

MANAGEMENT PLAN AND REGULATORY GUIDE FOR KING AND COHO SALMON
IN THE SOUTHEAST ALASKA/YAKUTAT SUMMER TROLL FISHERY, 2003



by

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and
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
LIST OF FIGURES	3
AUTHORS.....	4
FOREWORD	4
INTRODUCTION	5
2003 SUMMER SEASON DATES.....	5
GENERAL SUMMER TROLL FISHERY	5
MANAGEMENT APPROACH	6
KING SALMON.....	6
Management Objectives.....	6
Management Methods.....	6
General Summer Fishery	6
Projected 2003 King Salmon Harvests	7
Preliminary Total Troll Fishery Harvest for the 2003 Season	8
COHO SALMON.....	8
Management Objectives.....	9
Management Methods.....	9
Allocation Actions	10
Tentative 2003 Summer Season Schedule	11
OPEN AREAS DURING 2003 GENERAL SUMMER TROLL SEASON	12
REGULATION CHANGES ESTABLISHED IN 2003	13
REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO COMMERCIAL TROLL BYCATCH OF GROUND FISH AND HALIBUT	14
RULES PERTAINING TO SWITCHING BETWEEN COMMERCIAL TROLL GEAR AND MECHANICAL JIG/DINGLEBAR GEAR.....	15
SPORT FISHING FROM A COMMERCIALLY LICENCED TROLL VESSEL.....	15
REGIONAL AQUACULTURE TERMINAL HARVEST AREAS	15
SITKA SOUND AND NEETS BAY CHUM SALMON PLANS FOR 2003	16
Sitka Sound	16
Neets Bay	16
FISHERY CONTACTS.....	28
SOUTHEAST ALASKA TROLL WEBSITE.....	28

LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 1. General summer catch reporting districts, 2003.....	17
Figure 2. Fisheries performance data program data reporting areas in Southeast Alaska.....	18
Figure 3. Southeast Alaska areas closed to trolling for all species following the initial king salmon opening in the Southeast Alaska summer troll season.....	19
Figure 4. Inseason linear regression model using average power troll catch per boat per day to predict the wild (top) and total (bottom) Southeast Alaska commercial coho salmon catch.	20
Figure 5. Juneau area general summer trolling areas and seasons, 2003.....	21
Figure 6. Trolling times and areas beginning August 7 for the Yakutat area, 2003.....	22
Figure 7. Ketchikan area general summer trolling areas and seasons, 2003.....	23
Figure 8. Petersburg/Wrangell area general summer trolling areas and seasons, 2003.....	24
Figure 9. Deep Inlet THA (113-38).....	25
Figure 10. Silver Bay and Eastern Channel SHA for chum (113-35). Sitka area summer fisheries, 2003.	26
Figure 11. Neets Bay SHA for chum fisheries, 2003.	27

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FOREWORD

This plan summarizes the management approach the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) will employ during the 2003 Southeast Alaska/Yakutat commercial salmon summer troll fishery for king and coho salmon, and provides some of the regulatory information formerly found in the troll regulatory guide. Beginning in 1998 the department reformatted the commercial troll fishing regulations based on the troll regulatory guide model. As a result, most of the former regulatory guide information is now found in the standard regulation books available at local ADF&G offices.

INTRODUCTION

The Southeast Alaska/Yakutat commercial salmon troll fishery occurs in State of Alaska and Federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters east of Cape Suckling and north of Dixon Entrance. The fishery is managed according to regulations promulgated by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board), the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC). The department, under emergency order authority, conducts inseason management. In 2003, the all-gear king salmon fishery will be managed to achieve a harvest target based on the “U.S./Canada bilateral agreement for the Southeast Alaska all-gear king catch” (BLA). The BLA specifies a harvest based on a relationship between a preseason Abundance Index (AI) generated by the Pacific Salmon Commission’s Chinook Technical Committee and a target harvest rate specified in the BLA. The BLA also provides for an inseason adjustment to the harvest level based on an assessment of inseason data. Coho salmon will be managed to ensure escapement goals and to achieve board allocation guidelines. Coho salmon near Dixon Entrance will be managed in cooperation with Canada according to the BLA.

This management plan discusses the management objectives and methods used to achieve board, NPFMC, NMFS, and PSC policies and goals for the commercial summer troll fishery. This plan covers commercial trolling for king, coho, and chum salmon. Other species caught and retained by trollers are considered incidental.

2003 SUMMER SEASON DATES

General Summer Troll Fishery

July 1 through September 20. King salmon may be harvested only during open periods announced by the department. The coho salmon season may be extended no more than 10 days (September 21 through September 30) in Districts 101 through 116 (Figure 1) depending on run strength (5 AAC 29.110).

MANAGEMENT APPROACH

King Salmon

The majority of the king salmon harvested in the Alaska troll fishery are wild and hatchery stocks originating in British Columbia, Canada, Washington, and Oregon. As a result, the Southeast Alaska king salmon harvest is managed on an annual, all-gear catch quota established by the United States and Canada through the PSC. The ceiling is now abundance-based, with increased quotas when abundance is high, and vice versa. In addition to the catch ceiling of treaty fish, provisions of the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) administered by the PSC provide for an additional harvest of king salmon that have been produced in Alaskan hatcheries (add-on). The all-gear add-on is equal to the total number of hatchery king caught, minus the pre-treaty production of king salmon (5,000), and a risk adjustment factor.

Management Objectives

1. Achieve the allowable king salmon harvest.
2. Maximize the harvest of Alaska hatchery-produced king salmon.
3. Manage the fishery according to the board's Summer Salmon Troll Fishery and Coho Salmon Troll Fishery Management Plans (5 AAC 29.100 and 5 AAC 29.110).
4. Continue the coastwide natural king salmon stock-rebuilding program.
5. Achieve catch allocations among user groups as mandated by the board.
6. Minimize the incidental mortality of king salmon to the extent practicable.

Management Methods

General Summer Fishery

Historically, the majority of king salmon are taken during the general summer opening when the majority of waters, including the outside waters, are open to trolling. Unlike the spring fishery, a quota is set for management of king salmon. Determining when the general summer season for king salmon must be closed to stay within the allowable harvest is one of the major functions of the department's troll management plan. Tabulating the up-to-date troll catch is difficult due to the large number of fish tickets and the difficulty of receiving them from remote areas in a timely manner. Therefore, a Fisheries Performance Data (FPD) program, consisting of confidential interviews with commercial trollers as they deliver catches, is used to estimate daily catch rates in six areas (Figure 2). The total number of days the fishery will be open for king salmon retention is calculated by dividing the summer season harvest goal by the estimated daily catch by the troll fleet. From 1992 through 1995 and again in 2000 and 2001, the department announced a fixed number of days beginning July 1 due to the low number of king salmon available for harvest. From 1996–1999, the department returned to inseason management. For 2003, the department will manage the first opening period in season. Inseason management for 2003 is preferable because the very large king quota makes it more difficult to project the number of days it will take to harvest the quota. The department will manage the summer troll season according to the board management plan (5 AAC 29.100), which calls for

harvesting 70% of the remaining king salmon troll quota (see next section) in an initial opening beginning July 1. The remainder of the king salmon quota is to be harvested following any closure for coho salmon conservation and/or allocation in August. The management plan also calls for all areas to be open during the July 1 opening. Following the first king opening, the areas of high king abundance (Figure 3) will be closed unless fewer than 30% of the total remaining number of king salmon were harvested in the first opening. In addition, during the second king salmon opening, if the department determines after 10 days that the annual troll king salmon harvest ceiling might not be reached by September 20, the commissioner shall reopen by emergency order the areas of high king salmon abundance.

The hatchery add-on is calculated in season through port sampling programs. King salmon are sampled for the presence of adipose fins. The heads from fish missing adipose fins are then sent to the Juneau mark, tag and age lab for processing. Coded wire tags are removed from the heads and decoded. The number of Alaskan hatchery fish is calculated by expanding the number of Alaskan hatchery-produced king salmon in the sampled catch by the total catch.

Projected 2003 King Salmon Harvests

The king salmon fisheries will be managed according to the BLA. In addition to the pre-treaty “base catch,” of 3,700 king salmon, Alaska hatcheries are projected to contribute approximately 6,000 king salmon to the summer troll harvest for a total of 15,500 Alaska hatchery king salmon. The actual hatchery add-on will be determined in season and finalized postseason from CWT estimates.

At the February 1997 Board of Fisheries meeting, sharing percentages were established for the recreational and commercial troll and net king salmon fisheries (not including Alaska hatchery king). The commercial troll fishery was allocated 80% and the recreational fishery 20% of the PST quota, after subtracting 4.3% from the total for the purse seine fisheries, 7,600 for the drift gillnet fishery, and 1,000 for the setnet fishery. Each group is responsible for proportionally sharing the 5,000 pre-treaty king salmon harvest and risk adjustment factors.

The Chinook Technical Committee (CTC) of the PSC has determined that the king salmon abundance index for Southeast Alaska for 2003 is 1.79. This abundance index equates to an all-gear quota for treaty king salmon of 366,100 fish. This abundance is 9,600 fish higher than 2002 and is the highest allowable catch since the PST has been in effect (1985). The large king quota is due to significant increases in abundance projections over the past several years for nearly all stock groups that are harvested in the Southeast Alaska all-gear king salmon fishery. According to the BOF allocation plan outlined above, the troll fishery allocation of the treaty quota is approximately 273,400 fish. The summer troll quota is calculated by adding the winter treaty harvest (46,430 fish), the spring treaty harvest (estimated 20,300 fish), the pre-treaty Alaska hatchery harvest (3,700 fish), and a statistical risk factor surrounding the Alaska hatchery contribution estimate of 1,000 fish, and subtracting this sum from the troll allocation. This results in a summer troll quota of approximately 202,000 fish. In addition, under the BOF plan, 70% of the summer quota is to be harvested during the first summer opening beginning July 1. Therefore, the target catch for the first opening will be approximately 141,400 treaty fish, plus an estimated 3% Alaska hatchery fish, or a total first summer opening target catch of 145,800 fish. The second king opening treaty target catch is projected to be approximately 61,000 fish. However, the actual target will be dependent upon the actual catch in the first king opening and any changes in the actual spring fishery catch.

