

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

TO: Lowell Fair
Regional Supervisor

DATE: January 30, 2019

THRU: Dan Gray
Fish and Game Coordinator

FILE NO.: January 9, 2019

TELEPHONE NO. 907 225-5195

FAX NO. 907 225-3756

FROM: Bo Meredith
Assistant area management biologist
Division of Commercial Fisheries
Ketchikan

SUBJECT 2017-18 SEAK Sea
Cucumber Fishery

The 2017-18 commercial harvest season of sea cucumbers in Southeast Alaska began on October 2, 2017, with an overall Guideline Harvest Level (GHL) of 1,233,900 pounds of sea cucumbers. The total Southeast Alaska harvest was 1,294,637 pounds, 6% over the GHL. The maximum number of divers in any one opening was 165 during the third opening, with no divers participating in the last standard opening taking place on January 9, 2018. Throughout the season, 174 different divers made landings and there were 134 vessels registered to fish for miscellaneous shellfish in Southeast Alaska.

In the Ketchikan area, the GHL was 560,900 pounds, located in 7 different harvest areas. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 590,291 pounds, harvested in 11 openings. This was 5.2% over the GHL. There was an average of 49 divers per week harvesting an average of 1,095 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers per week for the season. The average effort and harvest for the first 4 openings of the season was 79 divers and 1,222 pounds. This was 5.0% over the GHL. A majority of the GHL was harvested in five openings. The last opening in the Ketchikan area occurred on December 11 and 12 in the East Dall Island area, Subdistrict 103-40.

In the Petersburg/Wrangell area, the GHL was 430,700 pounds, with six areas open for harvest. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 449,021 pounds, harvested in 14 openings. This was 4.2% over the GHL. Average effort level was 20 divers per week with an average of 68 divers for the first 4 weeks.

In the Juneau management area, the GHL was 62,000 pounds located in two harvest areas. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 230,431 pounds, harvested in seven openings with an average of 7 divers per week. This was 1.7% over the GHL.

In the Sitka management area, the GHL was 180,800 pounds located in three harvest areas. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 184,989 pounds, harvested in 23 openings with an average of 6 divers per week. This was 2.3 % over the GHL.

In the Ketchikan area, effort for the first week was concentrated on Gravina Island. In northern Southeast, effort was more dispersed with Ernest Sound and Peril Strait drawing the most effort. After the fifth week, effort Southeast wide began to drop substantially as many of the larger areas began to close. Effort dropped from 163 divers to 101 divers between the fifth and sixth opening and then dropped to 50 divers during the seventh opening. Effort dropped to 20 divers during the eighth opening where it remained steady until Christmas. Two areas remained open, South Mitkof and Sitka Sound, after a two-week closure during the

holidays to attempt to harvest the remaining GHL. These areas were given time incentives of three full days of harvest opportunity. They remained open through March when they closed by regulation.

There were 8 processors buying product in the Ketchikan area and 10 Southeast wide. Alaska Glacier Seafoods (Juneau) and EC Phillips (Ketchikan) were the largest buyers of sea cucumbers for the 2017-18 season. They bought 428,000 pounds and 322,000 pounds respectively, or 58% of the overall Southeast harvest. AGS had tenders throughout Southeast Alaska. Southeast Seafoods was the next largest buyer, purchasing 183,000 pounds of sea cucumbers.

Exvessel value for Southeast Alaska was approximately \$6,796,844. The exvessel value for the Ketchikan area was \$3,100,000. Values were based on an average price of \$5.25/lb in the Ketchikan area and \$5.50/lb Southeast wide. Prices varied by processor, whether the product was sold dockside or to a tender, or whether the product was poked or fully cut. If the product is fully cut divers usually receive \$.10 more per pound. Final prices are preliminary and there may be a retro check to fishermen in the future.

Port sampling for sea cucumbers was discontinued beginning in the 2006-07 season. GHLs were determined from sampling cucumbers during the preseason biomass survey.

Table 1. Registration Area A (Southeast Alaska) commercial sea cucumber harvest, effort, and value, 1986/87 through 2017/18 seasons.

