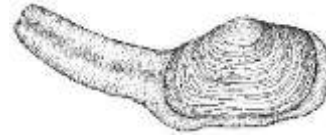

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Scott Kelley, Director



Contact:
Scott Walker

Phone: (907) 225-5195
Fax: (907) 225-3756

Ketchikan Area Office
2030 Sea Level Drive #205
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901
Date: September 22, 2017
Time: 2:00 p.m.

2017/18 SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMERCIAL GEODUCK CLAM FISHERY

Juneau . . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) announced today the following information concerning the 2017/18 commercial geoduck clam season in Southeast Alaska.

The Southeast Alaska commercial geoduck clam season begins by regulation on Sunday, October 1, 2017, with a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 559,000 pounds. The first opening is planned for October 5, depending on paralytic shellfish poison (PSP) test results.

Guideline Harvest Levels by Area:

District 1:

Nakat Bay (Subdistrict 101-11-001): will be open for a GHL of 19,800 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters of Nakat Bay, Sitklan Passage, Lincoln Channel, and Tongass Passage east of the longitude of Tree Point Light and south of a line extending from a point on the mainland shore approximately 0.3 nautical miles (nmi) west of the northernmost tip of Slim Island at 54°48.30' N. latitude, 130°47.30' W. longitude, to the northernmost tip of Slim Island, to a point approximately 0.3 nmi north of High Point at 54°47.78' N. latitude, 130°44.28' W. longitude, to a point at the southwestern entrance of Fillmore Inlet at 54°47.60' N. latitude, 130°38.08' W. longitude, to Point Phipp at 54°46.60' N. latitude, 130°37.25' W. longitude, and north of the U.S. Canadian border.

Kelp Island (Subdistrict 101-21-001): will be open for a GHL of 44,200 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters south of the latitude of Duke Point and east of 131°22.63' W. longitude, approximately 1.1 nmi west of Cape Northumberland.

North Kirk Point to Bullhead Cove (Subdistrict 101-23-003): will be open for a GHL of 17,800 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters along the mainland shore north of Kirk Point at 55°00.00' N. latitude and south of a line from Kah Shakes Point at 55°03.23' N. latitude, 131°02.80' W. longitude, to a point west of Bullhead Cove at 55°03.62' N. latitude, 130°59.45' W. longitude.

Percy Islands (Subdistrict 101-25-002): will be open for a GHL of 51,700 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters west of a line from Moss Point on Annette Island, to a point in Sealed Passage at 54°55.80' N. latitude, 131°30.45' W. longitude, north of a line from a point in Sealed Passage at 54°55.80' N. latitude, 131°30.45' W. longitude, to a point in Clarence Strait located at 54°54.63' N.

latitude, 131°39.65' W. longitude and east of 131°39.00' W. longitude, approximately 1.7 nmi east of Point Davison.

Vegas and Hotspur Islands (Subdistrict 101-25-003): will be open for a GHl of 90,200 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters west of a line from a point on the northwest side of Duke Island at 54°57.72' N. latitude, 131°27.42' W. longitude, to a point on the northeast tip of Vegas Island at 54°58.18' N. latitude, 131°27.64' W. longitude, to a point approximately 0.2 nmi southeast of the Ajax Reef Light at 54°59.98' N. latitude, 131°27.53' W. longitude, and east of a line from Point White to a point in Sealed Passage at 54°55.80' N. latitude, 131°30.45' W. longitude to Moss Point on Annette Island.

Nehenta Bay (Subdistrict 101-29-001): will be open for a GHl of 22,900 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters along the western shore of Gravina Island south of 55°16.18' N. latitude and north of 55°11.65' N. latitude.

Middle Gravina Island (Subdistrict 101-29-002): will be open for a GHl of 51,900 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters along the western shore of Gravina Island south of 55°19.12' N. latitude and north of 55°16.18' N. latitude.

Vallenar Bay (Subdistrict 101-29-004): will be open for a GHl of 26,600 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters on the west coast of Gravina Island south of the latitude of the northernmost tip of Vallenar Point and north of South Vallenar Point at 55°22.83' N. latitude.

Southern Gravina Island (Subdistrict 101-29-005): will be open for a GHl of 15,500 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters along the western shore of Gravina Island south of 55°11.65' N. latitude and north of the latitude of Dall Head.

