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Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: June 30, 2020

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Cook Inlet Area Sablefish Season Opens

The Cook Inlet Area sablefish season will open July 15 with a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 77,000 lb.

The fishery GHL is adjusted each year in proportion to the annual percentage change in the Central Gulf of Alaska (CGOA) Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for sablefish set by the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) for federal waters of the CGOA. The ABC is based on biomass estimates generated from annual surveys conducted by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the Gulf of Alaska. The 2020 CGOA ABC increased by 25% from 2019, and therefore the GHL for the Cook Inlet Area was adjusted from 62,000 lb in 2019 to 77,000 lb in 2020.

A vessel may not land or have on board more than 3,000 lb of sablefish (round weight) in any two consecutive day period. All state-waters sablefish harvest must be landed or in port with intent to land within 24 hours of the closure (5 AAC 28.371).

There is a **6-hour prior notice of landing (PNOL)** for the Cook Inlet Area sablefish fishery (5 AAC 28.360 (d)). Vessel operators are required to contact ADF&G after each sablefish trip by telephoning (907) 226-2121 at least 6 hours prior to landing and reporting the following: 1) vessel name/ADF&G #, 2) date and location of landing, 3) estimated time of arrival, 4) buyer or processor, 5) estimated pounds of sablefish onboard, and 6) if sablefish is whole or dressed.

In addition, log sheets are required and must: 1) include the date, the specific location of harvest by latitude and longitude, the number of hooks or the number of pots 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; and 4) be made available to a local representative of the department upon request. Additionally, the completed log sheets must be submitted to the department no later than seven days following delivery and correspond with each ADF&G sablefish fish ticket.

In December 2019, the Board of Fisheries (BOF) adopted a regulation which amends 5 AAC 28.360 adding a new subsection:

(e) a vessel retaining sablefish in federal waters may not operate gear in state waters of the Cook Inlet Area during the same trip.

Vessels participating in the Cook Inlet Area sablefish fishery must remain inside state waters of the Cook Inlet Area for the entire trip when retaining sablefish from state waters during that trip. Sablefish IFQ-holders who want to participate in this fishery should contact NMFS enforcement in Kodiak (907-486-3298), Homer (907-235-2337), or Seward (907-224-5348) prior to fishing.

Groundfish pots may be longlined in the sablefish fishery; at least one marked buoy must be attached to each end of the longline and no more than 15 groundfish pots may be attached to the same line (5 AAC 28.330 (c)).

Any vessel retaining sablefish during the Cook Inlet Area sablefish season must possess a Cook Inlet Area sablefish registration. In order to register for the Cook Inlet Area sablefish fishery, fishermen must present a Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) sablefish (statewide) permit card for the appropriate gear type. A vessel may not be registered for more than one groundfish registration area at a time. In order to change registration areas, a vessel owner or agent must notify ADF&G in Homer. Registrations and log sheets may be obtained from ADF&G offices in Homer, Cordova, 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).

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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