

AGENDA B-2
April 1998



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

REPORT TO THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

June 10, 1998

The State of Alaska is delegated the authority to manage fisheries in federal waters for crab, scallops, troll salmon, and demersal shelf rockfish in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska. Fisheries for lingcod and state waters Pacific Cod are managed by the state. This report summarizes fishery management of these species for the period September 16, to December 1, 1997.

BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS KING AND TANNER CRAB FISHERIES

This is the first year for the harvest of the Bering Sea snow crab Community Development Quota. A total of 20 vessels registered and made landings in the fishery. Preliminary total harvest is estimated to be 8.23 million pounds.

STATEWIDE SCALLOP FISHERY

Weathervane scallop fisheries in Yakutat, Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Adak, Dutch Harbor, Bering Sea and Adak Area open July 1 while the Kamishak District of Cook Inlet opens August 15.

The maximum harvest guidelines in the Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, and Bering Sea Areas were reduced from last season's levels to accommodate proposed optimum yield standards in Amendment 6 of the NPFMC Scallop Fishery Management Plan. The guideline harvest ranges for Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound are estimated using data from survey that is currently underway. Guideline harvest ranges and crab bycatch limits are reported on the attached news release.

SALMON TROLL FISHERY

The 1997/1998 winter troll fishery opened on October 11 and closed April 14. A total of 279 permits fished the season with a total catch of 32,000 king salmon. Approximately 7% of the harvest was Alaska hatchery fish. The spring troll fishery season is April 15 through June 30. Through June 1, a preliminary harvest estimate of 1,000 king salmon has been taken by 65 permits. The spring troll fishery primarily targets hatchery fish.

SE ALASKA DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH AND LINGCOD FISHERIES

Harvest of demersal shelf rockfish fishery is limited to bycatch only as the directed fishery is closed. Currently, black rockfish is targeted by three vessels but harvest is limited due to weather.

The directed fishery for lingcod reopened in most waters of the Southeast District May 16. The waters of the Central Southeast Outside Section (the pinnacle area) and waters of Sitka Sound will remain closed to lingcod fishing. The directed lingcod quotas (round pounds) are 160,000 lbs. for East Yakutat, 114,000 lbs. for Central Southeast Outside, and 79,700 lbs. for Northern Southeast Outside. The remaining quotas (round pounds) for all gear types combined are 343,500 lbs. for Southern Southeast Outside, 96,750 lbs. for Northern Southeast Inside, and 98,950 lbs. for Southern Southeast Inside. The directed fishery for lingcod in the waters surrounding the Fairweather Grounds was closed May 24 to distribute effort throughout the East Yakutat management area. The fishery remains open along the beach and in East Yakutat.

STATE WATERS PACIFIC COD FISHERY

The Alaska board of Fisheries adopted a Pacific cod management plan for State water fishery utilizing pot gear and jig gear. The Pacific cod fishery in Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, and Kodiak opened at noon on March 17, seven days after the federal closure of the Central Gulf of Alaska. The Chignik area opened by regulation on April 1. The South Alaska Peninsula area opened on March 10, seven days after the closure of the Western Gulf of Alaska. Cook Inlet pot gear closed by regulation on April 7 and will re-open on June 15. Stormy weather throughout the Gulf in late March and early April has definitely slowed the progress of the fishery. The following catch numbers are through April 16, 1998.

Prince William Sound Pacific Cod

The fishery for Pacific Cod in Prince William Sound opened March 17, one week after the federal waters closure with a guideline harvest level of 860,000. The harvest through May 27 is 200,000 pounds. The harvest by gear type remains confidential.

Cook Inlet Pacific Cod

The Cook Inlet Pacific Cod fishery opened March 17 with a guideline harvest of 2,435,000 pounds. The pot fishery harvested 232,000 pounds prior to closure April 7 and will reopen June 15. The jig fishery has harvested 150,000 pounds to date.

Kodiak Pacific Cod

The Kodiak Area cod guideline is 8.1 million pounds split equally between pot and jig gear. The fishery opened March 17 and was closed to pot fishing April 27 with a harvest of 3.9 million pounds. The jig fishery remains open with the harvest through May 31 estimated at 1.7 million pounds.

Chignik Pacific Cod

The guideline harvest level is 5.7 million pounds for Chignik. The fishery was open April 1 through April 23 and harvest tallied 5.45 million pounds. The fishery was reopened to jig fishing

May 20 to allow harvest of the remaining 250,000 pounds of the GHL. To date 36,000 pounds have been landed.

South Alaska Peninsula Cod

The South Peninsula fishery opened March 10 with a guideline harvest level of 9.0 million pounds. The pot fishery closed April 16 with a harvest of 8.2 million pounds and jig fishery remains open with harvest to date at 300,000 pounds.

OTHER GROUND FISH

The Clarence Strait longline sablefish fishery will be open June 1 through July 15. The annual stock assessment survey conducted by the Department in May indicated a significant decline in catch per unit effort (CPUE) measured as fish/hook and dressed lbs./hook this year compared to the 1997 survey. As a result, the quota is set at 632,000 round pounds (286.6 mt), a 20% reduction from the 1997 quota. Because the total number of permits has declined to 31 (27 longline and 4 pot), the per-permit share will be 20,400 round pounds a 12% reduction from 1997.

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME



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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 1, 1998

ATTENTION ALASKA SCALLOP FISHERMEN

Weather-vane scallop fisheries in the Yakutat, Prince William Sound, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Bering Sea and Adak Areas will open at 12:00 noon, July 1, 1998. Vessels may be registered for only one area at a time and must carry an onboard observer while fishing.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has released guideline harvest ranges for the 1998/99 scallop season, and the associated king and Tanner crab bycatch limits. Maximum harvest guidelines in the Kodiak, Dutch Harbor and Bering Sea Areas were reduced from last season's levels. This action was necessary to accommodate new optimum yield standards in Amendment 6 of the NPFMC Fishery Management Plan. The actual 1998 harvest cap in Prince William Sound will be determined from an upcoming assessment survey. A mid June news release will provide management details for this fishery. The guideline harvest ranges and bycatch limits by area are as follows:

| <u>Registration Area</u> | <u>Guideline Harvest Range</u> (pounds of shucked meats) | <u>Bycatch Limits</u> | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------|
| | | <u>Tanner Crab</u> | <u>King Crab</u> |
| Yakutat | 0 to 250,000 | - | - |
| District 16 | 0 to 35,000 | - | - |
| Prince William Sound | To Be Announced | 500 | - |
| Kodiak | 0 to 300,000 | | |
| Shelikof | - | 33,500 | 196 |
| Northeast | - | 46,500 | 21 |
| Alaska Peninsula | 0 to 200,000 | 48,500 | 900 |
| Dutch Harbor | 0 to 110,000 | 10,700 | 10 |
| Bering Sea | 0 to 400,000 | 215,000 | <i>C. bairdi</i> 500 |
| | | 130,000 | <i>C. opilio</i> |
| Adak | 0 to 75,000 | 10,000 | 50 |

-Continued-

News Release

June 1 1998

Fishermen should be aware that the bycatch limits are the maximum allowed. If, at any time the bycatch rate becomes excessively high the department may close those affected areas prior to achieving the limits. Registrations require vessel operators and crew members to notify observers of every king crab encountered. When possible the department will inform the fleet as to the overall crab bycatch rate by area as the season progresses. For additional information please contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Kodiak at (907) 486-1840.

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