

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

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DATE: June 8, 2022
FILE NO.: June 8, 2022
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SUBJECT 2021/22 SEAK Sea
Cucumber Fishery

The commercial harvest of sea cucumbers in Southeast Alaska began on October 4, 2021, with an overall guideline harvest level (GHL) of 1,872,800 pounds of sea cucumbers. The total Southeast Alaska harvest of 1,868,503 pounds was 0.7% under the GHL. Participation throughout the season varied, with maximum participation of 157 divers during the third opening, and a minimum of 17 divers participating during the last opening there was harvest for the season. Throughout the season 167 different divers made 1,537 landings with 136 vessels registered to fish for miscellaneous shellfish in Southeast Alaska.

In the Ketchikan management area, eight harvest areas were open for a combined GHL of 1,232,100 pounds. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 1,223,513 pounds harvested during 13 openings. The final harvest was 0.7% under the total GHL. The seasonal average was 42 divers harvesting an average of 1,454 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers per week. Half of the GHL was harvested in the initial four openings when an average of 66 divers participated and harvested an average of 1,710 pounds per week. There was no harvest during statistical week 52 through 3 which was driven by processor availability. The last opening for the season occurred on January 31 and February 1, Hetta Inlet, Nutkwa Inlet, and Keete Inlet (Subdistricts 103-23 and 25) and Trocadero Bay (Subdistrict 103-60) opened and both areas received no effort.

In the Petersburg management area, Snow Pass (106-30) was the only area open with a GHL of 176,200 pounds. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 189,137 pounds harvested over 5 openings. The season harvest was 7% over the GHL. Average effort level was 22 divers per week with an average weekly harvest of 1,747 pounds per diver. Effort and harvest were greatest during the last opening for Snow Pass (106-30) on November 1 and 2, when 33 divers harvested 59,130 pounds.

In the Juneau management area, the GHL was 132,900 pounds located in two harvest areas. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 132,026 pounds, harvested in 6 openings. The Juneau management area had a steady rate of harvest and participation throughout the season with 14 to 15 divers harvesting an average of 22,004 pounds per week. An average of 15 divers per week harvested an average of 1,519 pounds per diver. The last opening was on November 8 and 9 and had the highest weekly harvest with 23,679 pounds. The total harvest was 0.7% under the GHL.

In the Sitka management area, the GHL was 331,600 pounds located in two harvest areas. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 323,827 pounds, harvested in 7 openings. An average of 28 divers harvested per week with an average weekly harvest of 1,650 pounds per diver. Weekly participation ranged from 20 to 36 divers. The Sitka management area harvest was 2% under the combined GHL.

The first three weeks of the season had the highest weekly harvest for the region, with 278,270 pounds taken in SW 41. After the sixth week, effort throughout Southeast began to drop substantially as many of the areas with larger GHGs closed. Effort dropped from 104 divers to 46 divers between the seventh and eighth openings. Fishery participation remained low with 17 to 36 divers harvesting during the eighth through the eighteenth opening at the end of January. There was no closure during the holiday season, and during statistical week 52 through 3 there was no harvest. The final opening was on January 31 and February 1, and no harvest was reported. A total of 13,015 pounds of sea cucumber GHG was unharvested during the 2021/22 season.

There were three processors buying product in the Ketchikan area and eight throughout Southeast Alaska. Ex-vessel value for Southeast Alaska was approximately \$11.2 million based on raw fish ticket data. The ex-vessel value for the Ketchikan area was \$6.9 million. Values were based on an average price of \$6.00 per pound. Prices varied by processor, whether the product was sold dockside or to a tender, and whether the product was poked or fully cut. Prices remained high throughout the entire season. One processor has also indicated that retrospective checks may be written post season, and the amount is to be determined.

Port sampling for sea cucumbers was discontinued beginning in the 2006/07 season. GHGs were determined from sampling cucumbers during the preseason biomass survey.

Table 1. Registration Area A (Southeast Alaska) commercial sea cucumber harvest, effort, and value, 1986/87 through 2021/22 seasons.