Preliminary Total Troll Fishery Harvest for the 2003 Season

TROLL KING CATCHES IN THOUSANDS					
Treaty Quota	Seine	Drift GN	Set GN	Sport	Troll
366,130	15,700	7,600	1,000	68,400	273,400
2003 Troll Numbers:			Total	Hatchery	Treaty Fish
		Winter	50,810	4,380	46,400
		Spring	29,000	8,700	20,300
				Pre-Summer Total:	66,700
				Pre-treaty hatchery and statistical risk factor:	4,700
				Total pre-Summer:	71,400
	Summer Total = Troll - Pre-summer total - Pre-treaty and risk factor:				202,000
	273,430 – 66,100				
	Projected First Summer Treaty Fish Target = 70% summer total =				141,400
	Projected Second Summer Treaty Fish Target = Summer total-First summer =				60,600

The department will update the preseason projection of abundance with actual fishery catch and effort statistics immediately following the closure of the first opening. Any adjustments to the targeted all-gear harvest based on this inseason data will be made as soon as possible.

Based on past fishery performance at similar abundance levels of treaty king salmon, it is estimated that the fishery will last approximately 10 days. However, effort and catch rates are highly variable and because the projected fishery length is based on historical effort levels the actual length of the first opening could be significantly different than projected. Closure announcements and any updates will be made via U.S. Coast Guard marine advisory broadcasts and trollers are advised to either listen to the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Advisory broadcasts daily or stay in close contact with the department or processors for any such announcements.

Following the closure of the initial summer king salmon period, all king salmon must be offloaded prior to resuming trolling for other species.

Coho Salmon

Most coho salmon harvested in the troll fishery are of Alaska origin. They spawn in approximately 2,500 streams in Southeast Alaska during the fall and early winter months. Coho salmon catches were depressed in the mid to late 1970s but improved through most of the 1980s and 1990s. The 2002 catch was 1.3 million fish, with a 2-day August closure.

Troll fishery catches of coho salmon in outer coastal areas generally peak during mid-July to mid-August. Catches in inside fisheries generally peak during late August to mid-September. Most coho salmon migrate into spawning streams between late September and mid-October.

Early in the season, coho salmon stocks returning to southern Southeast Alaska are harvested by the troll fishery in northern and central outside areas where they intermingle with coho salmon bound for northern

and central areas of the region. Management of coho salmon is based on aggregate abundance. Lack of a general coho salmon stock identification technique prevents assessment of run strength of individual stock groups contributing to these early-season mixed stock fisheries. Hatchery coho salmon production (almost entirely from Southeast Alaska facilities) first became significant in 1980. The contribution of hatchery coho salmon since then has varied from 0.4% of the total troll catch in 1980, 13.0% in 1986, 5.5% in 1988, and 20 to 26% from 1997 through 2002. The 2002 Alaska hatchery contribution was 26%.

Management Objectives

1. Provide adequate escapement of coho salmon, by area, to ensure sustainable populations.
2. Provide maximum opportunities for harvest consistent with conservation objectives.
3. Manage the coho salmon fisheries to achieve allocations consistent with board regulations.
4. Manage coho salmon on the U.S./Canada border to comply with provisions of the BLA.

Management Methods

As with king salmon, the department's primary tool for inseason assessment of coho salmon catch rates is a program of dockside interviews with vessel skippers. Catches by the net fisheries are obtained from fish tickets, while the recreational catch is estimated from a creel census conducted by the Sport Fish Division. An assessment of run strength using troll catch per unit of effort (CPUE) data from the FPD program occurs in mid to late-July. Information available on individual coho salmon indicator stocks will also be considered in management actions.

Catch rates will be assessed in Southern Southeast Alaska from mid- through late-July to assess run strength of early-run coho salmon returning to systems in both Canada and the U.S., near the border. If run strength is weak, areas of Districts 101–104 may close for conservation for up to three weeks, from late July through mid-August, as per the terms of the June 1999 PST agreement.

Projected total season troll coho salmon harvests will be used as a relative index of total run size. Analysis of the FPD program has shown that the average area-wide catch-per-day (adjusted for the maximum number of troll vessels observed during aerial surveys) for Statistical Weeks 28 and 29 (average week ending date is July 19) for the years 1996 to 2001 is a good predictor of the all-gear total and wild coho salmon catch (Figure 4). If the projected overall run size is less than 1.1 million wild fish, the department will implement a 7-day conservation closure beginning sometime in late July (5 AAC 29.110). In 2003, the department will make this projection during the third or fourth week of July. (Figure 4). The 2002 catch and effort data was not used for this projection due to the eighteen-day initial king retention period interfering with normal coho fishing patterns during weeks 28 and 29. If the 2003 initial king retention period is longer than two weeks, the week 30 and 31 catch and effort data (including 2002 data) may be used for catch projections although the relationship between catch and effort are not quite as good ($R^2 = 0.76$) as for the Statistical Week 28–29 period.

The department will continue to monitor all coho fisheries after this period to determine if the number of coho salmon reaching inside areas will be adequate to provide for spawning requirements, given normal or even restricted inside fisheries. The primary abundance indicators for this assessment consist of relative harvest levels by all fisheries and, in particular, CPUE of wild fish in inside drift gillnet and sport fisheries compared to 1971–1980 levels. An assessment will be made in early August to determine when and how long to close the troll fishery for conservation and allocation purposes.

Cumulative catch per day of wild fish will be monitored in each of the six FPD areas (Figure 2) through August to assess run strength in each of the areas. Data will be compared with catches and CPUE within these areas and, if necessary, the department will implement area-specific closures.

The department, in years of high abundance, may extend the troll season through September 30 in portions of Districts 101 through 116 if there are no conservation concerns. The department will consider the following data in determining if an extension is warranted:

1. Total run size projection,
2. total harvests to date by gear by area,
3. CPUE relative to previous years by gear by area,
4. percent of hatchery fish in the catch relative to previous years,
5. survival projections for hatchery and wild stocks, and
6. inseason escapement data.

The department will announce any extensions, if warranted, during the week of September 14.

Allocation Actions

The board has established long-term allocation goals for the coho salmon harvest by each commercial gear type. Target percentages established by the board are 61% for troll, 19% for purse seine, 13% for drift gillnet, and 7% for set gillnet. The board stated that subsistence, personal use, and recreational harvests of coho salmon are not affected by the established allocations between commercial gear types. The board also stated that:

“These percentages are guidelines only and may vary from season to season given natural fluctuations in salmon abundance and distribution and the limitations of fisheries management. It is, however, the board’s intent that these allocation guidelines be met as closely as possible over the long term. It is not the board’s intent for the department to disrupt any of the traditional commercial fisheries that the historical allocation is founded. The department may, however, make inseason adjustments to attempt to achieve these long term allocation guidelines.”

The department will, however, implement applicable, existing regulations (5 AAC 29.100). These regulations are:

1. A region-wide troll closure for up to 10 days is required during the coho salmon season to address allocations between outer coastal fisheries and inside water fisheries if the department determines that the proportional share of coho salmon harvest by the troll fishery is larger than that of inside gillnet and recreational fisheries compared to the 1971–1980 levels. Primary inside fishery indicators for this assessment are overall coho salmon harvests, escapement projections for streams where escapement goals have been established and CPUE in the Tree Point, Prince of Wales, Taku/Snettisham, and Lynn Canal drift gillnet fisheries, and Juneau marine sport fishery.
2. In Sections 1-C, 1-E, and 1-F, salmon may be taken only as follows:
 - (a) Section 1-C: from August 15 through September 20.
 - (b) Section 1-E:

- (1) In waters of W. Behm Canal within one nautical mile of the western shore of Revillagigedo Island north of the latitude of Escape Point 55°39.07'N. lat., 131°43.08' W. long. excluding the waters of the Neets Bay SHA (5 AAC 33.370) from July 1 through September 20.
 - (2) All other waters from July 13 through September 20.
 - (c) Section 1-F: east of a line from the northernmost tip of Kirk Point to Mary Island Light to the southernmost tip of Cone Island, from July 13 through September 20.
 - (d) Section 1-F: east of a line from the southernmost tip of Black Island to the westernmost tip of Slate Island to the westernmost tip of White Reef to the easternmost tip of Black Rock to the northernmost tip of Kirk Point, including the waters of Boca de Quadra not closed under 5 AAC 29.150(b)(2), from August 1 through September 20.
- 3. In District 8 the weekly fishing periods for trolling are the same as for drift gillnetting.
 - 4. In District 11 salmon may be taken only in Sections 11-C and 11-D.
 - 5. In District 15 salmon may be taken only in Sections 15-A and 15-C.
 - 7. The troll fishing schedule in portions of State waters off Yakutat, beginning August 7, corresponds to weekly fishing periods in the set gillnet fisheries (Figure 6).

If a region-wide troll closure is implemented to conserve coho salmon during late July or early August, the likelihood of a closure during mid-August to meet the allocation criteria will be reduced. Any potential transfer of coho salmon harvest to inside fisheries resulting from an early closure, if implemented, will be reflected in inside fishery performance indicators used for comparison against the allocation criteria.

Tentative 2003 Summer Season Schedule

The following is a generalized timetable for summer salmon management. It is emphasized that some modifications to this schedule may be required.

