# Species Fact Sheet:
# Arrowtooth flounder

*MSC certified May 2010

- **Latin Name:** *Atheresthes stomias*
- **Market/vernacular names:** flounder, arrowtooth
- **Location:** Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA)
- **Fishing Gear:** Bering Sea flatfish gear. This modified gear principally uses sweeps raised off the seafloor by bobbins spaced at 30 meter intervals to herd flatfish into relatively small nets where the fish are captured. Research by NMFS scientists has shown that use of elevated sweeps dramatically reduces effects of fishing on seafloor habitat and associated species such as crab and structure-forming animals called epifauna. This gear will be required for all BSAI flatfish fishing in 2011, and is currently being used voluntarily in the GOA.
- **Season:** BSAI May 1 - December 31; GOA January 20 - December 31
- **Catch/TAC:** BSAI 2014 catch = 19,103 metric tons / 2015 TAC = 25,000 metric tons. GOA 2014 catch = 36,293 metric tons / 2015 TAC = 103,300 metric tons.
- **Products:** The fish is sold H&G (headed & gutted), H&G without tail
- **Size:** Length to 86 cm. Weight to 7.7 kg. (General H&G/T size: 0.5-3.0 kg.)
- **General Information:** Until recently, harvest of arrowtooth flounder mainly occurred as bycatch in other higher valued fisheries. However, with the advent of technologies to improve meat quality and additional markets for arrowtooth flounder, a directed fishery has emerged. Arrowtooth flounder is currently the most abundant groundfish species in the GOA and most of the world's arrowtooth flounder comes from Alaska fisheries. Arrowtooth flounder is harvested as a directed fishery or as bycatch in other fisheries throughout the calendar year, mostly by catcher processors in the BSAI ranging in size from 110 to 295 feet, and by a combination of catcher vessels and catcher processors in the GOA. Catcher processors harvest multiple species, conduct primary processing aboard the vessel, and freeze their products on board. Catcher vessels exclusively deliver to shoreside processors or other vessels.
- **Management:** In 1976, the U.S. established management for arrowtooth flounder stocks out to 200 miles. Federal fishery management plans, adopted through an open and transparent public process and based on sound science, govern the harvest of arrowtooth flounder. The plans have been amended numerous times to achieve continuous improvement in the performance of the fishery. Fishery managers and scientists follow a precautionary, ecosystem-based approach.
- **Improvements:** Industry participants have worked with NMFS scientists to develop Bering Sea flatfish gear. Research by NMFS scientists has shown that use of this gear, which incorporates elevated sweeps, dramatically reduces effects of fishing on seafloor habitat and associated species such as crab and structure-forming animals called epifauna. Research showed that gear modification resulted in a substantial decrease of the trawl sweep contact with seabed and was effective in reducing trawl sweep impact effects to basketstars, sea whips, sponges, and siphons. Additionally, using the modified sweeps reduced estimates of mortality for C. bairdi and C. opilio crabs from 5 percent with conventional sweeps to nearly zero for the modified sweeps.