



## Advisory Announcement

*For Immediate Release: June 10, 2022*

**CONTACT: Rhea Ehresmann**  
Region I Groundfish Project Leader  
rhea.ehresmann@alaska.gov  
(907) 747-6688

### 2022 NORTHERN SOUTHEAST INSIDE (NSEI) SUBDISTRICT SABLEFISH FISHERY ANNUAL HARVEST OBJECTIVE

The 2022 Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) Subdistrict commercial sablefish fishery annual harvest objective (AHO) is 1,233,633 round pounds. The AHO is based on the sablefish recommended acceptable biological catch (ABC) with decrements made for sablefish mortality in other fisheries. There are 73 valid Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permits for 2022, which is the same number of permits as in 2021. **The individual equal quota share (EQS) is 16,899 round pounds**, an 8.4% increase from the 2021 EQS of 15,587 round pounds. Permit holders who have any legal overage or underage incurred during the 2021 fishing season will have their 2022 personal quota share (PQS) adjusted accordingly. **The NSEI fishery opens by regulation at 8:00 a.m., August 15, 2022, and will close at 12:00 noon, November 15, 2022.**

The recommended 2022 ABC is 1,443,314 round lb ( $F_{ABC} = 0.056$ ), a 15% increase from the 2021 ABC and the maximum allowable increase in a given year. The increase in the ABC is attributed to a series of relatively strong recruitment events occurring between 2013 and 2016 and a substantial increase in the longline survey catch per unit effort (CPUE) in the last two years. The large increase from last year's assessment is the result of the growth of the 2013–2016 year class fish and a large increase in the estimated size of the 2016 year class relative to last year. Furthermore, spawning stock biomass has increased dramatically as fish from the 2013–2016 year classes reach maturity. Fishery catch and exvessel value remain depressed as these younger, smaller fish are less valuable and may be released at sea. The CPUE in the longline survey declined slightly from 2021 but remains well above recent rates. Though recent high catch rates of small sablefish across multiple geographic areas signal increasing abundance trends for sablefish stocks, the department maintains a precautionary approach to setting harvest limits. Estimates from the 2021 stock assessment suggest sablefish spawning stock biomass remains at suppressed levels compared to the 1980s and 1990s. The ABC determination process uses a statistical catch-at-age model, which was first implemented in 2020. The model reduces the reliance on the annual mark-recapture project to estimate recruitment, abundance, and spawning stock biomass of NSEI sablefish by integrating multiple indices of abundance and biological data (e.g., catch by age, mark-recapture abundance estimates, longline survey and fishery CPUE, longline survey length and age compositions). As in previous years, maximum ABC is defined by  $F_{50}$ , the fishing mortality rate that reduces spawning biomass to 50% of equilibrium unfished levels.

The sablefish marking survey was conducted May 2–29, 2022, during which approximately 8,500 sablefish were marked and released throughout NSEI waters. The department will continue to conduct a marking survey annually or biannually, as funding allows. Three vessels will be chartered for the 2022 ADF&G longline survey, scheduled for August 2–9, 2022. Data from the 2022 longline survey will be used to obtain size, age, and maturity information for the 2023 stock assessment.

#### 2022 Alaska Board of Fisheries Decisions

In March 2022, the Board of Fisheries adopted new regulations that will be enacted prior to or during the NSEI sablefish fishing season. An advisory announcement will be issued at a later date with more information. New regulations include:

- Full retention and landing requirements using hook-and-line and pot gear for all species of rockfish, including thornyhead rockfish.
- Allowing pot gear as a legal gear type in addition to longline gear for the C61A permits, which is contingent upon the approval process through CFEC.
- Pots must have at least two circular escape rings, with a minimum inside diameter of three and three-fourths inches, installed on opposing vertical or sloping walls of the pot.

### **Area Description 5 AAC 28.105 (a)(2)**

The NSEI Subdistrict (Figure 1) consists of all waters of Frederick Sound, Stephens Passage, Lynn Canal, Icy Strait, Glacier Bay, Chatham Strait, and contiguous bays and inlets bordered by a line from Beacon Point to Wood Point, from Point Camden to Salt Point Light, the Cape Decision Light to a point west of Gish Bay at 55° 54.53' N. lat., 134° 12.50' W. long. to the southernmost tip of Helm Point to the westernmost tip of Hazy Island to the Cape Ommaney Light, north of 57° 30' N. lat. in Peril Strait, from the westernmost tip of Column Point to the northernmost tip of Soapstone Point and from the southernmost tip of Cape Spencer through Yakobi Rock to Yakobi Island.

