

# PELAGIC TRAWL

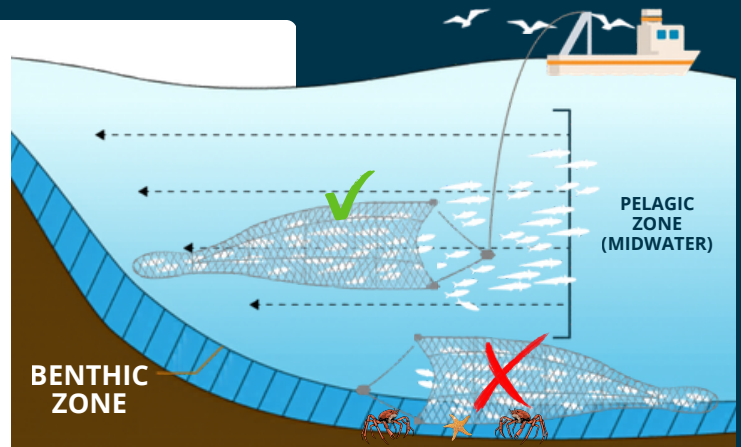
## DEFINITION & PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

### WHAT IS PELAGIC TRAWL?

Pelagic trawl, or midwater trawl, in Alaska is dragging large nets to catch pollock, which are near the seafloor. Though the nets are designed to minimize contact with the seafloor, avoiding benthic habitat and species, pelagic gear accounts for 34% of bottom contact in the North Pacific.

### WHAT IS A PERFORMANCE STANDARD?

A regulatory tool to limit bycatch or habitat impacts by setting specific, measurable benchmarks for fishing behavior.



### IMPACTS OF BOTTOM CONTACT

- Bycatch: the waste of non-targeted species such as halibut & crab
- Effects on crab habitat
- Destruction of seafloor habitat (coral, sponges)
- Releases carbon from the seafloor & inhibits ability to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>

### NPFMC ACTIONS TAKEN

- Updated the pelagic trawl definition in 2025 – the first time since 1993
- Now requires salmon excluders & includes gear innovation
- Does not include seafloor protection devices even though bottom contact is *proven* in “pelagic” trawl

### THE CURRENT STANDARD IS OUTDATED & NEEDS TO BE REVISED!

The Council has the tools to revise the performance standard for pelagic trawl operations and will address this at their June 2026 meeting.



### URGE THE COUNCIL TO:

- Prohibit pelagic trawl in areas closed to bottom trawling
- Set a performance standard of no more than 10% bottom contact for all other areas of the Bering Sea

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