DATES	EXPECTED REGULATORY ACTIONS
July 1	Open the 2003 general summer troll season for all species; the initial troll king salmon opening will close when 70% of the remaining number of king salmon have been harvested. The first king salmon retention period will be managed in season with no pre-determined length. The waters of frequent high king salmon abundance will close following the king salmon closure.
Mid through late July	Assess coho salmon run strength in Southern Southeast Alaska. Portions of Districts 101–104 may close if run strength indicates conservation concerns for coho salmon stocks near the U.S./Canada border.

Late July/early August	Seven-day, region-wide conservation closure if projected run size is less than 1.1 million wild coho salmon; the projected total season commercial harvest will be used as index of run size.
Mid to late August	<p>A region-wide closure of up to 10 days will be implemented if required for either coho salmon conservation or allocation based on assessment of stock and fishery performance data relative to board-established criteria. If a region-wide conservation closure has occurred during late July, the likelihood of a closure being implemented for allocation at this time will be reduced.</p> <p>Following any closure of the troll fishery, the king salmon fishery will reopen to take all of the remaining treaty quota king salmon. A minimum closure of 2-days is required prior to the second king salmon opening to allow for a fair start (5 AAC 29.100(c)(1)(B)(ii)).</p> <p>During the closure period, a chum salmon fishery may occur in the Sitka Sound and Neets Bay areas.</p>
Late August to September 20	Coho salmon conservation measures implemented region-wide or by area, as required, to protect weak coho stocks.
Mid-September	An assessment of coho strength to determine if portions of Districts 101 through 116 may remain open no longer than September 30.
September 20	Established regulatory closing date of 2003 general summer troll season.

The widespread and complex nature of the troll fishery necessitates a closely coordinated management program. Inseason management is accomplished through a team consisting of the Southeast regional supervisor and management biologist, two troll fishery management biologists, and 11 area management biologists. Department contact information is listed at the end of this plan.

OPEN AREAS DURING 2003 GENERAL SUMMER TROLL SEASON

Salmon trolling is permitted in all areas during the first king salmon retention period of the 2003 general summer season except for those waters described above (5 AAC 29.100) and the closed waters listed in 5 AAC 29.150. In addition, during subsequent king salmon retention periods, waters designated as frequent high king salmon abundance (5 AAC 29.025) will be closed as necessary.

REGULATION CHANGES ESTABLISHED IN 2003

The Alaska Board of Fish at its February, 2003 meeting made some regulation changes that will be implemented during the 2003 summer fishery. These are:

1. A portion of Section 1-E within one mile of the eastern shoreline of West Behm Canal between Brow Point and Escape Point will open on July 1 (Figure 7);
2. The chum troll area in Sitka Sound, where trollers may target chum salmon during the troll coho closure in August, was expanded (Figure 10);
3. A new area was established in Neets Bay where trollers may target chum salmon during the troll coho closure in August (Figure 11);
4. The six-day closed periods in District 12 and Sections 15-A and 15-C after July 15 were eliminated;
5. New regulations establishing reporting, landing and permit requirements for salmon troll catcher-processors (FAS vessels) as follows:

(a) Notwithstanding the provisions in 5 AAC 39.130, the owner or operator of a salmon troll catcher-processor vessel shall issue a separate fish ticket for each week that fishing took place. Each fish ticket shall document as accurately as possible the number and pounds of salmon caught during each week. Fish tickets may be completed at the time the fish are offloaded and must be submitted to the department within seven days of the time fish are offloaded from the vessel. Tickets should be marked as “frozen at sea” or FAS.

(b) The commissioner may require the owner or operator of a salmon troll catcher-processor vessel to contact the department during an open fishing period to provide catch information needed for inseason management of the fishery. The information may include but is not limited to permit holder's name, vessel ADF&G number, district(s), and subdistrict(s) fished, and the number of salmon of each species landed on board the vessel.

(c) A salmon troll permit holder including a salmon troll catcher-processor are not required to offload salmon species other than king salmon at the end of a king salmon fishing period. A fish ticket must be submitted to the department within seven days of offloading king salmon with an estimate of the number and pounds of salmon remaining onboard and should make a notation on the fish ticket that the estimated fish have not yet been offloaded.

(d) Notwithstanding 5 AAC 29.140(b) a salmon troll catcher-processor may be allowed to remove the heads from adipose fin-clipped salmon if the owner or operator of that vessel has applied for and received a permit from the department authorizing the exemption.

(e) For the purposes of this section,

(1) a “week” means Sunday 12:01 a.m. to Saturday 11:59 p.m.;

(2) “catcher-processor” means a salmon troll vessel permit holder who catches and sells processed fish or fish products off the vessel

REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO COMMERCIAL TROLL BYCATCH OF GROUNDFISH AND HALIBUT

For a complete guide to the Southeast Alaska Groundfish regulations, refer to the 2002–2003 Groundfish Fishery Commercial Fishery Regulations books available at all Southeast ADF&G area offices.

1. Commercial halibut may be legally retained only by trollers holding individual fishing quota shares (IFQs) during the open season for halibut, March 1–November 15 (50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 679.4 (d) and 5 AAC 28.133 (c)). Trollers holding unfilled IFQs are required to retain any halibut taken incidentally while trolling (50 CFR 679.7 (f)(11)). If trollers have no more than 500 pounds of halibut onboard and if landed concurrently with a legal landing of salmon, they can offload their catch without having to give a six-hour notice to the National Marine Fisheries Service (50 CFR 679.5 (l)(1)(iv)). Trollers fishing for salmon in Sitka Sound may retain halibut bycatch if they hold IFQs (50 CFR 300.63). Halibut taken incidentally while trolling for salmon should be reported on the same troll ticket with the salmon catch.
2. Lingcod greater than 27", measured from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail, may be taken as bycatch in the commercial salmon troll fishery starting May 16 (5 AAC 28.113 (c)). When the troll lingcod quota is reached for each management area, trollers will be required to release lingcod back into the water. Lingcod must be delivered head-on, with the external gender indicators intact until further notice. (5 AAC 28.173(g)). **Trollers should expect some changes regarding lingcod bycatch once new regulations adopted by the Board of Fisheries (January 2003) are codified. These changes will be announced by news release prior to July 1.**

Trollers are requested to retain tagged lingcod of any size and to notify the nearest Fish and Game office at the time of delivery so the fish may be sampled (in Sitka contact Cleo Brylinsky, 304 Lake Street, Room 103; phone 907-747-6688). The tags should be left on the fish. The date, exact location, and depth should be recorded. A reward will be given to those who turn in tagged lingcod with the necessary catch information.

Trollers are reminded that the waters of Sitka Sound are closed permanently to the taking of lingcod (5 AAC 28.150 (a)). Trollers who have lingcod onboard may not fish in areas closed to lingcod retention.

3. Groundfish may not be taken in waters off Cape Edgecumbe enclosed by a box defined as 56°55.5' N. lat., 56°57' N. lat., 135°54' W. long., and 135°57' W. long. (5 AAC 28.150 (c)). This area is commonly referred to as "the pinnacles." Trollers fishing in this area may not have groundfish or halibut onboard.
4. Full retention of Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR) is required in all state waters. All CFEC permit holders must retain, weigh, and report all DSR taken. All DSR in excess of 10% round weight, of all target species on board the vessel must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket. All proceeds from the sale of excess DSR bycatch shall be surrendered to the state (5 AAC 28.171 (a)). The seven species of rockfish in the DSR assemblage are yelloweye, quillback, canary, rosethorn, copper, china, and tiger rockfish.
5. Trollers are allowed to longline for groundfish and troll for salmon on the same trip as long as salmon are not onboard the vessel in an area closed to trolling. Longliners are reminded to submit a logbook with their fish ticket.
6. Trollers may currently retain 100% of their pelagic rockfish bycatch and are required to do so in groundfish management areas NSEI and SSEI. **Trollers should expect changes regarding pelagic rockfish bycatch once new regulations adopted by the Board of Fisheries (January 2003) are codified. These changes will be announced by news release prior to July 1.**

Rules Pertaining to Switching Between Commercial Troll Gear and Mechanical Jig/Dinglebar Gear

Trollers must stop fishing for groundfish/halibut with mechanical jig or dinglebar gear three days (72 hours) prior to a salmon troll opening if they plan on participating in that salmon troll fishery. Trollers must also wait 24 hours after a salmon troll closure before fishing for groundfish with mechanical jig or dinglebar gear (5 AAC 29.120 (h)). Once a salmon troll opening is in progress, these waiting periods are not necessary. Salmon must be offloaded prior to fishing with mechanical jig or dinglebar gear (5 AAC 28.133(b)). A vessel fishing for groundfish with dinglebar gear must display the letter D. A vessel fishing for groundfish with mechanical jig gear must display the letter M (5 AAC 28.135). A vessel fishing for salmon cannot have the letter M or D displayed.

SPORT FISHING FROM A COMMERCIALLY LICENCED TROLL VESSEL

1. Sport fishing is allowed from a registered commercial salmon troll vessel (5 AAC 47.041 (a)).
2. If sport fishing in waters closed to commercial trolling, the dorsal fin must be removed immediately from any salmon brought onboard the vessel (5 AAC 47.041(c)).
3. Sport fishing from a commercially licensed vessel, while commercially-caught salmon are in possession, is illegal in waters closed to commercial salmon fishing (5 AAC 47.041(d)).
4. A vessel registered for commercial trolling may also be registered as a charter vessel, though a vessel may not be used for both activities on the same day (5 AAC 75.995 (8)). Sport-caught fish may not be sold.
5. A troll gurdy may NOT be used in conjunction with a fishing rod while fishing commercially but may be legally used as a downrigger to sport fish from a hand or power troll vessel (5 AAC 29.120 (e)).

