

WEBBING FLAP

Another important component of a TED is the exit hole cover or flap. A flap should fit over the exit hole during towing to prevent shrimp loss, yet open easily enough to allow sea turtles and debris to exit.

Most debris encountered during a tow will usually slide to the base of bottom opening TEDs. If not excluded from the TED, this debris can divert water flow and shrimp, out of the exit hole. A properly functioning bottom opening TED should exclude debris as quickly and as often as possible during a tow.

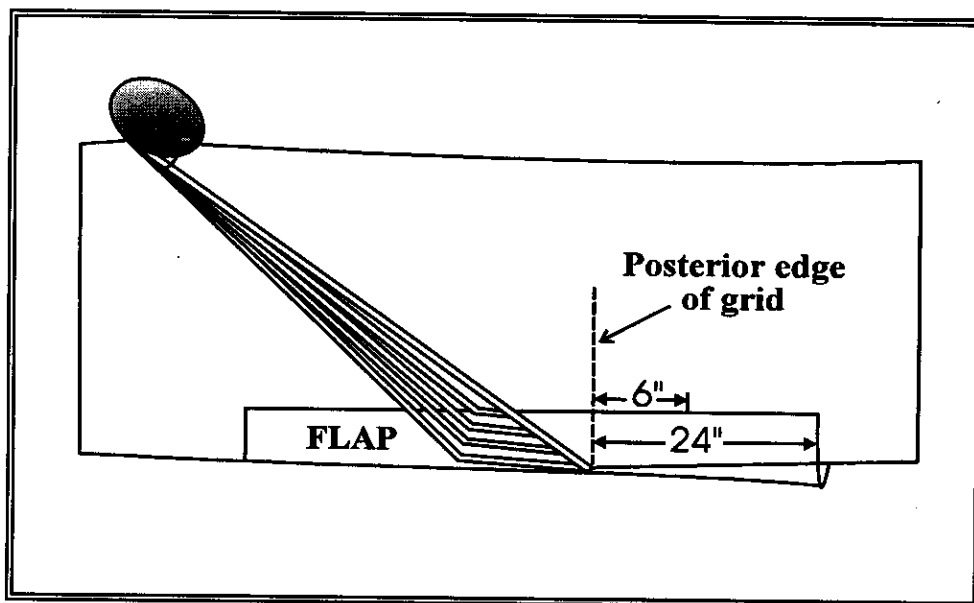


Figure 15 EXTENDED FLAP

NMFS gear researchers working with shrimpers have developed an exit hole and flap which can improve the ability of TEDs to exclude debris and retain shrimp. The "extended flap" can be adapted to any hard TED design (Figure 15).

The extended flap is made from heat-set and depth-stretched polyethylene webbing. A characteristic of this material is that it can return to its original shape after it has been stretched.

The flap extends forward of the TED frame and covers a large exit hole. The large exit hole is important, allowing the polyethylene webbing to stretch over a wide area in order to exclude large objects. Another feature of the extended flap is that it extends behind the TED frame and insures that the exit hole remains sealed when under tow.

Some captains prefer to use a short flap on a bottom opening TED. According to these fishermen, shorter flaps allow the TED to discharge debris more rapidly, reducing the possibility of clogging the TED. In addition, these fishermen report that a flap which has been shortened to leave a 4-inch opening at the base of the TED can result in a substantial reduction in fish bycatch.

TED REGULATION SUMMARY: FLAP LENGTH

A webbing flap may be used to cover the escape opening if no device holds it closed or otherwise restricts the opening, and if:

- 1.) It is constructed of webbing with a stretched mesh size no larger than 1-5/8-inch (4.1 cm).**
- 2.) Is attached along the entire forward edge of the escape opening**
- 3.) Is not attached on the sides more than 6-inches (15.2 cm) beyond the posterior edge of the grid.**
- 4.) Does not extend more than 24-inches (61.0 cm) beyond the posterior edge of the grid.**