



New Year's Wish for Fisheries: A Safe and Productive Year

The Aleutians East Borough Natural Resources Department held the annual end-of-the-year meeting with fishery management and enforcement agencies on December 16th. The meeting is in preparation for the upcoming 2021 winter groundfish fisheries. Information from the meeting summarized below.

Federal Fisheries

2021 Western Gulf of Alaska A season Pacific Cod total allowable catch (TACs) [Federal Register announcement](#)

- A season jig – 117 metric tons (mt)
- HAL CV – 38 mt (closed to directed fishing)
- HAL CP – 588 mt
- Trawl CV – 1,701 mt (closed to directed fishing without a voluntary catch share)
- Trawl CP – 49 mt (closed to directed fishing)
- Pot – 1,068 mt
- Crab side-boarded pot – 355 mt

2021 A season 610 pollock – 799 mt in A season - closed to directed fishing without a voluntary catch share. (The full 799 mt can roll into the B season if not fished during the A season.) GOA pollock fisheries has gone from four seasons down to just two. (A season Jan 20 – June 10, B season Sept 1 – Nov 1)

BSAI Pacific Cod A Season TACs [Federal Register announcement](#)

- CV trawl – 18,281 mt
- Jig – 939 mt (possible reallocation to under 60)
- Under 60 pot/HAL – 2,222 (with possible 900 mt reallocation from jig)
- Over 60 pot – 4,761 mt

Federal fishery permits expire at the end of the year, on a 3-year cycle, all FFP holders with upcoming expirations should have received a letter explaining the process. FFPs need to be renewed online.

A [new regulation](#) effective **March 23rd 2020** requires full retention of rockfish in all federal groundfish fisheries in the BSAI and GOA using pot, hook & line or jig gear. A

certain amount is eligible for commerce, or for donation or personal use. State-managed fisheries are not included in this regulation.

One regulation clarification: pot gear fishing of sablefish or halibut requires use of NMFS logbook, including vessels less than 60 ft LOA.

A rule update: vessels that possess an FFP must have a matching LLP endorsement to participate in the parallel fishery in the BSAI beginning January 4th 2021, similar to the GOA parallel fishery rules.

The BSAI cod CV trawl and the over 60 ft pot TACs are expected to be fully harvested within a week.

State Groundfish Fisheries

The 2021 South Peninsula guideline harvest level (GHL) for pot gear is 4,489,514 pounds, jig gear 792,267 pounds. The South Alaska Peninsula Area state-waters Pacific cod pot gear season will open at noon March 7, 2021 or seven days after closure of the Western Gulf of Alaska (WGOA) federal/parallel Pacific cod pot gear sector A season, whichever is later. The season opening date for pot gear may be delayed due to weather. The jig gear season will open 48 hours after the WGOA federal/parallel jig gear sector A season closes. Vessels participating in the South Alaska Peninsula Area state-waters Pacific cod season may not exceed 58 feet, 60 pot limit. [2021 State-Waters South Peninsula Chignik And Kodiak GHLs announcement.](#)

The 2021 Dutch Harbor Subdistrict (DHS) state-waters Pacific cod season GHL for pot gear is 27,292,000 pounds and 100,000 pounds for jig gear. The DHS season for pot gear will open by advisory announcement 7 days after closure of the initial federal Pacific cod season for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands hook-and-line and pot catcher vessel less than 60 feet sector. The DHS state-waters Pacific cod season for jig gear will open at midnight May 1, 2021. Vessels 58 feet or less using pot gear or mechanical jigging machines may participate in DHS state-waters Pacific cod fishery. Gear is limited to 60 groundfish pots or 5 mechanical jigging machines. [2021 Dutch Harbor Subdistrict State-waters Pcod GHL announcement.](#)

The Aleutian Islands Subdistrict (AIS) state-waters Pacific cod fishery 2021 GHL is 15,000,000 pounds. The daily harvest limit of Pacific cod in the AIS state-waters Pacific cod season is 150,000 pounds round fish weight per vessel, with a maximum of 150,000 pounds of unprocessed Pacific cod on board a vessel at any time. The AIS state-waters Pacific cod season opens January 1 in the Adak Section to vessels 60 feet or less, except for vessels operating longline gear which may be no more than 58 feet OAL. All state waters of the AIS will open to vessels 125 feet or less using pot gear and vessels 100 feet or less OAL using trawl gear noon March 15th. The AIS state-waters Pacific cod season will close when the GHL is reached. [2021 Aleutian Island Subdistrict State-waters Pcod GHL announcement.](#)

The South Alaska Peninsula Area–Eastern District black rockfish fisheries will open at 12:01 a.m. January 1, 2021.; GHL 75,000 pounds. State rockfish GHLs and bycatch limits [here.](#)

Buoy tag fees are being waived this year, but current buoy tags are required for all Pacific cod pots. Daily reporting of harvests is critical for able management of the fishery. Please stay in communication with ADFG managers during the fishing season.

