Fishery Management Plan for the Chignik Area State-Waters Pacific Cod Season, 2016

by

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Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Divisions of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries



Symbols and Abbreviations

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hydrogen ion activity pH U.S.C. United States population Var	hydrogen ion activity	
(negative log of) Code sample var	(negative log of)	
parts per million ppm U.S. state use two-letter	parts per million	
parts per thousand ppt. abbreviations	parts per thousand	
(e.g., AK, WA)		
volts V	volts	
watts W	watts	

FISHERY MANAGEMENT REPORT NO. 15-52

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CHIGNIK AREA STATE-WATERS PACIFIC COD SEASON, 2016

by

Nathaniel Nichols

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Sport Fish, Research and Technical Services 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, Alaska, 99518-1565

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ABSTRACT

This document provides an overview of regulations effective for the 2016 Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod *Gadus macrocephalus* season. The 2016 Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season for pot gear is scheduled to open 7 days after closure of the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA) federal/parallel Pacific cod pot sector A season or March 1, whichever is later. The 2016 Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season for jig gear is scheduled to open by regulation on March 15. Vessels participating in the state-waters or parallel Pacific cod seasons may not exceed 58 feet in length, and legal gear is limited to pot, mechanical jigging machine, and hand troll. No more than 60 pots or 5 mechanical jigging machines may be operated from a vessel. The 2016 Chignik Area state-waters season Pacific cod guideline harvest level (GHL) is 9,512,506 pounds. Pot vessels are allocated 90% of the total GHL or 8,561,255 pounds. Jig vessels are allocated 10% of the total GHL or 951,251 pounds.

Key words: Pacific cod, *Gadus macrocephalus*, Chignik Area, management plan, regulations, jigging machine, pot, guideline harvest level, parallel season, state-waters season

INTRODUCTION

AREA DESCRIPTION

The Chignik Area for groundfish consists of all waters on the south side of the Alaska Peninsula enclosed by a line extending south from the Alaska Peninsula near Kilokak Rocks at long 156° 20.22' W and a line extending 135° southeast from Kupreanof Point (lat 55° 33.98' N, long 159° 35.88' W; Figure 1).

OVERVIEW

Two distinct Pacific cod *Gadus macrocephalus* fisheries occur within state waters (0–3 nmi) of the Chignik Area. The parallel fishery is prosecuted concurrent to the federal Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA) Pacific cod fishery and is managed by adopting most National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regulations and management actions. The Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery is prosecuted independent of the federal/parallel fishery and is managed exclusively by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) under guidelines developed by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

Parallel Pacific Cod Fishery

When the federal (3–200 nmi) CGOA area is open to directed Pacific cod fishing, the State of Alaska opens a concurrent parallel fishery inside state waters (0–3 nmi). Unless specifically prohibited, the same gear types in the federal Pacific cod fishery are allowed in the parallel fishery, although nonpelagic trawl vessels are prohibited from fishing inside most state waters (5 AAC 39.164(b)(3), *Nonpelagic trawl gear restrictions*).

With the exception of vessels using jig gear, all vessels that participate in the parallel Pacific cod fishery must have an activated vessel monitoring system (VMS; 5 AAC 28.087 (c)). All vessels targeting Pacific cod during the Chignik Area parallel fishery may not exceed 58 feet in overall length (5 AAC 28.537 (b)). Steller sea lion *Eumetopias jubatus* restrictions during the Chignik Area parallel fishery match federal management measures (5 AAC 28.087; Figure 2).

Vessels that fish exclusively in the Chignik Area parallel Pacific cod fishery are not required to possess a federal fishing permit (FFP) or a Pacific cod gear endorsement administered through the federal License Limitation Program (LLP). Vessels with a FFP or LLP that participate in the parallel fishery should be aware of federal regulations regarding observer coverage and catch reporting requirements, as well as other NMFS regulations.

The parallel Pacific cod fishery is divided into 2 seasons: the A season and B season. The parallel Pacific cod A season opens January 1 to pot, longline, and jig gear sectors. The Pacific cod jig sector B season opens June 10. The B season for all other gear sectors begins September 1.

Pacific cod harvested during the parallel fishery is deducted from the federal gear-specific sector harvest allocation. Parallel Pacific cod seasons for the pot and longline sectors close when their respective sector harvest allocations are achieved. The parallel Pacific cod A season for the jig gear sector closes when the jig gear sector harvest allocation is achieved, or March 15, whichever is earlier.

