

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Scott Kelley, Director



Contact:
Maria Wessel, Groundfish Management Biologist
Phone: (907) 424-3212
Fax: (907) 424-3235

Cordova Office
P.O. Box 669
Cordova, AK. 99574
Date Issued: 3/30/2016

FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND AREA E

PARALLEL PACIFIC COD SEASON CLOSING TO POT GEAR

STATE-WATERS PACIFIC COD SEASON OPENING TO POT GEAR

EMERGENCY ORDERS # 2-GF-E-01-16 AND # 2-GF-E-09-16

The Prince William Sound (PWS) Area E **parallel Pacific cod season will close to pot gear effective 12:00 noon March 31, 2016 and a state-waters Pacific cod season will immediately open to pot gear.** 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 season for jig gear in state waters will remain open until closed by emergency order.

The PWS state-waters Pacific cod season has a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 4.8 million pounds and will close to pot gear when 15 percent of the GHL (726,285 pounds) is harvested by either pot or jig gear. Lingcod may not be retained prior to July 1. Detailed bycatch limits are listed below.

For the state-waters Pacific cod season, area registration is exclusive; gear is limited to 60 pots and each pot must display a buoy identification tag. Buoy tags and vessel registrations may be obtained from department offices in Homer and Cordova or from Department of Public Safety in Seward.

Fishermen are reminded that there is a 24-hour delivery time requirement following closure of a groundfish fishery. Groundfish pot storage for PWS (5 AAC 28.232) requires all groundfish pots be removed from the water following closure of a parallel fishery, unless the vessel is registered for the state-waters season. The following provisions apply:

- ◆ Pots may be stored in waters less than 25 fathoms deep only on the north side of Montague Island between 147° 25.00' W. long and 147° 35.00' W. long. 10 days before the scheduled opening of the state-waters season until 10 days following the closure of that fishery.
- ◆ Pots in storage must have all bait and bait containers removed, and all doors either secured open (rectangular pots) or not secured closed (cone or pyramid pots).

Fishing area: During a state-waters season, Pacific cod may be taken in waters of the PWS Area (5 AAC 28.205) except for those waters of the Outside District east of 146° 15.12' W. long. (the latitude of Hook Point) (5 AAC 28.267. (e) (2)).

Pot fishing closure areas: Waters closed to the use of groundfish pot gear are defined in 5AAC 28.250. Consult the current regulation booklet and attached map (Figure 1) prior to fishing.

Steller Sea Lion rookery closures: Directed fishing for all groundfish species is closed in waters within 3 nautical miles of two Steller sea lion rookeries within PWS (Figure 1). For specific regulatory language contact NMFS in Kodiak at (907) 481-1780 or <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/regs/679b22.pdf>.

Bycatch limits: Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for the Prince William Sound Management Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery are set as follows by Emergency Order 2-GF-E-01-16 as round weight of bycatch as a percentage of the round weight of the target species:

- (1) may retain 5 percent skate species in aggregate except;
- (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 28.265 and any rockfish in excess of 5 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 3,000 pounds
- (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 Cordova, at 907-424-3212.

-continued-

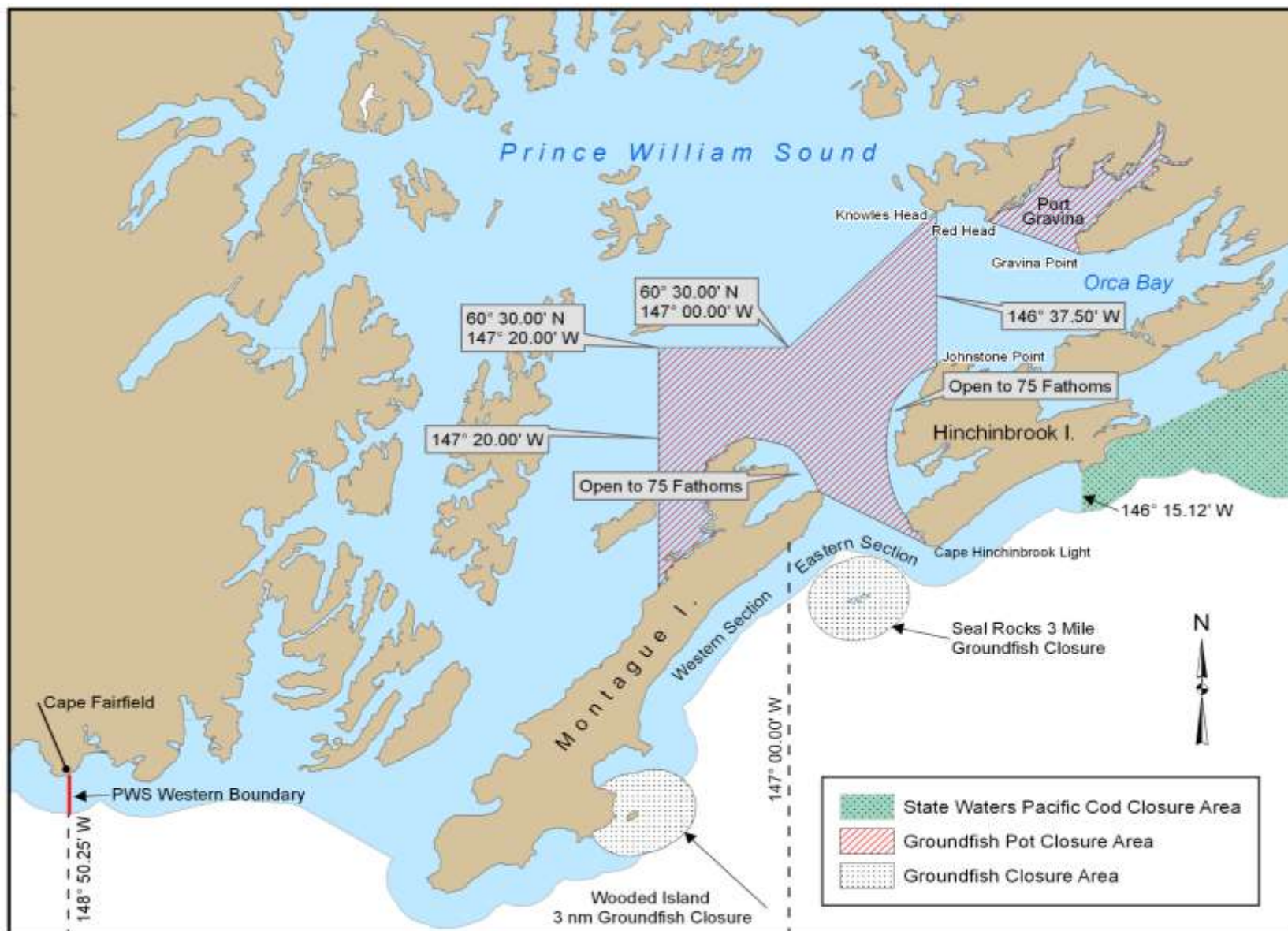


Figure 1. Prince William Sound closures to groundfish pot gear, groundfish fishing, and to the state-waters Pacific cod season.

-end-