### **Registration and Logbook Requirements**

Fishermen must register prior to fishing [5 AAC 28.106 (b)] and are required to keep a logbook during the fishery. **Registrations, PQS forms, and logbooks will be available starting July 15 at ADF&G offices in Southeast Alaska.**

Completed logbook pages must be attached to the ADF&G copy of the fish ticket at the time of delivery. Confidential ADF&G envelopes for logbook pages may be requested when registering. Logbooks must include, by set, the date and time gear is set and retrieved, specific location of harvest by latitude and longitude for start and ending positions, hook spacing, amount of gear used (number of hooks and skates), depth of set, estimated weight of the target species, and the estimated weight of bycatch by species. Indicate for each set if the target species was sablefish or halibut and if there was any lost gear. A permit holder must retain all visibly injured or dead sablefish. Sablefish that are not visibly injured or dead may be released unharmed. **The permit holder must record in the logbook, by set, the number of live sablefish released [5 AAC 28.170(f)], as well as the discard reason (e.g., fish are small, PQS has been met, etc.).**

### **Tagged Sablefish**

Fishermen are requested to document tagged sablefish. Please record tag number(s) and attach tags directly in the logbook with the corresponding set information. All persons who return an ADF&G sablefish tag will receive a tag reward (e.g., a hat or t-shirt). Tags returned with valid recovery information (the tag, date of capture, latitude and longitude) are entered into an annual random drawing for a cash prize.

### **Fish Ticket Requirements**

Landed weights must be recorded on an ADF&G fish ticket at the time of delivery. If a fisherman delivers fish in the round, the total round weight delivered must be recorded on the fish ticket. If a fisherman delivers dressed fish, the fish ticket must include the total landed dressed weight as well as the round weight equivalent, determined by using the standard 0.63 conversion rate. There is a 2% allowance for ice and slime when delivering unrinsed whole sablefish. A fish ticket must be completed prior to the resumption of fishing and each permit holder must retain onboard their vessel, copies of all NSEI fish tickets from the current season as well as their updated PQS tracking form. Fishermen are reminded that a completed fish ticket must be submitted to ADF&G before fish are transported out of Alaska.

### **Possession and Landing Requirements**

In the NSEI Subdistrict, the holder of a CFEC permit for sablefish may not retain more sablefish from the directed fishery than the annual amount of sablefish EQS specified by the department [5 AAC 28.170 (f)]. However, if a permit holder's harvest exceeds the permit holder's EQS for that year, by not more than 5%, the department shall reduce the permit holder's EQS for the following year by the amount of the overage. If a permit holder's harvest exceeds the permit holder's EQS by more than 5%, the proceeds from the sale of the overage in excess of 5% shall be surrendered to the state and the permit holder may be prosecuted under AS 16.05.723 [5 AAC 28.170 (j)]. If a permit holder's harvest is less than the permit holder's EQS established for that year, the department shall increase the permit holder's EQS only for the following year by the amount of the underage that does not exceed 5% of the EQS [5 AAC 28.170 (k)]. **For the 2022 NSEI fishing season, 5% of the annual EQS is 845 round pounds.**

### **Bycatch Allowances for the NSEI Sablefish Fishery**

Percentage indicates amount of bycatch that may be sold on a NSEI sablefish permit and is based on the round weight of sablefish and bycatch species or species group on board the vessel:

<b><u>Bycatch species</u></b>	<b><u>Allowable bycatch amount</u></b>
All rockfish, including thornyheads	15% in aggregate, of which up to 1% may be DSR
Lingcod	0%
Pacific Cod	20%
Spiny Dogfish	35%
Other groundfish	20%

CFEC permit holders fishing for groundfish or halibut in NSEI must retain, weigh, and report all rockfish taken [5 AAC 28.171 (f)]. The full retention regulation does not apply to thornyhead rockfish at the time of publication but will when the new regulations become effective later in 2022. The demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) assemblage includes yelloweye, quillback, canary, copper, tiger, China, and rosethorn rockfish [5 AAC 39.975 (34)]. All rockfish retained in excess of allowable bycatch limits shall be reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket. All proceeds from the sale of excess rockfish bycatch shall be surrendered to the state. Excess rockfish retained due to full retention requirements may be retained for personal use; however, the pounds must be documented as overage on the fish ticket.

A CFEC permit holder fishing for groundfish must retain all Pacific cod when the directed fishery for Pacific cod is open and up to the maximum retainable bycatch amount (20%) of Pacific cod when a directed fishery for Pacific cod is closed [5 AAC 28.070 (e)]. Pacific cod taken in excess of the bycatch limit in areas open to directed fishing for Pacific cod may be landed on a CFEC miscellaneous saltwater finfish permit designated for the gear that was used. Fishermen with halibut IFQ in regulatory area 2C and a CFEC halibut permit card must retain all halibut over 32 inches in length, up to the amount of their IFQ.