For additional information regarding federal Pacific cod regulations and harvest updates, contact NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division (1-800-304-4846 #3), NMFS Office of Law Enforcement (907-486-3298), or the NMFS Observer Program (206-526-4195). For other information regarding the parallel fishery, contact ADF&G in Kodiak (907-486-1840; Appendix A1).

State-Waters Pacific Cod Fishery

State-waters (0–3 nmi) Pacific cod fisheries are open access fisheries and are prosecuted independent of federal/parallel fisheries. Information specific to the 2016 Chignik Area statewaters Pacific cod fishery is outlined below.

STATE-WATERS PACIFIC COD REGULATIONS

OVERVIEW

Regulations pertaining to the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod fisheries begin on page 47 in the 2015–2016 Statewide Groundfish Commercial Fishing Regulations booklet. ADF&G manages the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season in accordance with the *Chignik Area Pacific Cod Management Plan* (5 AAC 28.537). Following is a summary of important regulations that govern the 2016 Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season.

2016 GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVEL

The guideline harvest level (GHL) for the state-waters Pacific cod season is based on 8.75% of the CGOA Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for Pacific cod. The 2016 GHL for the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod fishery is 9,512,506 pounds. By regulation, 90% of the total GHL, or 8,561,255 pounds, is allocated to pot vessels and 10% of the total GHL, or 951,251 pounds, is allocated to jig vessels.

SEASON DATES AND GHL ROLLOVER PROVISIONS

Pot Gear

The 2016 Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season for pot gear will open at 12:01 AM March 1 or 7 days after closure of the CGOA federal/parallel Pacific cod pot gear sector A season, whichever is later. The state-waters season for pot gear will close when the Chignik Area Pacific cod pot gear GHL allocation has been harvested.

If the state-waters pot gear GHL allocation has not been fully harvested by August 28, the state-waters pot gear season will close on August 28 to allow the CGOA federal/parallel Pacific cod pot gear sector B season to open on September 1. A summary of state-waters and parallel season dates is located in Appendix C1.

Jig Gear

The Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season for jig gear will open by regulation on March 15. If the federal/parallel jig gear sector A season has not closed by March 15, ADF&G will close the parallel (0–3 nmi) jig season and open the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season for jig gear.

If the state-waters jig season opens prior to closure of the federal jig sector season, the Chignik Area state-waters (0–3 nmi) season will be prosecuted concurrent to the federal (3–200 nmi) CGOA jig gear sector Pacific cod season. Vessels that participate in the Chignik Area state-waters season will be subject to state fisheries regulations, and all Pacific cod harvested will be deducted from the Chignik Area state-waters jig gear GHL allocation. Vessels that participate in the federal CGOA jig gear sector season will be subject to federal fisheries regulations, and all Pacific cod harvested will be deducted from the federal CGOA jig gear sector harvest allocation.

When the Chignik Area state-waters season and the federal Pacific cod season are open concurrently for the same gear

- vessels may not simultaneously participate in the Chignik Area state-waters season and any other Pacific cod season;
- vessel operators registered for the state-waters season must invalidate their ADF&G Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod registration prior to participating in a federal Pacific cod season;
- vessel operators participating in a federal Pacific cod season must register with ADF&G prior to participating in the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season;
- all Pacific cod must be delivered prior to validating or invalidating a Chignik Area statewaters Pacific cod registration; and
- vessel operators may validate or invalidate vessel registrations by contacting ADF&G in Kodiak (907-486-1840) during normal state business hours (Monday–Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM).

The Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season for jig gear will close when the Chignik Area Pacific cod jig gear GHL allocation has been harvested. If the Chignik Area state-waters jig gear GHL allocation has not been fully harvested by June 8, the state-waters jig gear season may close on June 8, based on inseason assessment of effort, harvest rate, and remaining GHL, to allow the federal/parallel Pacific cod jig gear sector B season to open on June 10. The state-waters season for jig gear will reopen after closure of the CGOA federal/parallel Pacific cod jig gear sector B season if the Chignik Area state-waters jig gear GHL allocation has not been achieved. A summary of state-waters and parallel season dates is located in Appendix C1.

GHL Rollover Provisions

The Chignik Area Pacific cod management plan provides late-season fishing opportunity when the GHL is not fully harvested. If Chignik Area state-waters GHL is available on August 15, the state-waters Pacific cod season may reopen to both pot and jig gear and gear limit restrictions may be removed. If a substantial portion of the state-waters season GHL remains unharvested on or after October 30, vessel size restrictions may be removed to facilitate full harvest of the GHL. All actions regarding GHL rollover provisions will be announced by ADF&G news release.

