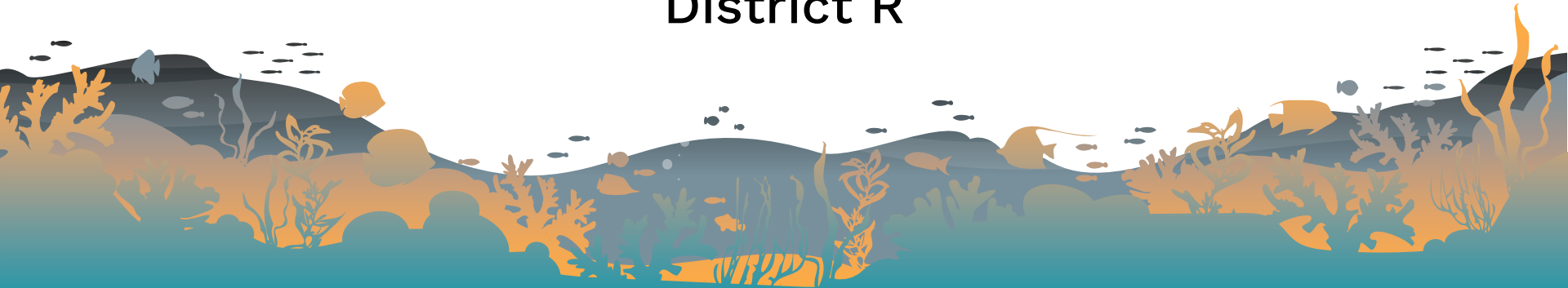


SB 161: Prohibit Bottom Trawling

Senator Mike Cronk
District R



About Bottom Trawling



Bottom Trawling:

- Is a fishing method where large, weighted net is dragged along the seafloor.
 - Is often used to catch groundfish and other species that live near the seafloor.
- Leads to a substantial amount of bycatch - species that were not intended to be harvested, and are often subsequently discarded.
 - In Alaska, common bycatch species are halibut and chinook salmon.
- Is very effective at harvesting massive amounts of fish, but is devastating to our seafloor and marine life.

THE IMPACTS OF BOTTOM TRAWLING - BEFORE AND AFTER

SOURCE: BT REPORT

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IMPACTS:

- Serial resource depletion
- Damage to seafloor integrity and habitats, leading to changes in fish distribution
- Changing the balance of species abundance
- Disrupting biogeochemical cycles and compounding eutrophication
- Reducing carbon sequestration rates

