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# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner*  
*Scott Kelley, Director*



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Contact:  
Andrew Olson

Phone: (907) 465-4259  
Fax: (907) 465-4944

Douglas Area Office  
802 3<sup>rd</sup> ST  
Douglas, AK 99824  
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#### 2017 SOUTHERN SOUTHEAST INSIDE SUBDISTRICT SABLEFISH FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Douglas...The 2017 Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI) Subdistrict sablefish commercial annual harvest objective (AHO) is 516,763 round lb, a 7% increase from the 2016 AHO. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) evaluates stock status and establishes the SSEI AHO using commercial fishery and survey catch per unit effort (CPUE) data, fishery and survey biological data (age, weight, length, and maturity), and stock status trends of sablefish populations in surrounding geographic areas.

In 2016, the SSEI AHO was reduced by 10%, due to decreases in survey CPUE and concerns about the high proportion of immature fish in the commercial and survey catch. In 2017, stock status has improved and survey CPUE increased (20%) from 2015 to 2016 after a period of decline from 2011 to 2015 (33%). In addition, there have been signs of recruitment in the survey and commercial fishery, and reductions in the proportion of immature fish harvested in the longline fishery. These improvements prompted a cautionary increase for the 2017 AHO to allow for continued recruitment and recovery to the stock in SSEI. The SSEI commercial longline fishery CPUE has remained fairly stable, but declined slightly (2%) from 2015 to 2016 and harvest proportions of immature sablefish decreased in the longline fishery from 2015 to 2016, but remain high in the pot fishery. For other areas in 2017, the Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) Subdistrict survey CPUE increased from 2015 to 2016 as did the 2017 ABC (5%), and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) federal survey CPUE index increased from 2015 to 2016 (34%) as did the 2017 federal ABC (11%). Recruitment of sablefish in the GOA has been historically low and has likely led to geographic-wide trends in stock declines in recent years; furthermore the federal assessment predicts sablefish spawning stock biomass will continue to decline through 2019.

**The SSEI sablefish fishery using longline gear will open 8:00 a.m., Wednesday, June 1 and close at 12:00 noon, Monday, August 15, 2017. The SSEI sablefish fishery using pot gear will open at 8:00 a.m., Thursday September 1 and close at 12:00 noon, Tuesday, November 15, 2017.**

Equal quota share (EQS) for each of the 23 permit holders will be 22,468 round pounds. There has been no change in the number of permit holders since 2012. Each permit holder's 2017 EQS will be adjusted based on any legal overages or underages and a personal quota share (PQS) will be assigned.

**Registration and Logbook Requirements**

Fishermen must register prior to fishing and keep a logbook during the fishery. Registration forms and logbooks will be available at ADF&G offices in Southeast Alaska beginning May 5, 2017. Completed logbook pages must be attached to the ADF&G copy of the fish ticket at the time of delivery. Confidential envelopes for logbook pages may be requested when registering.

Permit holders will receive a PQS tracking form at the time of registration. This form is used to record the total round weight landed for each delivery. Each permit holder must, upon request, provide the buyer with the total round weight of sablefish the permit holder has landed to date. The department requests that a copy of the completed PQS tracking form is included with the final fish ticket of the season for that permit.

Logbooks must include, by set, the date and time gear is set and retrieved, specific location of harvest by latitude and longitude in degrees and decimal minutes for start and ending positions, hook spacing, amount of gear (number of hooks or pots), depth of set, estimated weight of the target and bycatch species retained or discarded. Indicate for each set if the target species was sablefish or halibut and if there was any lost gear.

**Tagged Sablefish**

Fishermen are requested to watch for tagged sablefish. Please record tag number(s) and attach tags directly to the logbook with the corresponding set information. All persons who return an ADF&G sablefish tag will receive a tag reward (i.e. hat, T-shirt, or fishermen's knife). Tag returns with valid recovery information (date of recovery and latitude and longitude) are entered into a random drawing for a cash prize.

**Fish Ticket Requirements**

Landed weights must be recorded on a fish ticket at the time of delivery. If a fisherman delivers fish in the round, the total round weight delivered must be recorded on the fish ticket. If a fisherman delivers dressed fish, the fish ticket must include the total landed dressed weight as well as the round weight equivalent, determined by using the standard 0.63 recovery rate. There is a 2% allowance for ice and slime when appropriate. A fish ticket must be completed prior to the resumption of fishing and each permit holder must retain onboard their vessel, copies of all SSEI sablefish tickets from the current season as well as their updated PQS tracking form. When delivering fish out of state, a completed fish ticket must be submitted to ADF&G prior to transporting fish out of Alaska.

**Sablefish Possession and Landing Requirements**

The holder of a CFEC permit or interim use permit for sablefish may not retain more sablefish in the directed fishery than the annual amount of sablefish EQS specified by the department [5 AAC 28.170 (g)]. However, if a permit holder's harvest exceeds the permit holder's EQS for that year, by not more than five percent, the department shall reduce the permit holder's EQS for the following year by the amount of the overage. If a permit holder's harvest exceeds the permit holder's equal quota share by more than five percent, the proceeds from the sale of the overage in excess of five percent shall be surrendered to the state and the permit holder may be prosecuted under AS 16.05.723. A permit holder may not knowingly exceed a quota share or exceed the EQS in an amount greater than five percent as such actions may be prosecuted under AS 16.05.722 or AS 16.05.723.

If a permit holder's harvest is less than the permit holder's EQS for that year, the department shall increase the permit holder's EQS only for the following year by the amount of the underage that does not exceed five percent of the EQS [5 AAC 28.170 (k)]. For the 2017 SSEI sablefish fishery, five percent of the annual EQS equals 1,123 round pounds.

## Bycatch

Allowable bycatch that may be legally landed on an SSEI sablefish permit is as follows based on round weight of both target and bycatch species:

<b>Species</b>	<b>Longline fishery</b>	<b>Pot fishery</b>
<b>Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR)</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Shortraker &amp; Roughey Rockfish</b>	<b>7% in aggregate</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Other rockfish &amp; thornyheads</b>	<b>15% in aggregate</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Lingcod</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Pacific Cod</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Spiny dogfish</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Other groundfish</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>

CFEC permit holders fishing for groundfish or halibut must retain, weigh, and report all rockfish taken in SSEI. This regulation does not apply to shortspine thornyhead. All rockfish in excess of allowable bycatch limits shall be reported as bycatch overage on the fish ticket. Any proceeds from the sale of excess rockfish shall be surrendered to the state.

When the directed Pacific cod fishery is open in SSEI, Pacific cod taken in excess of bycatch limits may be landed on the appropriate CFEC miscellaneous finfish permit.

## Prohibitions

A vessel or a person on board a vessel from which commercial, subsistence, or personal use longline fishing gear was used to take fish in the SSEI area during the 72-hour period immediately before the start of the commercial SSEI sablefish fishery, or from which that gear will be used during the 24-hour period immediately after the closure of the SSEI sablefish fishery, may not participate in the taking of sablefish in SSEI during that open sablefish fishing period [5 AAC 28.180 (a)]. The operator of a fishing vessel may not take sablefish in SSEI while sablefish from another area are onboard the vessel. Also, the operator of a vessel taking sablefish in SSEI shall unload and submit a completed fish ticket to the department before taking sablefish in another area [5 AAC 28.170 (a) and (b)].

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