



Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: August 30, 2021

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Cook Inlet Area
Parallel Pacific Cod Season
Opens to Pot Vessels and Longline Vessels Less than 50 Feet in Length
Closed to Longline Vessels Greater than or Equal to 50 Feet in Length
Emergency Order # 2-GF-H-07-21

The Cook Inlet Area (Area H) parallel Pacific cod season **will open to vessels fishing with pot gear and to vessels fishing with longline gear that are less than 50 feet in length effective 12:00 noon September 1.** The parallel Pacific cod season **will remain closed to vessels fishing with longline gear that are greater than or equal to 50 feet in length.** The parallel season remains open to vessels fishing with jig gear.

Parallel Pacific cod seasons for pot and longline gear opening at 12:00 noon September 1 are established by emergency order (EO) to coincide with the season dates and gear sectors set by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the Pacific cod “B” season in the adjacent federal Central Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Area (CGOA). NMFS announced that hook-and-line (longline) vessels greater than or equal to 50 feet in length will be prohibited from participating in the federal Pacific cod “B” season to prevent exceeding the 2021 total allowable catch apportioned to those vessels. The parallel seasons will close by EO concurrent with federal “B” season closures when gear sector allocations are achieved.

Fishermen are reminded: 1) to obtain a Cook Inlet Area parallel Pacific cod season registration from ADF&G prior to fishing; 2) of the requirement for fishermen using pot or longline gear in parallel Pacific cod fisheries to have a functioning, activated, NMFS-approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) as described at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/vessel-monitoring-systems-alaska-federal-register-rules-and-notices> and, 3) to adhere to the federal seabird avoidance measures (SAM) which are required in all longline fisheries for groundfish in the North Gulf District of the Cook Inlet Area. Additional information describing SAM can be found at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/bycatch/seabird-avoidance-gear-and-methods>.

NMFS continues to prosecute the North Pacific Groundfish and Halibut Observer Program. Vessel operators participating in parallel groundfish and/or directed halibut fisheries are encouraged to become familiar with this federal program. Information on the observer program can be found at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/contact/north-pacific-observer-program> or by contacting the NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division in Juneau at (907) 586-7228.

Regulation 5AAC 28.350 (b) closes certain waters on the west side of Cook Inlet and within Kachemak Bay (Figure 1) to groundfish pot gear.

Two rookeries within the Cook Inlet Area, Outer (Pye) Island and Sugarloaf Island remain closed to fishing with pot or longline gear during a parallel Pacific cod season to protect Steller sea lions. Waters within three nautical miles (nmi) of these locations are closed to vessel transit and waters within 10 nmi of these locations are closed to fishing with fixed gear via emergency order. Contact NMFS in Kodiak at ph: (907) 481-1780 or consult the NMFS website at <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/sslpm>.

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

COVID-19

Under Alaska's Health Mandates 1, 2, 3, and 4, commercial fishing is Essential 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 Advisories. COVID-19 Health Advisories may be found here: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-advisories/>.

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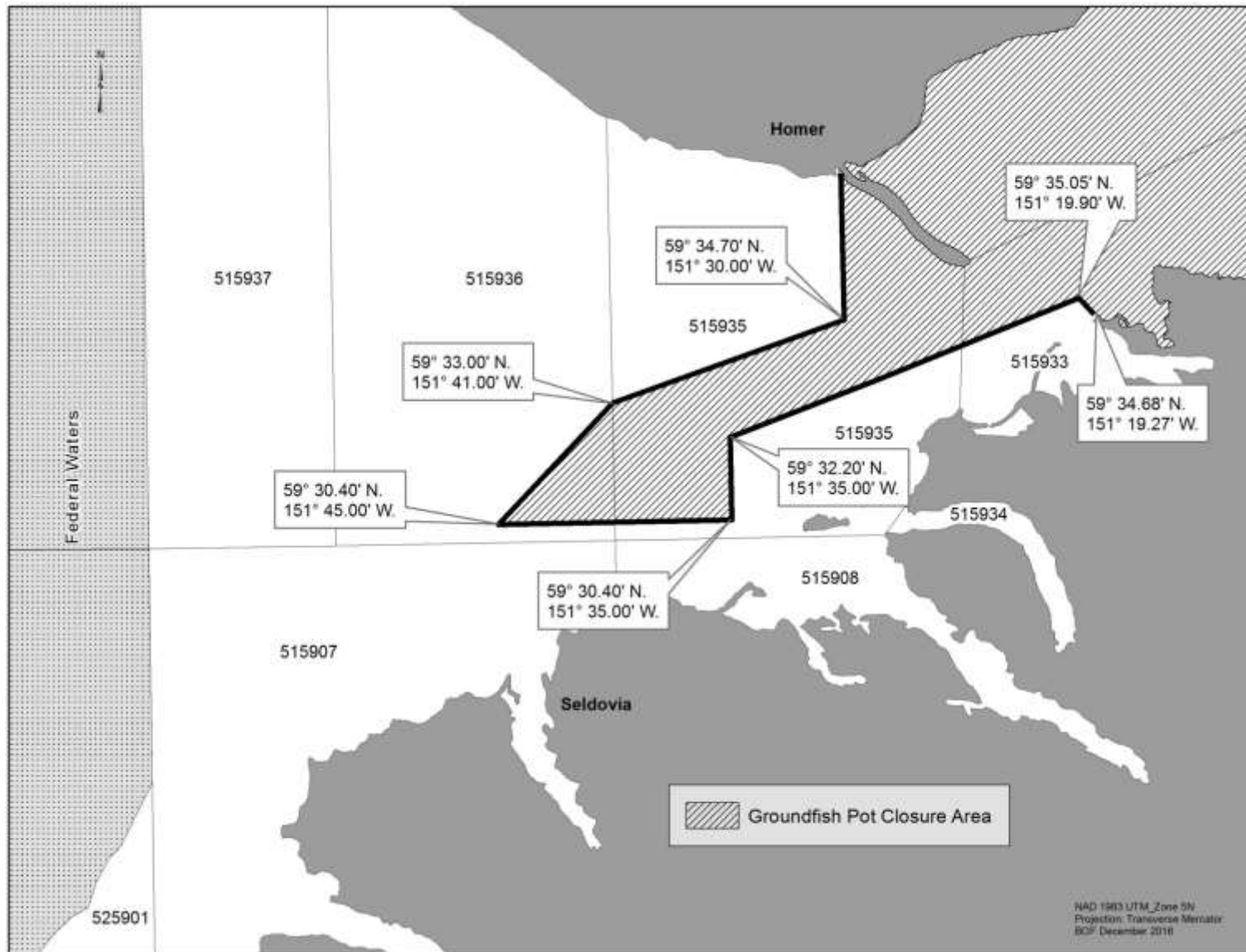


Figure 1. Kachemak Bay groundfish pot closure area with coordinates.

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