

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

TO: Lowell Fair
Regional Supervisor

DATE: October 9, 2020

THRU: Troy Thynes
Fish and Game Coordinator

FILE NO: October 1, 2020

TELEPHONE NO: 907 225-5195

FAX NO: 907 225-3756

FROM: Justin Breese
Assistant area management biologist
Division of Commercial Fisheries
Ketchikan

SUBJECT: 2019-20 SEAK
Geoduck Fishery

The Southeast Alaska Commercial Geoduck season runs from October 1 through September 30. The total guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2019-20 season was 651,100 pounds of geoducks with 637,900 pounds in 14 fishery areas managed in Ketchikan and an additional 13,200 pounds in 1 fishery area managed in Sitka. Three areas, Middle Gravina, East San Fernando, and Cone Island North, failed to pass paralytic shellfish poison (PSP) testing in the previous season, resulting in their GHLs totaling 191,600 pounds rolled into this season. This was the second consecutive time that Middle Gravina had failed to pass PSP for a season. This season was the first season the Sitka areas moved to a two-year rotational fishery. In previous seasons Sitka areas were fished annually.

The geoduck market is a predominantly a live market with areas certified for live sale based on PSP test results. Of the 131 tests performed, 49 tests or 37%, had a passing result allowing for a fishery. The commercial geoduck fishery's primary market is China. At the end of January, due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and the closing of the borders to China, the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fishery Association voted to stop testing PSP levels. Testing resumed in the end of April for limited fisheries. The fishery operated under the rules of Alaska Health Mandates 10, 11, 12, 17, and 18 during the season which limited crew contact with communities and governed inter and intra-state travel. With the additional rules and smaller domestic market for geoducks, the average number of fishermen taking part in the fishery dropped from 43 to 19 after January 2020.

The first fishery opening was on October 2, 2019. Openings were generally weekly, occurring on Thursdays. Fifty-eight divers harvested 551,208 pounds of geoducks. Four shore-based processors operated in the Ketchikan area, E.C Phillips, Gateway Seafood, Hollis Bay Seafoods, and Noyes Island Smokehouse. In addition to these, there were several permit holders who direct-marketed and shipped their own product out live. The Sitka area geoducks are direct marketed by the divers. Prices for geoduck clams ranged from three to eight dollars per pound with an approximate ex-vessel value of \$3.1 million.

Table 1. Registration Area A (Southeast Alaska) commercial geoduck clam harvest, effort, and value 1985/86 through 2019/20 seasons.

Season ^a	Guideline Harvest Level (lb)	Total Pounds Landed	Average Price per Pound ^b	Estimated Exvessel Value ^b	Number of Divers	Number of Landings	Total Days Open	Average Pounds per Diver	Average Earnings per Diver ^b
1985-86	^c	143,868	\$0.21	\$30,212	8	40	240	17,984	\$3,777
1986-87	^c	28,191	\$0.25	\$7,048	3	9	240	9,397	\$2,349
1987-88	125,000	185,674	\$0.30	\$55,702	6	156	240	30,946	\$9,284
1988-89	189,232	143,188	\$0.49	\$70,162	9	127	240	15,910	\$7,796
1989-90	199,000	207,083	\$0.51	\$105,612	18	165	240	11,505	\$5,867
1990-91	196,000	189,585	\$0.51	\$96,688	15	130	176	12,639	\$6,446
1991-92	219,000	193,074	\$0.66	\$127,429	20	131	33	9,654	\$6,371
1992-93	196,000	189,379	\$1.11	\$210,211	22	109	19	8,608	\$9,555
1993-94	219,000	209,322	\$1.50	\$313,983	40	115	11	5,233	\$7,850
1994-95	195,000	197,246	\$1.85	\$364,905	64	190	14	3,082	\$5,702
1995-96	209,000	229,681	\$2.02	\$463,956	109	401	10	2,107	\$4,256
1996-97	196,000	203,017	\$2.57	\$521,754	97	359	6	2,093	\$5,379
1997-98	196,000	180,443	\$3.89	\$701,923	110	312	3	1,640	\$6,381
1998-99	112,500	111,311	\$2.13	\$237,092	98	206	66	1,136	\$2,419
1999-00	250,400	202,260	\$1.60	\$323,616	61	240	50	3,316	\$5,305
2000-01	391,100	438,334	\$1.06	\$464,634	74	543	148	5,923	\$6,279
2001-02	285,322	283,405	\$0.72	\$204,052	37	324	78	7,660	\$5,515
2002-03	382,100	392,406	\$1.69	\$663,166	50	537	35	7,848	\$13,263
2003-04	341,000	377,584	\$2.87	\$1,083,666	49	482	25	7,706	\$22,116
2004-05 ^d	477,000	535,516	\$3.93	\$2,104,578	60	710	24	8,925	\$35,076
2005-06 ^d	403,800	436,040	\$2.04	\$889,522	64	545	51	6,813	\$13,899
2006-07 ^d	687,100	726,866	\$3.88	\$2,820,240	66	812	42	11,013	\$42,731
2007-08 ^d	590,800	611,164	\$3.12	\$1,906,832	59	675	42	10,359	\$32,319
2008-09 ^d	868,700	906,685	\$3.66	\$3,318,467	56	920	39	16,191	\$59,258
2009-10 ^d	630,900	658,714	\$6.74	\$4,439,732	60	694	28	10,979	\$73,996
2010-11 ^d	824,800	845,582	\$6.61	\$5,589,297	69	953	25	12,255	\$81,004
2011-12 ^d	557,300	556,210	\$10.31	\$5,734,525	69	776	25	8,061	\$83,109
2012-13 ^d	763,200	800,783	\$6.88	\$5,509,387	68	974	30	11,776	\$81,020
2013-14 ^d	601,400	514,037	\$7.92	\$4,071,173	69	763	34	7,450	\$59,003
2014-15 ^d	770,100	818,766	\$4.56	\$3,733,573	59	1017	32	13,877	\$63,281
2015-16 ^d	543,600	565,761	\$5.28	\$2,987,218	55	658	28	10,287	\$54,313
2016-17 ^d	616,900	605,529	\$9.87	\$5,976,571	59	813	28	10,263	\$101,298
2017-18 ^d	573,700	533,999	\$8.20	\$4,378,792	62	730	20	8,613	\$70,626
2018-19 ^d	716,600	536,379	\$6.11	\$3,277,276	64	821	36	8,381	\$51,207
2019-20 ^d	651,100	551,208	\$5.68	\$3,130,861	58	767	52	9,504	\$53,980

