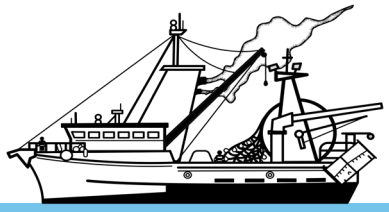
PROTECTING GULF OF ALASKA HABITAT

OCEANA

Bottom trawling disturbs seafloor habitat.[1] Due to ecosystem concerns, fishery managers have limited the footprint of bottom trawling in much of Alaska and along the U.S. West Coast.[2] The Gulf of Alaska* is the last region in the North Pacific where this precautionary approach has not been implemented, leaving millions of acres of seafloor habitat at risk.[3]



In the Gulf of Alaska 91% of seafloor habitat remains open to bottom trawling.

Shelf Habitat
0 - 200 meters

73% OPEN
to bottom trawling

- **HALIBUT** — FEEDING & NURSERY HABITAT
- **COD** — SPAWNING HABITAT
- **SABLEFISH** — NURSERY HABITAT
- **SALMON** — FEEDING & MIGRATION
- **CRAB** — JUVENILE & ADULT HABITAT

+ forage fish
rocky reefs
offshore banks
sea whip groves

Slope Habitat
200 - 1,000 meters

90% OPEN
to bottom trawling

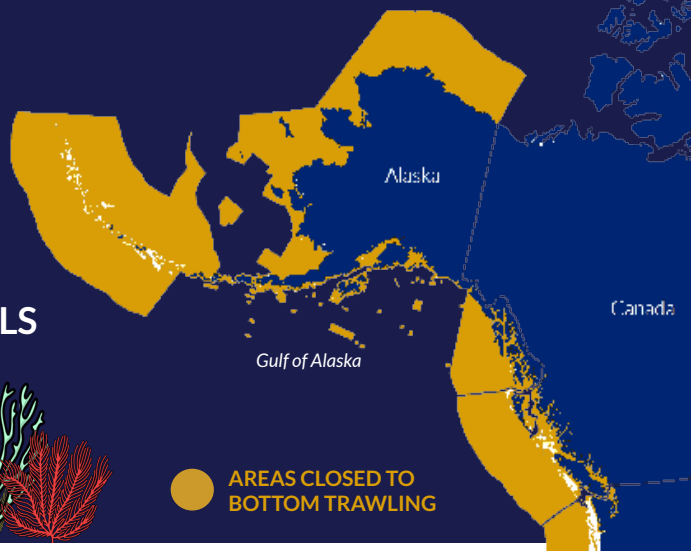
- **ROCKFISH** — FEEDING & SPAWNING
- **HALIBUT** — FEEDING & SPAWNING
- **SABLEFISH** — FEEDING & SPAWNING
- **DEEP SEA CORALS & SPONGES**

Deep Sea Habitat
1,000 + meters

98% OPEN
to bottom trawling

+ OVER 50 SEAMOUNTS,
less than half of which are currently protected

- **SABLEFISH** — DEEPWATER FEEDING HABITAT
- **DEEP SEA CORALS & SPONGES**



By comparison, 46% of the Bering Sea and less than 5% of the Aleutians remain open to bottom trawling.

*For this analysis, the Gulf of Alaska includes U.S. ocean waters from Yakutat (140° W) to the eastern Aleutian Islands (170° W), NMFS statistical areas 610 - 640.

PROTECTING GULF OF ALASKA HABITAT

OCEANA

Utilizing the best available science and an ecosystem approach, fishery managers can apply the same precautionary management in the Gulf of Alaska that has protected seafloor habitat elsewhere in the North Pacific.

HABITAT PROTECTED

	Status Quo	Proposed
CORALS	4%	87%
SPONGES	46%	76%
SEA PENS & SEA WHIPS	16%	61%
COBBLE & BOULDER HABITAT	39%	93%
SEAMOUNTS	52%	100%
SHELF HABITAT	27%	71%
SLOPE HABITAT	10%	45%
DEEP SEA HABITAT	2%	100%

Using this approach, 90% of the Gulf of Alaska would be protected from bottom trawling while preserving 93% of fishing effort.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO READ THE FULL PROPOSAL VISIT:

WWW.OCEANA.ORG/GULFOFALASKA

References:
1. National Research Council. 2002. *Effects of Trawling and Dredging on Seafloor Habitat*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/10323;
2. NPFMC. 2023. *North Pacific Conservation and Spatial Management Areas in Alaska's Exclusive Economic Zone, Area Summaries*. https://www.npfmc.org/wp-content/PDFdocuments/Publications/Conservation_Area_Summaries.pdf;
3. Oceana. 2023. *Gulf of Alaska Seafloor Habitat Protection Proposal, Discussion Draft*. https://usa.oceana.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/06/Oceana_Gulf-of-AK-Habitat-Proposal.pdf