

# Species Fact Sheet: Yellowfin sole



\*MSC certified May 2010

- **Latin Name:** *Pleuronectes asper* (aka *Limanda aspera*)
- **Market/vernacular names:** sole, flounder
- **Location:** Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI). Yellowfin sole is one of the most abundant flatfish species in the Bering Sea and is the target of the largest flatfish fishery in the United States.
- **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.
- **Season:** January 20 - December 31
- **Catch/TAC:** 2014 catch = 156,795 metric tons / 2015 TAC = 184,000 metric tons
- **Products:** H&G (headed and gutted), whole round and kiriti (fish slices)
- **Size:** Length to 49 cm. Weight to 1.8 kg. (General H&G size: 130-450 grams)
- **General Information:** Yellowfin sole is the largest flatfish fishery in the United States. Alaska is responsible for the majority of the worldwide yellowfin sole catch, harvesting over 107,528 mt in 2009. Yellowfin is harvested throughout the calendar year with most taken in March/April/May and August/September/October. Yellowfin sole is harvested mostly by catcher processors ranging in size from 110 to 295 feet. These vessels harvest multiple species, conduct primary processing aboard the vessel, and freeze their products on board.
- **Management:** In 1976, the U.S. established management for yellowfin sole 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 yellowfin sole. The plan has 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.