

§ 679.24 Gear limitations.

Regulations pertaining to vessel and gear markings are set forth in this section and as prescribed in the annual management measures published in the *Federal Register* pursuant to § 300.62 of chapter III of this title.

(a) Marking of hook-and-line, longline pot, and pot-and-line gear.

(1) All hook-and-line, longline pot, and pot-and-line marker buoys carried on board or used by any vessel regulated under this part shall be marked with the following:

- (i) The vessel's name; and
- (ii) The vessel's Federal fisheries permit number; or
- (iii) The vessel's ADF&G vessel registration number.

(2) Markings shall be in characters at least 4 inches (10.16 cm) in height and 0.5 inch (1.27 cm) in width in a contrasting color visible above the water line and shall be maintained so the markings are clearly visible.

(b) Gear restrictions

(1) Longline pot gear.

Any person using longline pot gear must treat any catch of groundfish as a prohibited species, except:

- (i) In the Aleutian Islands subarea.
- (ii) While directed fishing for sablefish in the Bering Sea subarea, except as provided in paragraph (c)(4)(ii) of this section.

(2) *[Reserved]*

(3) Trawl footrope.

No person trawling in any GOA area limited to pelagic trawling under § 679.22 may allow the footrope of that trawl to be in contact with the seabed for more than 10 percent of the period of any tow.

(4) BSAI pollock nonpelagic trawl prohibition.

No person may use nonpelagic trawl gear to engage in directed fishing for pollock in the BSAI.

(c) Gear restrictions for sablefish

(1) Gear allocations.

Gear allocations of sablefish TAC are set out under § 679.20.

(2) Eastern GOA regulatory area

(i) General.

(A) No person may use any gear other than hook-and-line and trawl gear when fishing for sablefish in the Eastern GOA regulatory area.

(B) No person may use any gear other than hook-and-line gear to engage in directed fishing for sablefish.

(ii) Sablefish as prohibited species

(A) Trawl gear. When operators of vessels using trawl gear have harvested 5 percent of the TAC for sablefish in the Eastern GOA regulatory area during any year, further trawl catches of sablefish must be treated as prohibited species as provided by § 679.21(b).

(B) Other gear. Operators of vessels using gear types other than those specified in paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section in the Eastern GOA regulatory area must treat any catch of sablefish as a prohibited species as provided by § 679.21(b).

(3) Central and Western GOA regulatory areas; sablefish as prohibited species.

Operators of vessels using gear types other than hook-and-line and trawl gear in the Central and Western GOA regulatory areas must treat any catch of sablefish in these areas as a prohibited species as provided by § 679.21(b).

(4) BSAI.

Operators of vessels using gear types other than hook-and-line, longline pot, pot-and-line, or trawl gear in the BSAI must treat sablefish as a prohibited species as provided by § 679.21(b).

(d) Trawl gear test areas

(1) General.

For purposes of allowing pelagic and nonpelagic trawl fishermen to test trawl fishing gear, NMFS may establish, after consulting with the Council, locations for the testing of trawl fishing gear in areas that would otherwise be closed to trawling.