

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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FISHERY UPDATE COOK INLET AREA COMMERCIAL LINGCOD and ROCKFISH FISHERIES

Seasons for the Cook Inlet Area directed lingcod and pelagic shelf rockfish fisheries will open on July 1 with guideline harvest levels (GHL) of 52,500 and 150,000 pounds, respectively. Legal gear types for these fisheries are mechanical jig and hand troll (hand jig) and only these gear types may be aboard a vessel targeting these species. To participate in these directed fisheries, fishermen must possess a gear-appropriate Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit card for lingcod and/or miscellaneous groundfish, a Cook Inlet nonexclusive groundfish area registration, and for rockfish, logbooks to be completed while fishing. Groundfish registrations and logbook pages can be obtained at department offices in Anchorage, Homer, Soldotna, and Cordova.

There is a 35-inch minimum legal size for lingcod from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. Fishermen are requested to deliver lingcod in a head-on condition and with the vent intact to enable the department to collect age and sex information.

Only pelagic shelf rockfish species: dark, dusky, widow, yellowtail, black, and blue rockfish, may be targeted in the directed rockfish fishery. Logbook pages must be completed and accompany each fish ticket. All rockfish caught must be retained. Five-day trip limits for rockfish are 4,000 pounds in the North Gulf District and 1,000 pounds in the Cook Inlet District.

ADF&G management authority for black and dark rockfishes and lingcod extends into federal waters of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In addition to the regular state requirements of a gear-appropriate permit card and area registration, a fisherman targeting lingcod, black rockfish or dark rockfish in the EEZ also needs a Federal Fisheries Permit (FFP). FFP application forms are available at National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) offices in Homer, Anchorage, or Seward and online at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/ram/FFPAPP.pdf>.

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Fishermen targeting groundfish or halibut in Cook Inlet Area state waters must retain all rockfish and may not exceed rockfish trip limits as described above. Allowable bycatch levels are 20% non-pelagic rockfish species to the directed rockfish fishery and 10% rockfish (all species) to other directed groundfish and halibut fisheries. Rockfish in excess of allowable bycatch levels must be reported as an overage on the fish ticket and any proceeds surrendered to the State of Alaska.

Big skate closed to retention as bycatch in Cook Inlet waters on February 6 by Emergency Order 2-GF-H-03-14. Other bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for the Cook Inlet Management Area are set by Emergency Order 2-GF-H-01-14.

Fishermen targeting groundfish or halibut in Cook Inlet Area waters may retain lingcod as bycatch up to 20 percent of the directed harvest aboard the vessel. After the directed lingcod season is closed, lingcod may not be retained.

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