These regulations can be found in the 2003 Sport Fishing regulation booklet.

REGIONAL AQUACULTURE TERMINAL HARVEST AREAS

Terminal harvest areas (THAs) are described in the Southeast Alaska and Yakutat Areas Commercial Salmon and Miscellaneous Finfish Regulations book. Hidden Falls, Inner Silver Bay, Neets Bay, Earl West Cove, Deep Inlet, and Nakat Inlet THAs will remain open to the harvest of all salmon species and will be closed by emergency order. Trollers are requested to consult the appropriate terminal harvest area News Releases or contact any department office for the exact harvest schedules for each THA.

Sitka Sound and Neets Bay Chum Salmon Plans for 2003

Sitka Sound

NSRAA is expecting about 1,450,000 chum salmon to return to the Deep Inlet Terminal Harvest Area (THA) (Figure 9) and the Medvejie Hatchery, with approximately 1,230,000 chum salmon to be available for common property harvest. The Deep Inlet THA rotational schedule began on June 1, with the first troll opening scheduled for June 2. Weekly troll openings are scheduled for the THA each Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, through August 16. Trolling will be allowed during these scheduled times as long as it does not interfere with cost recovery fishing. A detailed listing of troll openings can be found in an ADF&G news release dated May 9, 2003. Additional fishing opportunities will be announced by August 14.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries expanded the Silver Bay Special Harvest Area so that cost recovery harvest can occur in all or portions of Eastern Channel, depending on the time period. Cost recovery fishing is expected to begin on July 1 in waters of Silver Bay and Eastern Channel. From July 24 through the end of the troll coho salmon closure, the cost recovery area will be reduced in size.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries during its February 2003 meeting expanded the area in Sitka Sound where the department may open by emergency order a fishery in which trollers may target chum salmon during the troll coho closure in August (5 AAC 29.112). This area includes waters of Sitka Sound and the Eastern Channel east of a line from Vitskari Rock light to Inner Pt., south of a line from Inner Pt., to Black Rock at 57°03.12' N. lat., 135°25.63' W. long., to Signal Island light at 57°02.78' N. lat., 135°23.58' W. long., and north of a line from Cape Burunof at 56° 59.03' N. lat., 135°23.23' W. long., to Kulichkof Rock at 56°59.52' N. lat., 135°26.62' W. long. to Vitskari Rock light. (Figure 10). During this fishery, trollers may not retain or have onboard any coho or king salmon.

Neets Bay

The Neets Bay Special Harvest Area will open to trollers on July 1, 2003 concurrent with the opening of Behm Canal (Figure 7). SSRAA will allow trollers to harvest summer chum in the SHA, with the target goal of 200,000 fish. SSRAA anticipates allowing troller access in the HA throughout the summer chum return that peaks July 25 through approximately August 10. SSRAA will consider closing the SHA in inner Neets Bay under the following circumstances:

- On July 20, the return appears to be 15% less than forecast;
- Difficulty in capturing the required broodstock for the hatchery; and
- A harvest rate that suggests troller harvest would exceed 200,000 fish.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries during its February 2003 meeting also established an area in Neets Bay in which trollers may target chum salmon during the troll coho closure in August (5 AAC 29.112). The department may open, by emergency order, the waters of Neets Bay from the longitude of Chin Point to the longitude of the easternmost tip of Bug Island. SSRAA is expecting a summer chum salmon return to the Neets Bay terminal area of approximately 1,195,000 fish.

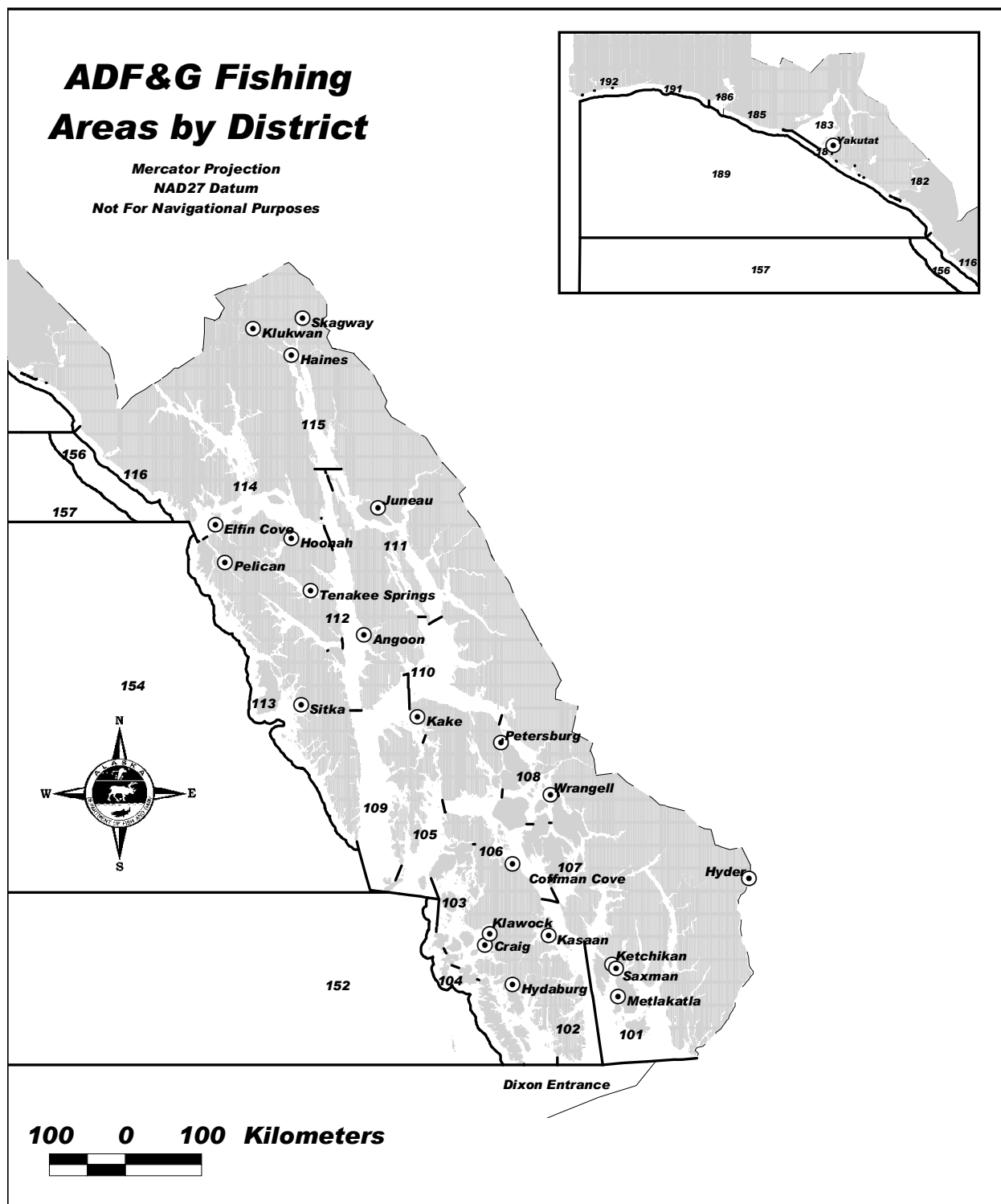


Figure 1. General summer catch reporting districts, 2003.

