



## Advisory Announcement

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### 2020 NORTHERN SOUTHEAST INSIDE (NSEI) SUBDISTRICT SABLEFISH FISHERY ANNUAL HARVEST OBJECTIVE ANNOUNCEMENT

Sitka... The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) announced today that the 2020 NSEI Subdistrict commercial sablefish fishery annual harvest objective (AHO) is 1,108,003 round pounds. There are 75 valid Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permits for 2020, which is a reduction of 3 permits from 78 permit holders in 2019. **The individual equal quota share (EQS) is 14,773 round pounds**, a 25% increase from the 2019 EQS of 11,796 round pounds. The AHO is based on the sablefish recommended acceptable biological catch (ABC) with decrements made for sablefish mortality in other fisheries.

Two key advancements to the ABC determination process were implemented for the 2020 NSEI sablefish assessment which included:

- A new statistical catch-at-age model replaced past methodology that partitioned a mark-recapture abundance estimate to numbers-at-age using fishery age compositions. This reduces ADF&G's reliance on an annual mark-recapture project by integrating multiple indices of abundance and biological data, including catch, mark-recapture abundance estimates, longline survey and fishery catch-per-unit-effort, and longline survey length and age compositions, to estimate recruitment, abundance, and spawning stock biomass of NSEI sablefish since 1975. As in previous years, maximum ABC is defined by  $F_{50}$ , the fishing mortality rate that reduces spawning biomass to 50% of equilibrium unfished levels;
- A new management procedure was implemented that constrains the recommended ABC to a 15% annual maximum change to increase fishing stability and maximize catch.

With these advancements, the recommended 2020 ABC is 1,216,743 round lb ( $F_{ABC} = 0.0537$ ), a 15% increase from the 2019 ABC. The increase in ABC is attributed to the large 2014-year class, which are estimated to be 45% mature in 2020 and comprise 38% of the forecasted female spawning stock biomass.

**The NSEI fishery opens by regulation at 8:00 a.m., August 15, 2020, and will close at 12:00 noon, November 15, 2020.** Permit holders who have any legal overage or underage incurred during the 2019 fishing season will have their 2020 personal quota share (PQS) adjusted accordingly.

#### 2020 Survey Activities

The most recent sablefish marking survey was completed on May 26, 2020, during which 7,916 sablefish were marked and released throughout NSEI; these results will be used for the 2021 stock assessment. The department will continue to conduct a marking survey annually or biannually, as funding allows. Three vessels have been chartered for the 2020 ADF&G longline survey, scheduled for August 9-13, 2020. Four NSEI permit holders will harvest their PQS during the survey. Data from the 2020 longline survey will be used to obtain size, age, and maturity information for the 2021 stock assessment.

#### Registration and Logbook Requirements

Fishermen must register prior to fishing and are required to keep a logbook during the fishery. **Registration forms and logbooks will be available starting July 20 at ADF&G offices in Southeast Alaska.** Completed logbook pages must be attached to the ADF&G copy of the fish ticket at the time of delivery. Confidential ADF&G envelopes for logbook pages may be requested when registering.

Logbooks must include, by set, the date and time gear is set and retrieved, specific location of harvest by latitude and longitude for start and ending positions, hook spacing, amount of gear (number of hooks and skates) used, depth of set, estimated weight of the target species, and the estimated weight of bycatch by species. Indicate for each set if the target species was sablefish or halibut and if there was any lost gear. A permit holder must retain all visibly injured or dead sablefish. Sablefish that are not visibly injured or dead may be released unharmed, and the permit holder must record in the logbook, by set, the number of live sablefish released [5 AAC 28.170(f)]. Record discard reason, e.g., fish are small, PQS has been met.

**Tagged Sablefish**

Fishermen are requested to watch for tagged sablefish. Please record tag number(s) in the logbook with the corresponding set information. All tags returned will receive a reward. Tag rewards include a t-shirt and entry into an annual drawing for one \$1,000, two \$500, and four \$250 cash rewards. To qualify for entry in the annual drawing, ADF&G requires the following information: the tag, set location (latitude and longitude), date of capture of the fish, and the name and address of the person recovering the tag.

**Fish Ticket Requirements**

Landed weights must be recorded on an ADF&G fish ticket at the time of delivery. If a fisherman delivers fish in the round, the total round weight delivered must be recorded on the fish ticket. If a fisherman delivers dressed fish, the fish ticket must include the total landed dressed weight as well as the round weight equivalent, determined by using the standard 0.63 conversion rate. There is a 2% allowance for ice and slime when delivering unrinsed whole sablefish. A fish ticket must be completed prior to the resumption of fishing and each permit holder must retain onboard their vessel, copies of all NSEI fish tickets from the current season as well as their updated PQS tracking form. Fishermen are reminded that a completed fish ticket must be submitted to ADF&G before fish are transported out of Alaska.

