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Advisory Announcement

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Prince William Sound Area **Pacific Cod Parallel Season Closes to Pot Gear** **Pacific Cod State-Waters Season Opens to Pot Gear** **Emergency Order # 2-GF-E-04-21**

The Prince William Sound Area (PWS) Pacific cod **parallel season will close to vessels using pot gear at 12:00 noon on January 22**. This coincides with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) closure of the Pacific cod pot gear sector in the federal Central Gulf of Alaska Area (CGOA). The parallel season will remain open to vessels using jig and longline gear.

There is a 24-hour delivery time requirement following closure of a groundfish fishery. All fish harvested in the parallel season must be landed prior to participating in the state-waters season.

The PWS Pacific cod **state-waters season will open to vessels using pot gear at 12:00 noon on January 23**. In accordance with the PWS Pacific Cod Management Plan (5 AAC 28.267), the state-waters season for pot gear shall open 24 hours following the closure of the initial federal season in the CGOA for pot gear.

The guideline harvest level (GHL) for the PWS Pacific cod state-waters season is 1,094,044 lb, with 85% or 929,937 lb allocated to vessels using longline gear and 15% or 164,107 lb allocated to vessels using pot or jig gear.

Area registration for the state-waters season is exclusive, no more than 60 groundfish pots may be operated from a vessel, and each pot must display a buoy identification tag. Buoy tags and vessel registrations may be obtained through department offices in Homer, Anchorage, or Cordova. Due to CoVid-19, vessel operators are encouraged to contact the Homer office by phone and arrange to register by fax or e-mail; buoy tags may also be mailed. A vessel may not participate in a Pacific cod state-waters season and any other Pacific cod season at the same time.

Following the closure of the parallel Pacific cod season, all groundfish pot gear must be removed from the water, except that pot vessels registered for the state-waters Pacific cod season may store groundfish pots as provided in 5 AAC 28.232. Groundfish storage provisions allow groundfish pot gear to be stored in waters not more than 25 fathoms deep on the north side of Montague Island between 147° 25.00' W. long. and 147° 35.00' W. long. for up to ten days prior to the opening and 10 days following the closure of the state-waters season to pot gear, provided all bait and bait containers are removed and all doors are secured open at the time of the parallel season (or state-waters season) closure. After the ten day period has elapsed, no groundfish pot storage is permitted.

Fishing area: During a state-waters season, Pacific cod may be taken in waters of PWS (5 AAC 28.205) except for those waters of the Outside District east of 146° 15.12' W. long. (the latitude of Hook Point) (5 AAC 28.267 (e) (2)); see map in Figure 1.

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Steller Sea Lion rookery closures: Directed fishing for all groundfish species is closed in waters within 3 nautical miles of two Steller sea lion rookeries within PWS (Figure 1). For specific regulatory language contact NMFS in Kodiak at (907) 481-1780 or <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/sslpm>.

Pot fishing closure areas: Some areas are closed by regulation 5 AAC 28.250 to fishing with groundfish pot gear (Figure 1). Check the regulation book or contact Homer ADF&G at (907) 235-8191 prior to fishing.

Bycatch limits: Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for PWS are set by Emergency Order 2-GF-E-01-21 and may be found in the Central Region Groundfish Fisheries Outlook advisory announcement.

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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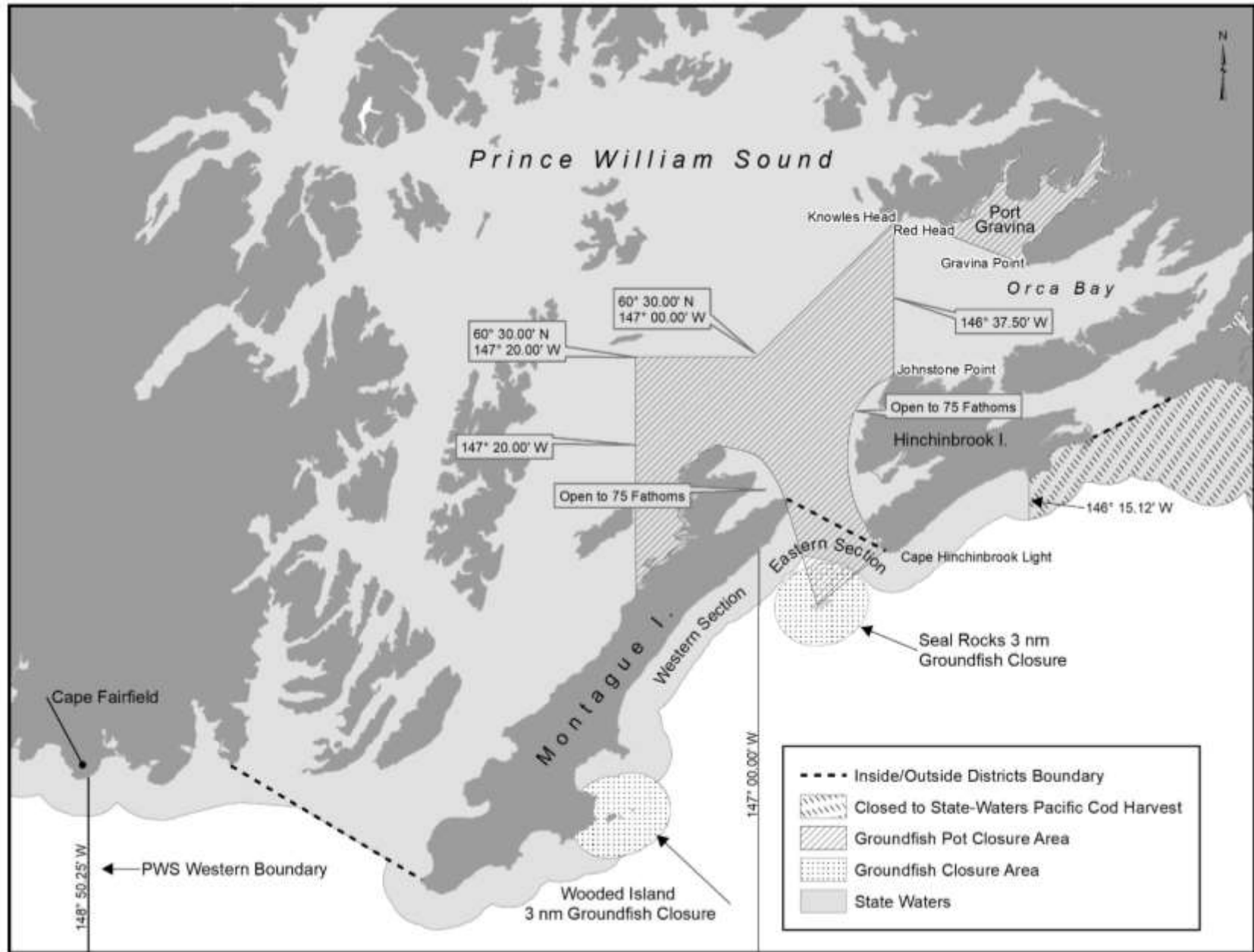


Figure 1. Prince William Sound Area closures to groundfish pot gear, groundfish fishing, and to the state-waters Pacific cod season.

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