

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND AREA

2017 PACIFIC COD SEASONS CLOSE DECEMBER 31

2018 PARALLEL PACIFIC COD SEASONS OPEN JANUARY 1

EMERGENCY ORDERS # 2-GF-E-02-18

The Prince William Sound (PWS) Area parallel Pacific cod seasons for pot, jig, and longline gear will close at midnight December 31, 2017. The parallel Pacific cod season will immediately open to vessels using pot, jig, and longline gear January 1, 2018. Fishermen are reminded that all fish must be landed within 24 hours following the closure of the 2017 season and prior to participating in the 2018 season. The PWS parallel Pacific cod season closures for jig and pot gear will coincide with their respective closures in the adjacent federal Central Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Area (CGOA). The PWS parallel season closure for longline gear will coincide with the federal closure of the less than 50 foot hook-and-line (<50' HAL) gear sector in the CGOA.

Fishermen are reminded: 1) to obtain a PWS 2017 parallel Pacific cod season registration from ADF&G prior to fishing; 2) that participants using pot or longline gear in parallel Pacific cod fisheries must have a functioning, 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 Outside District of PWS. Additional information on SAM can be found at: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/pr/seabird-avoidance-gear>.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) continues to prosecute and improve the North Pacific Groundfish and Halibut Observer Program. Vessel operators participating in directed halibut and/or parallel groundfish fisheries inside state waters are encouraged to become familiar with this federal program. Information and frequently asked questions on the restructured 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.

Directed fishing for all groundfish species is closed in waters within 3 nautical miles of two Steller sea lion rookeries within PWS and certain waters are closed to fishing with groundfish pot gear (Figure 1; 5 AAC 28.250(a)). For specific regulatory language regarding Steller sea lion protection areas contact NMFS in Kodiak at (907) 481-1780 or <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/sslpm>.

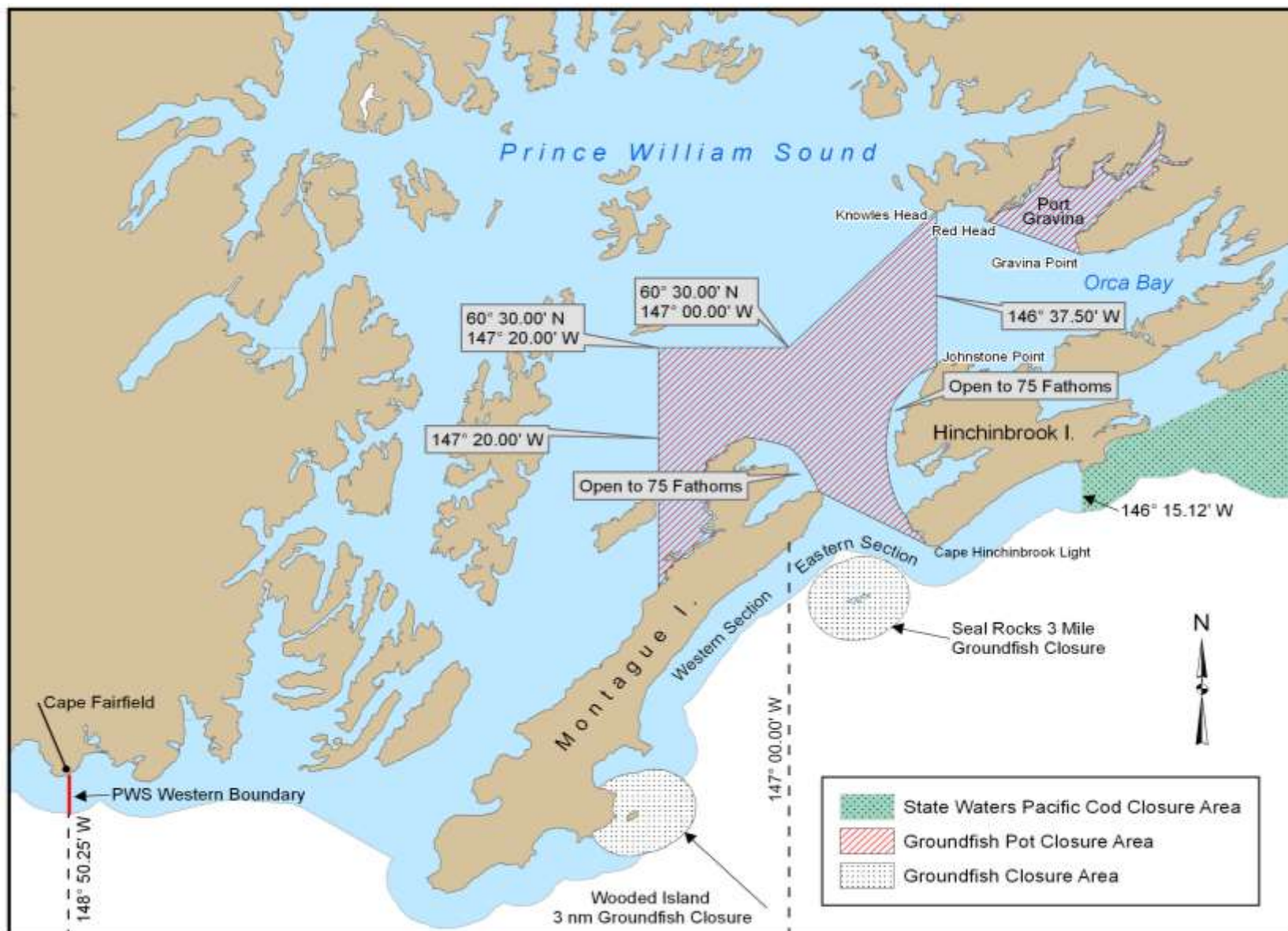


Figure 1. Prince William Sound Area closures to groundfish pot gear, groundfish fishing, and to the state-waters Pacific cod season.

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