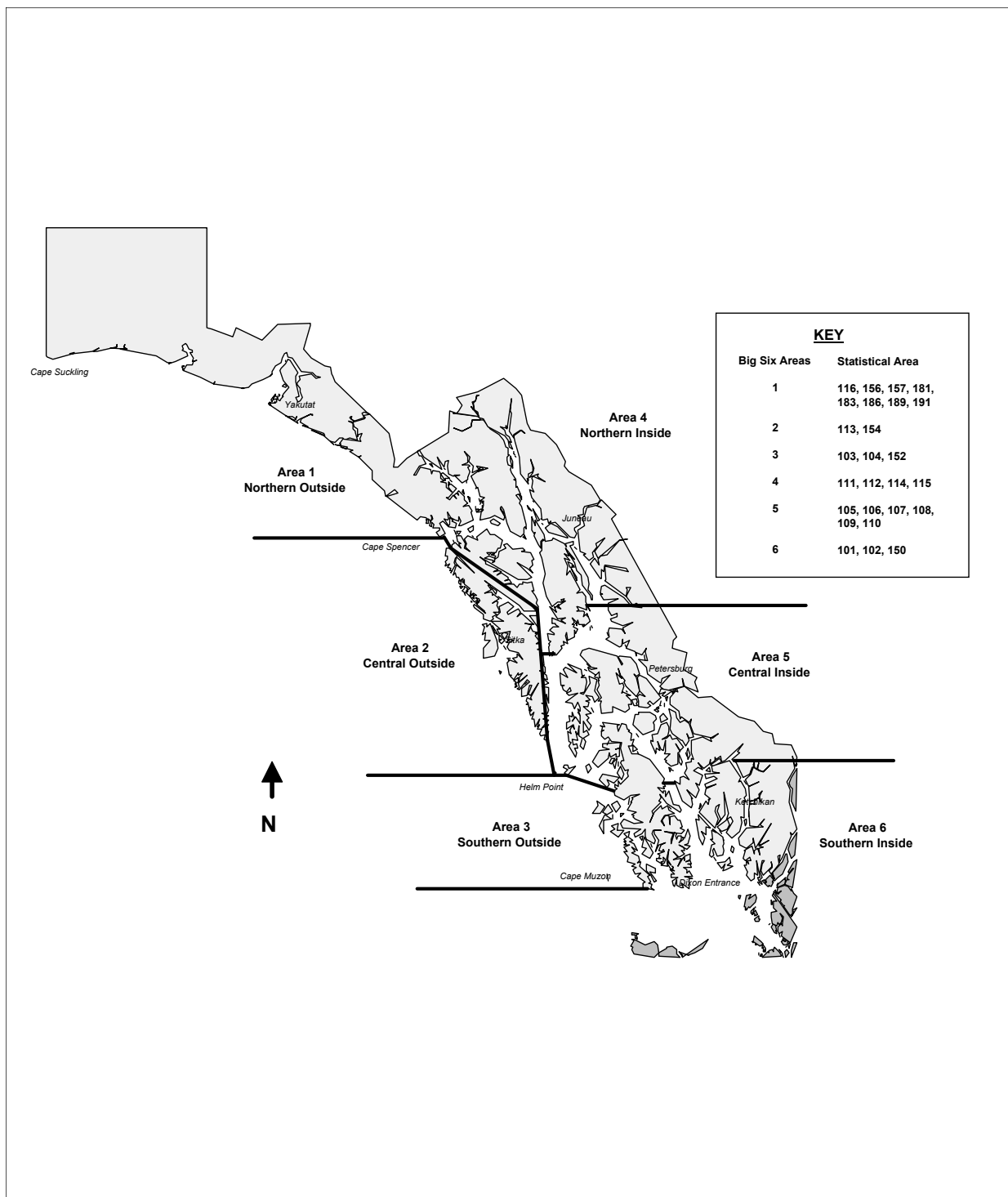


Figure 2. Fisheries performance data program data reporting areas in Southeast Alaska.

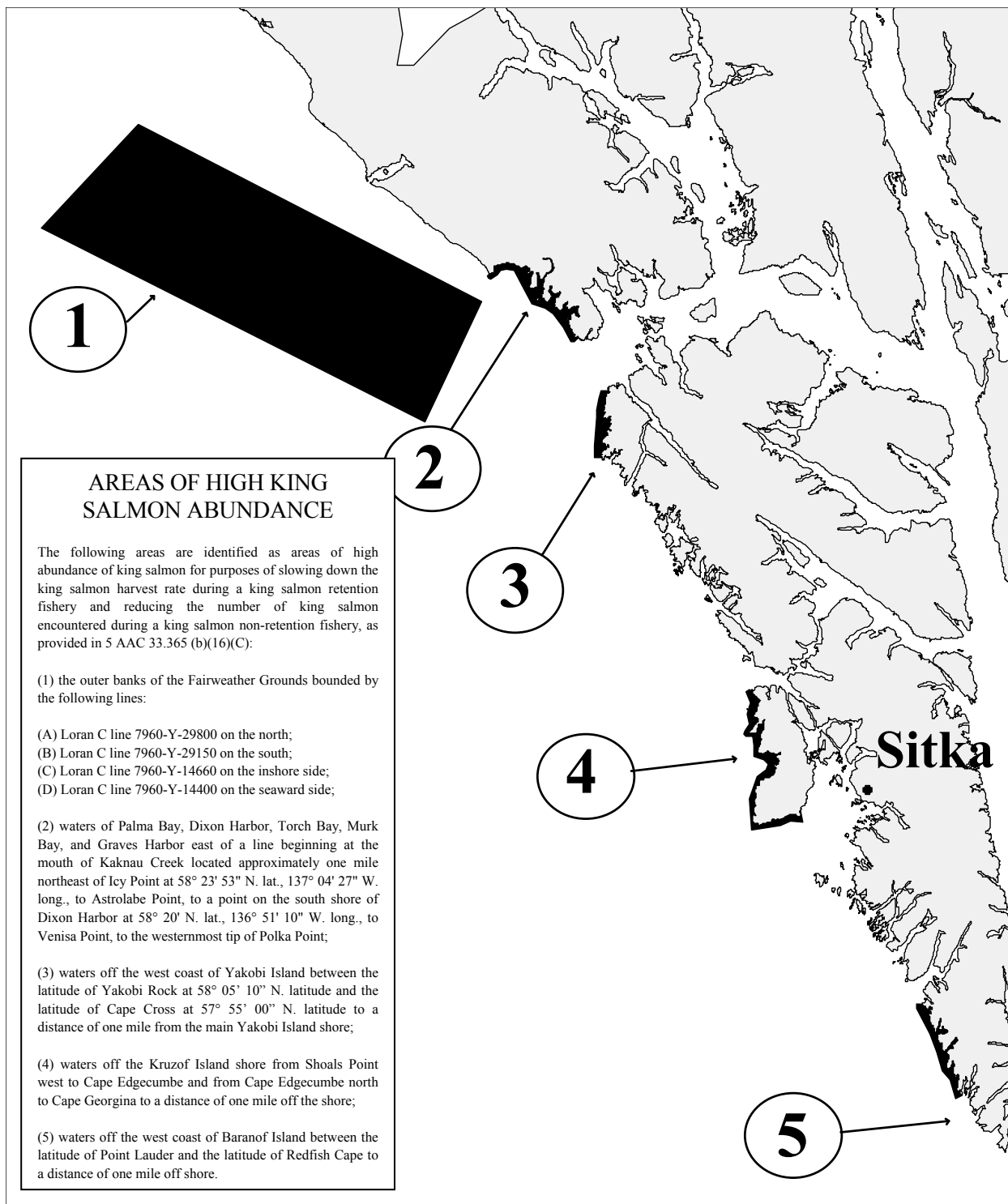


Figure 3. Southeast Alaska areas closed to trolling for all species following the initial king salmon opening in the Southeast Alaska summer troll season.

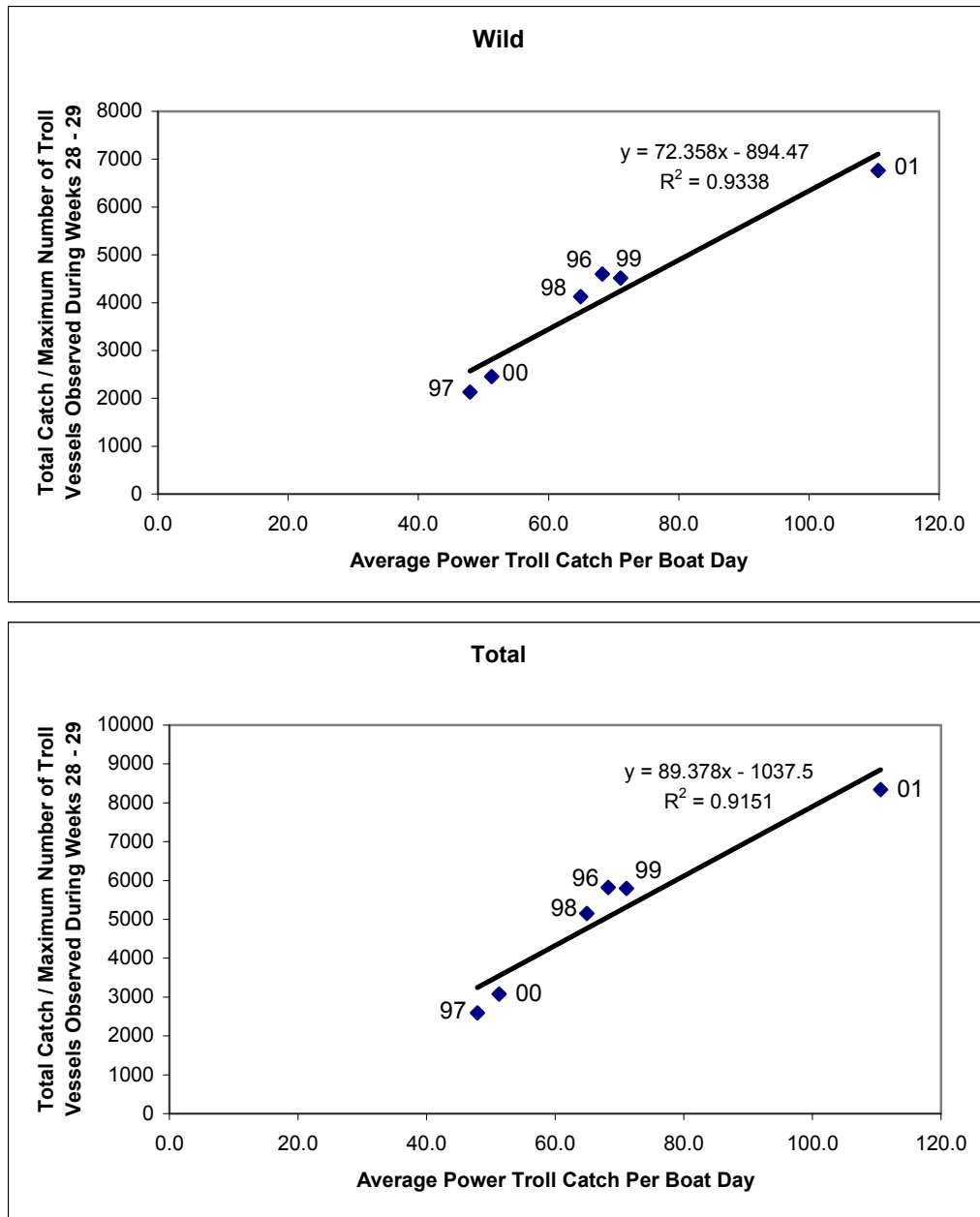


Figure 4. Inseason linear regression model using average power troll catch per boat per day to predict the wild (top) and total (bottom) Southeast Alaska commercial coho salmon catch.

