

SABLEFISH GEAR SWITCHING – IDENTIFY THE GEAR SWITCHING LEVEL TO USE IN DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES

Council discussions on limiting the use of fixed gear in the trawl individual fishing quota (IFQ) fishery (gear switching) began as part of its review of the trawl catch share program, conducted in 2016 and 2017. During that process, the Council adopted a control date of September 15, 2017. The review was finalized at the November 2017 Council meeting, and at its March 2018 meeting the Council decided to begin a formal process that could culminate in a gear switching limitation. To assist it in those deliberations, the Council appointed the Sablefish Management and Trawl Allocation Attainment Committee (SaMTAAC) in the spring of 2018. The committee provided a final report at the June 2020 Council meeting which included a set of action alternatives to limit gear switching, along with a no action alternative. The Council formally reviewed the [SaMTAAC report](#) at its September 2020 meeting along with a preliminary assessment of trawl under-attainment issues ([Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 1, September 2020](#)), adopted a purpose and need statement, and voted to move forward with considering of a range of alternatives that could limit gear switching for sablefish in the trawl IFQ fishery north of 36° N. lat. (no action continues to be included). At its November 2020 meeting, the Council reviewed the alternatives ([Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 1, November 2020](#); also see [Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 2, November 2020](#) for a summary of decision points within the alternatives) along with a related analysis ([Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 3, November 2020](#)) and asked for an analysis to help identify a level of gear switching that would be used to guide further development of the SaMTAAC recommended alternatives. Each alternative recommended by the SaMTAAC has different gear switching constraints for the short term and long term. Thus, the Council may want to consider gear switching levels for both the short and long term.

The first half of the analysis document (Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1) includes summaries of sections of the September 2020 analysis, augmented as follows.

Section 2.0: Main Factors Influencing Trawl Allocation Attainment

- Trawl strategies most likely to compete with gear switching (Section 2.1)
- Availability of sablefish and related changes in the Dover to sablefish ratios (Section 2.1)
- Analysis of market conditions potentially related to a decline in Dover landings (Section 2.3)

Section 3.0: Future Gear Switching Levels with No Action

- Development of scenarios for assessing possible expansions of gear switching in the absence of a gear switching limitation (Section 3.1)
- A new graphic illustrating the dynamic relationship between sablefish prices and quota pound prices (Section 3.2.2)
- Potential effects of cross participation in Alaska fisheries (Section 3.2.3)

The main analysis of gear switching levels is contained in the second half of the analysis (Section 4.0 of Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1). As requested by the Council, those levels include 0 percent (elimination of gear switching) 12 percent, 20 percent, 33 percent, and the continuation of

unrestricted gear switching (i.e. No Action). To assess the expansion of gear switching under the unrestricted approach, two scenarios were developed: one for an expansion to 40 percent and the other to 52 percent. (see Section 3.1).

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to identify a level(s) of gear switching that will be used to guide further development of the action alternatives. Further development of the action alternatives is tentatively scheduled for the June 2021 Council meeting.

This agenda item has two parts, Part 1 is scheduled to occur on April 13 with the overview, reports and comments of management entities and advisory bodies, and public comment. Council action will occur during Part 2, which is scheduled for April 14.

Council Action:

Select Gear Switching Level to Guide Development of the Gear Switching Alternatives and Provide Other Guidance as Appropriate.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1: Analysis of Gear Switching Levels.
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- F.4 Sablefish Gear Switching – Identify the Gear Switching Level to Use in Developing Alternatives Jim Seger
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Select Gear Switching Level to Guide Development of the Gear Switching Alternatives and Provide Other Guidance as Appropriate

PFMC
03/24/21