VESSEL REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS AND SIZE RESTRICTIONS

The Chignik Area is a superexclusive registration area for Pacific cod. Once a vessel is registered for the 2016 Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season, that vessel may not be used to take Pacific cod in any other state-waters Pacific cod management area during 2016. Conversely, a vessel registered for any state-waters Pacific cod season outside of the Chignik Area during 2016, may not participate in the 2016 Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season. The Chignik Area superexclusive registration requirements do not apply during a parallel Pacific cod fishery.

Pacific cod vessel registrations may be obtained in person at ADF&G offices in Kodiak and Dutch Harbor, or by fax. A 2016 Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) interim-use miscellaneous finfish permit card for the appropriate gear type must be obtained prior to registration. CFEC and other fishery related contact information is provided in Appendix A1.

Tender vessel operators must obtain a tender vessel registration for the state-waters Pacific cod fishery. Tender operators may target Pacific cod with either pot or jig gear while operating as a tender vessel. Separate fish tickets must be completed for fish landed by the tender vessel and for fish taken from other fishing vessels.

Pacific cod may not be taken by vessels greater than 58 feet in overall length during the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season unless the vessel length restriction is removed by ADF&G on or after October 30.

LEGAL GEAR, GEAR LIMITS, AND POT BUOY TAGS

Pot, mechanical jigging machine, and hand troll gear are the only legal gear types during the state-waters Pacific cod fishery. Vessels may not use pot and jig gear at the same time; however, vessel operators may change gear registration by contacting the Kodiak ADF&G office (Appendix A1).

During the state-waters season, groundfish pots of any size may be used to take Pacific cod, although individual tunnel eye openings on pot gear must be 36 inches in perimeter or less. All pots must be equipped with a biodegradable escape mechanism (5 AAC 39.145 *Escape Mechanism for Shellfish and Bottomfish Pots*). The biodegradable escape mechanism is an opening 18 inches or greater in length placed within 6 inches of the bottom of the pot and secured closed by a single length of untreated, 100% cotton twine no larger than 30 thread count. No more than 60 groundfish pots may be operated from a vessel unless the pot limit has been rescinded by ADF&G emergency order on or after August 15.

Buoy tags are required for pot gear when the 60-pot limit is in effect. Tags must be placed on the main or trailer buoy and are available at ADF&G offices in Kodiak and Dutch Harbor for \$1.50 per tag. Tags may be mailed through the U.S. Postal Service if paid for prior to shipment. Buoy tags may also be seasonally available at the city office in Chignik and from an ADF&G representative in Sand Point prior to the season opening date. A valid 2016 miscellaneous finfish CFEC permit card for pot gear is required to receive tags. Contact ADF&G in Kodiak at 907-486-1840 for additional information on buoy tags.

If buoy tags are lost during the season, replacement tags may be obtained by contacting ADF&G in Kodiak. The vessel owner, operator, or agent must complete and submit an affidavit form to ADF&G describing how tags were lost and the location and unique number(s) of each lost tag.

Pots with lost tags may remain in the water, but those pots must be secured open with bait and bait containers removed until replacement tags are attached.

Vessels using mechanical jigging machines are restricted to using no more than 5 machines unless the gear limits have been rescinded by ADF&G on or after August 15. Each of the 5 permissible lines may have no more than 30 hooks. There are no limits on the amount of hand troll gear that may be operated from a vessel. Vessels may operate both hand troll and mechanical jigging gear at the same time; however, separate CFEC permit cards and fish tickets are required for each gear type at the time of landing.

POT BUOY MARKING REQUIREMENTS

Buoys attached to groundfish pots must be marked with the permanent ADF&G vessel number of the vessel operating that gear (5 AAC 28.050 and 5 AAC 28.530(c)). The buoy containing the 5-digit ADF&G number may not be marked with any additional numbers; however, symbols and letters are acceptable. Trailer buoys used to mark ownership or string sequence may be marked with any desired numbers, symbols, or letters.

POT STORAGE AND GEAR CONFIGURATION

All pot gear must be open and unbaited at the time of a parallel or state-waters season closure. Open and unbaited pots may be stored, at any depth for a maximum of 7 days following the closure date. After 7 days, pots must be removed from the water or stored opened and unbaited in waters 25 fathoms or less.