Season ^a	Guideline Harvest Level (lb) ^c	Total Harvest (lb)	Average Price / lb ^b	Estimated Exvessel Value ^b	Number of Divers	Number of Landings	Average lb / Diver	Average Earnings / Diver ^b
Data prior to 1986/1987 season is confidential.								
1986/87	34,043	34,043	\$0.21	\$7,149	7	44	4,863	\$1,021
1987/88	65,056	65,056	\$0.21	\$13,662	11	143	5,914	\$1,242
1988/89	801,405	801,405	\$0.21	\$169,096	57	922	14,060	\$2,967
1989/90	2,318,305	2,318,305	\$0.42	\$969,142	205	2,263	11,309	\$4,728
1990/91 ^d	704,491	804,184	\$0.59	\$472,386	143	890	5,624	\$3,303
1991/92	839,160	869,988	\$0.80	\$697,970	187	704	4,652	\$3,732
1992/93	1,100,440	1,249,621	\$0.79	\$988,628	240	1,003	5,207	\$4,119
1993/94	799,235	964,343	\$1.03	\$995,783	320	949	3,014	\$3,112
1994/95	1,351,000	1,322,219	\$1.79	\$2,361,541	261	1,379	5,066	\$9,048
1995/96	1,157,500	1,332,095	\$1.39	\$1,846,556	424	1,582	3,142	\$4,355
1996/97	939,300	909,789	\$1.29	\$1,169,612	294	1,234	3,095	\$3,978
1997/98	892,410	894,739	\$1.63	\$1,458,425	226	976	3,959	\$6,453
1998/99	1,026,345	1,055,572	\$1.55	\$1,636,137	219	971	4,820	\$7,471
1999/00	1,580,000	1,569,626	\$1.95	\$3,060,771	200	1,378	7,848	\$15,304
2000/01	1,122,500	1,158,385	\$2.23	\$2,583,199	220	913	5,265	\$11,742
2001/02	1,425,200	1,438,451	\$1.75	\$2,517,289	235	1,201	6,121	\$10,712
2002/03	1,576,700	1,639,440	\$1.26	\$2,042,882	201	1,313	8,156	\$10,164
2003/04	1,637,700	1,698,650	\$1.42	\$2,472,456	195	1,296	8,711	\$12,679
2004/05	1,381,200	1,374,532	\$2.12	\$2,769,116	194	1,139	7,085	\$14,274
2005/06	1,475,800	1,437,731	\$2.00	\$2,875,462	198	1,418	14,523	\$14,523
2006/07	1,598,700	1,597,457	\$1.97	\$3,146,990	175	1,237	17,983	\$17,983
2007/08	1,384,300	1,449,301	\$2.43	\$3,774,428	181	1,290	7,923	\$21,086
2008/09	1,122,100	1,102,637	\$2.30	\$2,536,065	176	1,072	6,301	\$13,078
2009/10	1,574,700	1,610,826	\$2.34	\$3,769,333	169	1,240	9,532	\$22,304
2010/11	1,262,800	1,274,541	\$2.52	\$3,211,843	180	1,109	7,081	\$17,841
2011/12	999,000	1,023,834	\$5.06	\$5,180,600	189	1,043	5,417	\$27,411
2012/13	1,476,000	1,512,895	\$4.05	\$6,127,225	199	1,369	7,602	\$30,790
2013/14	1,472,600	1,556,983	\$3.97	\$6,181,223	198	1,396	7,864	\$31,218
2014/15	1,084,800	1,073,554	\$4.00	\$4,294,216	171	1,022	6,278	\$25,083
2015/16	1,439,900	1,525,387	\$3.50	\$5,338,855	175	1,278	8,716	\$30,508
2016/17	1,243,200	1,319,798	\$3.93	\$5,279,192	169	1,206	7,809	\$31,238
2017/18	1,233,900	1,294,637	\$5.25	\$6,796,844	175	1,211	7,398	\$38,839
2018/19	1,757,600	1,768,104	\$5.37	\$9,510,249	184	1,606	9,625	\$51,686
2019/20	1,909,000	1,994,991	\$5.16	\$10,294,153	184	1,788	10,842	\$55,946
2020/21	1,745,300	1,721,185	\$3.58	\$6,043,721	159	1,412	10,825	\$38,010
2021/22	1,872,800	1,868,503	\$6.00	\$11,195,392	167	1,537	11,189	\$67,132

^a Season = October 1 thru March 31. Experimental fishing program prior to 1990/1991 season.

