

BERING SEA AND ALEUTIAN ISLANDS MANAGEMENT AREA (BSAI)
GROUND FISH FISHERY
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT
AUTHORITY: 50 CFR 600.745(b) AND 50 CFR 679.6

PERMIT #2019-02

The Administrator, Alaska Region, (Regional Administrator), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), hereby authorizes vessels participating in the 2019 and 2020 Aleutian Islands (AI) pollock fishery to conduct experimental fishing that will provide information on methods to reduce bycatch of Pacific ocean perch (POP). This exempted fishing permit (EFP) describes exemptions to regulations and other requirements that are necessary to facilitate the project.

The permit holders and the owners and operators of the participating vessels must comply with the EFP terms, and unless otherwise provided in this permit, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and 50 CFR parts 600 and 679. An authorized designated representative for each vessel participating in experimental fishing under this EFP must complete and sign a copy of the vessel information form contained in Appendix A, of this EFP.

This permit is valid and in effect when signed by both the Regional Administrator and participating permit holders. This permit is valid through April 15th, 2020. If experimental fishing concludes before the expiration date, the Principal Investigator may terminate the permit prior to the expiration date by notifying Megan Mackey (907) 586-7322, NMFS Alaska Regional Office. This permit may be revoked, modified, or suspended under the permit's terms, by the Regional Administrator, or by regulatory action under 50 CFR 679, 50 CFR 600.745, or 15 CFR part 904.


James W. Balsiger, Ph.D. For J/B
Administrator,
Alaska Region, NMFS

2-1-19
Date Signed

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
GROUND FISH FISHERY
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT 2019-02
PERMIT HOLDER SIGNATURE PAGE

Kay Larson-Blair

Permit Holder Signature

Kay Larson-Blair

Permit Holder Printed Name

The Aleut Corporation

Permit Holder Company/Affiliation

1/31/2019

Date Signed



Permit Holder Signature

DAVE FRASER

Permit Holder Printed Name

ADAK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP.

Permit Holder Company/Affiliation

2-1-2019

Date Signed

**ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
GROUNDFISH FISHERY
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT #2019-02
TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

AUTHORITY: 50 CFR 600.745(b) AND 50 CFR 679.6

**TESTING METHODS TO MINIMIZE BYCATCH OF PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH IN THE
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS POLLOCK FISHERY**

A. Permit Holders

Kay Larson-Blair
The Aleut Corporation
4000 Old Seward Hwy, Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 561-4300

Dave Fraser
Adak Community Development Corporation
PO Box 1943
Adak AK 99546
(907) 602-6150

- B. Principal Investigator (PI).** The PI, Kay Larson-Blair with The Aleut Corporation will be the Principal Investigator. Ms. Larson-Blair, will do the initial coordinating and contracting with vessel operators, and will ensure they understand the EFP instructions.

Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI). Dave Fraser, with Adak Community Development Corporation, will be on site in Adak to do the on-site coordinating. In Adak, Mr. Fraser will coordinate with vessel operators and crew to provide equipment, data sheets, and instructions to vessel crew responsible for collecting and providing all catch information under this EFP.

- C. Designated Vessels.** Selected American Fisheries Act (AFA) catcher vessels (CVs) and non-AFA CVs less than 60 ft length overall (LOA) in the AI pollock fishery using pelagic pollock trawl gear will be designated to conduct the sampling for this EFP. No more than 500 mt of POP and 10,361 mt of walleye pollock will be harvested under this EFP each year. The 500 mt cap of POP is allocated between NMFS Statistical Areas 541 (450 tons) and 542 (50 tons). In addition to the EFP, the owners and operators of the designated vessels will be required to hold all permits and License Limitation Program endorsements otherwise authorizing participation in the AI pollock fishery.

1. A permit holder/PI will submit to NMFS a completed and signed Vessel Data Sheet (see **Appendix A**) for each designated vessel no later than three business days prior to the commencement of the exempted fishing authorized by this permit. The Vessel Data Sheet includes the following information:
 - a. Name of managing company
 - b. Vessel name(s)

- c. Federal permit number and USCG registration number
 - d. Name, address, telephone number, and email of owner(s)
 - e. Vessel length and tonnage (gross)
 - f. Vessel type
 - g. Vessel homeport
 - h. Name of designated representative
 - i. Contact information for designated representative
 - j. Signature of owner or designated representative
2. If the designated vessel is unable to complete the EFP fieldwork (e.g., due to a mechanical breakdown), a permit holder/PI will inform NMFS and submit the required information for any replacement vessel per the designation and notification instructions in sections C and D of this EFP.
 3. A copy of this EFP must be on board each designated vessel when EFP fishing.

