

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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Date Issued: 2/11/14  
Time: 2:30 p.m.

#### **FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT**

#### **COOK INLET AREA-H**

#### **PARALLEL PACIFIC COD SEASON CLOSING TO POT GEAR**

#### **STATE-WATERS PACIFIC COD SEASON OPENING TO POT GEAR**

#### **EMERGENCY ORDERS # 2-GF-H-04-14 # 2-GF-H-03-14**

The parallel Pacific cod season in the Cook Inlet Management Area will **close to pot gear effective 12:00 noon February 13, 2014**. 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. The parallel seasons for jig and longline gear in state waters will remain open until closed by emergency order.

The Cook Inlet state-waters Pacific cod season **will open to pot gear at 12:00 noon February 14, 2014** with a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 4,389,955 pounds allocated 85% or 3.73 million pounds to pot gear and 15% or 0.66 million pounds to jig gear. The state-waters season Pacific cod harvest by vessels fishing pot gear and greater than 58 feet in length is limited to 25% of the total GHL or approximately 1.10 million pounds.

Area registration in the state-waters Pacific cod fishery 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 from department offices in Homer, Cordova, and Kodiak or from the Department of Public Safety in Seward. A vessel may not participate in a state-waters Pacific cod season and any other Pacific cod season at the same time.

There is a 24-hour delivery time requirement following closure of a groundfish fishery. Groundfish pot storage provisions (5 AAC 28.332) allow groundfish pot gear to be stored in state waters for up to five days following the closure of a groundfish season to pot gear provided all bait and bait containers are removed and all doors are secured open at the time of closure. After the five day period has elapsed, no groundfish pot storage is permitted in state waters.

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**Steller Sea Lion Rookery closures:** The department has closed fishing in waters adjacent to two sea lion rookeries in the Cook Inlet Area. Sugarloaf Island (in the Barren Islands) and Outer (Pye) Island are closed to directed Pacific cod fishing with pot gear within 10 nautical miles of the specified locations and closed to vessel transit within three nautical miles. Contact ADF&G in Homer, NMFS in Kodiak (ph: 481-1780), or consult the NMFS website at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/rr/tables/tab15.pdf> for exact locations of these closure areas.

**Pot fishing closure areas:** Some areas are closed by regulation 5AAC 28.350 to fishing with groundfish pot gear (Figure 1). Check the regulation book or contact the department prior to fishing.

Retention of big skate (*Raja binoculata*) was closed on February 6, 2014 for the remainder of the year by Emergency Order 2-GF-H-03-14. Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for the Cook Inlet Management Area are set by Emergency Order 2-GF-H-01-14, which established a 20% bycatch allowance of Pacific cod to other directed groundfish and halibut fisheries. Bycatch limits for the directed Pacific cod fishery are set as follows as round weight of bycatch as percentage of the round weight of the target species:

- (1) may retain 15 percent skate species in aggregate except;
  - (A) big skate (*Raja binoculata*) may not be retained after 12:00 noon February 6, 2014;
- (2) may retain 15 percent shark species in aggregate (includes spiny dogfish);
- (3) must retain all pollock;
- (4) must retain all rockfish (and thornyhead) as required by 5 AAC 28.365 and any rockfish in excess of 10 percent in aggregate must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket;
  - (A) no rockfish landing or combination of landings may exceed the 5-day trip limit of 4,000 pounds in the North Gulf District or 1,000 pounds in the Cook Inlet District;
- (5) may retain 20 percent other groundfish in aggregate;
- (6) may not retain lingcod prior to July 1; after July 1 may retain 20 percent lingcod.

For additional information, contact ADF&G in Homer, at 907-235-8191.

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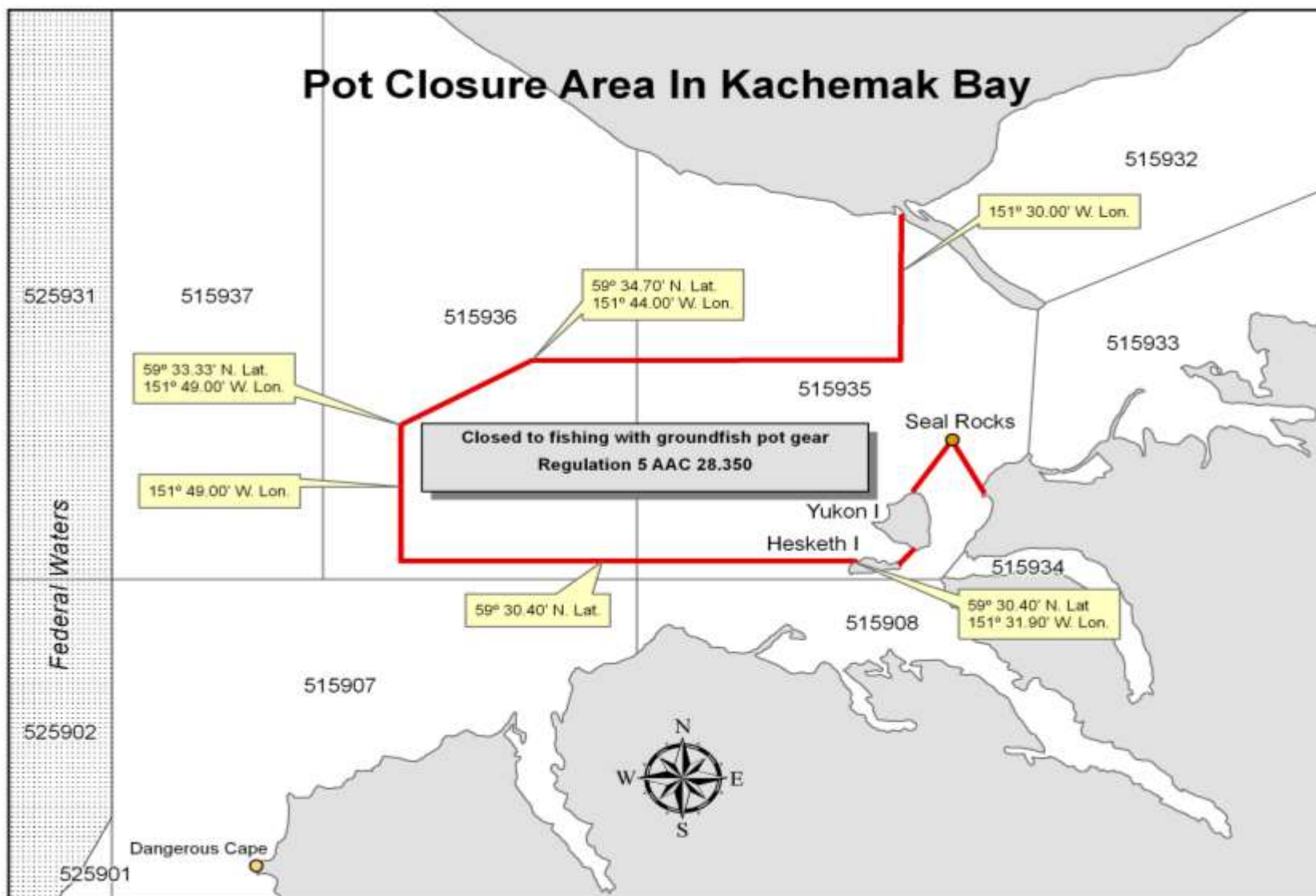


Figure 1. Kachemak Bay groundfish pot closure area with coordinates.