**Sablefish Possession and Landing Requirements**

In the NSEI Subdistrict, the holder of a CFEC permit for sablefish may not retain more sablefish from the directed fishery than the annual amount of sablefish EQS specified by the department [5 AAC 28.170 (f)]. However, if a permit holder’s harvest exceeds the EQS for that year, by not more than 5%, ADF&G shall reduce the permit holder's EQS for the following year by the amount of the overage. If a permit holder's harvest exceeds the permit holder's EQS by more than 5%, the proceeds from the sale of the overage in excess of 5% shall be surrendered to the state and the permit holder may be prosecuted under AS 16.05.723 [5 AAC 28.170 (j)]. If a permit holder’s harvest is less than the permit holder’s EQS established for the year, ADF&G shall increase the permit holder’s PQS only for the following year by the amount of the underage that does not exceed 5% of the EQS [5 AAC 28.170 (k)]. For the 2020 fishing season, 5% of the annual EQS is **739 round pounds.**

**Sablefish Live Market**

The holder of a CFEC or interim use permit for sablefish may possess live sablefish for delivery as live product except that, upon request of a local representative of the department or law enforcement, a permit holder must present sablefish for inspection and allow biological samples to be taken [5 AAC 28.170 (l)].

**Bycatch Allowances for the NSEI Sablefish Fishery**

Percentage indicates amount of bycatch that may be sold on a NSEI sablefish permit and is based on the round weight of sablefish and bycatch species or species group on board the vessel:

<b>Bycatch species</b>	<b>Allowable bycatch amount</b>
All rockfish, including thornyheads	15% in aggregate, of which up to 1% may be DSR
Lingcod	0%
Pacific Cod	20%
Spiny Dogfish	35%
Other groundfish	20%

CFEC permit holders fishing for groundfish or halibut in NSEI must retain, weigh, and report all rockfish taken [5 AAC 28.171 (f)]. This regulation does not apply to thornyhead rockfish. The demersal shelf rockfish (DSR) assemblage includes yelloweye, quillback, canary, copper, tiger, China, and rosethorn rockfish [5 AAC 39.975 (34)]. All rockfish retained in

excess of allowable bycatch limits shall be reported as bycatch overage on an ADF&G fish ticket. All proceeds from the sale of excess rockfish bycatch shall be surrendered to the state. Excess rockfish retained due to full retention requirements may be retained for personal use; however, the pounds must be documented as overage on the fish ticket.

A CFEC permit holder fishing for groundfish must retain all Pacific cod when the directed fishery for Pacific cod is open and up to the maximum retainable bycatch amount (20%) of Pacific cod when a directed fishery for Pacific cod is closed [5 AAC 28.070 (e)]. Pacific cod taken in excess of the bycatch limit in areas open to directed fishing for Pacific cod may be landed on a CFEC miscellaneous saltwater finfish permit designated for the gear that was used. Fishermen with halibut IFQ in regulatory area 2C and a CFEC halibut permit card must retain all halibut over 32 inches in length, up to the amount of their IFQ.

**Prohibitions**

The operator of a fishing vessel may not take sablefish in the NSEI area with sablefish from another area on board. Also, the operator of a vessel taking sablefish in the NSEI area shall unload those sablefish before taking sablefish in another area [5 AAC 28.170 (a) and (b)].

A vessel, or person on board a vessel, from which commercial, subsistence, or personal use longline fishing gear was used to take fish in the NSEI or SSEI Subdistricts during the 72-hour period immediately before the start of the commercial sablefish fishery in that subdistrict, or from which that gear will be used during the 24-hour period immediately after the closure of the commercial sablefish fishery in that subdistrict, may not participate in the taking of sablefish in that subdistrict during that open sablefish fishing period. A vessel, or a person on board a vessel, who has harvested and sold their PQS before the final day of the sablefish season in that subdistrict is exempt from the prohibition on fishing longline gear during the 24-hour period immediately following the closure of the sablefish fishery in that subdistrict. In addition, a vessel or a person on board a vessel, commercial fishing for sablefish in the NSEI Subdistrict may not operate subsistence or personal use longline gear for groundfish from that vessel until all sablefish harvested in the commercial fishery are offloaded from the vessel.

For additional information, visit: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.groundfish>.

Under Alaska’s Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, commercial fishing is an Essential Business 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 Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.

Advisory Announcement website: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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