



Advisory Announcement

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CONTACT: Jan Rumble and Elisa Russ
Groundfish Area Management Biologists
(907) 235-8191

Prince William Sound Area
Directed Pollock Pelagic Trawl Fishery Opens
Emergency Order # 2-GF-E-02-21

The directed fishery for walleye pollock *Gadus chalcogrammus* using pelagic trawl gear in the Prince William Sound Area (PWS; Registration Area E) will open at 12:00 noon January 20 with a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 4.93 million pounds (2,235 metric tons). **The registration deadline for this fishery is January 13 at 4:30 p.m.**

Registrations for the PWS pollock pelagic trawl fishery will only be issued to individuals who possess a 2021 Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) miscellaneous saltwater finfish interim-use permit card for trawl gear. Permit card applications are available at ADF&G offices, CFEC, or online at www.cfec.state.ak.us.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals are encouraged to register for the fishery by fax or email. Please contact the ADF&G Homer office at 907-235-8191 during regular business hours (Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) for registration information. Registration packets may be emailed to participants or distributed through ADF&G offices in Homer and Kodiak. The registration packet will include check-in and check-out requirements, logbooks, catch reporting procedures, and accommodation of ADF&G observers.

The PWS Pollock Pelagic Trawl Management Plan (5 AAC 28.263) limits the harvest from any one of the following three Inside District management sections to no more than 60% of the GHL (2.96 million lb):

- 1) Port Bainbridge Section: waters west of 148° W. long.
- 2) Knight Island Section: waters between 148° W. long. and 147° 20.00' W. long.
- 3) Hinchinbrook Section: waters east of 147° 20.00' W. long.

Total bycatch is limited to 5% or less of the total pollock harvested. The bycatch allowance is apportioned into the following five species groups as follows:

	Species Group					
	Rockfish	Salmon	Shark	Squid	Other	Total
Bycatch Apportionment	0.50%	0.04%	0.96%	3.00%	0.50%	5.00%
Annual Bycatch Cap (lb)	24,637	1,971	47,302	147,820	24,637	246,367
60% Section Bycatch Cap (lb)	14,782	1,183	28,381	88,692	14,782	147,820

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These bycatch apportionments for the fishery correspond to the allowable bycatch levels for individual vessels participating in the fishery as round weights of bycatch species, as a percentage of the round weight of pollock onboard the vessel. There is mandatory retention of all rockfish. All bycatch in excess of the above listed percentage amounts in an individual landing must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket, and these proceeds must be surrendered to the state. If bycatch in the fishery approaches or exceeds the above listed section or annual bycatch caps, the directed trawl fishery within that section or within PWS will be closed by emergency order (EO).

As established by 5 AAC 28.070 (e), a CFEC permit holder operating a vessel fishing for groundfish shall bring on board the vessel all walleye pollock caught while operating the vessel. The permit holder or a crewmember may not take any action intended to discard or release walleye pollock before the fish is brought on board the vessel. The permit holder shall retain all walleye pollock brought on board a vessel when a directed fishery for walleye pollock is open. Therefore, all pollock caught during the pollock pelagic trawl fishery must be brought on board the vessel and retained, even if this action results in a trip limit overage; excess pollock above the trip limit must be weighed and reported as a trip limit overage on an ADF&G fish ticket.

Because high effort could compromise ADF&G's ability to manage for both the section harvest and bycatch limits, it may be necessary to adopt weekly or daily fishing periods to ensure a manageable fishery.

Once the allowable harvest level within a section is attained, the directed trawl fishery within that section will close by EO.

ADF&G will solicit bids for a test fishery, which funds research in PWS, prior to the start of the season; the available harvest will be approximately 900,000 lb.

COVID-19

Under Alaska's Health Orders 5, 6, and 8, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Orders. COVID-19 Health Orders may be found here: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-order/>.

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