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# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner*  
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### 2018 SOUTHERN SOUTHEAST INSIDE SUBDISTRICT SABLEFISH FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Douglas...The 2018 Southern Southeast Inside (SSEI) Subdistrict sablefish commercial annual harvest objective (AHO) is 578,774 round lb, a 12% increase from the 2017 AHO. Equal quota share (EQS) for each of the 23 permit holders will be 25,164 round pounds. There has been no change in the number of permit holders since 2012. Each permit holder's 2018 EQS will be adjusted based on any legal overages or underages in 2017 and a personal quota share (PQS) will be assigned. 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.

For 2018, the SSEI AHO was raised 12% due to continued increases in the longline survey CPUE index, signs of recruitment in length and age-class distributions in the survey and fishery, introduction of escape rings for pot gear to reduce harvest of immature individuals and increasing trends in sablefish biomass from adjacent areas including the Gulf of Alaska (GOA), British Columbia, Canada (BC), and Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict (NSEI). Sablefish in SSEI have a 30% chance of moving out of SSEI after one-year of occupancy into the GOA and BC and therefore trends in abundance observed in adjacent areas are likely mirrored for SSEI stock. The SSEI commercial longline fishery CPUE (lb/hook) has been stable in the last ten years with a slight increase (4%) from 2016 to 2017; and commercial pot fishery CPUE (lb/pot) increased substantially (59%) from 2016 to 2017. Harvest proportions of immature sablefish increased in the longline and remain high in the pot fishery, which is indicative of the large 2014-year class recruiting to the fishery. For other areas in 2017, the NSEI Subdistrict survey CPUE increased from 2016 to 2017 (15%) and the GOA federal survey CPUE index increased from 2016 to 2017 (14%) as did the 2017 federal Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) (14%). The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Canadian sablefish trap stock assessment survey in BC showed a substantial increase (94%) in CPUE (kg/trap) from 2016 to 2017. Recruitment of sablefish in the GOA has been historically low and has likely led to geographic-wide trends in stock declines in recent years; however, with the 2014-year class beginning to recruit to the fishery it is expected that spawning stock biomass will continue to decline until the 2014-year class fully reaches maturity over the next few years.

**The SSEI longline sablefish fishery will open 8:00 a.m., Friday June 1, 2018. The SSEI pot fishery opening date will be delayed until new regulations adopted at the 2018 Board of Fisheries meeting become effective. The SSEI sablefish season will close for both gear types at 12:00 noon, Thursday, November 15, 2018. A news release announcing the effective date of new groundfish regulations will be issued at a later date.**

### **Legal Gear**

Sablefish may be taken in the directed SSEI sablefish fishery only by longline and pots. Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) limited-entry C61C permit holder can use both longline and pot gear while C91C permits are restricted to the use of pot gear only. Groundfish pot gear requires individual tunnel eye openings with perimeters 36 inches or less and a sidewall containing an escapement opening equal to or exceeding 18 inches in length that must be laced, sewn, or secured together by a single length of untreated, 100-percent cotton twine, no larger than 30 thread of which may be knotted at each end only and must be parallel to and within six inches of the bottom of the pot. When effective, **new regulations will also require two escape rings, with a minimum inside diameter of four inches, on opposing vertical or sloping walls of the pot.** King and Tanner crab pots as described in 5 AAC 34.050(2) and 5 AAC 35.050(2) may not be used to take groundfish.

### **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 15, 2018. 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 and pot spacing, amount of gear (number of skates and hooks or pots), depth of set, and 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 or sablefish released.

### **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. T-shirt). 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 2018 SSEI sablefish fishery, five percent of the annual EQS equals **1,258 round pounds**.

### Sablefish Live Market

When effective, **new regulations will allow a permit holder to possess live sablefish for delivery as live product except that, upon request of a local representative of the department or law enforcement, a permit holder must present sablefish for inspection and allow biological samples to be taken.**

### 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:

Species	Longline fishery	Pot fishery
<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>N/A</b>
<b>Thornyheads</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>5%</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 thornyhead rockfish. 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.

A CFEC permit holder fishing for groundfish must retain all Pacific cod when the directed fishery for Pacific cod is open. [5 AAC 28.070(e)] and those Pacific cod taken in excess of the bycatch limit 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)].

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

Office	Ketchikan	Petersburg	Wrangell	Sitka	Juneau	Haines	Yakutat
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AWT	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220