If the time period between closure of the CGOA federal/parallel Pacific cod pot gear sector A season and the start of the Chignik Area state-waters pot gear season is more than 7 days, all pot gear inside state-waters (0–3 nmi) must be placed into legal storage (25 fathoms or less). However, during the 7 days immediately prior to the Chignik Area state-waters season opening, open and unbaited pot gear may be stored on the fishing grounds (greater than 25 fathoms).

When the state-waters season opens, the 60-pot limit is in effect. During the 7 days after the state-waters season opens, a vessel may store or transport pots in excess of the 60-pot limit only if those pots are stored open and unbaited in waters 25 fathoms or less or being transported onboard a vessel. After the 7-day period, registered vessels may not operate more than the maximum allowable 60 pots for the remainder of the state-waters season. Following closure of the state-waters season vessel operators may not stack or move gear into storage while Pacific cod is on board the vessel (5 AAC 28.070 (c)(1)).

Contact NMFS Enforcement (Appendix A1) regarding gear storage in federal waters.

LANDING REQUIREMENTS

Vessels participating in the state-waters Pacific cod season are required to deliver their catch within 48 hours after a closure unless 1) cod were harvested as allowable bycatch in another directed fishery, or 2) the vessel is delayed due to extraordinary circumstances and the vessel operator has contacted an ADF&G representative within 48 hours following the closure and has been granted additional time to reach the port of landing (5 AAC 28.541).

BYCATCH

In state waters (0–3 nmi), ADF&G adopts the NMFS maximum retainable bycatch percentages applicable in federal waters (3–200 nmi) for groundfish species that are not actively managed by the State of Alaska. Federal retainable bycatch percentages are subject to change and may differ between species. Updated retainable bycatch percentages for federally managed species can be found on the NMFS Alaska Region website at http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/ or by contacting NMFS Enforcement in Kodiak (Appendix A1).

Unless otherwise specified, the maximum bycatch limit for any species of groundfish is 20% by weight of the targeted Pacific cod onboard a vessel. Lingcod *Ophiodon elongatus*, may only be retained from July 1 to December 31 and must be 35 inches or greater in length from tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. During a state-waters or parallel Pacific cod fishery, octopus may only be retained as bycatch up to 20% by weight of retained Pacific cod and must be landed on the miscellaneous finfish card used to deliver Pacific cod (5 AAC 38.417). Black rockfish *S. melanops* may be retained up to 5% by weight of Pacific cod onboard a vessel. Jig vessels concurrently registered for a Chignik Area Pacific cod season and the Chignik Area directed black rockfish season may retain black rockfish in excess of the 5% bycatch limit when the Chignik Area directed black rockfish season is open to commercial fishing. Contact the ADF&G office in Kodiak (907-486-1840) regarding retainable bycatch percentages for state managed species.

CATCH REPORTING

ADF&G will manage the Chignik Area state-waters Pacific cod season using inseason catch reports (Appendix B1) provided by vessel operators. Vessel operators using pot gear are encouraged to report daily the harvest location, number of pot lifts, and pounds of Pacific cod retained in the previous 24-hour period (midnight to midnight). Inseason catch reports allow ADF&G to consider how changes in effort, fleet behavior, tides, and weather influence harvest rates. Catch reports will be taken by satellite dispatch (7894), phone (907-486-1840), or email (nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov). Reporting worksheets will be issued to vessel operators during registration.

Reports will initially be taken between 10:00 AM and 11:00 AM daily.

INSEASON ANNOUNCEMENTS

All actions pertaining to regulatory changes in the state-waters season will be communicated to the fleet by dispatch, distributed via the ADF&G news release email subscription service (http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main), placed on the ADF&G recordaphone (907-486-4559 #1), and relayed through participating processors and National Weather Service marine weather VHF forecasts when possible. ADF&G will make every effort to provide sufficient advance notice prior to a closure; however, the potential exists for a short advance notice closure.

A weekly harvest updates will be distributed each Monday after 4:00 PM while the state-waters season is open. Weekly harvest updates are available on the ADF&G website at: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareachignik.groundfish#harvest or from the ADF&G groundfish management office in Kodiak.

