

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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FISHERY UPDATE

COOK INLET AREA SABLEFISH SEASON OPENS JULY 15

The Cook Inlet Area sablefish season will open July 15 with a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 62,000 lb. A season closure will be announced when harvest projections indicate achievement of the GHL.

The fishery GHL is adjusted each year in proportion to the annual percentage change in the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA) Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for sablefish set by the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) for federal waters of the CGOA. The ABC is based on biomass estimates generated from annual surveys conducted by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the Gulf of Alaska. From the 2017 assessment, biomass estimates applied to the 2018 season increased by 15% and therefore the GHL for the Cook Inlet Area has also increased by the same percentage from the 2017 GHL of 54,000 lb.

A vessel may not land or have on board more than 3,000 lb of sablefish (round weight) in any two consecutive day period. All state-waters sablefish harvest must be landed or in port with intent to land within 24 hours of the closure (5 AAC 28.371).

There is a **6 hour prior notice of landing (PNOL)** for the Cook Inlet Area sablefish fishery (5 AAC 28.360 (d)). Vessel operators are required to contact ADF&G after each sablefish trip by telephoning (907) 226-2121 at least 6 hours prior to landing and reporting the following:

1) vessel name/ADF&G#, 2) date and location of landing, 3) estimated time of arrival, 4) buyer or processor, 5) estimated pounds of sablefish onboard, and 6) if sablefish is whole or dressed.

In addition, log sheets are required and must: 1) include the date, the specific location of harvest by latitude and longitude, the number of hooks or the number of pots fished, the average depth of each set fished, and the time gear is deployed and hauled of each set; 2) include for the target species, and for each bycatch species, the number of fish retained and discarded, 3) be updated within 24 hours after midnight local time on the day of operation; and 4) be made available to a

local representative of the department upon request. Additionally, the completed log sheets must be submitted to the department no later than seven days following delivery and correspond with each ADF&G sablefish fish ticket.

Groundfish pots may be longlined in the sablefish fishery; at least one marked buoy must be attached to each end of the longline and no more than 15 groundfish pots may be attached to the same line (5 AAC 28.330 (c)).

Any vessel retaining sablefish during the Cook Inlet Area sablefish season must possess a Cook Inlet Area sablefish registration. In order to register for the Cook Inlet Area sablefish fishery, fishermen must present a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) sablefish (statewide) permit card for the appropriate gear type. A vessel may not be validly registered for more than one groundfish registration area at a time. In order to change registration areas, a vessel owner or agent must notify ADF&G in Homer. Registrations and log sheets are available from ADF&G offices in Homer, Cordova, and Anchorage or via fax with prior arrangement with the Homer office (phone: 235-8191; fax: 235-2448). Please contact ADF&G in Homer with questions regarding the Cook Inlet Area sablefish fishery.

Vessels participating in the Cook Inlet Area sablefish fishery must remain inside state waters of the Cook Inlet Area for the entire trip when retaining sablefish from state waters during that trip. Sablefish IFQ-holders wishing to participate in this fishery should contact NMFS enforcement in Kodiak (486-3298), Homer (235-2337), or Seward (224-5348) prior to fishing.

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