District 3:

Kaigani Strait (Subdistrict 103-30-001): will be open for a GHl of 35,400 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters of Kaigani Strait south of a line from Luke Point to a point on the northwest shore of Long Island at 54°55.52' N. latitude, 132°48.90' W. longitude and north of a line from the southernmost tip of Long Island to the easternmost tip of Cape Muzon.

Tlevak Strait (Subdistricts 103-40-009, 103-50-009): will be open for a GHl of 20,100 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters of Tlevak Strait north of a line from Reef Point on Dall Island at 55°03.63' N. latitude, 132°58.33' W. longitude to a point on Sukkwan Island approximately 2 nmi north of Kellogg Point at 55°08.12' N. latitude, 132°52.91' W. longitude, and west of a line drawn from a point in South Passage on Sukkwan Island at 55°09.26' N. latitude, 132°53.79' W. longitude to a point approximately 1.4 nmi southeast of Halibut Nose on Prince of Wales Island at 55°12.21' N. latitude, 133°0.79' W. longitude, to Natalia Point on Prince of Wales Island at 55°13.41' N. latitude, 133°02.06' W. longitude to a point on Prince of Wales Island at 55°16.49' N. latitude, 133°04.76' W. longitude; and in those waters of Meares Passage and Ulloa Channel north of a line from Eagle Point on Dall Island to a point, on Suemez Island approximately 0.7 nmi west of Eagle Point at 55°14.68' N. latitude, 133°14.45' W. longitude and east of a line from a point on Prince of Wales Island approximately 0.9 nmi southeast of Point San Antonio at 55°16.86' N. latitude, 133°13.00' W. longitude, to the easternmost tip of Suemez Island located at 55°16.51' N. latitude, 133°13.16' W. longitude, then south along the eastern shoreline of Suemez Island to a point on Suemez Island approximately 0.7 nmi west of Eagle Point at 55°14.68' N. latitude, 133°14.45' W. longitude with the following restriction:

View Cove, Baldy Bay, Coco Harbor, and Windy Cove: all waters of View Cove, Baldy Bay, Coco Harbor, and Windy Cove are closed to the harvest of geoduck clams.

Bucareli Bay and contiguous waters (Subdistrict 103-50-003): will be open for a GHL of 27,900 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters west of a line from Point Cuerdo on the southeast side of San Fernando Island, to Point Eugenia on the north side of San Juan Bautista Island, to the southernmost tip of Point Miliflores on the south side of San Juan Bautista Island, to Tranquil Point on Prince of Wales Island; north of a line extending from a point on the northeastern shore of Suez Island at 55°20.72' N. latitude, 133°19.75' W longitude, to the northernmost tip of Cape Flores, to the southernmost tip of Joe Island, then due east to Prince of Wales Island; north and east of a line from the westernmost tip of Point Arboleda to the southernmost tip of Point San Roque; south of the northernmost tip of Cristina Island located at 55°22.83' N. latitude, and south and east of a line from Point Amargura to a point on the eastern shore of St. Ignace Island at 55°24.27' N. latitude, 133°24.48' W. longitude with the following restriction:

Port San Antonio: all waters of Port San Antonio are closed to the harvest of geoduck clams.

Portillo Channel (Subdistrict 103-50-008): will be open for a GHL of 32,300 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters south of a line from a point on the northeast side of Lulu Island at 55°30.62' N. latitude, 133°28.08' W. longitude to a point on the northwest side of San Fernando Island at 55°31.53' N. latitude, 133°26.82' W. longitude, east of a line from Point Gorda at 55°25.50' N. latitude, 133°26.20' W. longitude to Arrecife Point at 55°27.07' N. latitude, 133°25.75' W. longitude, and north and west of a line from Point Amargura to a point on the eastern shore of St. Ignace Island at 55°24.27' N. latitude, 133°24.48' W. longitude.

Little Steamboat Bay (Subdistrict 103-70-002): will be open for a GHL of 18,100 pounds of whole geoduck clams only in those waters along the northern shoreline of Noyes Island east of Steamboat Point located at 133°41.33' W. longitude and west of a point approximately 1.3 nmi west of Steamboat Point at 133°39.04' W. longitude.