^a Season = October 1 thru September 30.

^b Average price data is based entirely on ADF&G fish ticket data. Note: 1985-2000 prices were reported for 90% of total pounds landed, however from 2001-2009 and for the 2010-14 season prices were reported for only 25-35% of total pounds landed and for the 2009-10 season, prices were reported for 50% of the total pounds harvested.

^c Five-year, 300,000 pound GHL in three areas.

^d Mariculture site fisheries are not included.

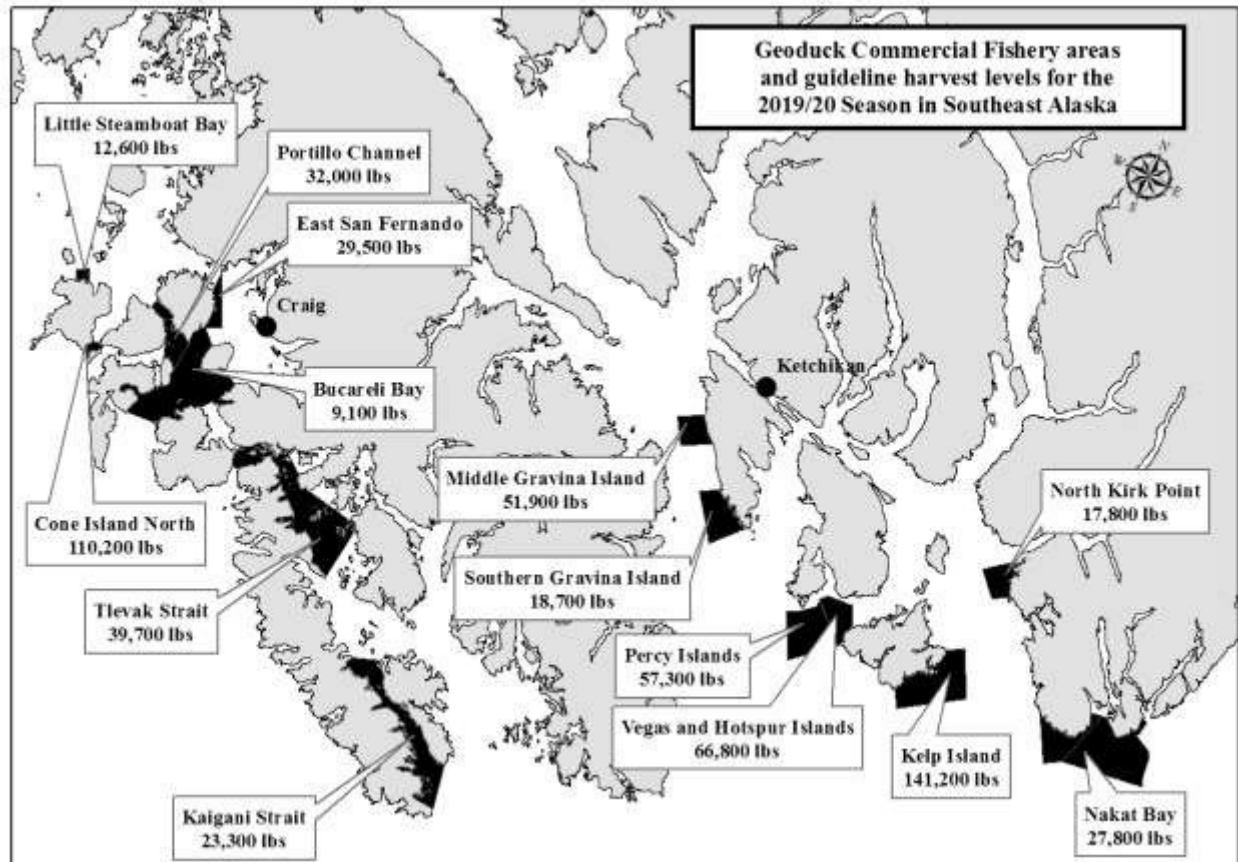


Figure 1. Map of open geoduck areas in the 2019-20 season.