

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

TO: Anne Reynolds-Manney

DATE: October 30, 2025

THRU: Troy Thynes

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SUBJECT 2024/25 SEAK Sea
Cucumber Fishery

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The commercial harvest of sea cucumbers in Southeast Alaska began on October 7, 2024, with an overall guideline harvest level (GHL) of 1,759,900 pounds of sea cucumbers for the 2024/25 season. Fisheries occurred on a weekly basis, and the fishery was open for a total of 25 openings. The total harvest of 1,753,897 pounds was 0.3% under the GHL. Participation throughout the season varied, with maximum participation of 149 divers during the first and fourth week of the season, and a minimum of 1 diver for multiple weeks during the middle and end of the season. Throughout the season, 160 divers made 1,369 landings from 128 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 1,064,000 pounds. A total of 1,074,288 pounds of sea cucumbers were harvested across 19 openings. The final harvest was 0.9% over the total GHL. During the first week, 165,831 pounds of sea cucumbers were harvested by 95 divers in the Ketchikan management area, and over three quarters of the harvest was from the Percy Islands (Subdistrict 101-25) area. Harvest remained steady, averaging about 146,000 pounds for statistical weeks (SW) 41 through 46, before dropping off in SW 47. Peak harvest and participation in the Ketchikan management area occurred during SW 43 when 184,931 pounds were taken by 98 divers, with an average of 1,887 pounds per diver. Throughout the season when processors were purchasing, average weekly effort was 64 divers harvesting an average of 95,000 pounds of eviscerated sea cucumbers per week, an average of 1,488 pounds per diver per week. Local processors ceased purchasing the week before the Christmas holiday for the season. Direct marketers continued to dive and sell their product for the remainder of the season. Two areas remained open through the last week of the fishery: Hetta, Nutkwa, and Keete Inlets (Subdistricts 103-23 and 25) and Trocadero Bay (Subdistrict 103-60). The Ketchikan management area had an opening or the opportunity for an opening each week of the 2024/25 season.

In the Petersburg management area, the GHL was 152,900 pounds in one harvest area. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 153,774 pounds, harvested over 7 weeks. The season harvest was 0.6% over the GHL. The average effort level was 14 divers per week with an average weekly harvest of 1,619 pounds per diver. Weekly participation ranged from 8 to 23 divers. Effort and harvest were greatest during SW 45 when 23 divers harvested 32,703 pounds. The Petersburg management area was closed on November 18, 2024.

In the Juneau management area, the GHL was 135,800 pounds located in two harvest areas. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 131,322 pounds, harvested in 8 openings. An average of 11 divers per week harvested an average of 1,476 pounds per diver during the initial 8 weeks of the season when processors were buying. The highest weekly harvest occurred in SW 47 with 33,657 pounds taken by 21 divers. The Juneau management area was closed November 24, 2024. The total harvest was 3% under the GHL.

In the Sitka management area, the GHL was 406,600 pounds located in two harvest areas. The total harvest of sea cucumbers was 394,513 pounds harvested over 23 weeks. However, the Sitka area received effort in only 10 of the possible 23 weeks the season was open. An average of 30 divers per week harvested an average of 1,651 pounds per diver during the initial 8 weeks of the season when processors were tendering and buying. The highest weekly harvest occurred in SW 47 with 66,342 pounds taken by 40 divers. Weekly participation ranged from 1 to 40 divers. The Sitka management area was open for 23 weeks during the 2024/25 season, with SWs 6, 7, and 14 being the only weeks without opening. One area (Chatham Strait and Kelp Bay – Subdistricts 112-11, 21, and 22) remained open through the entire season. The Sitka management area harvest was 3% under the combined GHL.

Participation in the fishery and harvest varied throughout the season. The fourth week of the season (SW 44) had the highest regional harvest, with 262,411 pounds taken. Peak effort occurred during the first and second weeks (SWs 41 and 42) with 149 divers for both weeks. After the sixth week (SW 46), participation throughout Southeast Alaska began to drop as many of the areas with larger GHLs closed. Participation decreased significantly between the SWs 47 and 48 with a shift from 108 divers to 67 divers. There was no closure during the holiday season, and during the corresponding SWs (SWs 52 and 53) there was no harvest. There was a slight uptick in participation and harvest the week after the winter holidays in the Ketchikan management area, driven by divers' self-marketing. Fishery participation remained low with 1 to 4 divers harvesting during the weeks following the winter holidays through the final week at the end of March. The fishery closed by regulation on March 31, and the last fishery occurred in SW 13. Of the overall GHL, a total of 6,003 pounds of sea cucumber GHL were unharvested during the 2024/25 season. In areas that remained open until the end of the season, 31,980 pounds were left unharvested.

The 2024/25 season was protracted when compared to the last time the rotation was fished in 2021/22. Three areas remained open until the fishery closed by regulation March 31. Management actions were taken to provide additional harvest opportunity and included extending fishery periods in areas which have traditionally taken longer for the GHLs to be harvested, beginning those fishery extensions earlier than in previous rotations, and increasing trip limits.

There were 6 shore-based processors, 1 export buyer, and 1 direct marketer. Exvessel value for Southeast Alaska was approximately \$8.7 million based on raw fish ticket data. The exvessel value for the Ketchikan area was \$5.4 million. Values were based on an average price of \$4.90 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. The price per pound fluctuated throughout the season and ranged from \$1.90 to \$5 per pound. During the initial week of the fishery the average was \$5 per pound. The price remained steady throughout the weeks prior to the winter holidays due to a single processor purchasing most of the product. After the winter holidays, the weekly average dropped to \$4.30 per pound and remained there until processors were done purchasing for the year.