The South Peninsula, DHS and AIS state-waters Pacific cod fisheries are exclusive vessel registration areas. A vessel may not be registered for more than one exclusive registration area during a calendar year.

CFEC permits for state fisheries expire at end of the year and can be renewed online.

This is a Board of Fish year for Aleutians East fisheries.

- Statewide Shellfish (2020/2021 cycle) March 5-10
- Board of Fish Proposals due April 9th
- Agenda Change Requests due August 13
- Work Session October 20-21
- Alaska Peninsula, BSAI, Chignik PCod October 22-23
- Alaska Peninsula, Chignik Salmon February 18-23, 2022

Observer Program

ODDS Selection Rates for 2021

- Longline Gear 23.35%
- Pot Gear 29.92%
- Trawl Gear 19.29%
- EM Longline and EM Pot Gear 30%

There has been some confusion regarding logging certain gear types in ODDS. If during the trip you will be using pot gear and that pot gear is strung together, this is still pot gear - not hook and line gear.

- Longline or Hook & Line Gear - Declare this gear type if using hooks of any kind
- Pot Gear - Declare this gear type if using pots of any kind (even if strung together)

Unused trips from 2020 selected as observed, will carry over to 2021.

Ports Deploying From in 2021 - As outlined in the Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) for 2021, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, NMFS will only be deploying observers from certain ports in Alaska:

- Akutan
- Dutch Harbor/Unalaska
- False Pass
- Homer
- Juneau
- Ketchikan
- King Cove
- Kodiak
- Nome
- Petersburg

- Sand Point
- Seward
- Sitka
- Yakutat

In the event a logged trip is selected for observer coverage from a port not listed, you can ask the observer provider for a release. The list may be modified throughout the year and the modification to the list will be provided through a public notice. The AIS call center (855) 747-6377 has an alternate number (206) 673-3338.

EM trawl exempted fishery permit (EFP)

There will be a preseason meeting for all WGOA EM trawl EFP participants at 2PM on January 15, 2021. There are several EFP changes for 2021. Retention of all species is to be maximized, with as few discards and net bleeds as possible. Discards are allowed of all sharks except spiny dogfish, but must be recorded in the log, including length. Jellyfish may be discarded. NO SALMON are to be discarded in this program to assess salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery. The tendering aspect of the WGOA fishery is unique in the EFP. The EFP has been extended through December 31st, 2022.

Other Items of Interest

- Specifics of the design for the 2021 IPHC Fishery-Independent Setline Survey were discussed at the Fishermen's meeting. The Annual IPHC meeting will be held January 25-29th, 2021. Go to www.iphc.int for more info.
- Fishermen are advised to 'fire up' VMS equipment 6-12 hours in advance of fishing to make sure everything is working correctly.
- USCG vessel safety teams are expected to be in the communities of King Cove, Sand Point, Port Moller and Chignik in late May to early June 2021.
- There was some discussion at the end of the meeting about the NPFMC action at the December meeting on the Cook Inlet Salmon FMP, and possible future implications for the 'traditional net fishing area' in the South Peninsula region. Council action on the Salmon FMP is not expected in the near future

Participants in the December 16th AEB fishermen's meeting:

- Brent Pristas, NFMS OLE
- Krista Milani, NMFS Dutch Harbor
- Nat Nichols, ADFG Kodiak
- Miranda Westphal, ADFG Unalaska
- Asia Beder, ADFG Unalaska
- Glenn Campbell, NMFS Observer Program
- Luke Szymanski, AIS Observers
- Jana Lage, AIS Observers
- Josh Keaton, NMFS Sustainable Fisheries
- Jared Fuller, Saltwater, Inc
- Lara Erikson, IPHC

- Ian Stewart, IPHC
- Dave Schaffer, USCG Vessel Safety Program
- Charlotte Levy, AEB
- Mike Stanley, CAMF
- Forrest Bowers, ADFG

This summary of the December 16th 2020 AEB Fishermen's meeting by AEB Natural Resources Director Ernie Weiss.

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