

FIXED GEAR MARKING AND ENTANGLEMENT RISK REDUCTION MEASURES ALTERNATIVES SUMMARY

This document provides a synopsis of the alternatives for fixed gear marking and entanglement risk reduction measures and a list of the options for each. Also included in a brief purpose of the alternatives, diagrams of groundfish pot and longline gear configurations, and staff proposed clarifications and questions.

Gear Marking

The gear marking provisions are designed to improve the National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) ability to identify the origins of gear involved in an entanglement. As discussed in Attachment 2, these provisions would have no immediate direct impact on entanglement risks. In the long run, however, they may help efforts to protect large whales and other protected species by enabling the Council and NMFS to design management measures for a specific gear type and/or fishery involved in documented entanglements.

The gear marking action alternatives are gear specific; that is, they would allow pot gear and longline gear in Council-managed groundfish fisheries to be distinguished from each other, and from other fisheries. The distinction between the gear types would be unique colors or combinations of colors for each gear type. By the time of final action (anticipated in June 2024), the Council should specify the gear-specific color(s) or shapes (for buoy tags) that will be used to mark each gear type.

Buoy Marking	
No Action: No marks required	
Alternative 1: Gear Specific mark	
Suboption a: patch, shape, letter on buoy	
Suboption b: cattle-ear tag on buoy	
Line Marking	
No action: No line marking required	
Alternative 1: Gear specific marking	
A. Portion of line marked	
1. Vertical line only	
2. Vertical and Surface line	
B. Distance (length) of mark (of vertical line)	
1. At least top 5 fm	
2. At least top 20 fm	
3. At least top 50 fm	
C. Method of marking	
1. Manufactured line	
2. Temporary marking (of vertical line)	
a. At least every 5 fm	
b. At least every 10 fm	
c. At least every 20 fm	
d. At least every 50 fm	

D. Transition period from temporary to manufactured line	
1. No transition, manufactured line required upon implementation	
2. 5-yr transition	
3. 10-yr transition	
4. Temporary markings and manufactured line allowed indefinitely	

Staff Proposed Clarifications

1. For line marking Alternative 1, any marks on the vertical line using temporary methods would be a minimum of 12 inches. Gear-specific colored manufactured line would be required for the extent of the distance to be marked (B).
2. For line marking Alternative 1, A2, the mark on the surface line would be 36 inches within the first two fathoms of the main buoy.

Questions for Council Consideration Prior to Final Action (scheduled in June)

1. If buoy marking Alternative 1, suboption 2 is selected- what color/shape of buoy tags would be applied for each groundfish gear?
2. If line marking Alternative 1 is selected- what color scheme would be applied for each groundfish gear? Would it be a single or dual color scheme?

Entanglement Risk Reduction

There is no interdependence among the entanglement risk reduction alternatives or with the gear marking alternatives. In other words, the Council could select one, both, or none of the alternatives for entanglement risk reduction. These items are aimed at minimizing the amount of line in the water, decreasing the likelihood of entanglement by whales or other protected species.

Surface Gear Requirements	
No Action: Surface gear required at both ends of gear	
Alternative 1: Surface gear required at only one end	
Surface Line Length Restrictions	
No Action: No maximum surface line length	
Alternative 1: Limit amount of surface line length to	
a. 5 fm	
b. 10 fm	