D. Vessel Selection preferences. Vessels will be selected from the pool of catcher vessels that meet the criteria in section C above. Preference will be given to vessels equipped with Simrad ES60/70 echo-sounders. The initial intent is to have 2 AFA catcher vessels and one <60' non-AFA vessel, with a maximum of 3 AFA and 2 non-AFA vessels if the Golden Harvest Alaska Seafoods plant in Adak has sufficient processing capacity.

E. Notification of Exempted Fishing. The permit holder/PI must notify NMFS Alaska Regional Office (Megan.Mackey@noaa.gov), the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (NOAA OLE) (Nathan.Lagerwey@noaa.gov and Will.Ellis@noaa.gov), and the NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center, North Pacific Observer Program (Observer Program) (Brian.Mason@noaa.gov) by email at least 24 hours before any designated vessel embarks on an EFP fishing trip.

The permit holder/PI must notify NMFS, NOAA OLE, and the Observer Program via the same email addresses, within 24 hours of the end of fishing under this EFP.

F. Area of Exempted Fishing. Exempted fishing under this permit is restricted to the Aleutian Islands subarea in NMFS Statistical Areas 541 and 542 (see Figure 1 to § 679).

G. POP and Pollock length and observer specimen collections. Per standard Observer Program sampling protocol, the NMFS-certified observer duties during this project are similar, following the protocols as laid out for Aleutian Islands walleye pollock sampling in the manual ([NMFS 2019](#))¹. The additional protocols not specified in the manual are as follows: during this EFP, observers should take note of any discarding at sea. Under the EFP vessels are only allowed to discard very large organisms or in the case of emergency. If any discarding occurs the observer should document it thoroughly in their logbook and report it as soon as possible. At the plant, vessel observers are expected to verify landed weights on the fish tickets with emphasis on validating POP identification and delivery weights. Observers are still required to monitor all offloads for salmon as described in the manual. Vessel observers may need to coordinate with observers assigned to the processing plant to complete these duties within approved work hours.

H. Vessel Data Recording Requirements. The permit holders/PI will provide vessel captains with a

¹ <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/north-pacific-observer-sampling-manual>

data recording form for logging the Vessel and Observer Cruise Number and the following variables: Fishing Captain, Haul Number, Date/Time (set and haul), Weather code, Sea State Code, Tidal State, Estimated Current speed and direction, Estimated percentage of POP (before set, haul-Back, On Deck), Additional Notes/Comments. Additionally, the Simrad equipped vessels are required to record hydroacoustic data. In order to track the 500 mt of POP cap allocation between NMFS Statistical Areas 541 (450 tons) and 542 (50 tons), each fish ticket must indicate which statistical area fish were harvested from.

- I. Observer Requirements.** In addition to other requirements set forth in this EFP, an observer will be on each vessel throughout the experimental fishery in accordance with normal Observer Program protocol and sample each haul at sea as per observer protocol. All vessels participating in the EFP will be required to have 100% observer coverage with full retention of all catch. Observers will collect species composition samples and length composition samples on POP and pollock on all hauls at sea as per their normal duties.

All catch will be retained, sorted, and weighed after delivery at the processing plant. Additional sampling will be done at the shore-based processing facility. The number of fish measured and otoliths collected may be increased by the Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis Division relative to the observer protocols. Female pollock maturity for fish from which otoliths can be taken will be collected. Fin clip samples may be collected and preserved for genetics work.

Observers are required to work within a 12-hour time window, which includes a maximum of 9 hours of sampling and 3 hours of paperwork. Sampling and paperwork that exceeds the 12-hour window could be covered between a vessel-based observer and a plant-based observer; however any plant-based observers must be secured by the plant in cooperation with the EFP permit holder. NMFS cannot assign a plant-based observer for this EFP. The processing plant for purposes of this EFP will be the Golden Harvest Alaska Seafoods plant.

In order for timely data transmission, the permit holders/PIs must work with participating vessels to ensure computers and transmission capabilities are provided to observers as described in 50 CFR 679.51(e).

