

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



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**FISHERY UPDATE
PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND SABLEFISH FISHERY
REGISTRATION DEADLINE AND GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVEL**

The registration deadline date for the 2017 Prince William Sound Area (PWS) sablefish fishery is **5:00 p.m. Monday, April 3** (ADF&G offices are closed on Saturday, April 1, the regulatory deadline). The season will open April 15 with a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 117,000 lb. Any permit holder failing to register by the April 3 deadline will not be allotted a share of the quota.

Only a PWS sablefish limited entry (LE) permit holder possessing a 2017 permit card or their authorized agent may register. Registrations and log sheets are available at ADF&G offices in Homer, Anchorage, Kodiak and Cordova, and by appointment with the Alaska Wildlife Troopers in Seward and Valdez. Individuals may register by fax but must contact the ADF&G office in Homer. PWS sablefish permit holders are advised that recipients of a permanent or emergency transfer must re-register with the department prior to fishing.

The 2016 harvest of 40,457 lb was less than half of the 110,500 lb GHL, although an increase compared to the 2015 harvest of 16,910 lb, the lowest harvest in the history of the fishery (GHL of 122,000 lb). Beginning in 2015, the GHL has been adjusted by applying the relative change each year in the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Gulf of Alaska sablefish acceptable biological catch (ABC), which is derived from NMFS stock assessment surveys. This GHL adjustment continues this season.

To gather more inseason information from the 2017 fishery, the department will continue to conduct more extensive participant interviews. The goal is to get additional information about sablefish recruitment and smaller age classes, catch per unit effort (CPUE), and the occurrence of targeted sablefish trips and mixed trips for other groundfish species. These may include post fishing trip phone calls or more thorough interviews at the dock. Fishermen are asked to cooperate with interviewers to help ADF&G get a broader view of the fishery this season.

After the registration deadline, ADF&G will determine the quota allocations as specified in regulation (5 AAC 28.272) and will announce those allocations in a news release no later than April 7, 2017.