Y axis = Region total commercial coho salmon catch prediction (excluding hatchery cost recovery) divided by the maximum number of troll vessels observed during aerial surveys during weeks 28 and 29. X axis = Troll fishery average power troll catch per boat day for Statistical Weeks 28–29 (July 7–20), which is calculated by adding the average daily catch rate for boats that make a landing in week 28 (July 7–13) and the average daily catch rate for boats that make a landing in week 29 (July 14–20).

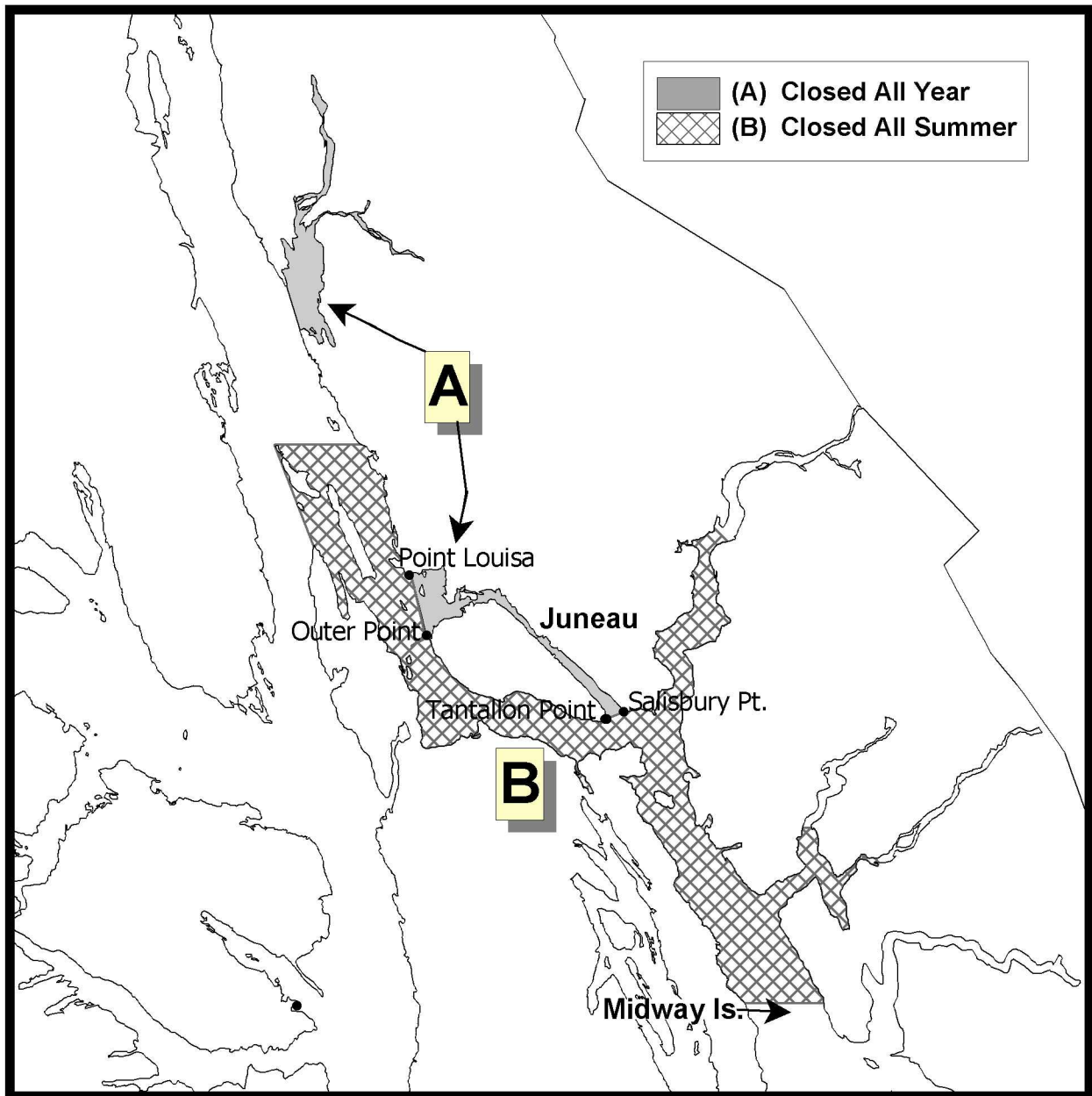


Figure 5. Juneau area general summer trolling areas and seasons, 2003.

This map is for general information only and does not exempt trollers from provisions in (5 AAC 29.150 (CLOSED WATERS)) or Emergency Orders issued by the Department of Fish and Game. The general summer troll fishing season applies to those areas not specified in the key or in 5 AAC 29.150.

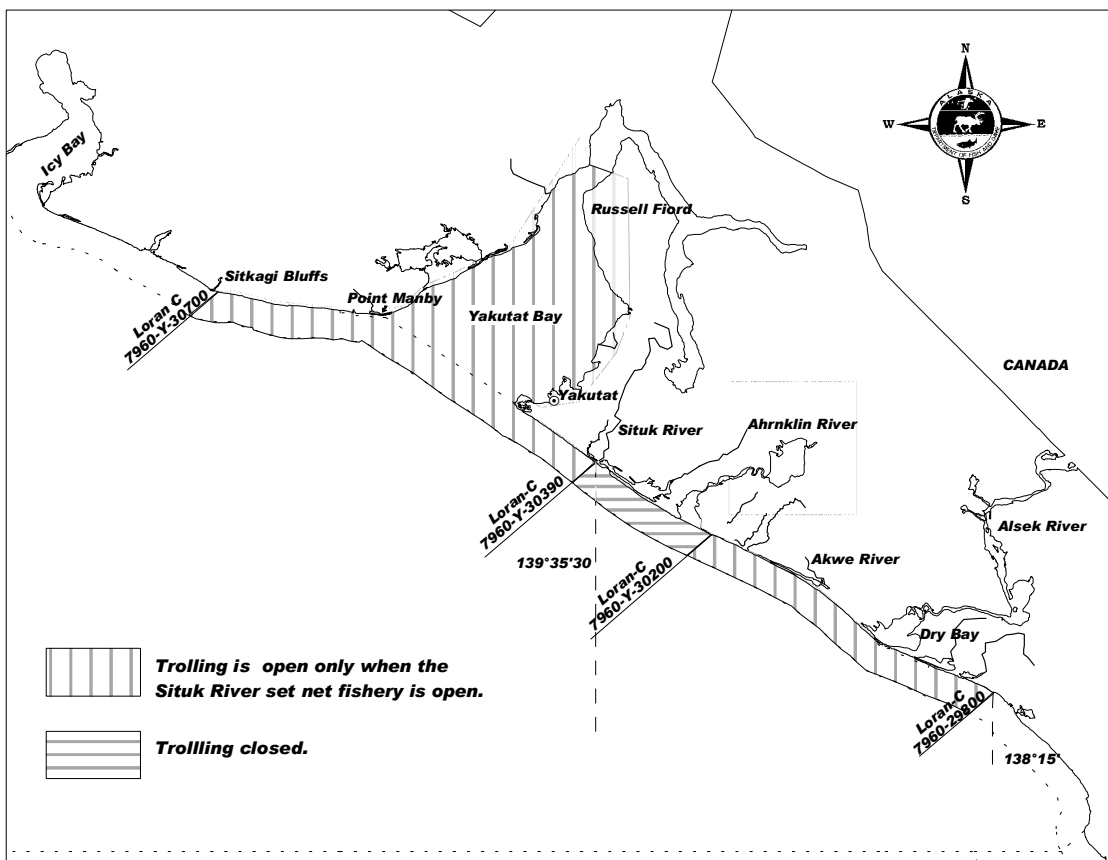


Figure 6. Trolling times and areas beginning August 7 for the Yakutat area, 2003.

This map is for general information only and does not exempt trollers from provisions in 5 AAC 29.150 (CLOSED WATERS)) or Emergency Orders issued by the Department of Fish and Game. The general summer troll fishing season applies to those areas not specified in the key or in 5 AAC 29.150.

