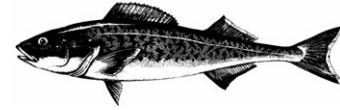

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Sitka Area Office
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Time: 11:45 a.m.

2009 NSEI (Chatham Strait) SABLEFISH QUOTA ANNOUNCEMENT

Sitka... The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today that the 2009 sablefish annual harvest objective (AHO) for the Northern Southeast Inside (NSEI) sablefish fishery will be 1,071,000 round pounds. This is a 29% drop from the 2008 AHO (1,508,000). There are currently 88 permits for this fishery, eight less than in 2008; therefore the individual quota share (EQS) will be 12,170 round pounds (22% less than last year's EQS of 15,710 round pounds). The fishery opens by regulation at 8:00 am on August 15, 2009 and will close at 12:00 noon on November 15, 2009. Permit holders should have received a certified letter detailing any legal overage or underage (up to 5% of the 2008 EQS) incurred during 2008. Their 2009 Personal Quota Share (PQS) will be adjusted accordingly. Permit holders who did not receive that certified letter should contact Kamala Carroll directly (747-6688).

The abundance of sablefish in Chatham Strait was estimated using mark-recapture methods and the Petersen estimator. From this estimate a forecast of biomass was developed by decrementing for natural mortality, adding for recruitment, and converting to biomass. A harvest rate is then applied to the forecasted biomass to obtain the allowable biological catch (ABC). For 2009 a harvest rate of $F_{45\%}$ (0.104) was applied to the point estimate of the 2009 forecasted biomass. For comparison, in 2007 and 2008 an $F_{40\%}$ (0.116) harvest rate was applied to the lower 90% confidence limit of the forecasted biomass to obtain the ABC. For 2009 the ABC was then decremented to account for updated estimates of bycatch in the halibut fishery and 3% of the ABC was deducted to account for sablefish caught in sport, subsistence and personal use fisheries and for deadloss in non halibut fisheries. These decrements are made every year. For 2009 an additional decrement was made to account for sablefish harvested in the NSEI sablefish longline survey. The decrease in the AHO for 2009 is a result of two things: a decrease in biomass and the use of a more conservative harvest rate. Two things mitigate the resultant decrease to the EQS; the application of the harvest rate to the less conservative biomass estimate (the point estimate rather than the lower 90% confidence limit) and the reduction in permits to the fishery.

General Considerations

The department continues to evaluate the best way to account for harvest in subsistence and personal use fisheries and deadloss of sablefish in non halibut fisheries. Sport catches of sablefish will be accounted for on charter logbooks and in the creel and call out surveys for 2009 and could better inform the department about sport harvest for the future. The Department will again in 2010 attempt to integrate the NSEI survey with fishermen harvest of their PQS thereby reducing the amount of fish decremented for harvest in the longline survey.

Again this year the Department has taken into consideration that there has been no definitive evidence of strong recruitment into Chatham Strait, that there has been a reduction in the TAC for the federal fishery, and that Canadian sablefish fishermen are seeing declines in abundance as well.

The department continues to work toward the publication of two reports detailing sablefish stock assessment activities in NSEI. It is anticipated that these reports will be available no sooner than November 2009.

Registration and Logbook Requirements

Fishermen are reminded that they must register prior to fishing and they are required to keep a logbook during the fishery. Registration forms and logbooks are available at Fish and Game offices in Southeast Alaska. Completed logbook pages for each trip must be attached to the ADF&G copy of the fish ticket at the time of delivery. Confidential ADF&G envelopes for logbook pages may be requested when registering.

When registering for the fishery, fishermen will be given a PQS tracking form declaring their 2009 personal quota share. This form is to be used to record the total round landed weight of each delivery. Each permit holder, upon request, must provide the buyer with the total round weight of NSEI sablefish the permit has landed to date. A copy of the completed PQS tracking form must be returned to the department along with the final fish ticket of the season for that permit.

Logbooks for longline gear must include, **by set**, the time and date gear is set and retrieved, the specific location of harvest by latitude and longitude for the start and ending positions, hook spacing, the amount of gear (number of skates and hooks) used, the depth of each set, the estimated weight of sablefish (both retained and discarded at sea), and an estimated weight of the bycatch by species. Indicate for each set if the target was sablefish or halibut and if there was any lost gear.

Tags

Fishermen are requested to watch for tagged sablefish. Please record the tag number(s) and attach tag(s) directly to the logbook in the comments section of the corresponding set. All ADF&G tags returned will receive a reward. Tag rewards this year include a hat and entry into an annual drawing for one \$1000, two \$500, and three \$250 cash rewards. To qualify for entry in the annual drawing, the department requires the following information: the tag, set location (latitude and longitude), the date of capture, and the name and address of the person recovering the tag. Additional useful information includes the length of the fish (fork length) and the depth where the fish was caught.

A permit holder must retain all visibly injured or dead sablefish. Sablefish that are not visibly injured or dead may be released unharmed, and the permit holder must record in the logbook, by set, the number of live sablefish released. Please record if you are releasing the fish because they are small or due to reaching your PQS.