Season ^a	Guideline Harvest Level (lb)	Total Harvest (lb)	Average Price / lb ^b	Estimated Exvessel Value ^b	Number of Divers	Number of Landings	Average lb / Diver	Average Earnings / Diver ^b
Data prior to 1986/1987 season is confidential.								
1986/87	34,043	34,043	\$0.21	\$7,149	7	44	4,863	\$1,021
1987/88	65,056	65,056	\$0.21	\$13,662	11	143	5,914	\$1,242
1988/89	801,405	801,405	\$0.21	\$169,096	57	922	14,060	\$2,967
1989/90	2,318,305	2,318,305	\$0.42	\$969,142	205	2,263	11,309	\$4,728
1990/91	704,491 ^c	804,184	\$0.59	\$472,386	143	890	5,624	\$3,303
1991/92	839,160 ^c	869,988	\$0.80	\$697,970	187	704	4,652	\$3,732
1992/93	1,100,440	1,249,621	\$0.79	\$988,628	240	1,003	5,207	\$4,119
1993/94	799,235	964,343	\$1.03	\$995,783	320	949	3,014	\$3,112
1994/95	1,351,000	1,322,219	\$1.79	\$2,361,541	261	1,379	5,066	\$9,048
1995/96	1,157,500	1,332,095	\$1.39	\$1,846,556	424	1,582	3,142	\$4,355
1996/97	939,300	909,789	\$1.29	\$1,169,612	294	1,234	3,095	\$3,978
1997/98	892,410	894,739	\$1.63	\$1,458,425	226	976	3,959	\$6,453
1998/99	1,026,345	1,055,572	\$1.55	\$1,636,137	219	971	4,820	\$7,471
1999/00	1,580,000	1,569,626	\$1.95	\$3,060,771	200	1,378	7,848	\$15,304
2000/01	1,122,500	1,158,385	\$2.23	\$2,583,199	220	913	5,265	\$11,742
2001/02	1,425,200	1,438,451	\$1.75	\$2,517,289	235	1,201	6,121	\$10,712
2002/03	1,576,700	1,639,440	\$1.26	\$2,042,882	201	1,313	8,156	\$10,164
2003/04	1,637,700	1,698,650	\$1.42	\$2,472,456	195	1,296	8,711	\$12,679
2004/05	1,381,200	1,374,532	\$2.12	\$2,769,116	194	1,139	7,085	\$14,274
2005/06	1,475,800	1,437,731	\$2.00	\$2,875,462	198	1,418	14,523	\$14,523
2006/07	1,598,700	1,597,457	\$1.97	\$3,146,990	175	1,237	17,983	\$17,983
2007/08 ^d	1,384,300	1,449,301	\$2.43	\$3,774,428	181	1,290	7,923	\$21,086
2008/09	1,122,100	1,102,637	\$2.30	\$2,536,065	176	1,072	6,301	\$13,078
2009/10	1,574,700	1,610,826	\$2.34	\$3,769,333	169	1,240	9,532	\$22,304
2010/11	1,262,800	1,274,541	\$2.52	\$3,211,843	180	1,109	7,081	\$17,841
2011/12	999,000	1,023,834	\$5.06	\$5,180,600	189	1,043	5,417	\$27,411
2012/13	1,476,000	1,512,895	\$4.05	\$6,127,225	199	1,369	7,602	\$30,790
2013/14	1,472,600	1,556,983	\$3.97	\$6,181,223	198	1,396	7,864	\$31,218
2014/15	1,084,800	1,073,554	\$4.00	\$4,294,216	171	1,022	6,278	\$25,083
2015/16	1,439,900	1,525,387	\$3.50	\$5,338,855	175	1,278	8,716	\$30,508
2016/17	1,243,200	1,319,798	\$3.93	\$5,279,192	169	1,206	7,809	\$31,238
2017/18	1,233,900	1,294,637	\$5.25	\$6,796,844	175	1,211	7,398	\$38,839

^a Season = October 1 thru September 30. Experimental fishing program prior to 1990/1991 season.

^b Based on CFEC (annual) data prior to the 1998/1999 season, then based on ADF&G fish ticket data.

