

**PROPOSAL 1**

**5 AAC 28.647. Aleutian Islands Subdistrict Pacific Cod Management Plan.**

Coordinate season opening dates, clarify reporting and landing requirements, and require pot vessels to deliver their catch prior to hauling stored gear after the fishery closure, as follows:

AAC 28.647(c)(2)(A) is amended to read:

(c) The commissioner shall open and close, by emergency order, a state-waters season in the Aleutian Islands Subdistrict as follows:

...

(2) all waters of the Aleutian Islands Subdistrict shall open as follows:

(A) for nonpelagic trawl gear, pot gear, longline gear, hand troll gear, and mechanical jigging machines four days after the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands parallel "A" season for the catcher-vessel greater than or equal to 60 feet in overall length pot gear fishery is closed **or at 12:00 noon Alaska standard time on March 15, whichever is earlier;**

(B) for vessels over 60 feet in overall length using nonpelagic trawl gear and vessels over 100 feet in overall length using pot gear, at 12:00 noon **Alaska standard time** on March 15;

5 AAC 28.647 is amended to read:

(d) During a state-waters season,

...

(3) a vessel used to harvest Pacific cod when

...

(B) all waters all waters of the Aleutian Islands Subdistrict are open under (c)(2) of this section, with

(iii) nonpelagic trawl gear, may not be more than 60 feet in overall length prior to 12:00 noon **Alaska standard time** on March 15, and may not be more than 100 feet in overall length after 12:00 noon **Alaska standard time** on March 15;

(iv) pot gear, may not be more than 100 feet in overall length prior to 12:00 noon **Alaska standard time** on March 15 and may not be more than 125 feet in overall length prior to 12:00 noon **Alaska standard time** on March 15;

...

(6) a vessel may harvest up to 150,000 **round** pounds of Pacific cod per day and may not have more than 150,000 **round** pounds of unprocessed Pacific cod on board the vessel at any time; a vessel may not have on board the vessel more processed fish than the round weight equivalent of the fish reported on ADF&G fish tickets; [A VALIDLY REGISTERED VESSEL MUST REPORT DAILY TO THE DEPARTMENT THE POUNDS OF PACIFIC COD TAKEN AND ON BOARD THE VESSEL;]

...

**(8) once an offload begins, a vessel may not operate groundfish gear until all Pacific cod onboard the vessel has been delivered. Partial deliveries may occur as described in 5 AAC 28.070; however, vessels may not operate groundfish gear in between partial deliveries including partial deliveries to shorebased processors, floating processors, tenders, transporters, or motherships;**

**(9) in the state-waters season, a participating vessel owner or operator must report, as specified on the registration form, to the local representative of the department**

**(A) the amount of gear operated by the vessel during the designated period;**

**(B) the number of pounds of Pacific cod retained during the designated period; and**

**(C) any other information that the commissioner determines is necessary for the management and conservation of the fishery.**

**(k) At the time of the closure for the Aleutian Islands Subdistrict Pacific cod state-waters season, all fishing gear must be completely removed from the water, except that pot gear may be stored in the water with all bait and bait containers removed and doors secured fully open. Pot gear stored in the water after closure of the state-waters season may not be retrieved until all Pacific cod onboard the vessel has been delivered.**

**(l) For the purposes of this section,**

**(1) “day” means the 24-hour period of time between 12:00 midnight and 11:59 p.m. of the same calendar day;**

**(2) “harvest” or “catch” means the total weight (or total number) of fish or shellfish removed from the water by commercial fishing operations.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Currently, the Aleutian Islands Subdistrict (AIS) state-waters Pacific cod management plan provides for three triggered season

opening dates based on geographic location, vessel size, and gear type. The second triggered season opening date was established in 2020 and opens the AIS to pot gear vessels between 61 and 100 feet overall length (OAL) four days after the federal/parallel Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands “A” season for catcher-vessels greater than or equal to 60 feet OAL pot gear fishery closes. This opening also expands the fishery from waters of the Adak Section (state waters between 175° and 178° W longitude) to all waters of the AIS to all other vessels eligible to fish at that time (pot, nonpelagic trawl, and jig gear vessels less than or equal to 60 feet OAL and longline vessels 58 feet OAL or less). The third triggered opening occurs on March 15 and allows trawl gear vessels up to 100 feet OAL and pot gear vessels up to 120 feet OAL to enter the fishery.

Since 2010, the federal over 60 pot gear closure needed to trigger the second AIS season opening predominantly occurred before March 15, except in 2015 and 2016 when the fishery closed on June 10. As written, if the federal over 60 pot fishery does not close at the time of the third regulatory AIS season opening date on March 15, only pot vessels over 100 feet OAL and nonpelagic trawl gear vessels over 60 feet OAL are permitted to fish outside the Adak Section which is inconsistent with historical practice and intent of this management plan. Therefore, the department seeks to clarify that if the second AIS triggered season opening date has not occurred at the time of the third triggered opening on March 15, the second opening date becomes null and all waters of the AIS shall open at 12:00 noon on March 15 to all vessels eligible to participate in the AIS. Additionally, since the subdistrict covers two time zones, the department seeks to clarify that all closure and opening times are in Alaska time, not Hawaii-Aleutian time.

Regulations governing partial offloads that occur during the season are poorly specified in the AIS state-waters Pacific cod management plan. Vessels are required to retain all Pacific cod brought onboard during a directed Pacific cod fishery and are limited to harvesting or delivering no more than 150,000 round pounds per day. Occasionally, vessels are unable to deliver their full 150,000 harvest limit due to processor or tender capacity limits and an unreported amount of Pacific cod remains onboard the vessel after a partial landing. Existing regulation is unclear on whether a vessel can resume fishing after a partial offload occurs. Inseason management and harvest limit compliance depend on accurate catch accounting. Therefore, the department seeks to clarify that all Pacific cod onboard must be delivered before a vessel can start fishing again and that a vessel may not operate groundfish gear in between partial deliveries.

Harvest reporting requirements are poorly defined in current regulation. Clarifying reporting times, what information the department requires, and how vessels provide fishery reports will assist the department in managing this fishery. Landing requirements at the time of season closure are additionally undefined in regulation. Adding provisions that requires all trawl, longline, and jig gear be removed from the water and pot gear be either removed from the water or open and unbaited at the time of the closure will aid enforcement and catch accounting for this fishery. Also amending regulation to specify that pot vessels must deliver all fish onboard before retrieving stored gear after the fishery closure is consistent with other regional state-waters fishery regulations.

**PROPOSED BY:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-F22-043)  
\*\*\*\*\*