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# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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#### **2015/16 SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMERCIAL SEA CUCUMBER FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT**

Juneau. . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today the following information concerning the commercial harvest of sea cucumbers in Southeast Alaska during the 2015/16 season:

The 2015/16 Southeast Alaska commercial sea cucumber dive fishery will open by emergency order at 8:00 a.m., Monday, October 5, 2015. Subsequent openings will be announced on a weekly basis until individual area's guideline harvest levels have been reached or until March 31, 2016, whichever is earlier. A total of 1,439,900 pounds of sea cucumbers will be available for harvest this season.

Divers are reminded that during the week of Thanksgiving, the weekly schedule will change to a Sunday/Monday opening. This scheduled open period will be Sunday, November 22, and Monday, November 23, 2015.

The following area will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday, October 5, 2015:

#### **District 1:**

Percy Islands (Subdistrict 101-25): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 77,300 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Clarence Strait in District 1, south of the latitude of the southernmost tip of Dall Head, located on the southern tip of Gravina Island, and south of a line from the southernmost tip of Dall Head to Cedar Point, located on Annette Island, and north of the latitude of the westernmost tip of Point White, located on the western side of Duke Island at 54°56.00' N. latitude, 131°29.87' W. longitude, and west of 131°26.60' W. longitude, located on the northwest side of Duke Island.

The following areas will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday, October 5, and from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 6, 2015:

#### **District 1:**

Tree Point (Subdistricts 101-10 and 101-11): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 184,800 pounds of sea cucumbers in the waters of Dixon Entrance, Edwards Passage, and Portland Canal in those waters south and east of Foggy Point light, west of a line from a point approximately 3 nautical miles southwest of Hidden Inlet at 54°54.23' N. latitude, 130°22.75' W. longitude, to a point on Pearse Island at 54°53.83' N. latitude, 130°21.78' W. longitude, and north of the U.S./Canada border, with the following restriction:

Willard and Fillmore Inlets: those waters of Willard and Fillmore Inlets north of the latitude of Male Point, located at the southwesternmost tip of Fillmore Island, and north of a line from a point at 54°51.99' N. latitude, 130°31.78' W. longitude, to a point at 54°52.09' N. latitude, 130°31.65' W. longitude are closed.

West Behm Canal (Subdistricts 101-90 and 101-95): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 96,000 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of the eastern portion of West Behm Canal adjacent to Revillagigedo Island, Betton Island, and surrounding islands, north of the latitude of the westernmost tip of Point Higgins, and south of the latitude of the westernmost tip of Nose Point.

## **District 2:**

Lower Clarence Strait (Subdistrict 102-20): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 34,900 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters adjacent to the eastern shore of Prince of Wales Island north of 54°54.08' N. latitude, located at the northern entrance to Kendrick Bay, and south of 55°08.25' N. latitude, located north of Port Johnson, excluding all waters of Moira Sound west of a line from 55°05.08' N. latitude, 132°02.50' W. longitude, to 55°02.03' N. latitude, 132°01.87' W. longitude.

Kasaan Bay and Skowl Arm (Subdistrict 102-60): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 220,700 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Kasaan Bay, Skowl Arm, and McKenzie Inlet, west of a line from a point on the southwest side of Kasaan Peninsula at 55°27.93' N. latitude, 132°11.92' W. longitude, to a point near Skowl Point at 55°25.00' N. latitude, 132°15.50' W. longitude, with the following restriction:

All waters less than 20 fathoms along the north shore of Kasaan Bay from the eastern tip of Grindall Point to the southern point of Harris Bay in Twelve-Mile Arm, are closed.

Cleveland Peninsula (Subdistrict 102-80): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 39,700 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Clarence Strait adjacent to the western shore of Cleveland Peninsula, north of the latitude of the southernmost tip of Caamano Point located at 55°29.90' N. latitude, 131°58.13' W. longitude, and south of the latitude of the northernmost tip of Lemesurier Point.

## **District 3:**

Long Island and upper Cordova Bay (Subdistricts 103-21 and 103-30): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 39,300 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Kaigani Strait and Cordova Bay, north and east of a line from the southernmost tip of Cape Muzon at 54°39.82' N. latitude, 132°41.47' W. longitude, to a point in Dixon Entrance at 54°39.83' N. latitude, 132°39.63' W. longitude, to a point on the southwest end of Long Island at 54°45.20' N. latitude, 132°39.13' W. longitude and north of a line from the east shore of Long Island at 54°53.12' N. latitude, 132°37.62' W. longitude, to the northernmost tip of Ship Island, to a point on the western shore of Prince of Wales Island at 54°54.53' N. latitude, 132°30.87' W. longitude and south of a line from Rose Point at 54°58.15' N. latitude, 132°56.50' W. longitude, to a point on Sukkwan Island at 55°00.00' N. latitude, 132°45.97' W. longitude, and south of a line from a point on the southernmost tip of Sukkwan Island to a point on Prince of Wales Island at 54°59.33' N. latitude, 132°36.62' W. longitude.