^c GHL originally calculated in numbers of sea cucumbers.

^d Does not include data for the Yakutat sea cucumber fishery.

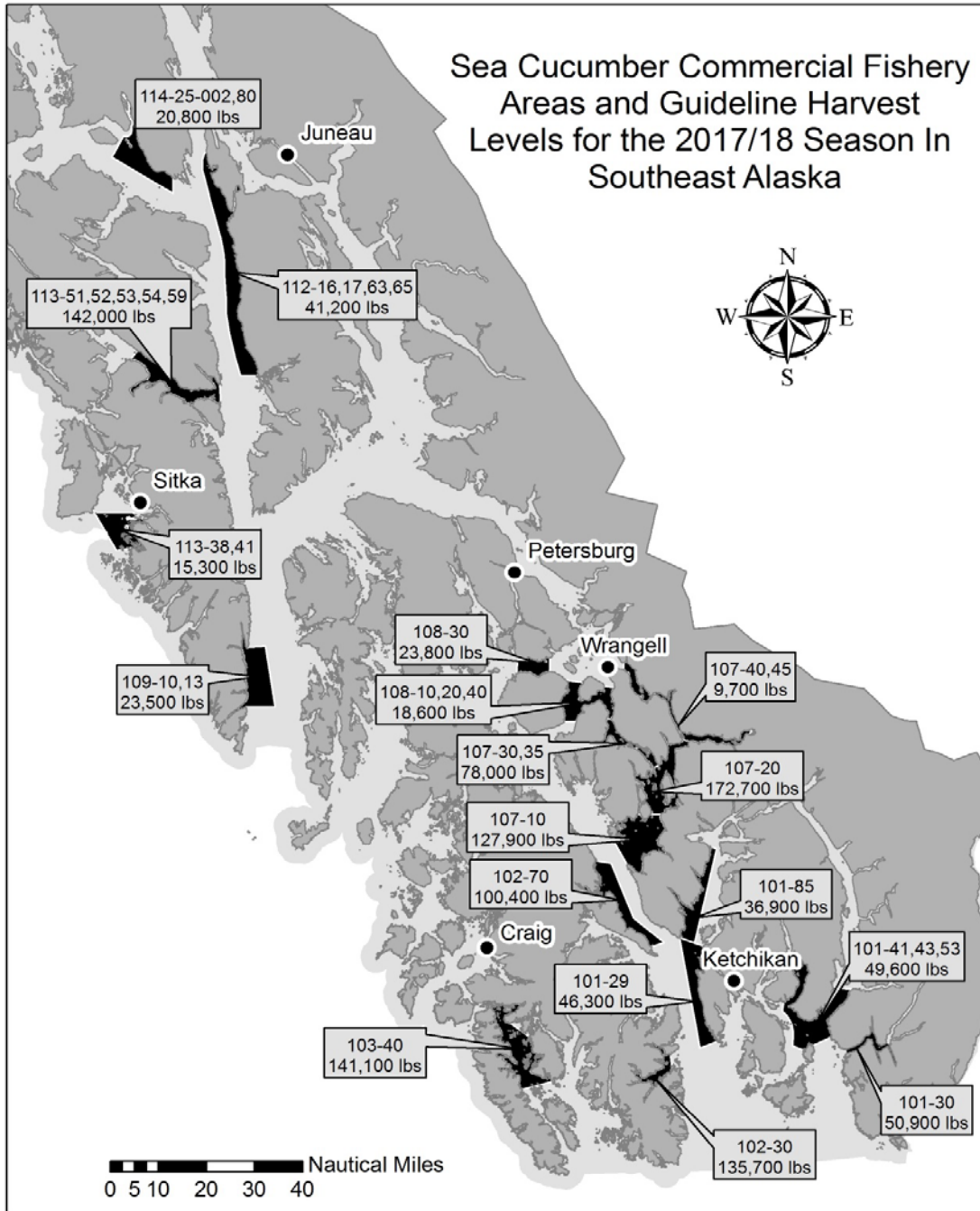


Figure 1. Map of open sea cucumber areas in the 2017/18 season.