Fish Ticket Requirements

Landed weights must be recorded on the fish ticket at the time of delivery and prior to continued fishing. This includes deliveries made to tenders. A permit holder's harvest will be based on the weight as delivered. If a fisherman delivers fish in the round, the round weight must be recorded on the fish ticket. If a fisherman delivers dressed fish, the fish ticket must include the total landed dressed weight, as well as a converted round weight using the standard 0.63 conversion rate. A two percent allowance for ice and slime is permitted. Each permit holder must have onboard copies of all NSEI sablefish fish tickets from the current season as well as their updated PQS tracking form. A copy of the completed PQS tracking form must be submitted to the department with the final fish ticket of the season.

Out of State Deliveries

Fishermen are reminded that a completed fish ticket must be submitted to the department before fish are transported out of state. This requires that a valid Alaska processor code be assigned to the ticket. If fishermen are not already licensed as catcher/exporters, they must either work in conjunction with a licensed Alaskan processor or they must obtain an Alaskan Fisheries Business License and pre-pay the estimated raw fish tax. For further information, contact Shellene Hutter at (907) 465-6131.

Sablefish Possession and Landing Requirements

In the Northern Southeast Inside Subdistrict (NSEI), the holder of a CFEC permit or interim use permit for sablefish may not retain more sablefish from the directed fishery than the annual amount of sablefish EQS specified by the department [5 AAC 28.170 (f)]. However if a permit holder's harvest exceeds the permit holder's EQS for that year, by not more than five percent, the department shall reduce the permit holder's EQS for the following year by the amount of the overage. If a permit holder's harvest exceeds the permit holder's equal quota share by more than five percent, the proceeds from the sale of the overage in excess of five percent shall be surrendered to the state and the permit holder may be prosecuted under AS 16.05.723. **Transfer of fish between permits is no longer allowed.**

For the 2009 fishery, five percent of the annual EQS is 609 round pounds. If a permit holder's harvest is less than the permit holder's EQS established for the year, the department shall increase the permit holder's EQS only for the following year by the amount of the underage that does not exceed five percent of the EQS [5 AAC 28.170 (k)].

Bycatch

The allowable bycatch that can be legally landed on the NSEI sablefish permit card is as follows:

Bycatch Species	NSEI Sablefish Longline Fishery
Demersal Shelf Rockfish (DSR)	1%
Shortraker and Rougheye rockfish	7% in aggregate
Other rockfish & thornyheads	15% in aggregate
Lingcod	0%
Pacific Cod	20%
Spiny dogfish	35%
Other groundfish	20%

Bycatch limits are based on the round weight of the bycatch species to the round weight of the target species, (i.e. sablefish).

Full retention of all rockfish is required excluding thornyheads.

Pacific cod in excess of bycatch limits may be landed on a miscellaneous finfish (M) card except in statistical areas 355801 and 355802 (Icy Strait and Port Frederick) where directed fishing for Pacific cod has closed for 2009. Fishermen with halibut IFQs remaining in regulatory area 2C and a state halibut permit card may retain all halibut, greater than 32 inches in length, up to their IFQ.

Prohibitions

A vessel or a person onboard a vessel from which longline gear was used to take fish in the NSEI area during the 72-hour period immediately before, or from which that gear will be used during the 24-hour period immediately after, an open sablefish fishing period, may not participate in the taking of sablefish in NSEI during that open fishing period [5AAC 28.180(a)]. The operator of a fishing vessel may not take sablefish in the NSEI area with sablefish from another area on board. Also, the operator of a vessel taking sablefish in the NSEI area shall unload before taking sablefish in another area (5AAC 28.170).

Harvest of Bait

The holder of a valid CFEC interim use or limited entry permit may take groundfish in the waters of Alaska in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska Area for use as bait in the commercial fishery for which the permit is held as follows: Except for sablefish, lingcod, yelloweye, shortraker, rougheye, and thornyheads, groundfish may be taken at any time; **sablefish may not be taken for bait or used for bait**. To view the entire bait regulation see 5 AAC 28.190 in the Groundfish Fishing Regulation book.

Additional information on Southeast Regional Groundfish Fisheries can be found on our web site at: <http://www.cf.adfg.state.ak.us/region1/finfish/grndfish/grndhom1.php>

News releases web site: <http://documents.cfl.adfg.state.ak.us/TopicContents.po>.

<i>Office</i>	<i>Ketchikan</i>	<i>Petersburg</i>	<i>Wrangell</i>	<i>Sitka</i>	<i>Juneau</i>	<i>Haines</i>	<i>Hoonah</i>	<i>Yakutat</i>
<i>ADFG</i>	225-5195	772-3801	874-3822	747-6688	465-4250	766-2830		784-3255
<i>AWT</i>	225-5111	772-3983		747-3254	465-4000		945-3620	
<i>Groundfish Hotline</i>				747-4882				