Division of Commercial Fisheries
Sam Rabung, Director

Homer Area Office
3298 Douglas Place
Homer, AK 99603

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner

PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
www.adfg.alaska.gov

Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: August 30, 2021

CONTACT: Jan Rumble and Elisa Russ
Groundfish Area Management Biologists
(907) 235-8191

Prince William Sound Area
Parallel Pacific Cod Season
Opens to Pot Vessels and Longline Vessels Less than 50 Feet in Length
Closed to Longline Vessels Greater than or Equal to 50 Feet in Length
Emergency Order # 2-GF-E-11-21

The Prince William Sound Area (PWS; Area E) parallel Pacific cod season **will open to vessels fishing with pot gear and to vessels fishing with longline gear that are less than 50 feet in length effective 12:00 noon September 1**. The parallel Pacific cod season **will remain closed to vessels fishing with longline gear that are greater than or equal to 50 feet in length**. The parallel season remains open to vessels fishing with jig gear.

Parallel Pacific cod seasons for pot and longline gear opening at 12:00 noon September 1 are established by emergency order (EO) to coincide with the season dates and gear sectors set by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the Pacific cod "B" season in the adjacent federal Central Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Area (CGOA). NMFS announced that hook-and-line (longline) vessels greater than or equal to 50 feet in length will be prohibited from participating in the federal Pacific cod "B" season to prevent exceeding the 2021 total allowable catch apportioned to those vessels. The parallel seasons will close by EO concurrent with federal "B" season closures when gear sector allocations are achieved.

Fishermen are reminded: 1) to obtain a PWS 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://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/vessel-monitoring-systems-alaska-federal-register-rules-and-notices; 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://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/bycatch/seabird-avoidance-gear-and-methods.

NMFS continues to prosecute the North Pacific Groundfish and Halibut Observer Program. Vessel operators participating in parallel groundfish and/or directed halibut fisheries are encouraged to become familiar with this federal program. Information on the observer program can be found can be found at:
https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/contact/north-pacific-observer-program or by contacting the NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division in Juneau at (907) 586-7228.

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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 Stellar sea lion protection areas contact NMFS in Kodiak at (907) 481-1780 or https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/sslpm.

Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for PWS are set by Emergency Order 2-GF-E-01-21 and may be found in the Central Region Groundfish Fisheries Outlook advisory announcement.

COVID-19

Under Alaska's Health Mandates 1, 2, 3, and 4, commercial fishing is Essential and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Advisories. COVID-19 Health Advisories may be found here: https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-advisories/.
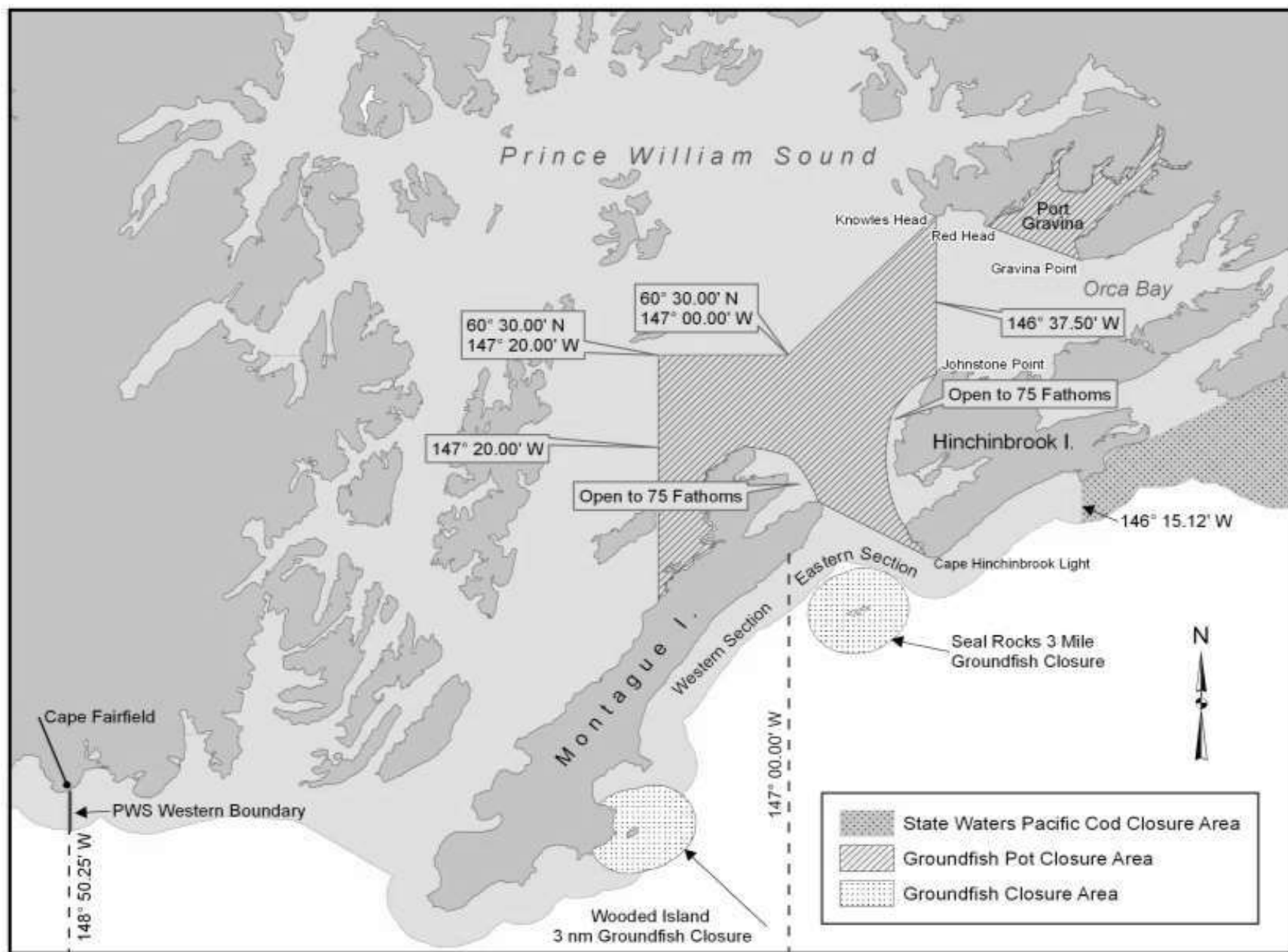
Figure 1. Prince William Sound Area closures to groundfish pot gear, groundfish fishing, and to the state-waters Pacific cod season.

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