



Advisory Announcement
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CONTACT: Jan Rumble
Groundfish Area Management Biologist
(907) 235-8191

Prince William Sound Area
Rockfish Bycatch Reduction for Groundfish Fisheries
Emergency Order # 2-GF-E-11-23

The Prince William Sound (PWS) Rockfish Management Plan (5 AAC 28.265) establishes a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 150,000 lb and requires full retention of all rockfish caught when participating in a directed groundfish or halibut fishery in the PWS Management Area. The plan also sets limits, by fishery, as a percentage of the round weight of the directed species on board the vessel. Any amount of rockfish that exceeds this bycatch limit is accounted for as overage and proceeds are surrendered to the state.

The department is **reducing the allowable rockfish bycatch limits in each fishery by 50% effective June 7** in order to stay within the GHL. This reduction in bycatch limits is designed to reduce rockfish harvest by **encouraging fishing in areas with low rockfish abundance**. In 2022, harvest of rockfish in PWS groundfish fisheries exceeded the GHL so in order to stay within the GHL in 2023, a bycatch reduction is necessary. Any amount of rockfish that exceeds this adjusted bycatch limit is accounted for as overage and proceeds are surrendered to the state. **All rockfish caught as bycatch must still be retained**, and all rockfish must be specciated, weighed, and reported. The department will continue to monitor the total rockfish harvest to stay within reasonable limits and will consider other management measures depending on the results of these reductions.

A permit holder in the Prince William Sound Area participating in a halibut or directed groundfish fishery:

- (1) may retain 20 percent Pacific cod;
- (2) may retain 5 percent skate species in aggregate;
- (3) may retain 15 percent shark species in aggregate (includes spiny dogfish);
- (4) may retain 20 percent lingcod; (after July 1)
- (5) may retain 20 percent pollock;
- (6) must retain all rockfish (and thornyhead) and any rockfish in excess of **5 percent** in aggregate must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket except that;
 - (A) in a directed sablefish fishery, all rockfish must be retained and all rockfish in excess of **10 percent** in aggregate must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket;
 - (B) in a season for Pacific cod, all rockfish must be retained and all rockfish in excess of **2.5 percent** in aggregate must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket;
- (7) may retain 20 percent other groundfish in aggregate.

(1) In accordance with 28.070 (b), as bycatch to directed salmon fisheries in limits as defined below. The limits are round weight of bycatch, as a percentage of the round weight of the target species. Groundfish retained in a salmon fishery must be weighed and reported on an ADF&G salmon fish ticket. A permit holder in the Prince William Sound Area participating in a directed salmon fishery:

- (A) may retain 20 percent Pacific cod;
- (B) may retain 5 percent skate species in aggregate;
- (C) may retain 15 percent shark species in aggregate (includes spiny dogfish);

- (D) may retain 20 percent lingcod; (after July 1)
- (E) may retain 20 percent pollock;
- (F) may retain 5 percent rockfish;
- (G) may retain 20 percent Starry flounder;
- (H) may retain 20 percent other groundfish in aggregate.

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