Davidson Inlet (Subdistrict 103-90-004): will be open for a GHL of 18,900 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters of Sea Otter Sound and Davidson Inlet west of 133°27.70' W. longitude, east of 133°43.37' W. longitude, and north of a line from Turn Point, to the southernmost tip of Whale Head Island to Alice Rocks at 55°49.46' N. latitude, 133°55.63' W. longitude, with the following restrictions:

Edna Bay: will be closed north of a line from a point near the southern mouth of Edna Bay at 55°55.90' N. latitude, 133°37.75' W. longitude to Limestone Point at 55°56.33' N. latitude, 133°37.02' W. longitude;

Token Cove: will be closed south of a line from a point on the northwest shore of Marble Island at 55°59.75' N. latitude, 133°28.05' W. longitude to 55°59.58' N. latitude, 133°28.90' W. longitude;

Unnamed bay on the northwest shore of Marble Island: will be closed east of a line from 55°59.27' N. latitude, 130°29.36' W. longitude to 55°58.20' N. latitude, 133°29.36' W. longitude.

District 3 and 4:

Cone Island North (Subdistricts 103-50-005, 104-40-005): will be open for a GHL of 65,700 pounds of whole geoduck clams in those waters of Saint Nicholas Channel, Cone Island, and the eastern shore of Baker Island south of a line from Point Saint Isidor at 55°27.05' N. latitude, 133°37.25' W. longitude to a point on Noyes Island at 55°27.24' N. latitude, 133°38.51' W. longitude, east of a line from the southernmost tip of Saint Nicholas Point to the western most tip of Cone Island, and north and west of a line from the easternmost shore of Cone Island to a point on Lulu Island at 55°26.93' N. latitude, 133°36.42' W. longitude.

In-Season Management Plan

In the Ketchikan management area, based on the recommendation of the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association, weekly harvest periods will occur between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Thursdays.

In the Sitka management area (District 13), GHLS and fishery openings for the 2017/2018 season will be announced in a subsequent News Release. It is expected that the 2017/2018 season will be delayed until September 2018.

A valid Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit is required prior to commercial harvest of geoduck clams and a separate registration is required for the Ketchikan and Sitka management areas. Harvesters are required to contact ADF&G at least 48 hours prior to fishing in a new registration area.

The geoduck clam fishery will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday from Friday, November 17, through Wednesday, November 29, 2017, and for Christmas and New Year's from Friday, December 15, 2017, through Wednesday, January 3, 2018. A decision regarding whether to fish during the Chinese New Year (February 16) will be made by ADF&G and the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association after January 1, 2018. State agencies will be closed on the following State holidays: November 10 (Veteran's Day), January 1 (New Year's Day), January 15 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day), February 19 (President's Day), March 26 (Seward's Day), and May 28 (Memorial Day).

There is an overage-underage policy in place for the commercial geoduck fishery designed to maintain the geoduck average harvest rate at 2% of the estimated biomass, consistent with 5 AAC 38.142(g). Harvest from the 2017/18 season that is over or under the specified GHL will be subtracted or added, respectively, to the GHL for the next fishery rotation for each area until such time as the GHL is revised based on a new survey of the area.

The mandatory logbook program for geoduck clams (5 AAC 38.142(m)) will continue for the 2017/18 season. This requires that logbooks be filled out before departing the harvest site and returned to ADF&G within 7 days of landing. Logbooks are available at local ADF&G offices and should be turned in with fish tickets or mailed directly to the Petersburg ADF&G office, C/O Jeff Meucci at P.O. Box 667, Petersburg, AK 99833.

The Southeast Alaska commercial geoduck clam fishery will begin Sunday, October 1, 2017. Fishing areas will be opened based on PSP test results. Weekly PSP results are expected on Monday afternoons or Tuesday mornings. However, if sampling is delayed the fishing period may also be delayed up to one day. Fishing periods will be announced by ADF&G news release, are expected to be between 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and to generally occur on Thursdays.

Area Closures:

Steamboat Bay (Subdistrict 103-70-003), Maurelle Islands (Subdistricts 103-70-009, 103-80-009, 104-40-009, 104-50-009), and Port Santa Cruz (Subdistrict 104-30-002): will be closed. The department surveyed these areas in 2017 and the biomass for each of these areas has fallen below 30% of the original biomass estimate. Under 5 AAC 38.142 (h) these areas will remain closed until the estimated biomass is above the 30% threshold. Evidence of sea otter predation on geoducks has been observed and documented by the department in these areas.

The Emergency Order corresponding to this announcement is EO 1M2217.

