (A) the number retained;
- (B) the number discarded; and
- (C) for lingcod only, their estimated sex ratio;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current logbook reporting requirements, consisting of six-digit statistical area and the nearest headland, do not always provide staff with enough detailed information to accurately assign groundfish harvest to the proper area. Logbooks are often submitted without statistical area information or adequate headland descriptions for staff to make an accurate area assignment. A requirement to report latitude and longitude of fishing locations will not only provide for more accurate fish ticket data, it will also furnish staff with detailed information on where these fisheries are prosecuted.

Over the years, the department has utilized the latitude and longitude information reported in longline logbooks for a variety of research activities. Current jig fishery logbook location data can only be summarized to the statistical area level. The proposed amendment would allow department staff to have access to more detailed harvest information which would assist in future management of these fisheries.

The current regulatory language requires that number of lines and number of hooks used per line are reported in the logbook. In jig fisheries that allow the use of multiple lines, reporting is inconsistent and it is often difficult for staff to determine whether fishermen are reporting the number of hooks per line or the total number of hooks used. In order to avoid this confusion, the lingcod logbook form has been updated to request the total number of hooks used. The proposed regulation amendment will provide consistency with the current fishery logbook.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(HQ-F14-075)

PROPOSAL 139 - 5 AAC 28.130. Lawful gear for Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area. Define mechanical jigging gear separate from dinglebar troll gear and establish limits on hooks to be used, as follows:

5 AAC 28.130 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(m) In the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area, a mechanical jigging machine is a device that deploys a single line with lures or baited hooks and retrieves that line with electrical, hydraulic, or mechanically powered assistance. A mechanical jigging machine allows the line to be fished only in the water column, in a manner that the hooks connected to the line are fished above the seafloor and the line is oriented vertically within the water column. A mechanical jigging machine line may not be pulled through the water or deployed while the vessel is making way. A mechanical jigging machine must be attached to a vessel registered to fish with a mechanical jigging machine. The mechanical jigging machine line may not be anchored to the seafloor or operated unattached from the vessel. No more than five mechanical jigging machines may be operated from a vessel, with no more than 30 hooks per line operated from a mechanical jigging machine.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The current statewide definition (5 AAC 39.105(d)(25)) for mechanical jigging machines is not detailed enough to clearly distinguish mechanical jig gear from dinglebar troll gear for fisheries in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska. Dinglebar troll gear is a single line that is retrieved and set with a troll gurdy with a terminally attached weight from which one or more leaders with one or more hooks are pulled through the water while a vessel is making way. This fishing line is towed through the water parallel to the seafloor and is quite effective at harvesting lingcod. Vessels using dinglebar troll gear are limited to the operation of a single line, a regulatory restriction that industry requested during the development of the directed lingcod fishery in the 1990s.

The statewide definition of mechanical jigging machine is vague enough that a permit holder fishing under that type of permit may utilize gear intended for dinglebar fishing and avoid the single line dinglebar restriction. Trolling a line of horizontally-oriented hooks over the sea floor is not the customary fishing method associated with mechanical jig machines. Without a clear distinction between mechanical jig and dinglebar troll gears, fishermen using dinglebar troll gear to harvest lingcod will be able to fish multiple lines by fishing under the auspices of a mechanical jig permit. Fishermen using multiple dinglebar lines will have higher catch rates of lingcod, which will complicate inseason management of these fisheries; the East Yakutat area allocation is already taken in as few as three or four days under the dinglebar single line restriction.

Current Eastern Gulf of Alaska regulations do not limit the number of mechanical jigging machines or hooks that may be used in groundfish fisheries in this area. The proposed limits on jig machines and hooks would standardize the Southeast groundfish fisheries mechanical jig regulations with the rest of the state; i.e. Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, Kodiak, Chignik, and South Alaska Peninsula areas.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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