

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



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**FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT
PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND AREA PACIFIC COD FISHERY
STATE-WATERS SEASON CLOSURES TO LONGLINE AND POT GEAR AND
PARALLEL SEASON OPENS TO POT GEAR SEPTEMBER 1
PARALLEL SEASON REMAINS CLOSED TO LONGLINE GEAR
EMERGENCY ORDER 2-GF-E-12-16**

The Prince William Sound Area (PWS; Area E) state-waters Pacific cod season will close to vessels fishing with longline and 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. All Pacific cod longline fisheries in PWS will be closed effective 12:00 noon September 1. 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. In addition to this action, the PWS guideline harvest level for rockfish has been achieved for 2016. Additional effort with longline gear will result in additional rockfish bycatch further necessitating the closure. 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 PWS non-exclusive parallel season Pacific cod area 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 5 AAC 28.250 (a) closes certain waters to groundfish pot gear in PWS (Figure 1). To protect Steller sea lions, 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 more information, contact NMFS in Kodiak at (907) 481-1780 or consult the NMFS website at <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/tab15.pdf>.

Allowable bycatch percentage limits were recently reduced for rockfish in an effort to reduce rockfish bycatch harvest by Emergency Order 2-GF-E-11-16 with other limits set by species or species aggregate for the Prince William Sound Area by round weight of bycatch as a percentage of the round weight of the target species:

- (1) may retain 20 percent Pacific cod [5 AAC 28.267(i)];
- (2) may retain 5 percent skate species in aggregate;
- (3) may retain 15 percent shark species in aggregate (includes spiny dogfish);
- (4) may retain 20 percent lingcod [5 AAC 28.210 (c) (2)];
- (5) may retain 20 percent pollock;
- (6) must retain all rockfish (and thornyhead) and any rockfish in excess of 5 percent in aggregate must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket [5 AAC 28.265(b)(1)], except that:
 - (A) in a directed sablefish fishery, all rockfish must be retained and all rockfish in excess of 10 percent in aggregate must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket [5 AAC 28.265(b)(2)];
 - (B) in a season for Pacific cod, all rockfish must be retained and all rockfish in excess of 2.5 percent in aggregate must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket;
 - (C) in the directed pollock trawl fishery, all rockfish must be retained and all rockfish in excess of 0.5 percent in aggregate must be weighed and reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket;
- (7) may retain 20 percent other groundfish in aggregate.

-end-

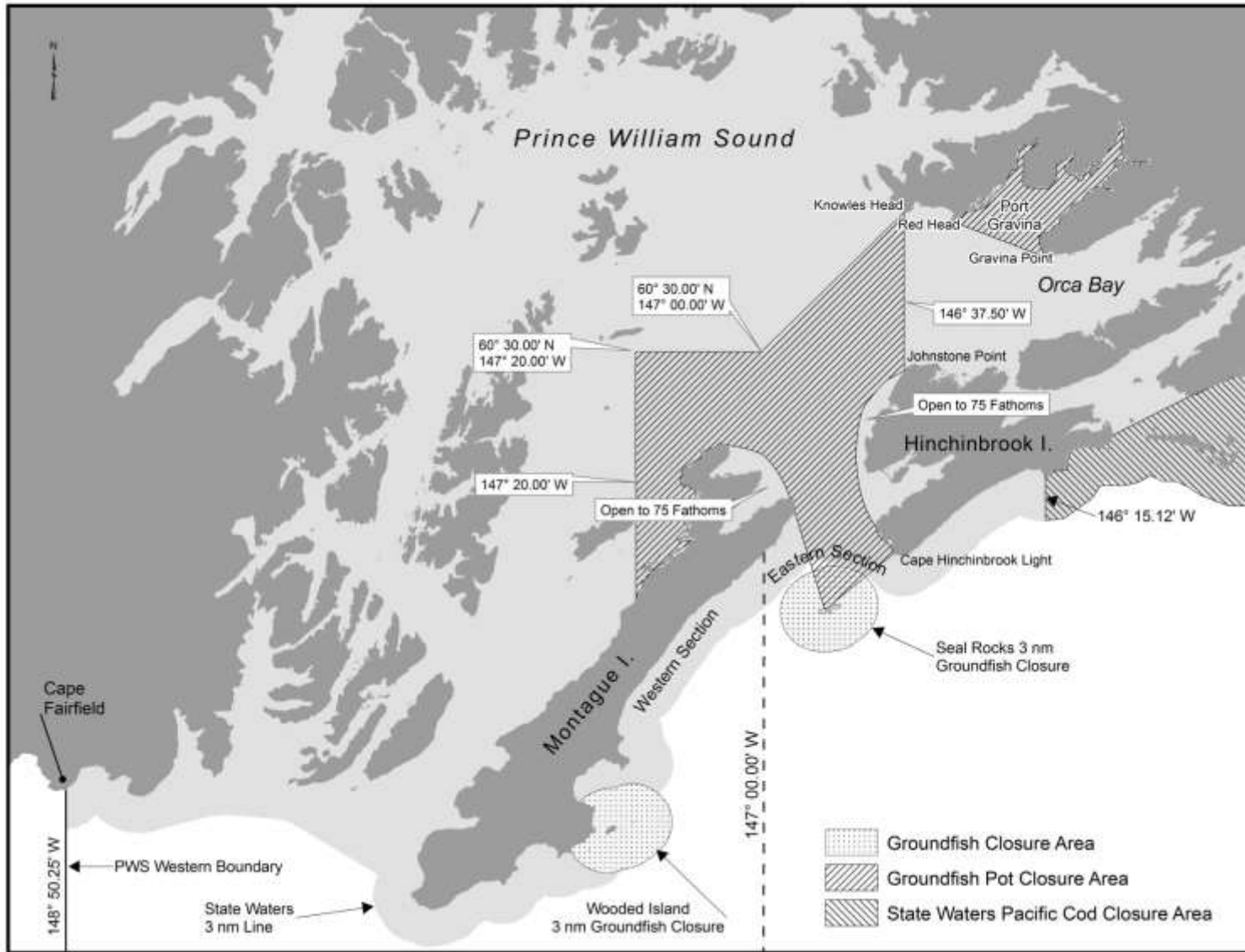


Figure 1. Prince William Sound closures to groundfish pot gear, groundfish fishing, and to the state-waters Pacific cod season.