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

<i>Office</i>	<i>Ketchikan</i>	<i>Petersburg</i>	<i>Wrangell</i>	<i>Sitka</i>	<i>Juneau</i>	<i>Haines</i>	<i>Hoonah</i>	<i>Yakutat</i>
ADF&G	225-5195	772-3801	874-3822	747-6688	465-4250	766-2830		784-3255
AWT	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000		945-3620	

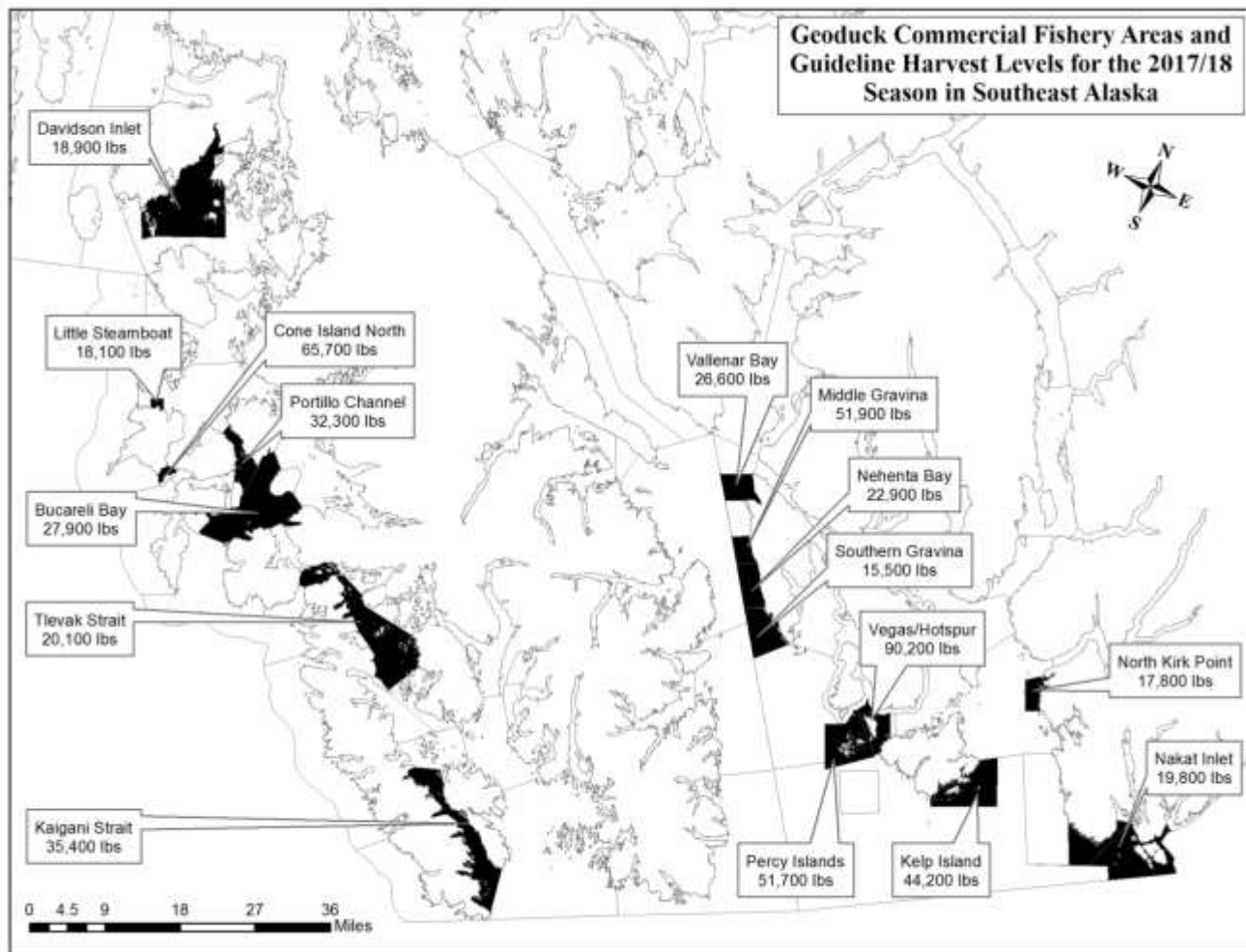


Figure 1. Commercial geoduck open harvest areas and guideline harvest levels for the 2017-18 season.

Note: 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.