
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2017/18 SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMERCIAL SEA CUCUMBER FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Juneau. . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today the following information concerning the commercial harvest of sea cucumbers in Southeast Alaska during the 2017/18 season.

The 2017/18 Southeast Alaska commercial sea cucumber dive fishery will open by emergency order at 8:00 a.m., Monday, October 2, 2017. Subsequent openings will be announced on a weekly basis until individual area's guideline harvest levels have been reached or until March 31, 2018, whichever is earlier. A total of 1,234,400 pounds of sea cucumbers will be available for harvest this season.

The following area will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday, October 2, 2017.

District 1:

West Shore of Gravina Island (Subdistrict 101-29): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 46,300 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Clarence Strait in District 1, south and west of a line from Caamano Point located at 55°29.83' N. latitude, 131°58.13' W. longitude to Point Higgins at 55°27.43' N. latitude, 131°49.93' W. longitude to the northernmost tip of Gravina Island and north of the latitude of the southernmost tip of Dall Head.

The following areas will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday, October 2, 2017, and from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Tuesday, October 3, 2017.

District 1:

Boca de Quadra (Subdistrict 101-30): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 50,900 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Boca de Quadra east of a line from Quadra Point located at 55°05.17' N. latitude, 130°59.05' W. longitude to Kah Shakes Point located at 55°04.22' N. latitude, 130°58.72' W. longitude and west of a point on the northern shore of Boca de Quadra at 55°06.09' N. latitude, 130°44.49' W. longitude (located approximately 1 nautical mile east of Porpoise Point) to a point on the southern shore of Boca de Quadra located at 55°05.61' N. latitude, 130°43.23' W. longitude.

Revillagigedo Channel, Thorne Arm, and East Behm Canal (Subdistricts 101-41, 43 and 53): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 49,600 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Thorne Arm, Revillagigedo Channel, and east Behm Canal south and east of a line from the southwest point of the entrance of Moth Bay at 55°15.70' N. latitude, 131°20.47' W. longitude to the northernmost tip of Harbor Point on the eastern shore of Annette Island; north of a line from a point on the eastern side of Annette Island at 55°06.78' N. latitude, 131°20.33' W. longitude to a point on the western side of Mary Island at 55°05.95' N. latitude, 131°13.00' W. longitude and from the Mary Island light to the northern point of Black Island at 55°08.00' N. latitude, 131°04.80' W. longitude then due east to the mainland shore; and all waters of East Behm Canal south of the latitude of the northernmost tip of point Nelson located at 55°18.05' N. latitude.

West Behm Canal (Subdistrict 101-85): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 36,900 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of West Behm Canal adjacent to the southeastern shore of the Cleveland Peninsula north of Caamano Point located 55°29.83' N. latitude, 131°58.13' W. longitude and south of the northernmost tip of Snail Point.

District 2:

Moira Sound (Subdistrict 102-30): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 135,700 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Moira Sound west of a line from 55°05.08' N. latitude, 132°02.67' W. longitude (located approximately 2 nautical miles east of Point Holliday) to 55°02.05' N. latitude, 132°02.03' W. longitude (located west of Menefee Anchorage).

Thorne Bay and Kasaan Peninsula (Subdistrict 102-70): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 100,400 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Clarence Strait adjacent to the eastern shore of Kasaan Peninsula north of a line from a point located inside of Street Island at 55°28.40' N. latitude, 132°08.75' W. longitude to Caamano Point located at 55°29.83' N. latitude, 131°58.13' W. longitude and south of a line from the easternmost tip of Narrow Point to the northernmost tip of Lemesurier Point.

District 3:

Eastern shore of Dall Island and Soda Bay (Subdistrict 103-40): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 141,100 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Tlevak Narrows and Tlevak Strait north of a line from Rose Point at 54°58.15' N. latitude, 132°56.58' W. longitude to a point on the southern end of Sukkwan Island at 55°00.00' N. latitude, 132°45.97' W. longitude and north of the latitude of the Sukkwan Narrows light and south of a line through Tlevak Narrows beginning at the easternmost tip of Turn Point located at 55°15.78' N. latitude, 133°07.23' W. longitude to a point on Prince of Wales Island at 55°15.75' N. latitude, 133°06.43' W. longitude, including all waters of Soda Bay.

District 7:

Southern Ernest Sound (Subdistrict 107-10): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 127,900 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters north and east of a line from Lemesurier Point to Ernest Point to a point on Etolin Island at 55°54.76' N. latitude, 132°21.11' W. longitude and south of the latitude of Point Eaton.

Northern Ernest Sound (Subdistrict 107-20): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 172,700 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Ernest Sound north of the latitude of Point Eaton, south of a line from a point on Etolin Island at 56°07.13' N. latitude, 132°07.01' W. longitude to a regulation marker on Thoms Point, and south of a line from a point on Wrangell Island at 56°12.28' N. latitude, 131°55.30' W. longitude to a point on the mainland shore at 56°11.67' N. latitude, 131°53.41' W. longitude.

Zimovia Strait and Anita Bay (Subdistricts 107-30 and 35): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 78,000 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Zimovia Strait and Anita Bay north of a line from a

regulation marker on Thoms Point to a point on Etolin Island at 56°07.13' N. latitude, 132°07.01' W. longitude and south of the latitude of Nemo Point.

Bradfield Canal, Blake Channel, and Eastern Passage (Subdistricts 107-40 and 45): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 9,700 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters north of a line from a point on Wrangell Island at 56°12.28' N. latitude, 131°55.30' W. longitude to a point on the mainland shore at 56°11.67' N. latitude, 131°53.41' W. longitude and east and south of a line from Babbler Point to Hour Point (56°27.74' N. latitude, 132°16.87' W. longitude) on Wrangell Island.