Before bottom trawling

After bottom trawling

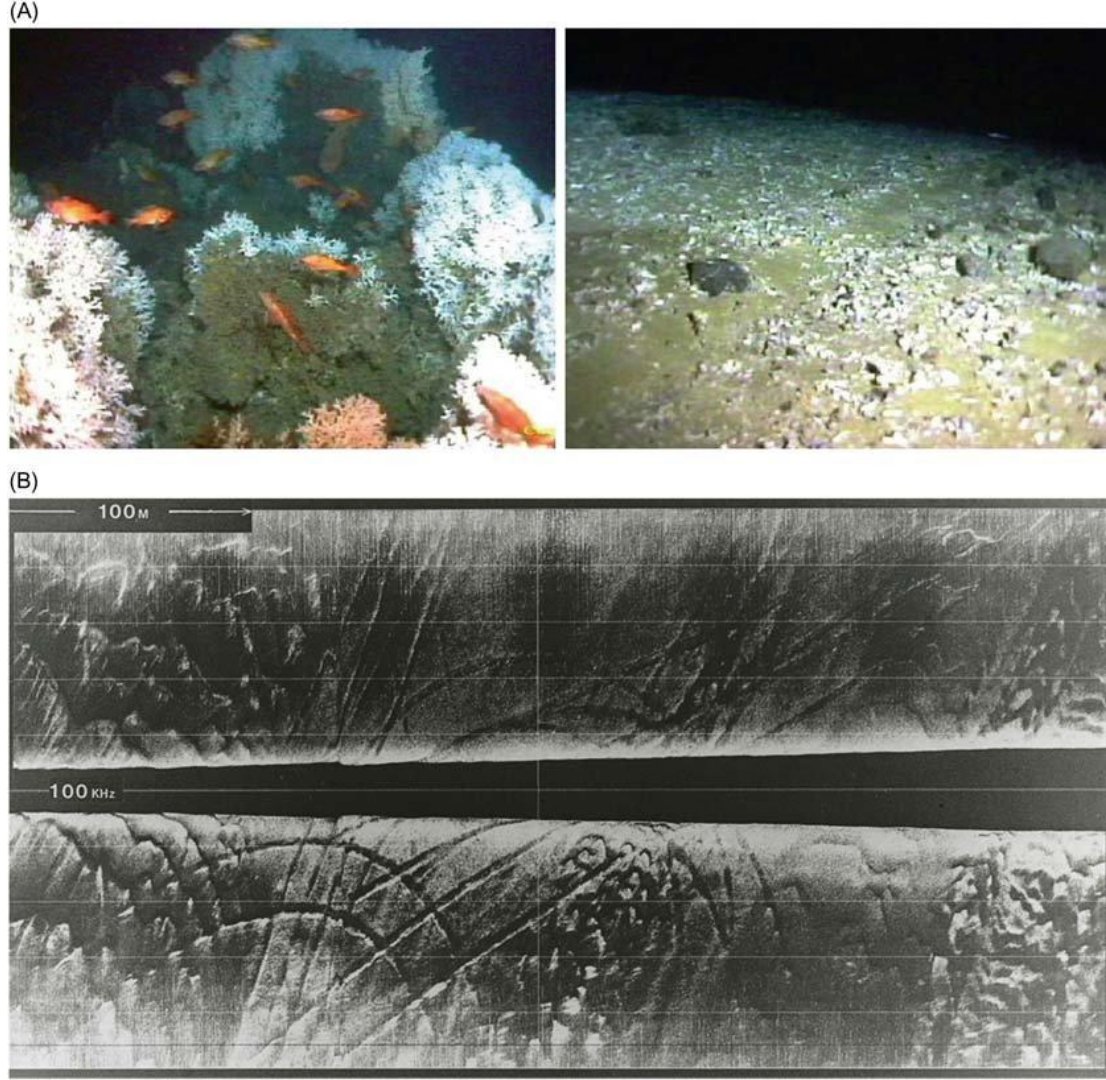
Source: WWF, BT Report

Bottom Trawling: Before & After

(A) Bottom photographs showing seafloor before (left) and after (right) bottom trawling has occurred on deep-sea coral gardens on the continental slope off Norway. Note in photo on right the elongated trawl mark on the seafloor, resulting from dragging trawl doors.

(B) Side scan sonograph showing elongated and curved tracks made by bottom trawl boards on the seabed of Moreton Bay, Australia. Light-toned areas are elongate trains of sand dunes.

Source: (A) Photos from UN Environment/GRID-Arendal, Norway. (B) Image from Geoscience Australia.



Fishery Closure: Kodiak

- Last year, two bottom trawlers accidentally caught over 2,000 chinook salmon while fishing for pollock.
- This led to the emergency closure of the Gulf of Alaska pollock trawl fishery on September 25th, 2024.
- Chinook (king) salmon runs continue to decline around Alaska.



Source: Kodiak Public Broadcasting Corporation

Fishing Closure: Yukon River



- Once strong Chinook and Chum populations in the Yukon River are now at dangerously low levels.
- In 2021, state regulations prevented all salmon fishing in the Yukon River.
- In 2024, a joint agreement between the U.S. and Canada agreed to a 7-year closure of all salmon fishing in the Yukon, including subsistence fishing.
- Individuals and communities who have subsisted on Yukon salmon for thousands of years can no longer fish in their ancestral waters.
- NOAA data shows that, of the 32,000+ chinook salmon taken as bycatch in 2020, 18,195 (56.4%) were from western Alaska stocks - almost all of which were caught by bottom trawlers.

What SB 161 Will Accomplish:

Section 1:

- Bans the use, employment, and operation of bottom trawling or dredging gear in Alaska state waters on **January 1st, 2028**. (Sec. 3)

Section 2:

- Directs ADF&G to study and report, **by Jan 1, 2027**, to include:
 - How Alaska's fish resource has been affected by bottom trawling,
 - The quantities of bycatch, by species, over the past 10 years,
 - Recommendations on whether bottom trawling should be banned or regulated for:
 - The maximum benefit of the people of Alaska,
 - The continued, sustained use yield of Alaska's fish resource.

Questions?

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