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Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: October 26, 2020

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Cook Inlet Area Pacific Cod Fishery State-Waters Season Opens to Pot Gear Gear Limits and Exclusivity Removed Emergency Order #2-GF-H-05-20

The Cook Inlet Area Pacific cod state-waters season will open to pot gear on October 31. The state-waters season remains open to vessels using jig gear. The Cook Inlet Area will be designated a nonexclusive registration area for Pacific cod and limits on the number of groundfish pots and mechanical jigging machines that may be operated from participating vessels will be removed effective October 31; actions permitted through the Cook Inlet Pacific Cod Management Plan. The 2020 GHF for the Cook Inlet Area Pacific cod state-waters season is 454,513 lb with 42,414 lb remaining and available to vessels fishing with either pot or jig gear effective October 31.

The Cook Inlet Pacific Cod Management Plan provides for remaining guideline harvest level (GHL) to be harvested by all legal gear types, gear limits to be removed, and for the Cook Inlet Area to be designated as a nonexclusive registration area for Pacific cod after October 30 if ADF&G determines that the GHL will not be reached by December 31 (5 AAC 28.367 (c)(3) and (g)). Area registration for the Pacific cod state-waters season is required, however, if a vessel was already registered for the 2020 exclusive season, registering again is not required and pot tags are no longer required. Vessel registrations may be obtained by contacting the Homer office.

Groundfish pot storage provisions (5 AAC 28.332) allow groundfish pot gear to be stored in state waters for up to five days following the closure of a groundfish season to pot gear provided all bait and bait containers are removed and all doors are secured open at the time of closure. After the five-day period has elapsed, no groundfish pot storage is permitted in state waters.

Stellar Sea Lion Rookery closures: The department has closed fishing in waters adjacent to two sea lion rookeries in the Cook Inlet Area. Sugarloaf Island (in the Barren Islands) and Outer (Pye) Island are closed to directed Pacific cod fishing with pot gear within 10 nautical miles of the specified locations and closed to vessel transit within three nautical miles. Contact ADF&G in Homer, NMFS in Kodiak (ph: 481-1780), or consult the NMFS website at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/rr/tables/tab15.pdf> for exact locations of these closure areas.

Pot fishing closure areas: Some areas are closed by regulation 5 AAC 28.350 to fishing with groundfish pot gear (Figure 1). Check the regulation book or contact Homer ADF&G prior to fishing.

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.

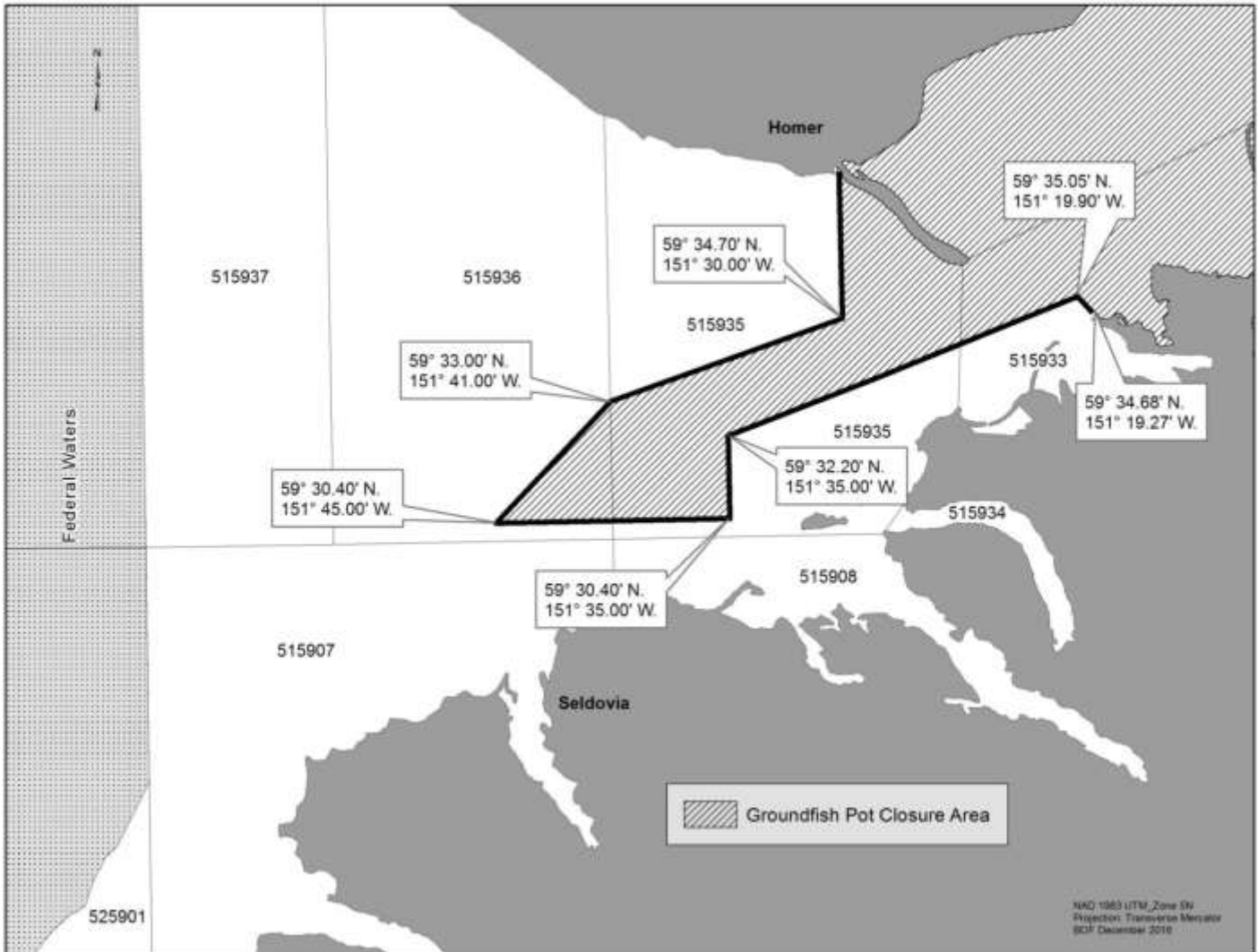


Figure 1. Kachemak Bay groundfish pot closure area with coordinates.

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