ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE

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FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT
COOK INLET AREA SABLEFISH FISHERY OPENS
EO # 2-GF-H-09-16

The Cook Inlet Area sablefish season will open at 12:00 noon July 15 with a 48,000 pound guideline harvest level (GHL). A season closure will be announced when harvest projections indicate achievement of the GHL.

The fishery GHL is adjusted each year in proportion to the annual percentage change in the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA) Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for sablefish set by the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) for federal waters of the CGOA. The ABC is based on biomass estimates generated from annual surveys conducted by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the Gulf of Alaska. From the 2015 assessment, biomass estimates applied to the 2016 season decreased by 13.6% and therefore the GHL for the Cook Inlet Management Area has also decreased by 13.6% from the 2015 GHL of 55,500 lb.

A vessel may not land or have on board more than 3,000 pounds of sablefish (round weight) in any two consecutive day period. All state-waters sablefish harvest must be landed or in port with intent to land within 24 hours of the closure (5 AAC 28.371).

Fishermen are reminded, under the authority of 5 AAC 28.020(c), they are required to **check out** with the department **after each sablefish trip** in the Cook Inlet Management Area by telephoning **(907) 226-2121** **<u>at least 6 hours prior to landing</u>** and reporting the following items: **1) vessel name/ADF&G#, 2) date and location of landing, 3) estimated time of arrival, 4) buyer or processor, 5) estimated pounds of sablefish onboard,** and **6) if whole or dressed fish.** The department is also trying to gather more information about the status of sablefish fishing in Cook Inlet and samplers may ask additional questions when collecting biological information.

Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for the Cook Inlet Management Area are set by Emergency Order 2-GF-H-01-16.

Any vessel retaining sablefish during the Cook Inlet Area sablefish season must possess a Cook Inlet Area sablefish registration and **logbook** pages. Participants must submit completed ADF&G logbook pages to the department with each fish ticket. In order to register for the Cook Inlet sablefish fishery, fishermen must present a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) sablefish (statewide) permit card for the appropriate gear type. A vessel may not be validly registered for more than one groundfish registration area at a time. In order to change registration areas, a vessel owner or agent must notify ADF&G in Homer. Registrations and ADF&G logbook pages are available from department offices in Homer, Soldotna, Cordova, and Anchorage or via fax with prior arrangement with the Homer office (phone: 235-8191; fax: 235-2448). Please contact ADF&G Homer with questions regarding the Cook Inlet sablefish fishery.

Sablefish IFQ-holders wishing to participate in this fishery should contact NMFS enforcement in Homer (235-2337) or Seward (224-5348) prior to fishing.

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