Sablefish in Oregon are caught with either bottom trawls, hooks on longlines, or traps on longlines. On a longline trap setup, there can be up to 50 traps attached to each line. The lines are set in water depths of 900 to 4000 feet. Trapezoidal, basket-shaped, and rectangular traps are used. The traps are baited with hake or squid. As the traps are set, they are marked with surface buoys and flag poles.

Back at port, the catch is delivered to local fish markets or seafood processors who ship the fish out to markets all over the world. Most sablefish are processed, frozen, and shipped to Japanese markets.

Sablefish traps have self-destruct panels that are designed to fall apart if the trap is left in the water too long. This keeps the trap from continuing to catch fish if it is lost. “Escape rings” on the trap allow smaller fish to escape.

Sablefish or black cod, *Anoplopoma fimbria*, are found in the deep coastal waters from the western North Pacific and the Bering Sea to California. They are high in healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Although they go by the name black cod, they are not true cod. Black cod are in a different fish family than true cod. True cod have three dorsal fins, while black cod have only two.

Sablefish Fishery Management

In Oregon, sablefish are managed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council under a limited entry program. Harvest is divided among different gear types including traps or hooks on a longline, and bottom trawl.

Sablefish traps are designed to be very selective, thereby reducing bycatch.