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## Advisory Announcement

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### **Cook Inlet Area** **Lingcod and Rockfish Seasons Open** **Emergency Order # 2-GF-H-04-20**

Commercial seasons for the Cook Inlet Area directed lingcod and pelagic shelf rockfish (PSR) jig fisheries, and retention of lingcod as bycatch, **will open July 1**. Guideline harvest levels (GHLs) are 52,500 for lingcod and 150,000 pounds for PSR. Legal gear types for directed lingcod and PSR fisheries are mechanical jig and hand troll and only legal gear types may be aboard a vessel targeting these species.

To participate in the lingcod or PSR directed fisheries, fishermen must possess a valid gear-appropriate Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit card for the target species or species group and a Cook Inlet Area fishery-specific nonexclusive groundfish area registration. Groundfish registrations and logbook pages may be obtained at ADF&G offices in Homer, Soldotna, and Anchorage. Participants are encouraged to register by phone/fax by contacting the Homer ADF&G office at 907-235-8191 (fax: 907-235-2448).

There is a lingcod-specific CFEC permit for either hand-troll (I05B) or jig gear (I26B). For the directed PSR fishery, the appropriate card is a miscellaneous saltwater finfish for either gear type hand-troll (M05) or jig (M26), and either the Gulf of Alaska (G) or Statewide (B) permits may be used in the Cook Inlet Area. If fishing both mechanical jig and hand troll gear simultaneously, then CFEC permit cards for both gear types must be purchased and fish must be landed on separate fish tickets by gear type. For the directed PSR fishery, log sheets must be completed while fishing (see below).

To help meet biological sampling objectives, Emergency Order (EO) 2-GF-H-04-20 requires **lingcod be delivered with the head attached and with the vent and one-inch area forward of the vent intact** as evidence of gender. Retained lingcod must measure at least **35 inches** from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail.

In December 2019, the Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a 6-hour prior notice of landing (PNOL) requirement for the Cook Inlet Area lingcod fishery; this requirement was already in regulation for the directed PSR fishery. Participants must contact ADF&G after each directed lingcod or rockfish jig trip in the Cook Inlet Area by telephoning (907) 226-2121 at least 6 hours prior to landing and reporting the following: 1) vessel name/ADF&G number, 2) date and location of landing, 3) estimated time of arrival, 4) buyer or processor, and 5) estimated pounds of rockfish and/or lingcod onboard.

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Log sheets are required to be filled out during the directed rockfish fishery and must be onboard the vessel at all times while participating in the fishery. Log sheets must: 1) include the date, the specific location of harvest by latitude and longitude, the number of hooks fished, the average depth of each set fished, and the time gear is deployed and hauled, for each set; 2) include for the target species, and for each bycatch species, the number of fish retained and discarded, 3) be updated within 24 hours after midnight local time on the day of operation; 4) be made available to a local representative of the department upon request. Also, completed log sheets must be submitted within 7 days of landing, preferably accompanying corresponding fish tickets.

Only pelagic shelf rockfish (PSR) species may be targeted in the directed rockfish fishery: black, dark, dusky, widow, yellowtail, and deacon rockfish. All rockfish caught must be retained, including those considered bycatch species. Five-day trip limits for all rockfish combined are 4,000 pounds in the North Gulf District and 1,000 pounds in the Cook Inlet District.

ADF&G management authority for black and dark rockfishes and lingcod extends into federal waters of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). In addition to state requirements of a gear-appropriate permit card and area registration, fishermen targeting lingcod, black rockfish, or dark rockfish in the EEZ also are required to have a Federal Fisheries Permit (FFP). FFP application forms are available online at <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/ffpapp.pdf> and at National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) offices in Homer, Anchorage, or Seward.

Fishermen targeting groundfish or halibut in Cook Inlet Area state waters **must retain all rockfish** and comply with rockfish trip limits. Bycatch limits by species or species aggregate for Cook Inlet Area directed lingcod and rockfish fisheries are set by Emergency Order 2-GF-H-02-20.

Allowable rockfish bycatch levels in the Cook Inlet Area are 20% non-pelagic rockfish species to directed pelagic rockfish and 10% rockfish (all species) to other directed groundfish and halibut fisheries. Rockfish in excess of allowable bycatch levels must be reported as an overage on the fish ticket and any proceeds surrendered to the State of Alaska.

Fishermen targeting groundfish or halibut in Cook Inlet Area waters **may retain lingcod** as bycatch up to 20 percent of the round weight of directed harvest aboard the vessel beginning July 1. Lingcod retained as bycatch must also be delivered with the head on and vent area intact (EO # 2-GF-H-04-20). After the directed lingcod season is closed, lingcod may not be retained.

## COVID-19

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/>.

For additional information, contact ADF&G in Homer at (907) 235-8191.

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