Hetta Inlet, Nutkwa Inlet, and Keete Inlet (Subdistricts 103-23 and 103-25): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 165,000 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Hetta Inlet, Nutkwa Inlet, Keete Inlet, and contiguous waters east of a line from a point on Prince of Wales Island located at 55°08.95' N. latitude, 132°38.47' W. longitude, located in Hetta Inlet approximately 1.1 nautical miles northeast of Eek Point, to a point at 55°03.25' N. latitude, 132°38.80' W. longitude, located approximately 0.4 nautical miles west of Lime Point to a point on Prince of Wales Island at 54°59.53' N. latitude, 132°36.73' W. longitude.

San Christoval Channel, western San Alberto Bay, and Trocadero Bay (Subdistricts 103-60 and 103-70-002, Figure 1): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 32,400 pounds of sea cucumbers in those

waters east of a line from the southernmost tip of Point Animas to the southernmost tip of St. Philip Island located at 55°38.03' N. latitude, 133°24.85' W. longitude and east of a line extending from Point Cuerbo to Point Eugenia to Point Miliflores to Tranquil Point, with the following restrictions:

Portions of San Alberto Bay: will be closed in those waters east of a line from a point on Prince of Wales Island located at 55°34.56' N. latitude, 133°13.65' W. longitude located approximately 0.6 nautical miles northeast of Sombrero Island, to Fern Reef buoy then to Point Eugenia, and north of a line from the northernmost tip of Point Miliflores to Point Miraballes, including those waters of Port St. Nicholas;

Port Caldera, Prince of Wales shoreline, and contiguous waters: will be closed east of 133°13.63' W. longitude, located approximately 0.1 nautical miles west of the northernmost tip of Tranquil Point and west of 133°07.00' W. longitude, located approximately 1.15 nautical miles east of Point Iphigenia.

#### **District 6:**

Snow Pass (Subdistrict 106-30): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 302,200 pounds of sea cucumbers in District 6 in those waters of Snow Pass south of a line from Point Colpoys Light to Macnamara Point and north and west of a line from Luck Point to Point Stanhope to a point on Etolin Island at 56°03.48' N. latitude, 132°37.43' W. longitude and Stikine Strait south of the latitude of Round Point, with the following restriction:

Whale Pass, Lake Bay, Coffman Cove, Kashevarof Pass, and contiguous waters: will be closed west of a line from Luck Point to a point on Prince of Wales Island at 56°10.30' N. latitude, 133°02.20' W. longitude.

#### **District 12:**

Chatham Strait and Kelp Bay (Subdistricts 112-11, 112- 21, and 112-22): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 110,300 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Section 12-A along the Catherine Island and Baranof Island shorelines south of the latitude of Point Thatcher.

Eastern portion of Tenakee Inlet (Subdistricts 112-41 and 112-42): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 38,600 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Tenakee Inlet west of a line from South Passage Point to North Passage Point, south of the latitude of East Point, and east of 135°16.67' W. longitude.

Western portion of Tenakee Inlet (Subdistricts 112-43, 112-44, 112- 45, 112-46, 112-47, and 112-48): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 54,300 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Tenakee Inlet west of 135°16.67' W. longitude.

#### **District 13:**

Salisbury Sound and Peril Strait (Subdistricts 113-62, 113-63, 113-64, 113-65, and 113-66): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 44,400 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Section 13-A including all waters of Salisbury Sound, Sukoi Inlet, Neva Strait, Fish Bay, and contiguous waters east of the longitude of Kalinin Point, south of the latitude of Pogibshi Point, and in Section 13-B only in those waters of Neva Strait north of the latitude of Neva point.

#### **Regulatory Summary**

The operation of dive fishing gear 14 days prior to a commercial fishery, 14 days after participating in a commercial opening, and between weekly open periods for miscellaneous shellfish is prohibited. A person who uses dive gear to fish in a commercial red sea urchin fishery, commercial geoduck fishery, or mariculture site may fish in the sea cucumber fishery within the 14-day period (5 AAC 38.147).

Each diver participating in the sea cucumber fishery must have a current Southeast Alaska Sea Cucumber Limited Entry Permit, which can be obtained from the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC). All vessels involved in the sea cucumber fishery need to have a current CFEC vessel license and be registered with the department. Vessel registrations can be obtained at any ADF&G office. All crew members are required to have a valid Commercial Crewmembers License, or a limited entry card from another fishery.

In order to provide a refuge for sea cucumbers in deeper waters, use of mixed gases or saturation diving is prohibited. Nitrox gas can be used for diving providing the oxygen concentration is less than 40%. Sea cucumbers may only be hand-picked and any means other than individually collecting sea cucumbers by hand and placing them in bags is prohibited. Sea cucumbers may only be harvested by diving with the aid of: (1) SCUBA; (2) tethered, umbilical surface supplied systems; or (3) diving with a snorkel.

No more than three divers licensed to fish sea cucumbers (hereafter called “permit holders”) may be on board a vessel registered to fish sea cucumbers from 24 hours before, during, and for 24 hours after a fishing period or at any time commercially harvested sea cucumbers are on board. Only two permit holders can make landings from any registered sea cucumber vessel during any fishing period.