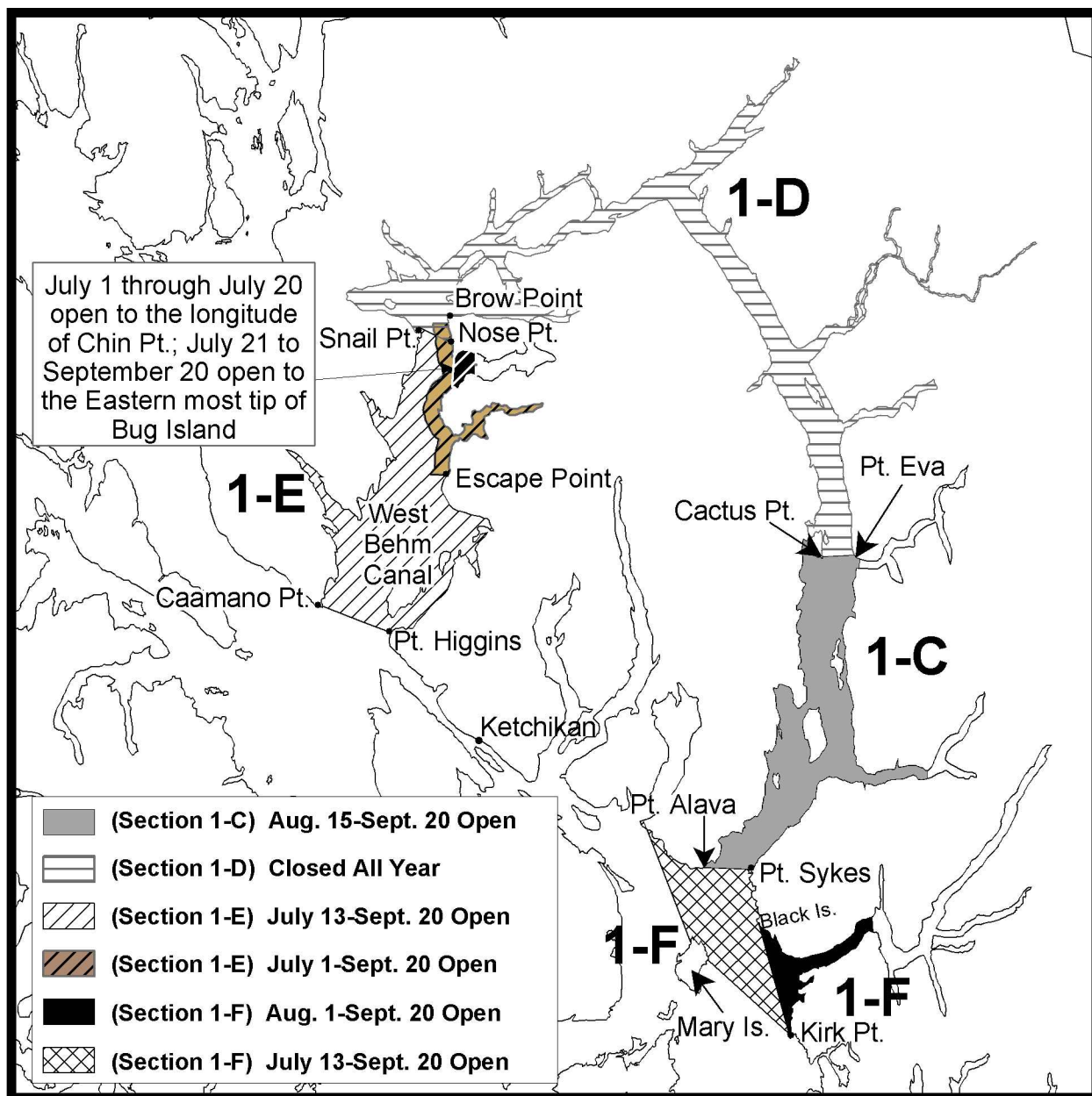


Figure 7. Ketchikan area general summer trolling areas and seasons, 2003.

This map is for general information only and does not exempt trollers from provisions in 5 AAC 29.150 (CLOSED WATERS)) or Emergency Orders issued by the Department of Fish and Game. The general summer troll fishing season applies to those areas not specified in the key or in 5 AAC 29.150.

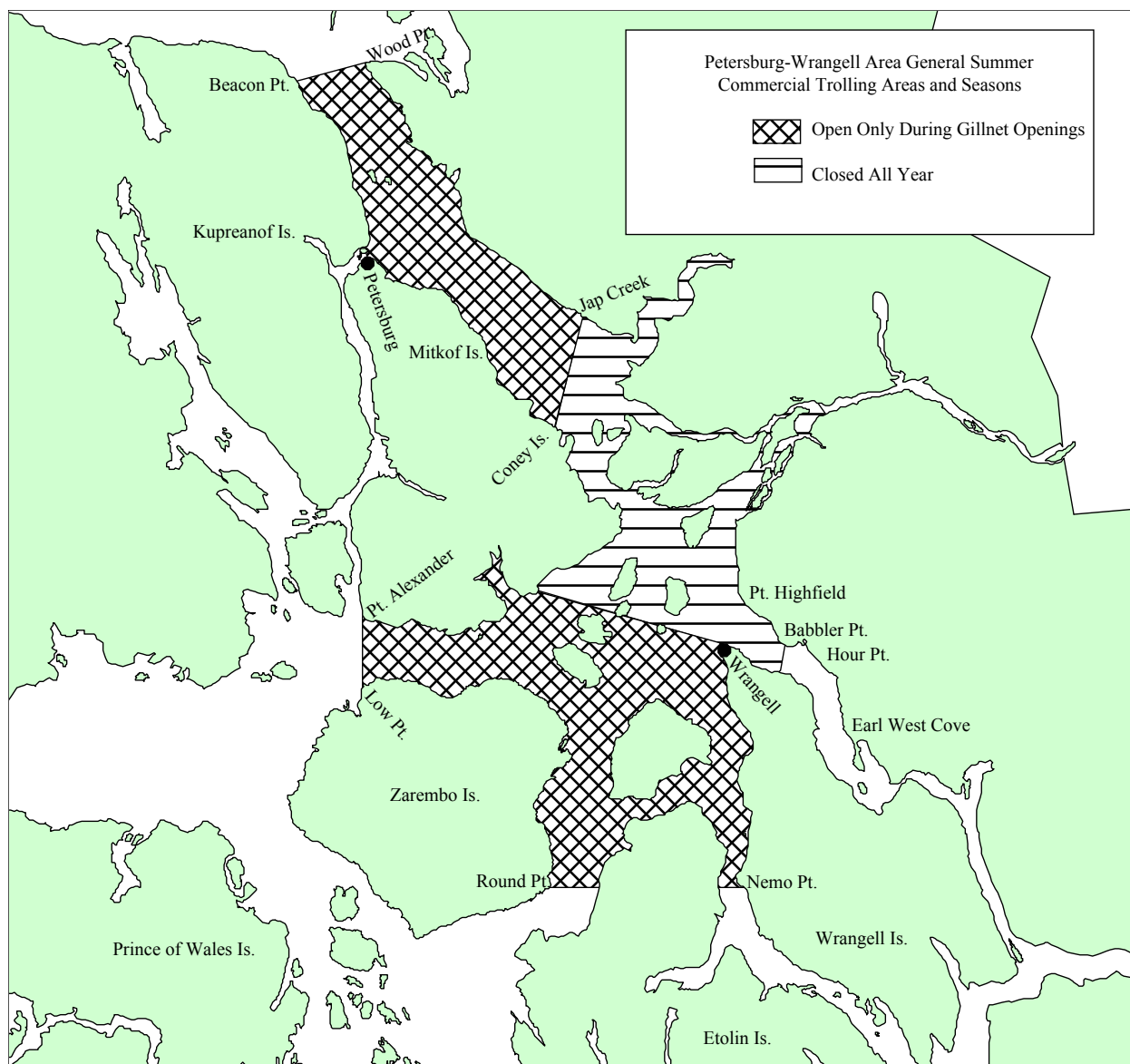


Figure 8. Petersburg/Wrangell area general summer trolling areas and seasons, 2003.

This map is for general information only and does not exempt trollers from provisions in 5 AAC 29.150 (CLOSED WATERS)) or Emergency Orders issued by the Department of Fish and Game. The general summer troll fishing season applies to those areas not specified in the key or in 5 AAC 29.150.

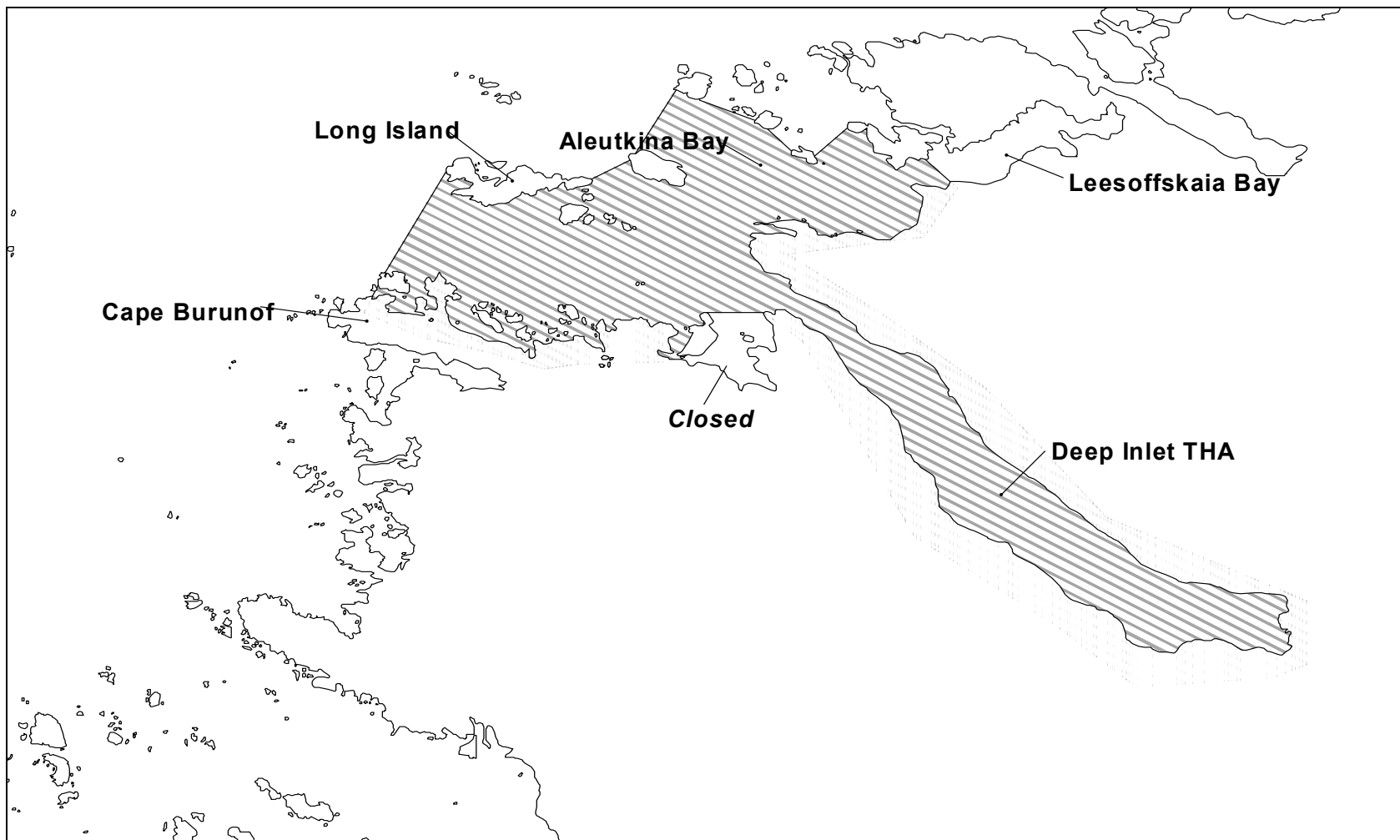


Figure 9. Deep Inlet THA (113-38).

