

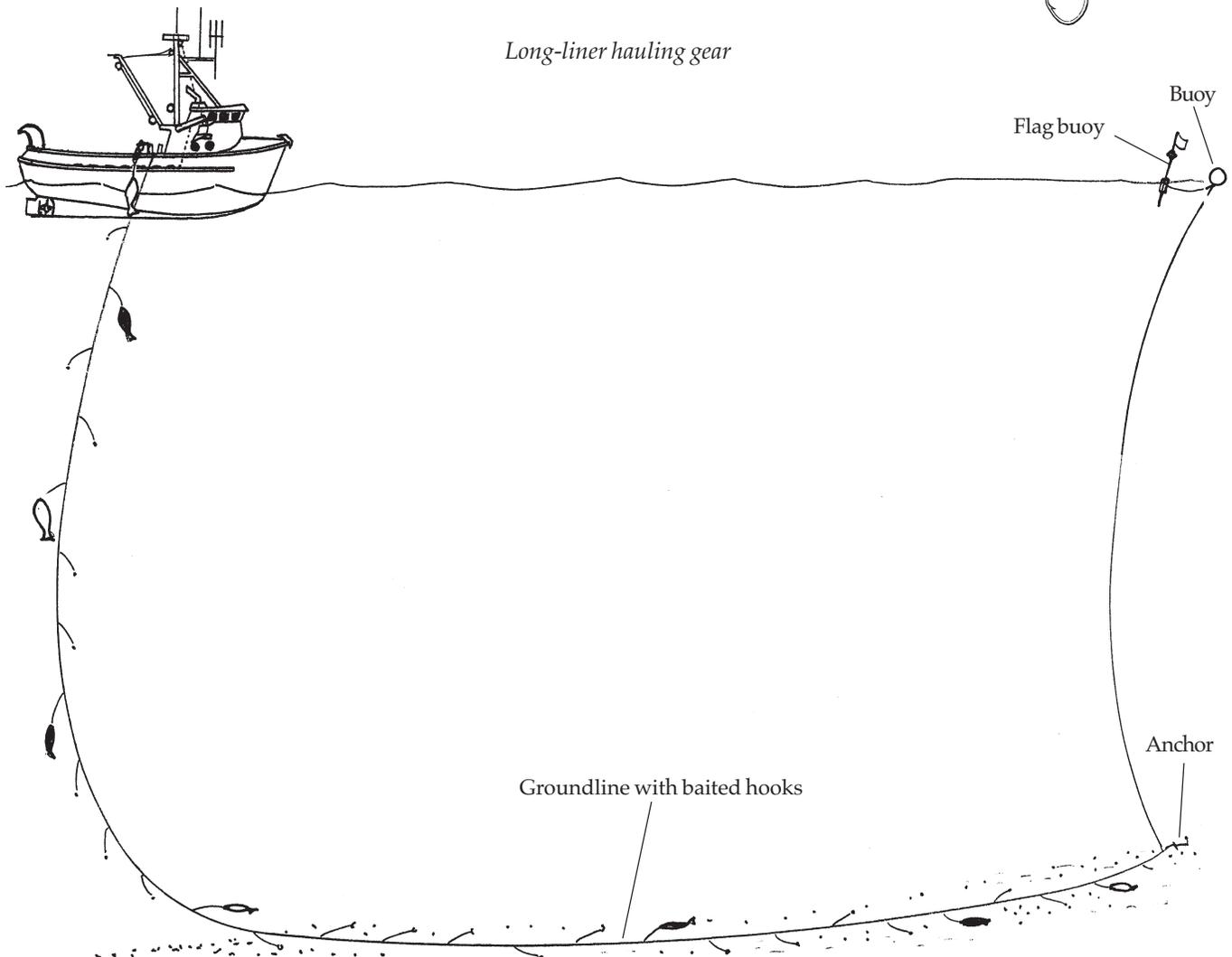
LONG-LINERS

THE GEAR

Long-lining involves using a longline (*ground line*) with baited hooks on leaders attached at intervals. Sablefish (black cod) and halibut are caught on longline gear. The longline is stretched over the bottom, anchored at each end, and marked by surface buoys, poles, and flags. Hook size, spacing, fishing time (*soak time*), and fishing depth vary. Onboard gear consists of poles about 17 feet long with 12- to 14-inch flags and 60-inch round buoys that are usually stored near the pilot house.

Longline boats have a distinctive appearance. The boats have a baiting tent, shed, or table on the stern. Chutes and pulleys are visible and are used in hauling or setting out the longline. The longline or groundlines are stored in tubs. The hooks on the longline are hung on the rim of the tub to keep them from getting tangled. The tubs on the work deck hold the ground line with the hooks placed around the rims.

Longline circle hook





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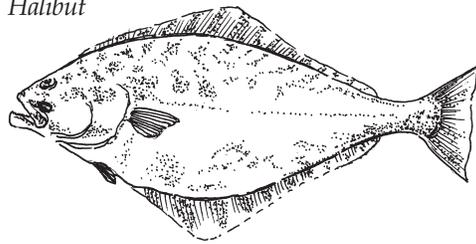
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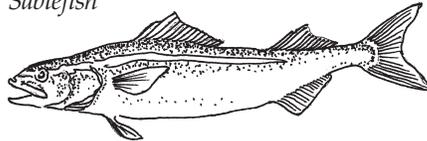


OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Halibut



Sablefish



HALIBUT

A halibut groundline might cover three miles with up to 800 hooks and take three hours to retrieve. The lines are set in 30 to 150 fathoms (1 fathom equals 6 feet) and soaked 6 to 12 hours before hauling. A 100-fathom length of groundline with approximately one hundred hooks is called a *skate*. The line off the groundline to which the hook is attached is called a *gangion*. One or more baited skates tied together and laid out along the bottom with anchors on each end are called a *set*.

SABLEFISH

Spacing for sablefish is much closer than for halibut, with hooks every 3 or 4 feet. They are fished at 100 to 400 fathoms. Sablefish are soft mouthed and can wiggle free of hooks. They also can be consumed by bottom dwellers, so the lines are hauled after four to six hours. The crew baits the hooks, often using herring, octopus, and cod.

Most sablefish are beheaded and gutted, frozen, and exported to

Japanese markets. High in oil content, sablefish make an excellent fish for smoking.

Recruitment is variable, with periodic strong year classes. Strong year classes are thought to be produced by favorable environmental conditions that produce an abundance of copepod zooplankton.

MANAGEMENT

The Pacific Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries are responsible for sablefish regulations. Fishermen operate under an individual quota system in which each permitted vessel is given a share of the catch.

Halibut is managed under a quota system based on area. Oregon and Washington are in area 1. Vessel quotas are based on vessel length. Vessels are allowed their quotas in each of several 10-hour seasons during the summer months.

A bilateral commission from Canada and the United States manages the fisheries. Fish in the Oregon area are juveniles.

Most of the adults are harvested in Alaska. Halibut can grow as large as 500 pounds and 2.7 meters in length (almost 9 feet). Since Oregon is at the southern end of the Pacific halibut range, fishermen catch younger fish, which are seldom over 150 pounds.

In terms of biological management, the Pacific halibut fishery is often cited as an example of a well-managed fishery.