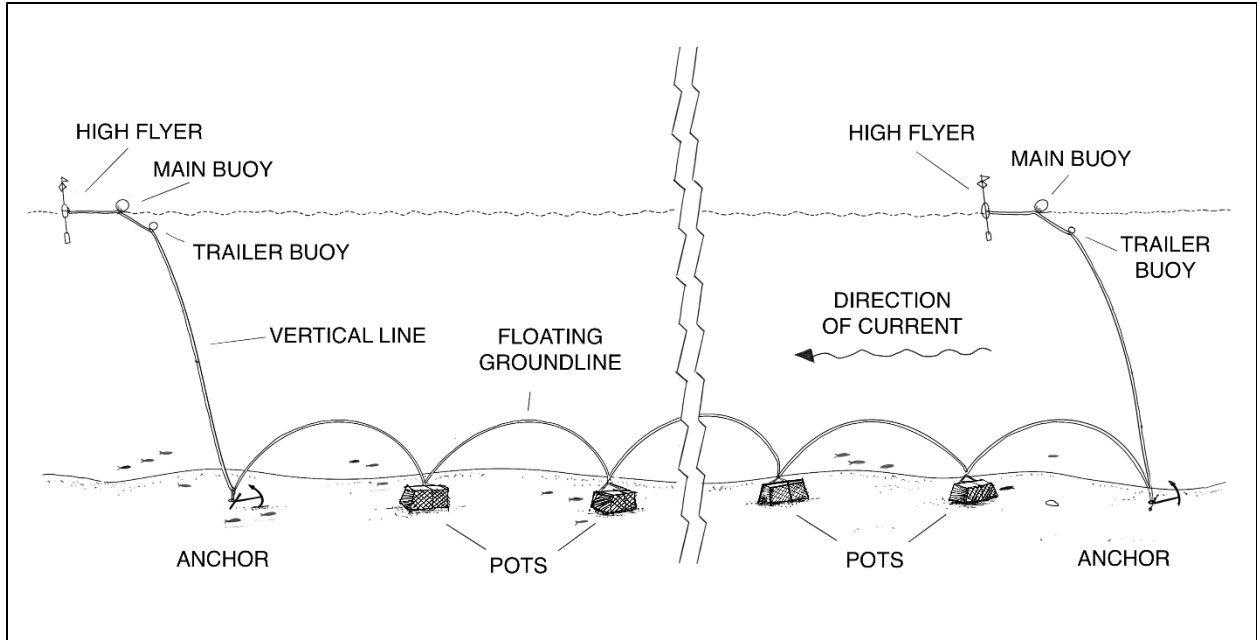


Figure 1. Diagram of groundfish pot gear. Credit: Tom Crestodina/Oregon Sea Grant

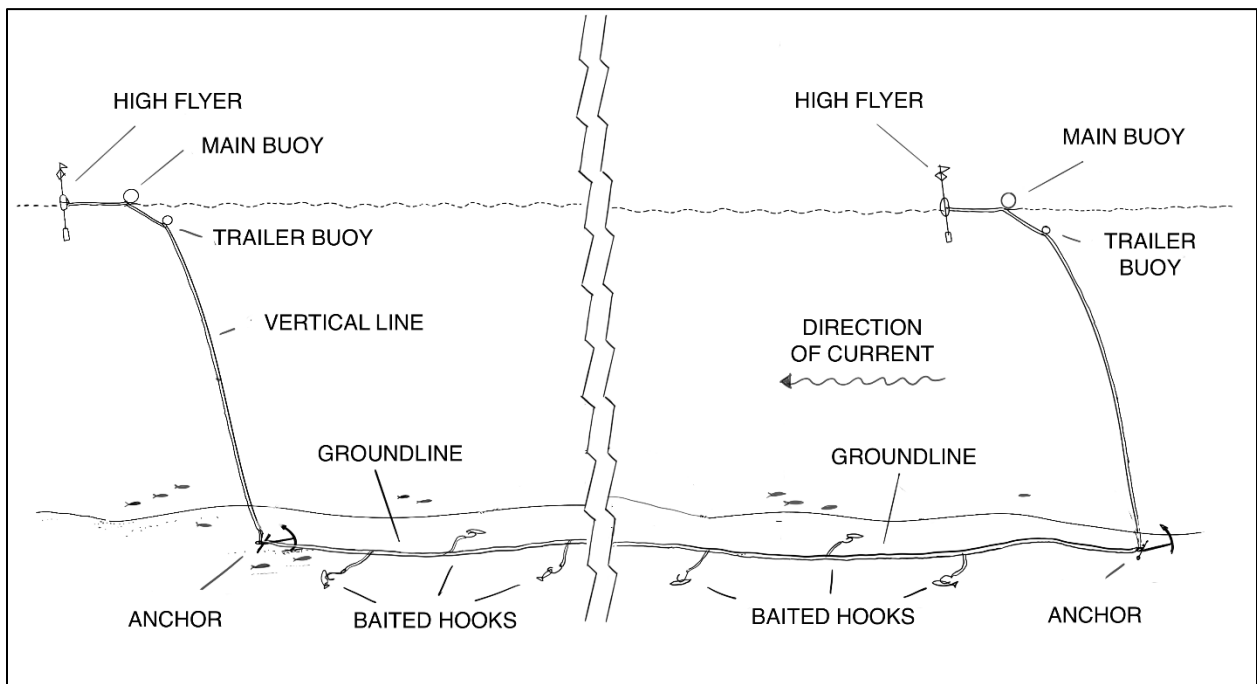


Figure 2. Diagram of groundfish longline gear. Credit: Tom Crestodina/Oregon Sea Grant

Administrative/Other Items

The escape panel requirements are an administrative clarification. The best practices guide, while not an official alternative, is discussed in Attachment 2 and could be a recommendation by the Council to NMFS to develop.

Escape Panel Requirements	
No Action: No change to escape panel regulations	
Alternative 1: Add clarification for escape panel regulations for panel placement on bottom of pot, with exception for slinky pots	

PFMC
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