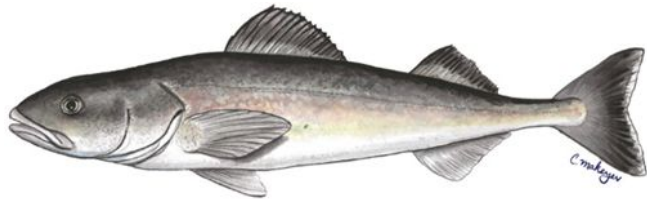


# AFSC Longline Survey Update

## 2025 April Council Meeting Science and Statistical Committee meeting

Alaska Fisheries Science Center Staff



# Longline Survey History

- Annual hook-and-line survey 1979-2023
- Sampled continental slope 200 - 1,000m
- Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska
- Operated on a cost-recovery basis
- Sale of the catch supported vessel costs
- Before 2020 there were two vessel companies but only one since
- ~90 day survey each year



# 2024 Longline Survey Cancellation

- Declining margins and losses in recent years
- Economic value of sablefish declined due to record high abundance and poor markets
- Survey was projected to operate at an economic loss in 2024
- Government contract structure was unable to provide financial guarantee
- In April, the 2024 survey was cancelled



# 2025 Longline Survey Planning - Contract

- Contract was restructured to guarantee a daily rate to remove market volatility risk to vessel
- Daily rate offset by sale of retained catch reduces net cost to government
- Government must obligate full contract amount in order to underwrite the contract
- Vessel days needed to be reduced and survey design re-structured



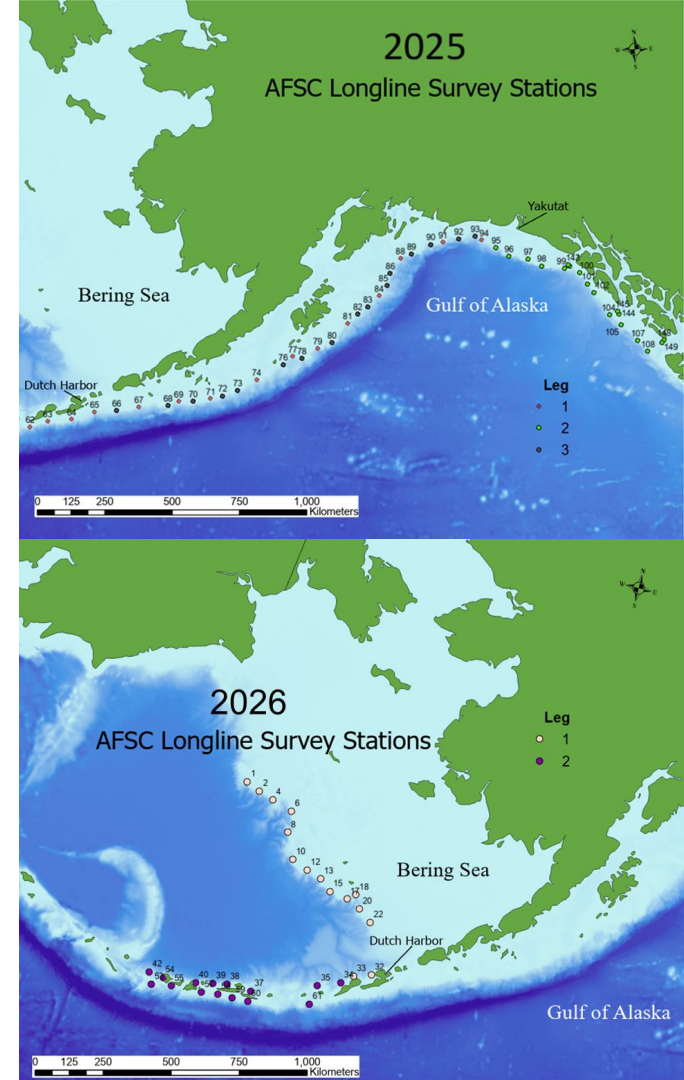
# Longline Survey - Operational Changes

- Geographical areas
- Survey timing
- Effort
- Assessment Impacts



# Longline Survey - Geographic Sampling

- Previously sampled GOA every year and BS or AI every other year - 90 day survey
- 2025 contract proposes sampling GOA in odd years for 50 DAS (2025) and BSAI in even years for 34 DAS (2026)
- AI last sampled in 2022, next in 2026