This map is for general information only and does not exempt trollers from provisions in 5 AAC 29.150 (CLOSED WATERS)) or Emergency Orders issued by the Department of Fish and Game.

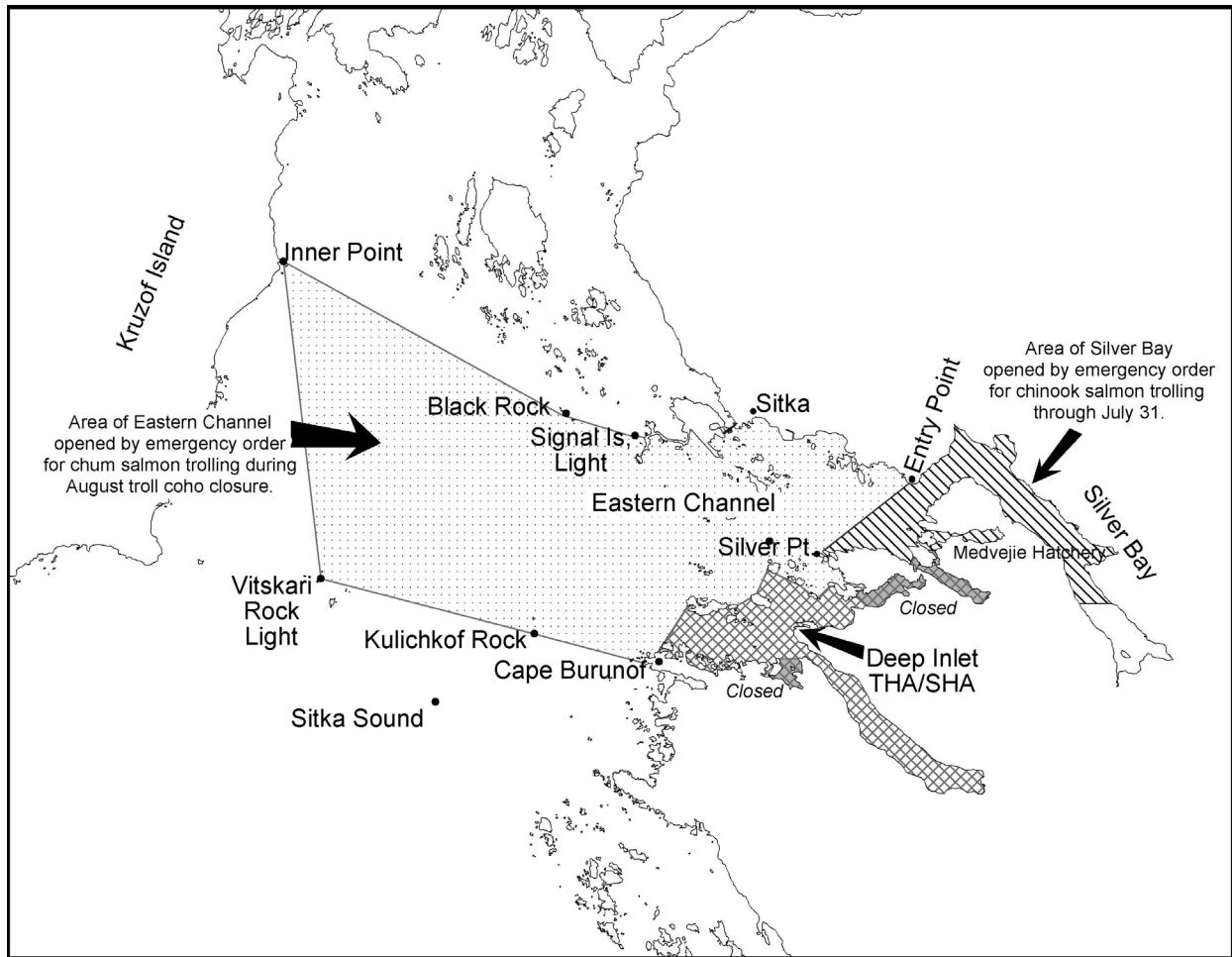


Figure 10. Silver Bay and Eastern Channel SHA for chum (113-35). Sitka area summer fisheries, 2003.

The area shown is the area described in 5 AAC 29.112(b). The actual area that will be open by Emergency Order may be different. The eastern portion of Eastern Channel has normally been closed during the chum fishery in past years.

This map is for general information only and does not exempt trollers from provisions in 5 AAC 29.150 (CLOSED WATERS) or Emergency Orders issued by the Department of Fish and Game. See management plan text for description of area.

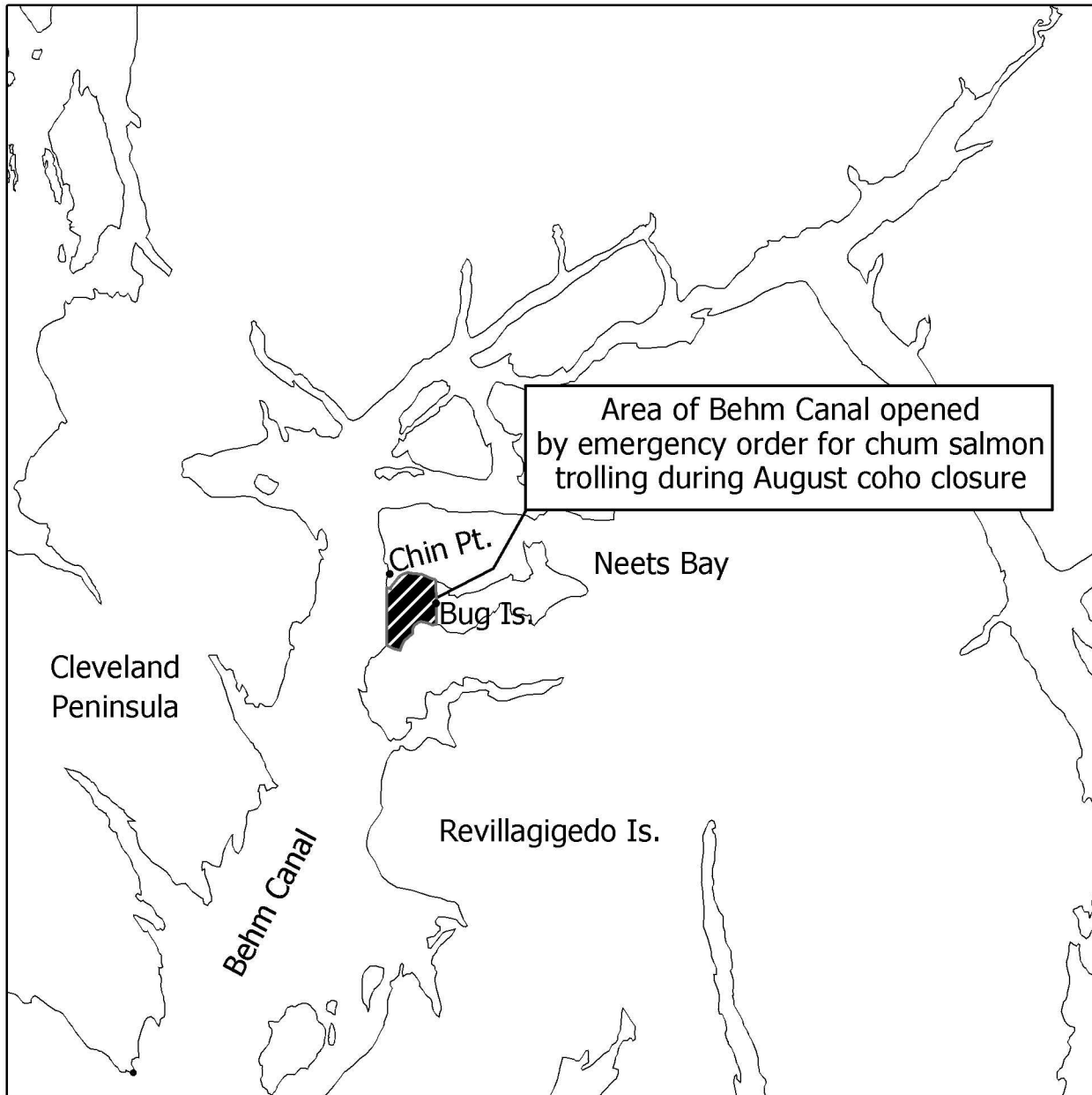


Figure 11. Neets Bay SHA for chum fisheries, 2003.

This map is for general information only and does not exempt trollers from provisions in 5 AAC 29.150 (CLOSED WATERS)) or Emergency Orders issued by the Department of Fish and Game. The general summer troll fishing season applies to those areas not specified in the key or in 5 AAC 29.150.

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For up-to-date troll information, call the 24-hour information line in the Douglas Office at 465-TROL (8765). In addition, the following telephone numbers may be called during the troll fishing season to obtain recorded announcements concerning areas open to trolling.

Ketchikan-(907) 225-6870

Sitka-(907) 747-8765

Petersburg-(907) 772-3700

SOUTHEAST ALASKA TROLL WEBSITE

<http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region1/finfish/salmon/trolinfo.htm>

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