### **Sablefish Live Market**

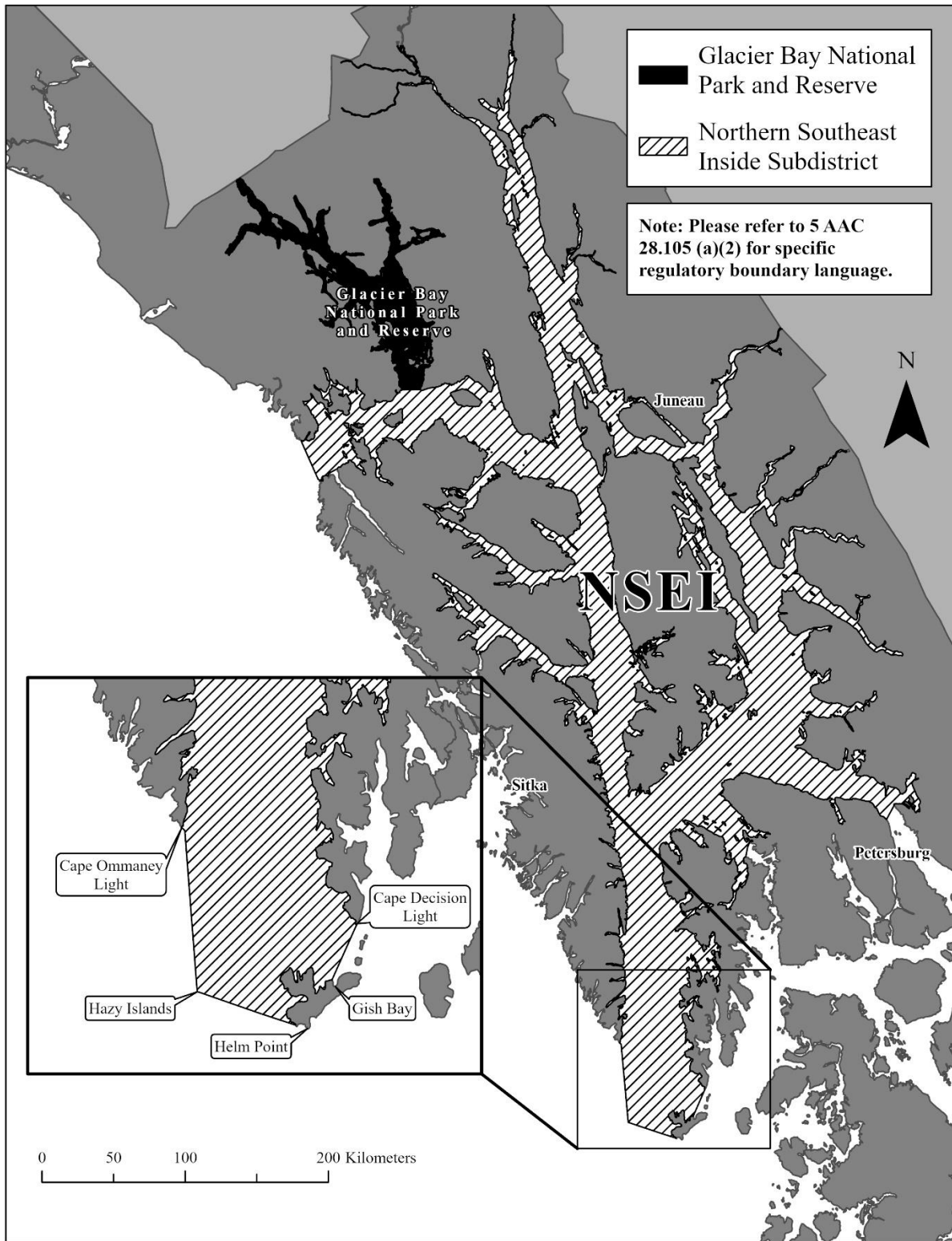
The holder of a CFEC or interim use permit for sablefish may possess live sablefish for delivery as live product except that, upon request of a local representative of the department or law enforcement, a permit holder must present sablefish for inspection and allow biological samples to be taken [5 AAC 28.170 (l)].

### **Prohibitions**

The operator of a fishing vessel may not take sablefish in the NSEI area with sablefish from another area on board. Also, the operator of a vessel taking sablefish in the NSEI area shall unload those sablefish before taking sablefish in another area [5 AAC 28.170 (a) and (b)].

A vessel, or person on board a vessel, from which commercial, subsistence, or personal use longline fishing gear was used to take fish in the NSEI or SSEI Subdistricts during the 72-hour period immediately before the start of the commercial sablefish fishery in that subdistrict, or from which that gear will be used during the 24-hour period immediately after the closure of the commercial sablefish fishery in that subdistrict, may not participate in the taking of sablefish in that subdistrict during that open sablefish fishing period. A vessel, or a person on board a vessel, who has harvested and sold their PQS before the final day of the sablefish season in that subdistrict is exempt from the prohibition on fishing longline gear during the 24-hour period immediately following the closure of the sablefish fishery in that subdistrict. In addition, a vessel or a person on board a vessel, commercial fishing for sablefish in the NSEI Subdistrict may not operate subsistence or personal use longline gear for groundfish from that vessel until all sablefish harvested in the commercial fishery are offloaded from the vessel.

For additional information, visit: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.groundfish>.



**Figure 1.—Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) Subdistrict. This map is for general information purposes only. For specific area descriptions refer to 5 AAC 28.105 (a)(2).**

Advisory Announcement website: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

Office	Ketchikan	Petersburg	Wrangell	Sitka	Juneau	Haines	Yakutat
ADF&G	225-5195	772-3801		747-6688	465-4250	766-2830	784-3255
AWT	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3255