

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT
COOK INLET AREA PACIFIC COD FISHERY
STATE-WATERS SEASON CLOSES TO POT GEAR AND
PARALLEL SEASON OPENS TO POT GEAR SEPTEMBER 1
PARALLEL SEASON REMAINS CLOSED TO LONGLINE GEAR
EMERGENCY ORDER 2-GF-H-10-16

The Cook Inlet Area (Area H) state-waters Pacific cod season will close to vessels fishing with pot gear effective 12:00 noon September 1, 2016. The parallel Pacific cod season will open to pot gear only at 12:00 noon September 1, 2016; the parallel Pacific cod season for longline gear will not open. This coincides with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) closure of directed fishing for groundfish by catcher vessels (C/Vs) using hook-and-line (HAL) gear in the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) effective June 10 through the remainder of 2016. NMFS took this action because the 2016 Pacific halibut bycatch allowance specified for the other HAL fishery by C/Vs in the GOA has been reached. Parallel Pacific cod seasons are established by emergency order (EO) to coincide with the season dates and gear types set by NMFS for the Pacific cod seasons in the adjacent federal Central Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Area (CGOA). The parallel Pacific cod season for jig gear will remain open.

The parallel seasons for pot and jig gear will close by EO for each gear type concurrent with federal "B" season closures announced by NMFS.

There is a 24-hour delivery time requirement following closure of a groundfish fishery. Vessels participating in the state-waters Pacific cod season for pot gear must deliver all groundfish prior to participating in the parallel Pacific cod season.

Fishermen are reminded: 1) to obtain a Cook Inlet Area non-exclusive parallel season Pacific cod registration from ADF&G prior to fishing; 2) of the requirement for fishermen using pot gear in parallel Pacific cod fisheries to have a functioning, activated, NMFS-approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) as described at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ole/ak_faqs.html.

Regulation 5AAC 28.350 (b) closes certain waters to groundfish pot gear along the west side of Cook Inlet and within Kachemak Bay (Figure 1). To protect Steller sea lions, waters adjacent to two rookeries within the Cook Inlet Area, Sugarloaf Island and Outer Pye Island, remain closed

to fishing for Pacific cod with pot or longline gear. Vessel transit is closed within 3 nautical miles (nmi) of these locations and fishing within 10 nmi of these locations is closed. For more information, consult the NMFS website at <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/tabl5.pdf>.

Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for the Cook Inlet Management Area parallel Pacific cod fishery were set as follows by Emergency Order 2-GF-H-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;
- (2) may retain 15 percent shark species in aggregate (includes spiny dogfish);
- (3) may retain 20 percent lingcod after July 1;
- (4) must retain all pollock;
- (5) must retain all rockfish (and thornyhead) and any rockfish in excess of 10 percent in aggregate must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket [5 AAC 28.365(f)], except that;
 - (A) in a directed pelagic shelf rockfish fishery, all rockfish must be retained and all nonpelagic rockfish in excess of 20 percent in aggregate must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket [5 AAC 28.365(g)];
- (6) may retain 20 percent other groundfish in aggregate.

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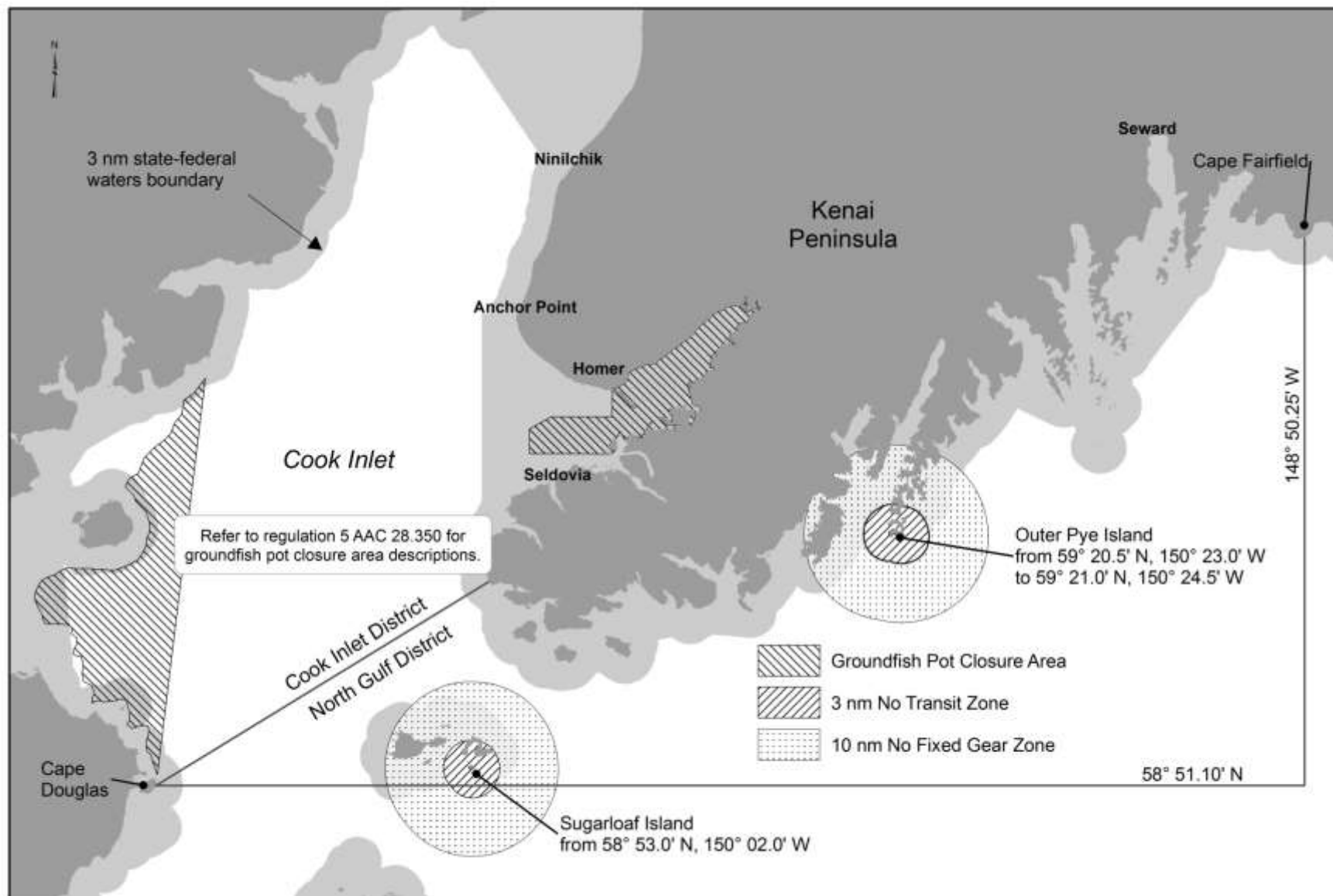


Figure 1. Vessel no-transit and fixed gear Pacific cod fishing closure zones around Steller sea lion rookeries and groundfish pot closure areas within the Cook Inlet Management Area.