No permit holder may land, or have on board, more than 2,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers during any fishing period established by the department and only one species of miscellaneous shellfish is permitted on board a vessel at one time. Only vessels registered as tenders may possess more than 4,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers during an established open fishing period.

Commercial sea cucumber fishermen are also advised that all landings to processors, catcher/processors, or tenders must be recorded on fish tickets with the number of minutes of dive time included. A permit holder who is operating their vessel as a tender for sea cucumbers must complete fish tickets as required by 5 AAC 39.130. A fish ticket must be made out for every landing and all fish tickets must be submitted to ADF&G within seven days of landing.

### **Area Closures**

Rocky Pass (105-32) and Port Camden (109-43) will be closed due to sea cucumber populations estimated at very low levels. Therefore, these subdistricts will remain closed during the 2015-16 fishing season to protect broodstock and maximize reproductive potential. Observations of sea otters and evidence of sea otter predation on other species were documented during surveys in these subdistricts.

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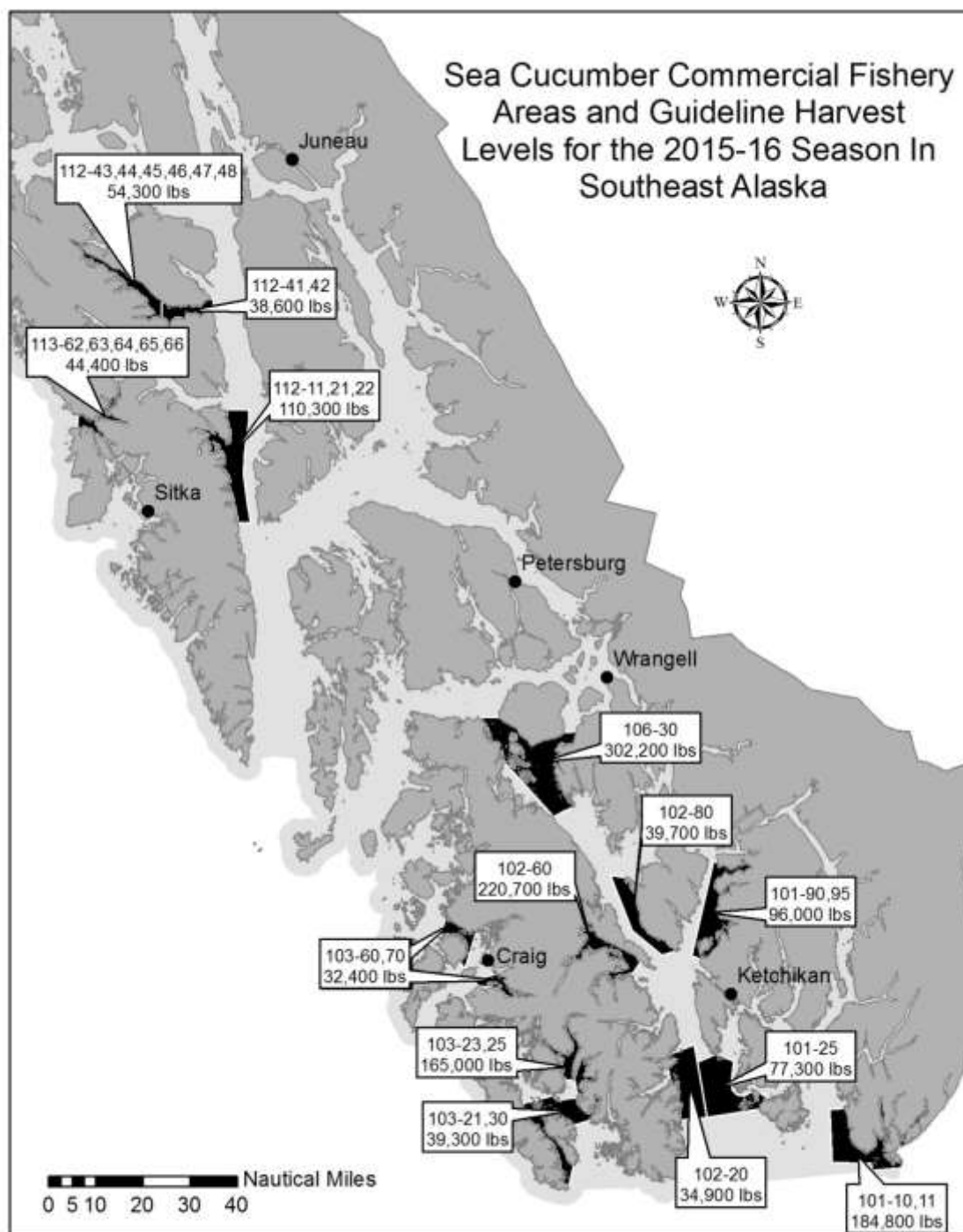


Figure 1. Commercial sea cucumber open harvest areas and guideline harvest levels for the 2015-16 season.

Note: This chart is for general reference purposes only and does not identify boundaries of open areas. See written descriptions above for detailed descriptions of open areas.