# Longline Survey - Timing



- Previously sampled June - August on 6 legs
- 2025/2026 Contract proposes June - July on either 3 (GOA) or 2 legs (BS & AI)
- Will work with fleet to avoid survey

2025

Longline  
Survey  
Station  
Schedule



NOAA  
FISHERIES



Alaska Fisheries Science Center

Data collected on the AFSC Longline Survey provides an important index of abundance used in the sablefish stock assessment and is used for assessing several other groundfish stocks. To increase the accuracy of survey results, survey coordinators and stock assessment authors respectfully request that the fishing fleet avoid survey stations by staying at least 3 nautical miles from each station for 7 days before and 3 days after planned sampling dates (3 days after allows for potential survey delays). This will allow the survey vessel to sample stations unencumbered and avoid negative effects on catch rates, calculated population indices, and harvest recommendations. The planned survey schedule and station locations are [listed](#) in this calendar. The vessel for the 2024 survey is the TV Alaskan Leader. While on the grounds, the fleet is encouraged to contact the captain of the survey vessel on VHF channel 38 to coordinate fishing operations and minimize gear interactions. The NOAA survey coordinator, Pat Malachuk, can also be contacted at [pat.malachuk@noaa.gov](mailto:pat.malachuk@noaa.gov).

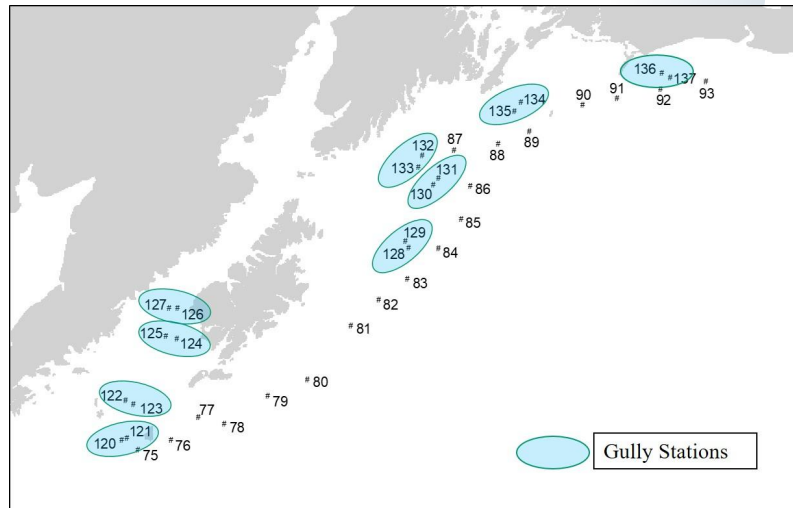


# Longline Survey - Effort

- Core abundance index (RPN) stations
  - 48 in GOA will now be reduced to 46
  - 30 in BSAI will remain the same
- No experimental stations
- No gully non-RPN stations
- Reduced # of transit/port days
- Longer average run between stations



## Gully Stations in Central GOA





# Longline Survey - Assessment Impacts

- Loss of 2 GOA RPN stations
  - Survey staff can provide GOA authors with recalculated RPN index dropping those two stations for time series consideration
  - Evaluate length compositions
- Sampling GOA and BSAI every other year
  - Most assessments are by FMP so creates a biennial survey similar to trawl surveys
  - Sablefish AK-wide has to deal with GOA one year and BSAI a different year
    - Previously had to extrapolate missing area (BS or AI)
    - Evaluate age/length compositions
    - Staff are evaluating best alternatives
      - Preferred application of survey data in sablefish assessment will be presented in September, 2025



**NOAA**  
FISHERIES

# Longline Survey - Future

- Contingent on agency funding
  - 2025 uncertain
  - Operations and vessel costs may increase
- Contingent on agency contracting abilities
  - 2025 uncertain
- Few potential vendors exist
- Contingent on markets rebounding
- Contingent on future catch

