

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT **COOK INLET AREA**

2017 PARALLEL PACIFIC COD SEASON CLOSES DECEMBER 31
2018 PARALLEL PACIFIC COD SEASON OPENS JANUARY 1
EMERGENCY ORDER # 2-GF-H-02-18

The 2017 Cook Inlet Area (CI) parallel Pacific cod season will close to vessels using pot, jig, and longline gear at midnight December 31, 2017. The parallel Pacific cod season will immediately open to pot, jig, and longline gear on January 1, 2018. A parallel Pacific cod season is established via emergency order (EO) to coincide with the season dates and gear types set by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the initial Pacific cod season in the adjacent federal Central Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Area (CGOA). 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 parallel Pacific cod season will close by EO for each gear type to coincide with respective gear sector closures in the federal CGOA.

Fishermen are reminded: 1) to obtain a Cook Inlet Area parallel Pacific cod season registration from ADF&G prior to fishing; 2) of the requirement for fishermen using pot or longline gear in parallel Pacific cod fisheries to have a functioning, activated, 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 North Gulf District of the Cook Inlet Area. Additional information describing SAM can be found at: <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/pr/seabird-avoidance-gear>.

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 at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/observers/> or by contacting the NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division in Juneau at (907) 586-7228.

Regulation 5AAC 28.350 (b) closes certain waters on the west side of Cook Inlet and within Kachemak Bay to groundfish pot gear. The Kachemak Bay groundfish pot closure area was reduced at the Board of Fisheries meeting in December 2016. The amended Kachemak Bay pot closure area was implemented by EO # 2-GF-H-14-16 and described in news release NR15-GF-

H-16 issued on December 5, 2016; the 2015-2018 Statewide Commercial Groundfish Fishing Regulations booklet is not up to date. The boundaries of the new area are shown in Figure 1.

Two rookeries within the Cook Inlet Area, Outer (Pye) Island and Sugarloaf Island remain closed to fishing with pot or longline gear during a parallel Pacific cod season to protect Steller sea lions. Waters within three nautical miles (nmi) of these locations are closed to vessel transit and waters within 10 nmi of these locations are closed to fishing with fixed gear via emergency order. Contact NMFS in Kodiak at ph: (907) 481-1780 or consult the NMFS website at <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/sslpm>.

Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for the Cook Inlet Area are set by Emergency Order 2-GF-H-01-18 and may be found in the Central Region Groundfish Fisheries Outlook news release.

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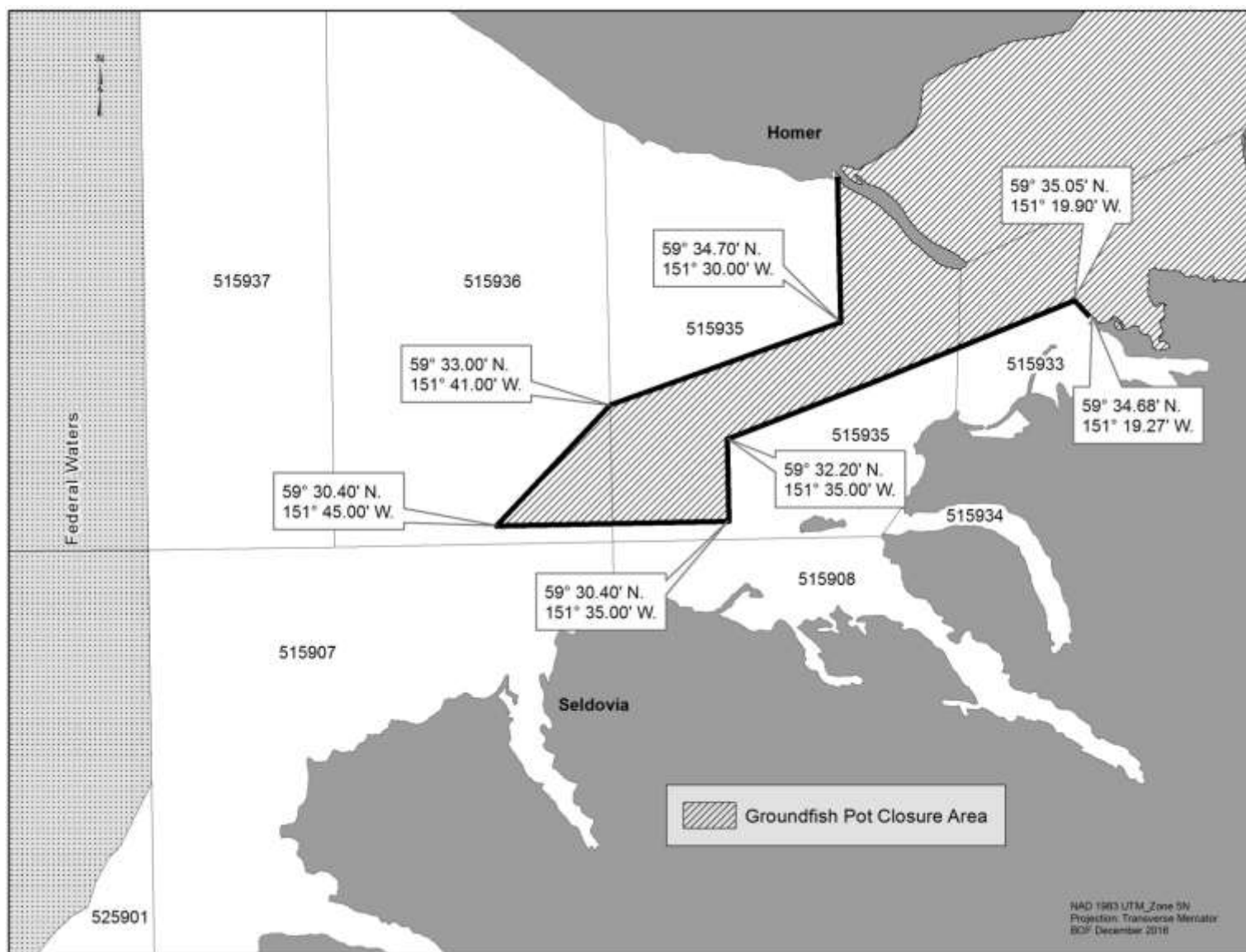


Figure 1. Updated Kachemak Bay groundfish pot closure area with coordinates, implemented by EO December 5, 2016.

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