FIGURES

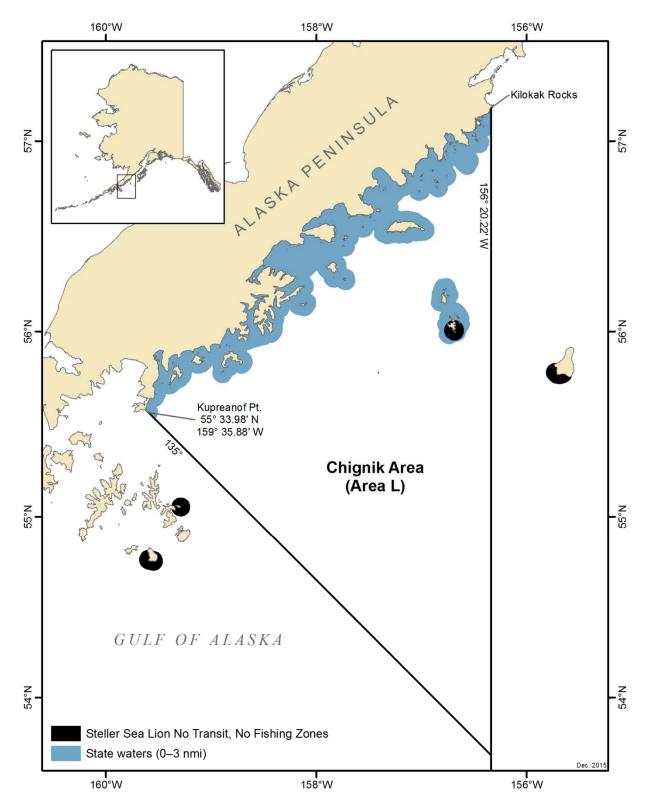


Figure 1.-Chignik Area for state-waters Pacific cod.

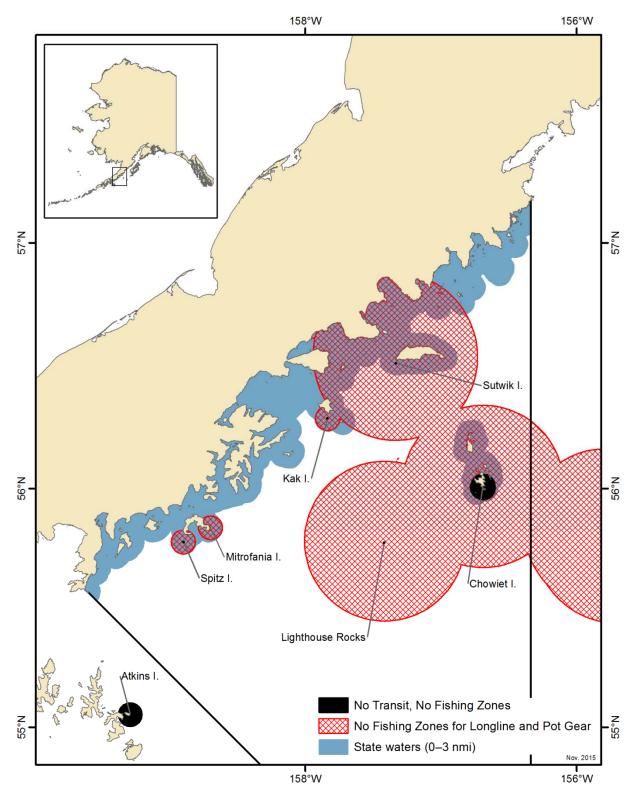


Figure 2.—Steller sea lion restrictions for pot and longline gear during the parallel Pacific cod season in the Chignik Area.

APPENDIX A. LIST OF FISHERY CONTACTS, BY AGENCY AND LOCATION

Alaska Department of Fish and Game web site: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingCommercialByArea.southwest

Kodiak Office

Mail address: 351 Research Court Physical address: 351 Research Court **Phone:** (907) 486-1840

> 2nd floor, Kodiak, Alaska Kodiak, Alaska 99615 **Record-a-phone:** (907) 486-4559

> > Fax: (907) 486-1824

Wayne Donaldson Westward Region Shellfish/Groundfish Management Coordinator wavne.donaldson@alaska.gov Mark Stichert Kodiak, Chignik, Alaska Peninsula Area Shellfish/Groundfish Biologist mark.stichert@alaska.gov Kodiak, Chignik, Alaska Peninsula Assistant Area Shellfish/Groundfish Biologist nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov Nathaniel Nichols

Dutch Harbor Office

Physical address: F.T.S. building, 2nd floor Mail address: P. O. Box 920587 **Phone:** (907) 581-1239

> Airport Beach Road, Dutch Harbor Dutch Harbor, Alaska 99692 **Fax:** (907) 581-1572

Division of Alaska Wildlife Troopers web site: http://www.dps.state.ak.us/AWT/

Kodiak Office

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Mail address: 2921 A Mill Bay Road Physical address: 2921 A Mill Bay Road **Phone:** (907) 486-4762

