

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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



Contact:  
Jan Rumble, Area Groundfish Management Biologist  
Elisa Russ, Assistant Area Management Biologist

Homer Area Office  
3298 Douglas Place  
Homer, Alaska 99603

Phone: (907) 235-8191  
Fax: (907) 235-2448

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#### **FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT**

#### **COOK INLET AREA PACIFIC COD FISHERY**

#### **STATE-WATERS SEASON CLOSURES TO POT GEAR**

#### **PARALLEL SEASON OPENS TO POT AND LONGLINE GEAR**

#### **EMERGENCY ORDER 2-GF-H-08-17**

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** and the parallel Pacific cod season will immediately open to pot and longline gear. The parallel Pacific cod season is established by emergency order (EO) to coincide with the season dates and gear sectors set by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the Pacific cod "B" season in the adjacent federal Central Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Area (CGOA). The parallel season will close by EO for each gear type concurrent with federal "B" season closures when gear sector allocations are achieved.

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 parallel Pacific cod season registration from ADF&G prior to fishing; 2) of the requirement for fishermen using pot or longline gear in parallel Pacific cod fisheries to have a functioning, activated, NMFS-approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) as described at <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/cwm> and, 3) to adhere to the federal seabird avoidance measures (SAM) which are required in all longline fisheries for groundfish in the North Gulf District of the Cook Inlet Area. Additional information describing SAM can be found at: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/pr/seabird-avoidance-gear>.

Regulation 5AAC 28.350 (b) closes certain waters on the west side of Cook Inlet and within Kachemak Bay to groundfish pot gear. The Kachemak Bay groundfish pot closure area was reduced at the Board of Fisheries meeting in December 2016. The amended Kachemak Bay pot closure area was implemented by EO # 2-GF-H-14-16 on December 5, 2016 and described in news release NR15-GF-H-16 issued on the same date. The boundaries of the new area are shown in Figure 1.

NMFS continues to prosecute the North Pacific Groundfish and Halibut Observer Program. Vessel operators participating in directed halibut and/or parallel groundfish fisheries are encouraged to become familiar with this federal program. Information on the observer program

can be found at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/observers/> or by contacting the NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division in Juneau at (907) 586-7228.

Two rookeries within the Cook Inlet Area, Outer (Pye) Island and Sugarloaf Island remain closed to fishing with pot or longline gear during a parallel Pacific cod season to protect Steller sea lions. Waters within three nautical miles (nmi) of these locations are closed to vessel transit and waters within 10 nmi of these locations are closed to fishing with fixed gear via emergency order. Contact NMFS in Kodiak at ph: (907) 481-1780 or consult the NMFS website at <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/sslpm>.

Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for the Cook Inlet Area parallel Pacific cod fishery were set as follows by Emergency Order 2-GF-H-01-17 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, except that,
- (2) may retain 15 percent shark species in aggregate (includes spiny dogfish);
- (3) may retain 20 percent lingcod (after July 1);
- (4) may retain 20 percent 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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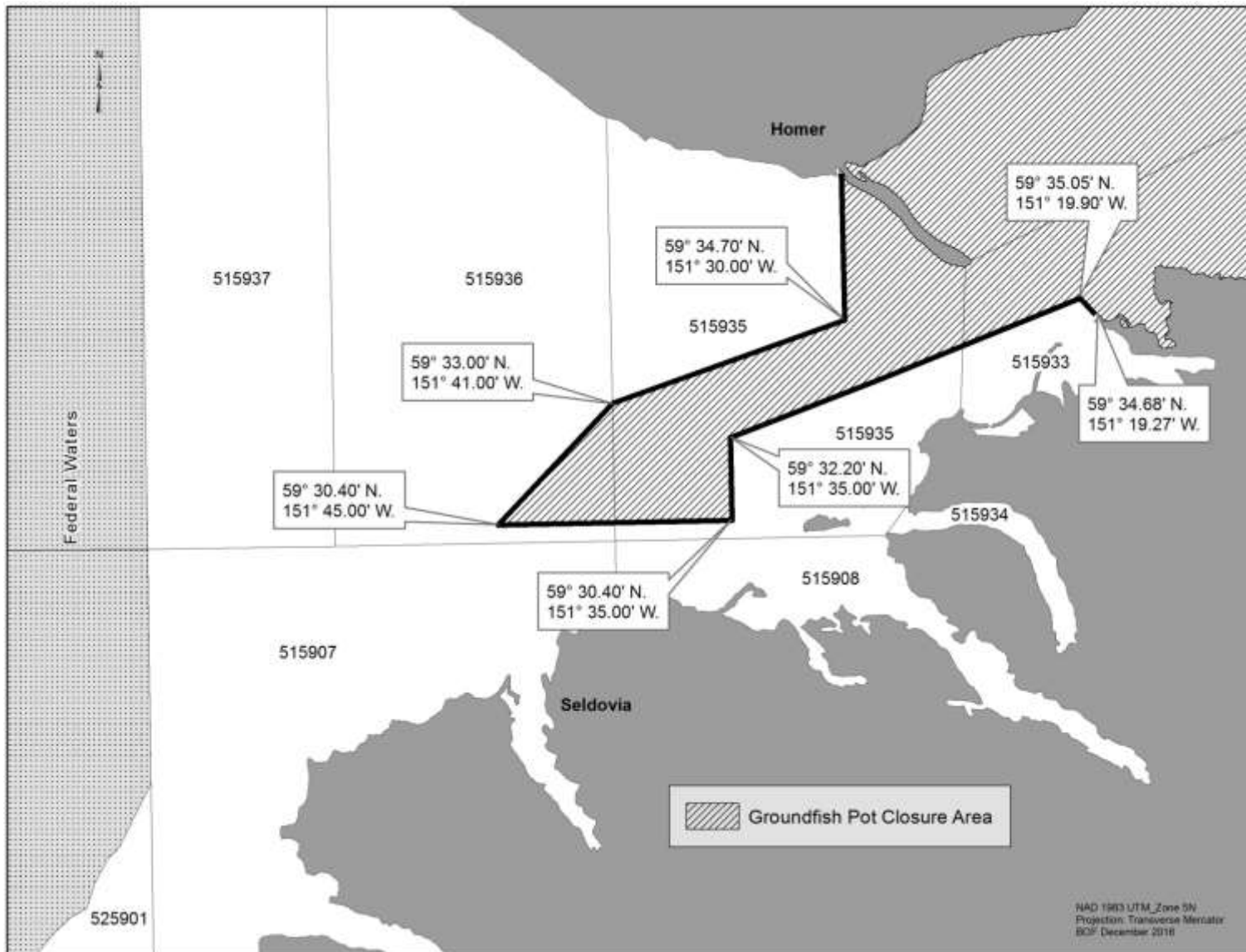


Figure 1. Updated Kachemak Bay groundfish pot closure area with coordinates, implemented by EO December 5, 2016.

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