^b Based on CFEC (annual) data prior to the 1998/1999 season, then based on ADF&G fish ticket data.

^c Guideline harvest levels calculated in number of sea cucumbers prior to the 1992/93 season.

^d Three-year rotational fishing regime began.

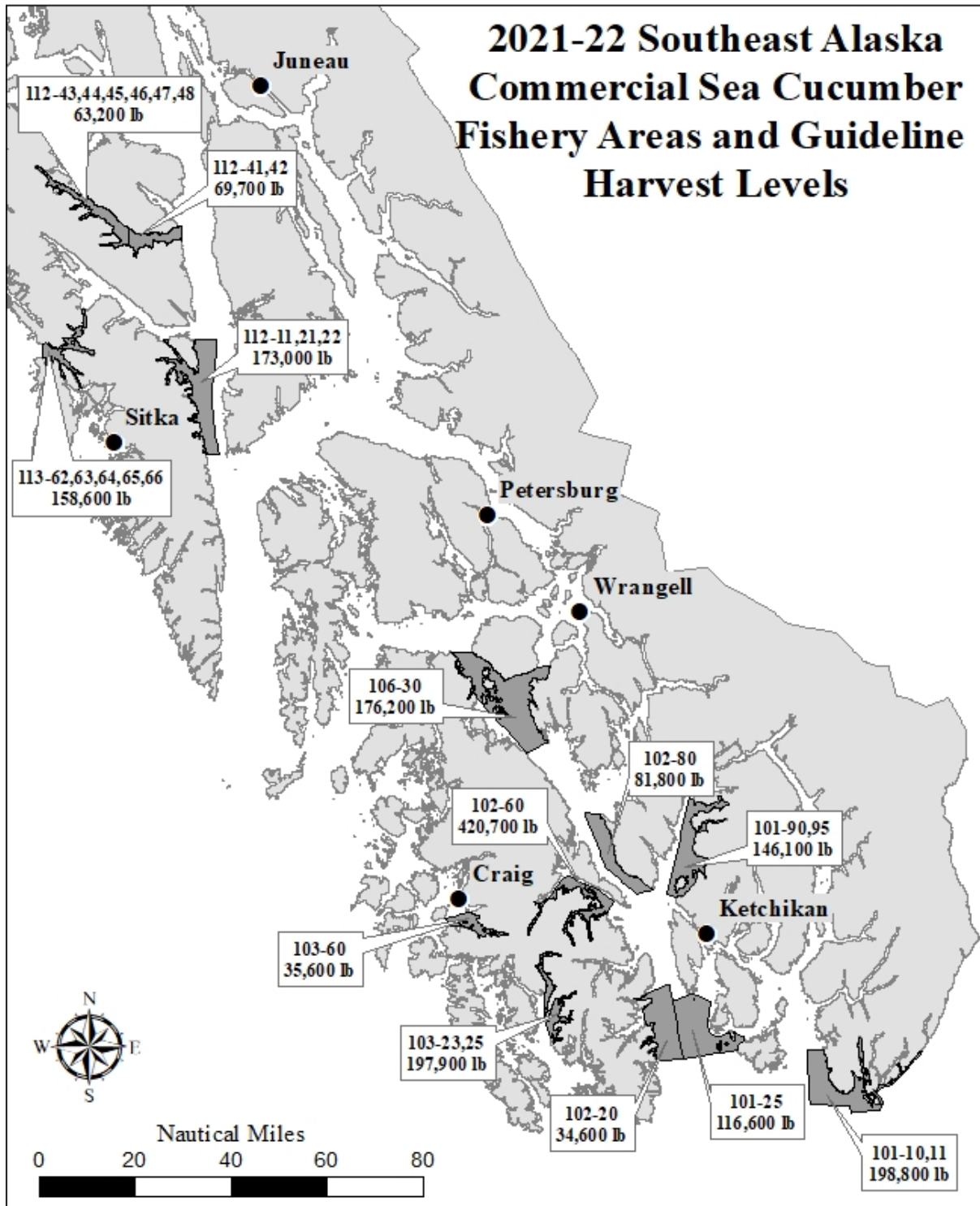


Figure 1. Map of open sea cucumber areas in the 2021/22 season.