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Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release:

December 22, 2026

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Prince William Sound Area 2026 Parallel Pacific Cod Seasons Open January 1 Emergency Order # 2-GF-E-02-26

The 2026 Prince William Sound Area (PWS) parallel Pacific cod seasons will open to vessels using pot, jig and longline hook gear at 12:01 a.m. January 1. Parallel Pacific cod seasons are established via emergency order (EO) to coincide with the season dates and gear types set by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the initial Pacific cod season in the adjacent federal Central Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Area (CGOA). Longlined pots are not legal in the Prince William Sound (PWS) parallel Pacific cod season. The parallel Pacific cod season for jig and pot gear will close by EO to coincide with their respective gear sector closures in the CGOA. The parallel Pacific cod season for longline hook gear will close by EO to coincide with the federal closure of the less than 50 foot hook-and-line gear sector in the CGOA.

Fishers are reminded: 1) to obtain a PWS gear specific parallel Pacific cod season registration from Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) prior to fishing; 2) of the requirement for fishers using pot or longline hook 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/national/enforcement/regional-vessel-monitoring-information> and; 3) to adhere to federal seabird avoidance measures (SAM) as required in all longline fisheries for groundfish in the Outside District of PWS. Additional information on SAM may be found: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/bycatch/seabird-avoidance-gear-and-methods>.

Registrations are available online on the ADF&G website at:

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.groundfish> or at ADF&G offices in Homer, Cordova, Anchorage, Soldotna and Kodiak and may also be completed by fax or e-mail. Contact the Homer ADF&G office with groundfish regulatory and registration questions.

The department remains concerned about the status of rockfish stocks and is seeking the assistance of fishery participants to set gear away from areas of known rockfish abundance.

Two Steller sea lion rookeries within PWS, Wooded Island (Fish Island) and Seal Rocks, remain closed to fishing for all gear types out to 3 nautical miles during a parallel Pacific cod season (Figure 1). For more information on sea lion closure areas contact NMFS in Kodiak at (907) 481-1780 or consult the NMFS website at <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/sslpm>.

Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for PWS are set by EO 2-GF-E-01-26 and may be found in the Central Region Groundfish Fisheries Outlook Advisory Announcement.

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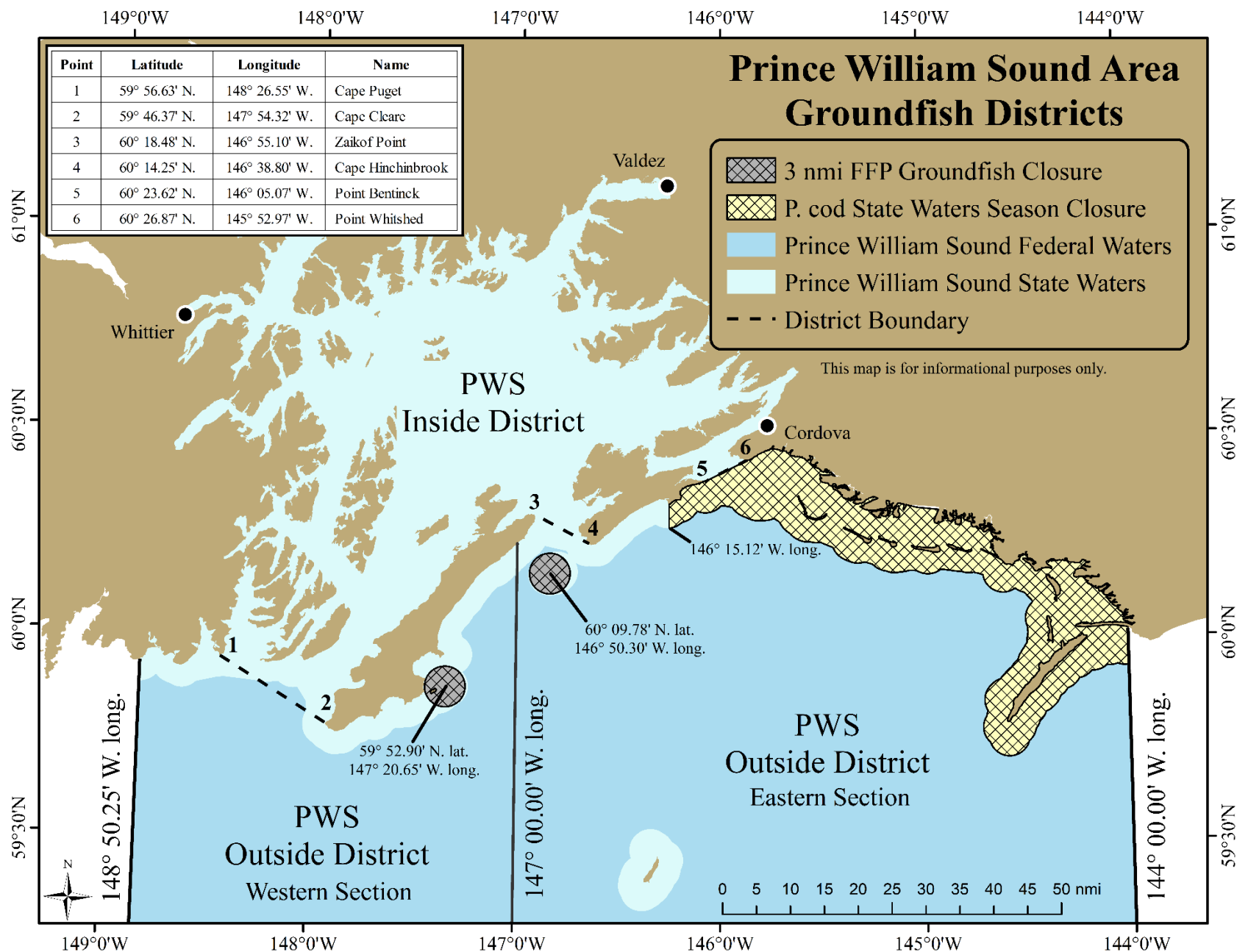


Figure 1. Prince William Sound districts, FFP groundfish closure areas and Pacific cod closed waters.