District 8:

Stikine Strait and Chichagof Passage (Subdistricts 108-10, 20, and 40): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 18,600 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Stikine Strait north of the latitude of Round Point, those waters of Zimovia Strait and Chichagof Passage north of the latitude of Nemo Point, south of the latitude of East Point (located on the eastern shore of Woronkofski Island) and south of a line extending from Wedge Point (located on the western shore of Woronkofski Island) to a point on the northeast shore of Zarembo Island located at 56°25.13' N. latitude, 132°37.73' W. longitude.

South Mitkof and North Zarembo Islands (Subdistrict 108-30): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 23,800 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Sumner Strait east of a line from Low Point to Point Alexander and west of a line from the western entrance of Blind Slough on Mitkof Island at 56°30.17' N. latitude, 132°43.48' W. longitude to Craig Point Light.

District 9:

Southeast Baranof (Subdistricts 109-10 and 13): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 23,500 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of eastern Baranof Island south of the latitude of Patterson Point, including all waters of Patterson Bay and Deep Cove, and north of the latitude of Armstrong Point, including all waters of Port Lucy.

District 12:

Northern Chatham Strait (Subdistricts 112-16, 17, 63, and 65): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 41,200 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Chatham Strait along the western shore of Admiralty Island south of 58°18.70' N. latitude and north of the latitude of Danger Point Light (located at 57°30.93' N. latitude) including all waters of Funter Bay and Hawk Inlet.

District 13:

Southern Sitka Sound (Subdistricts 113-38 and 41): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 15,300 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters of Sitka Sound from Deep Inlet to Kanga Bay, south of a line from Shoals Point to the westernmost tip of Long Island to the easternmost tip of Long Island to a point at the northern side of the entrance to Deep Inlet at 56°59.60' N. latitude, 135°18.67' W. longitude and north of a line from a point at 56°53.55' N. latitude, 135°22.78' W. longitude (at the southern entrance to Kanga Bay) to the northernmost tip of Peisar Island and extending due west from the northernmost tip of Peisar Island.

Peril Strait (Subdistricts 113-51, 52, 53, 54, and 59): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 142,000 pounds of sea cucumbers in the waters of Peril Strait, Rodman Bay, Saook Bay, Hanus Bay, and Sitkoh Bay east of a line from the easternmost tip of Nismeni Point to Broad Island light to a point on the Chichagof Island shore at 57°35.80' N. latitude, 135°22.83' W. longitude and west of a line from Point Thatcher to Point Hayes.

District 14:

Excursion Inlet and Homeshore (Subdistricts 114-25-002 and 114-80): will be open for a guideline harvest level of 20,800 pounds of sea cucumbers in those waters along the eastern shore of Excursion Inlet and Homeshore west of 135°10.00' W. longitude and south of 58°30.00' N. latitude including those waters of the Porpoise Islands.

Regulatory Summary

The use of dive gear 14 days prior to a commercial fishery, 14 days after participating in a commercial opening, and between weekly open periods for miscellaneous shellfish is prohibited. A person who uses dive gear to fish in a commercial red sea urchin fishery, commercial geoduck fishery, or mariculture site may fish in the sea cucumber fishery within the 14-day period (5 AAC 38.147).

Each diver participating in the sea cucumber fishery must have a current Southeast Alaska Sea Cucumber Limited Entry Permit, which can be obtained from the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC). All vessels involved in the sea cucumber fishery need to have a current CFEC vessel license and a Miscellaneous Shellfish vessel registration form issued by ADF&G. Vessel registrations can be obtained at any ADF&G office. All crew members are required to have a valid Commercial Crewmembers License or a limited entry card from another fishery.

In order to provide a refuge for sea cucumbers in deeper waters, use of mixed gases or saturation diving is prohibited. Nitrox gas can be used for diving providing the oxygen concentration is less than 40%. Sea cucumbers may only be hand-picked and any means other than individually collecting sea cucumbers by hand and placing them in bags is prohibited. Sea cucumbers may only be harvested by diving with the aid of: SCUBA; tethered, umbilical surface supplied systems; or a snorkel.

No more than three divers licensed to fish sea cucumbers (hereafter called “permit holders”) may be on board a vessel registered to fish sea cucumbers from 24 hours before, during, and for 24 hours after a fishing period or at any time commercially harvested sea cucumbers are on board. Only two permit holders can make landings from any registered sea cucumber vessel during any fishing period.

No permit holder may land, or have on board, more than 2,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers during any fishing period established by the department and only one species of miscellaneous shellfish is permitted on board a vessel at a time. Only vessels registered as tenders may possess more than 4,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers during an established open fishing period.

Commercial sea cucumber fishermen are also advised that all landings to processors, catcher/processors, or tenders must be recorded on fish tickets with the number of minutes of dive time included. A permit holder who is operating their vessel as a tender for sea cucumbers must complete fish tickets as required by 5 AAC 39.130. A fish ticket must be made out for every landing and all fish tickets must be submitted to ADF&G within seven days of landing.

Area closures

West Dall Island (Subdistricts 104-10, 20, and 30) will be closed due to sea cucumber populations estimated at very low levels. Therefore, these subdistricts will remain closed during the 2017/18 fishing season to protect broodstock and maximize reproductive potential. Observations of sea otters and evidence of sea otter predation on other species were documented during surveys in these subdistricts.

News releases web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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Figure 1. Commercial sea cucumber open harvest areas and guideline harvest levels for the 2017/18 season. This chart is for general reference purposes only and does not identify boundaries of open areas. See written descriptions above for detailed description of open areas.