

**Regional Information Report No. 4K26-01**

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**Fishery Management Plan for the Aleutian Islands  
State-Waters Sablefish Season, 2026**

by

**Asia Beder**

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January 2026

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Commercial Fisheries



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

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**FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS  
STATE-WATERS SABLEFISH SEASON, 2026**

by

Asia Beder

Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Dutch Harbor

Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
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January 2026

The Regional Information Report Series was established in 1987 and was redefined in 2007 to meet the Division of Commercial Fisheries regional need for publishing and archiving information such as area management plans, budgetary information, staff comments and opinions to Alaska Board of Fisheries proposals, interim or preliminary data and grant agency reports, special meeting or minor workshop results and other regional information not generally reported elsewhere. Reports in this series may contain raw data and preliminary results. Reports in this series receive varying degrees of regional, biometric, and editorial review; information in this series may be subsequently finalized and published in a different department reporting series or in the formal literature. Please contact the author or the Division of Commercial Fisheries if in doubt of the level of review or preliminary nature of the data reported. Regional Information Reports are available through the Alaska State Library and on the Internet at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/publications/>.

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*This document should be cited as follows:*

*Beder, A. 2026. Fishery management plan for the Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish season, 2026. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Regional Information Report No. 4K26-01, Kodiak.*

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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 2026 season guideline harvest level is 2,696,000 pounds, which is 5% of the combined estimated sablefish acceptable biological catch (ABC) 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 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 170°W long 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 the 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 2026 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 2026 season.

### 2026 GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVEL

The guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2026 AI state-waters sablefish season is 2,696,000 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 GHF 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 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 2026 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 and 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 ADF&G 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 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (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 2026 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 of Title 50, Part 679 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).<sup>1</sup>

## **STELLER SEA LION CLOSURES DURING STATE-WATERS SEASON**

During the 2026 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.<sup>1</sup>

## **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 on board 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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Code of Federal Regulations is available at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-VI/part-679> (accessed November 25, 2025).

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, 2026. 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 2026 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.

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

## **FIGURES**

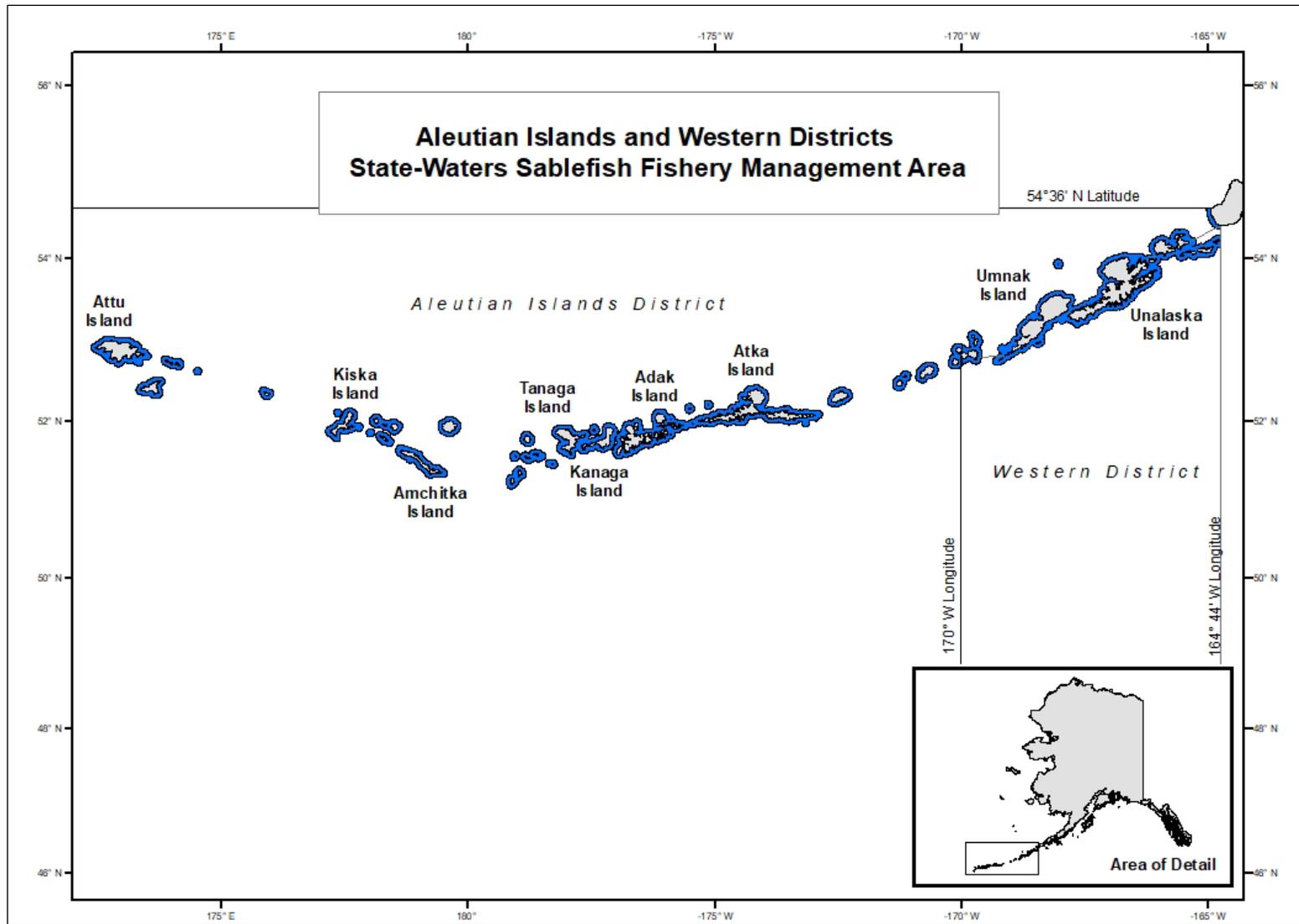


Figure 1.—Aleutian Islands state-waters sablefish fishery management area.

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

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

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**Alaska Department of Fish and Game**

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