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

The Board of Fisheries met in Ketchikan in January of 2025 to discuss Southeast Alaska miscellaneous shellfish regulations. Multiple proposals related to the sea cucumber fishery were put forward. The board supported the regulatory change of the season length from the first Monday in October through March 31 to the first Monday in October through April 30. Discussion centered around biological considerations related to the spawning season and the increase in popularity of divers possessing direct marketers permits and establishing their own markets. This change will be in effect for the 2025/26 sea cucumber fishery season.

Table 1. Registration Area A (Southeast Alaska) commercial sea cucumber harvest, effort, and value, 1986/87 through 2024/25 seasons.

Season ^a	Guideline Harvest Level (lb)	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	704,491 ^c	804,184	\$0.59	\$472,386	143	890	5,624	\$3,303
1991/92	839,160 ^c	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 ^d	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

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Table 1. cont.

Season ^a	Guideline Harvest Level (lb)	Total Harvest (lb)	Average Price / lb ^b	Estimated Exvessel Value ^b	Number of Divers	Number of Landings	Average lb / Diver	Average Earnings / Diver ^b
2021/22	1,872,800	1,868,503	\$6.00	\$11,195,392	167	1,537	11,189	\$67,132
2022/23	1,962,300	1,820,895	\$3.17	\$5,723,539	160	1,485	11,381	\$35,772
2023/24	1,673,000	1,639,237	\$5.22	\$8,480,659	150	1,342	10,928	\$56,537
2024/25	1,759,900	1,753,897	\$4.90	\$8,723,963	160	1,369	10,962	\$54,525

^a Season = October 1 through September 30. 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 Quota originally calculated in numbers of sea cucumbers.

^d Does not include data for the Yakutat sea cucumber fishery.

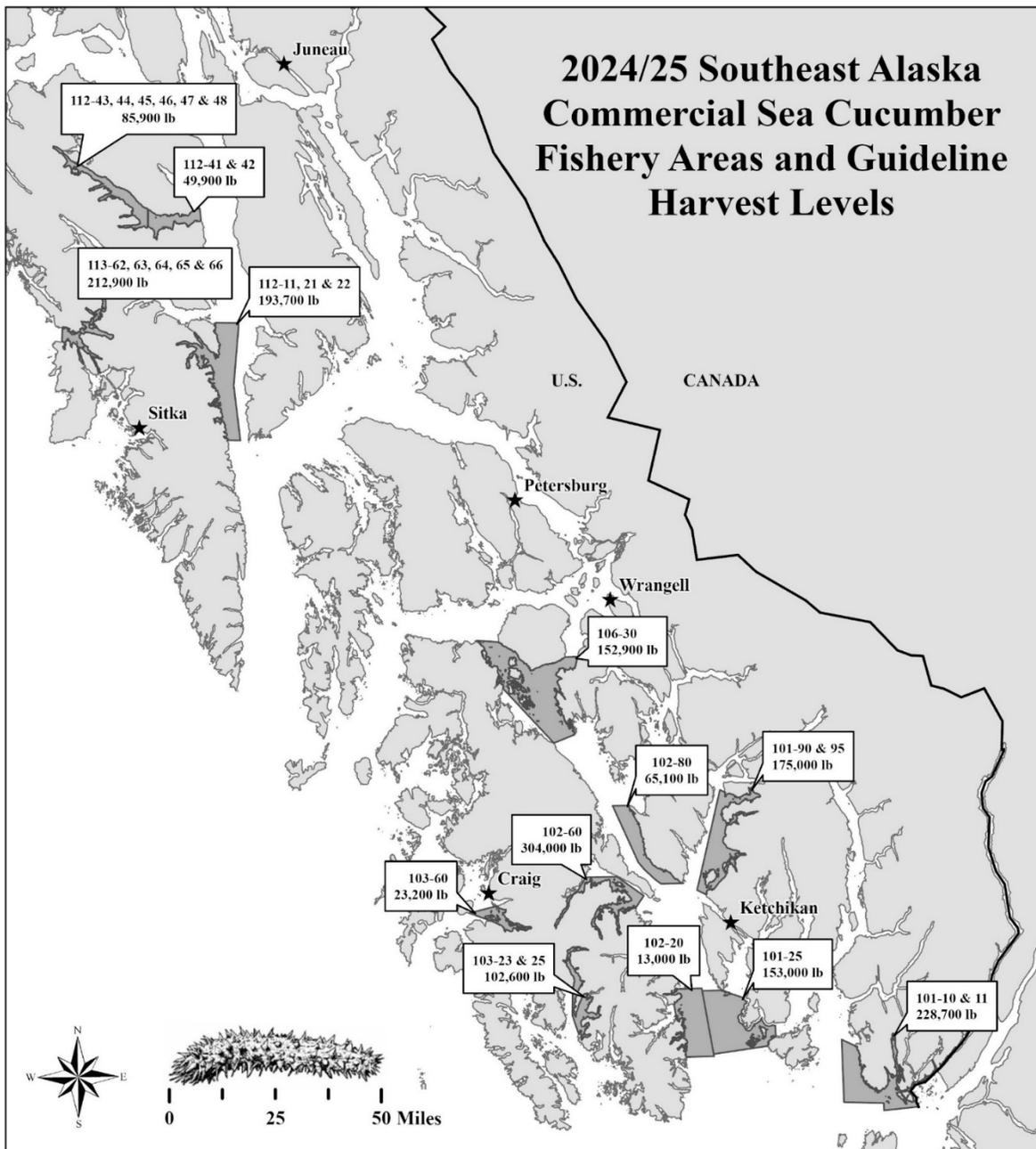


Figure 1. Map of open commercial sea cucumber fishery areas in the 2024/25 season.