- J. Exemptions from Federal Regulations.** The owners, operators, and crew of the designated vessels must comply with all requirements of 50 CFR part 679 regulations applicable to vessels participating in trawl fisheries targeting pollock in the AI, with the exception of the two exemptions listed below. These exemptions apply only to testing during the effective period of the EFP.

Maximum Retainable Amount Requirement. Participating vessels are exempt from the 5 percent maximum retainable amount (MRA) limit for aggregate rockfish (for purposes of limiting POP) at § 679.20(e)(ii) in order to test methods to limit bycatch of POP while fishing for AI pollock. This exemption would apply from the date the 2019 final harvest specifications are effective until April 15, 2019 and again during the same time period in 2020.

Halibut Prohibited Species Catch Bycatch Management. Participating vessels are exempt from § 679.21(b)(1)(ii)(B)(4) that specifies halibut prohibited species catch (PSC) bycatch management and PSC limits for rockfish trawl fisheries in the BSAI. POP is a type of rockfish. While this EFP is not targeting POP directly, allowing participating vessels to retain POP above the 5 percent

MRA may put them into the range of POP in the directed POP fishery each year. The directed POP fishery in the AI for vessels less than 60 ft LOA does not open until April 15 to limit halibut bycatch. Because vessels fishing under this EFP would be operating before that April 15 date, those vessels would be exempt from the halibut PSC limit applicable to directed fishing for POP in the BSAI.

K. Administration of the Activities under Exempted Fishing. Management of the EFP fieldwork will be the responsibility of the permit holders/PI. In addition to other duties, the permit holders/PI will:

1. Monitor compliance with the terms of the EFP.
2. Arrange for the selection of vessels.
3. Provide sampling and data recording instructions, data forms, and any biological collection tools and storage materials necessary for sampling.
4. Coordinate with vessels and crew to make sure they understand and comply with data recording instructions and the terms of the permit.
5. Coordinate with the fish plant to monitor catch amounts to stay within the POP and Pollock limits.
6. Coordinate with the fish plant for sea sampler data collection.
7. Arrange for the release of observer data to the analyst.
8. Arrange for the post season debriefing of captains, and the collection and compiling of captains' logs, and sea sampler data.
9. Arrange for the statistical analysis of the data.
10. Make sure the schedule of milestones is achieved as written in the EFP Application.
11. Submit the interim and final reports.

L. Analysis of Results. All data collected by the PI on vessels named on Vessel Designation Sheets submitted to NMFS for fishing under this permit are discloseable to the public, except for haul-specific catch data and vessel-specific fishing locations and other proprietary business information not relevant to the studies, which are otherwise treated consistent with confidentiality provisions under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act. Data collected by NMFS observers relevant to this EFP is disclosable to the public, otherwise observer data will be treated consistent with data confidentiality provisions under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act.

The PI will prepare an interim report that includes a summary of project objectives, statistical areas fished, vessels used, a detailed description of activities, any problems and successes, and how well EFP objectives were accomplished. The interim report will be provided to NMFS November 30, 2019. The PI will prepare and submit to NMFS by November 30, 2020 a final report that updates the 2019 interim report and summarizes the results of the hypotheses tested and how well EFP objectives were accomplished. The reports will be disclosable to the public and the PI will present EFP results to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

M. Violations, non-compliance. A permit holder must immediately notify the NMFS Alaska Regional Office by contacting Megan Mackey (907-586-7322) and the owners of the designated vessels fishing under this permit if a vessel is not meeting EFP requirements. Failure of the permit holder, vessel crew, or the owners or operators of the designated vessels fishing under this EFP to comply with the terms and conditions of this permit, non-exempted provisions of 50 CFR

parts 600 and 679, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, or any other applicable regulations, may be cause for revocation, suspension, or modification of this permit as well as civil or criminal penalties under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

**APPENDIX A—VESSEL DATA SHEET
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT: 2019-02
DESIGNATED VESSEL**

Name of Managing Company:

Vessel Name:

Federal Permit Number:

USCG Official Number:

Owner Name:

Owner Address:

Phone:

Email:

Length Overall:

Gross Tonnage:

Type of Vessel:

Homeport:

Name, phone number, and email of designated representative:

Signature(s) of Owner or Designated Representative(s):

Signature

Date signed

Signature

Date signed

The signature(s) above confirm this information, but do not constitute a final commitment to participate in the exempted fishing operations.