> Kodiak, Alaska 99615 Kodiak, Alaska **Fax:** (907) 486-5480

Shane Nicholson Sergeant larry.nicholson@alaska.gov

Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission web site: http://www.cfec.state.ak.us/

Mail address: P.O. Box 110302 **Physical address:** 8800 Glacier Highway #109 **Phone:** (907) 789-6150

Juneau, Alaska 99811-0302 **Fax:** (907) 789-6170 Juneau, Alaska

National Marine Fisheries Service – ALASKA REGION web site: http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/

Sustainable Fisheries Division

Juneau Office **Phone:** (800) 304-4846 #3 Dutch Harbor Office **Phone:** (907) 581-2062

NOAA Fisheries Enforcement

Dutch Harbor Office **Phone:** (907) 581-2061 Kodiak Office **Phone:** (907) 486-3298

NOAA Observer Program Phone: (206) 526-4795

APPENDIX	B. EXAMPL	E OF REPO	ORTING W	ORKSHEET

2016 Chignik Area State-Waters Pacific Cod Reporting Worksheet					
Vessel Name:					
<u>Date</u>	<u>Item 1</u>	<u>Item 2</u>	<u>Item 3</u>		
Previous 24-hour period (midnight to midnight)	Area fished	Number of pots lifted	Pounds of cod retained		

Instructions:

Report catch for the previous 24 hour period (midnight–midnight) to ADF&G Kodiak <u>daily</u> by any of the following methods:

Reports will be taken from 10 AM-11 AM daily.

Report vessel name, area fished, number of pots lifted, and pounds of cod retained.

Do not combine reports. If one or more reporting periods are missed, report each period individually.

APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF KODIAK, CHIGNIK, AND SOUTH ALASKA PENINSULA PARALLEL AND STATEWATERS PACIFIC COD SEASON DATES BY GEAR TYPE

Appendix C1.—Summary of Kodiak, Chignik, and South Alaska Peninsula parallel and state-waters Pacific cod season dates and guideline harvest levels by gear type, 2016.

Pacific Cod Season	Kodiak		Chignik		South Alaska Peninsula	
Opening Dates	Pot	Jig	Pot	Jig	Pot	Jig
Federal/Parallel A Season	January 1	January 1	January 1	January 1	January 1	January 1
State-Waters Season	7 days after Federal CGOA pot A Season	48 hours after Federal CGOA jig A Season ^a	March 1 or seven days after closure of CGOA pot A Season, whichever is later	March 15	March 7 or seven days after closure of WGOA pot A Season, whichever is later	48 hours after Federal WGOA jig A Season ^b
Federal/Parallel B Season	September 1	June 10	September 1	June 10	September 1	June 10
State-Waters GHL Rollover	Following Federal CGOA pot B Season	Following Federal CGOA pot B Season	August 15	August 15	Following Federal WGOA pot B Season	Following Federal WGOA pot B Season
State-Waters GHL	-Waters GHL 13,589,294 (whole pounds)		9,512,506 (whole pounds)		26,788,149 (whole pounds)	
GHL By Gear Type	6,794,647 (50%)	6,794,647 (50%)	8,561,255 (90%)	951,251 (10%)	22,769,927 (85%)	4,018,222 (15%)

Notes: CGOA = Federal Central Gulf of Alaska Management Area; WGOA = Federal Western Gulf of Alaska Management Area

This document is for general information purposes only, it is not intended to be a complete list of fishery regulations, nor does it replace or supercede existing regulations. Vessel owners and operators are responsible for understanding all state and federal regulations. For additional information contact ADF&G in Kodiak at (907) 486-1840 or NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division at (800) 304-4846 #3.

^a If the CGOA federal/parallel A-season jig sector harvest allocation has not been achieved by March 15, the parallel (0–3 nmi) jig gear sector A season may close and the Kodiak Area state-waters season for jig gear may open on March 15 or later depending on ADF&G's ability to provide for orderly fisheries based on inseason assessment of effort, harvest rate, or remaining federal jig quota.

If the WGOA federal/parallel A-season jig sector harvest allocation has not been achieved by March 15, the parallel (0–3 nmi) jig gear sector A season may close and the South Alaska Peninsula Area state-waters season for jig gear may open on March 15 or later depending on ADF&G's ability to provide for orderly fisheries based on inseason assessment of effort, harvest rate, or remaining federal jig quota.