



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

SEASON OPENING DELAY

A decision was made today by the Directors of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Department of Fish and Game to delay the opening of the 2011-12 Coastal Dungeness crab fishery coast-wide (from Point Arena north) until at least December 15, 2011.

This decision is based on crab condition tests conducted by agency staff in all three states using the newly revised and agreed to pre-season testing protocol developed by the Tri-State Dungeness Crab Committee. These protocols specify that after the second round of testing, if any area does not meet the minimum meat recovery criteria (23% north of Cascade Head and 25% south of Cascade Head) and if a third test cannot be completed by November 26th - then there will be a season opening delay until at least December 15th. *Note that a mandatory minimum of 10 days must elapse between the second and third tests.*

The results from the second round of testing in Oregon and California show all areas do not meet the minimum meat recovery criteria. Washington's second test results will not be available until Friday November 11. However, with the low results in northern Oregon, and the Tri-State protocols that describes that Washington will open consistently with Oregon down to Cascade Head; WDFW is comfortable agreeing to this season delay decision.

All three states agree that it would be difficult, if not impossible to complete a third round of testing prior to November 26th, especially with the Thanksgiving Holiday occurring in the midst of the period. Additionally given the low meat recovery rates seen so far, all three states felt that allowing for additional time for crab to fill out prior to the third test is appropriate.

As a result, all three agency Directors are in agreement that a third test will be conducted in early December and a recommendation for a season opening date or further delay and additional testing will be provided by December 10.

We will provide you with more specific details of the Washington test results early next week.