

February 9, 2021

WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

Season Opening from WA/OR BORDER to US Canada Border

The purpose of this notice is to provide you with final details relative to the opening of the 2020-21 coastal Dungeness crab fishery **for the entire coast.**

Following two-months of weekly testing for domoic acid in Dungeness crab, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) in close consultation with the Washington Department of Health (WDOH) will open the commercial Dungeness crab season as follows;

- **The state coastal commercial Dungeness crab fishery between WA/OR Border (46°15.00) and the US/Canada border (excluding Special Management Areas) will open at 9:00 am, February 16, 2021.**
- A **73-hour** gear pre-set period will begin at 8:00 am February 13, 2021.
- **Hold inspections** will be conducted starting at noon on February 15, 2020.

Due to persistent elevated levels of domoic acid in the area south of Point Chehalis WDOH has issued a formal recommendation that WDFW require evisceration of all crab landed from south of Point Chehalis, WA (46°53.18 N. Lat). Below are important details fishery participants must pay close attention to;

- Washington license holders and vessels designated on those licenses choosing to land crab **only for an EVISCERATION market** must declare this choice at the time of their hold inspection. *The vessel hold inspection certificate will clearly indicate that choice as EVS. In addition, dual licensed vessels with an Oregon vessel hold inspection will also be required to eviscerate **all crab** landed into Washington.*
 - Crab landed under an EVISCERATION vessel hold inspection certificate must be eviscerated and CANNOT be sold for whole cooked crab or live crab markets.
 - Vessels fishing with an EVISCERATION vessel hold inspection certificate may set gear in all coastal catch areas.
- Washington license holders and vessels designation on those licenses choosing to land crab into **ANY market, including whole cooked and live crab**, must declare this choice at the time of their hold inspection. *The vessel hold inspection certificate will clearly indicate that choice as NORTH.*
 - Vessels fishing with a NORTH vessel hold inspection certificate may **ONLY SET AND FISH GEAR NORTH OF POINT CHEHALIS (46°53.18 N. Lat),** including inside Grays Harbor.

- Crab landed under a NORTH vessel hold inspection certificate CAN be sold for live, whole cooked or evisceration markets.

- **Fishers should expect that no new hold inspections will occur for at least 30 days. This provision is in place to strengthen enforcement of evisceration requirements and protect public health.** However, WDFW and WDOH will continue to test crab on a regular basis. If there are changes in the WDOH recommendation for areas requiring evisceration, WDFW will require any license or vessel with a current EVISCERATION vessel hold inspection to land all crab before receiving a new hold inspection that will allow them to land crab into whole cooked and live markets. If conditions are appropriate and with support from DOH, we will make every effort to reduce the 30 day requirement and conduct another hold inspection.

All specific provisions in tribal agreements have been satisfied and the various tribal special management areas locations remain the same as the 2019-20 season.

Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the management measures described below before you begin your fishing operations and stay informed relative to additional changes.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS:

Quinault SMA:

The Quinault **primary SMA** will be closed to state fishers beginning at 8:00 am February 13, 2021. The **primary SMA** is scheduled to remain closed to state fishers until further notice.

The Quinault **primary SMA** is described as the coastal waters shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve between Raft River (47°28.00) and Copalis River (47°08.00) according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: 47°28.00' N. Lat. – 124°20.70' W. Lon.
- Northwest Corner: 47°28.00' N. Lat. – 124°34.00' W. Lon.
- Southwest Corner: 47°08.00' N. Lat. – 124°25.50' W. Lon.
- Southeast Corner: 47°08.00' N. Lat. – 124°11.20' W. Lon.

Quileute SMA:

The Quileute SMA will be closed to state fishers beginning at 8:00 am February 13, 2021. The Quileute SMA will open to state fishers beginning at 8:00 AM, May 1, 2021.

The Quileute SMA is described as the area from Cape Johnson to Destruction Island shoreward of a line approximating 30 fathoms according to the following points:

- Northeast Corner (Cape Johnson): 47°58.00' N. Lat. - 124°40.40' W. Long.
- Northwest Corner: 47°58.00' N. Lat. - 124°49.00' W. Long.
- Southwest Corner: 47°40.50' N. Lat. - 124°40.00' W. Long.

- Southeast Corner (Destruction Island): 47°40.50' N. Lat. - 124°24.43 W. Long.

There will be a 100-pot limit in the SMA from May 1, 2020 through May 31, 2021. Fishers must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear in this area.

Makah SMA:

The Makah SMA will be closed to state fishers beginning at 8:00 am February 13, 2021 and will remain closed for 30-days. The Makah SMA will open to state fishers at 8:00 am March 16, 2021.

The Makah SMA is described as the coastal waters between 48°02.15' N. Lat. to 48°19.50' N. Lat., east of a line connecting those points approximating the 25-fathom line according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: Tatoosh Island
- Northwest Corner: 48°19.50' N. Lat. – 124°50.45' W. Long.
- Southwest Corner: 48°02.15' N. Lat. – 124°50.45' W. Long.
- Southeast Corner: 48°02.15' N. Lat. – 124°41.00' W. Long.

There will be a 200-pot limit in the Makah SMA from March 16, 2021 through April 15, 2021. Fishers must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear in this area.

- **WAC 220-340-400 Definition—Commercial crab fishing:** “Commercial crab fishing” means any taking, fishing, use, or operation of gear to fish for crab for commercial purposes, and includes the possession of crab on the water for commercial purposes, and the landing or initial delivery of crab for commercial purposes.

Other Requirements:

- Dungeness crab that are delivered to a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife licensed Fish Dealer and/or Wholesale Fish Buyer may be transported or sold to a facility with an approved HACCP plan and eviscerated. *However, the vessel inspection number must accompany the crab to the final designation where it will be eviscerated.*
- Whale entanglements are a serious problem, please implement the recommendations in the Washington Best Practices Guidelines to minimize the risk of entangling marine mammals.
- Since 2018, all crew members must have a WDFW **Annual Commercial Crew License**. This can be done by an individual crewman and is transferable between boats and fisheries. Or, up to two **Undesignated Annual Commercial Crew Licenses** can be purchased by a commercial fishing license holder that will be specific to the vessel. Details can be found at: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/commercial/miscellaneous#> or by calling 360-902-2464 (option#4).
- All commercial crab license holders will be required to carry, complete, and submit logbooks to WDFW. This information will greatly assist us in managing our fishery in the future. New logbooks will be available during Hold Inspections or by calling WDFW at 360-249-4628.

- A **Washington Gear Transfer Permit** issued by WDFW is required to transport through Washington State waters, crab pots or buoys bearing the tags issued by another state beginning February 13, 2021. Contact Sergeant Brian Alexander at 360-580-6200 for issuance of this permit.
- A hold inspection certificate number is required on all fish tickets until further notice.
- WDFW would like your help, please call the coastal crab hotline (360-249-4628, extension 260) if you witness or have information regarding enforcement violations including fishing in closed areas, starting early, pots without buoy tags, etc.

This information and future updates will also be available on WDFW web page:
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/commercial/crab/coastal/>

If you have questions regarding the information contained in this letter or other regulations pertaining to the coastal Dungeness crab fishery, please contact Dan Ayres at (360) 249-4628 ext. 209.

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