



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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November 23, 2016

(this is a modified version that lists the correct date for hold inspections)

Dear Coastal Dungeness Crab Fisher:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with details on the 2016-17 Washington coastal Dungeness crab season opening. Policy makers from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife met today to discuss the latest round of domoic acid testing and details regarding the opening of the coastal Dungeness crab fishery. The decision was made to delay the season opening coast-wide. Crab sampled from one area along the Oregon coast tested above the U.S Food and Drug Administration action which requires that area to be closed. **In order to provide for an orderly opening, the entire Washington and Oregon coast will remain closed until at least December 16 as each state continues testing.**

Late today the California Department of Fish and Wildlife announced a partial opener in the area north of Point Arena. Quoting from the California announcement (also attached to this email); *“On Dec. 1, commercial Dungeness crab season will open as scheduled from the north jetty at the Humboldt Bay entrance (40° 46.15’ N. lat.) north to the Oregon/California state line (District 6). The opener will be preceded by a 64 hour pre-soak period commencing at 8 a.m. on Nov. 28. The area between the north jetty at the Humboldt Bay entrance south to Point Reyes (38° 00’ N. lat.) in Marin County will remain closed until the CDFW Director receives a recommendation from the state health agencies that levels of domoic acid – a naturally occurring toxin – do not pose a public health risk.”*

Licenses and vessels designated to those licenses that fish (as defined by WAC 220-52-036, see page 4 of this letter) in the coastal commercial Dungeness crab fishery in the waters between Point Arena, California and the Oregon/California border, will be delayed fishing in any area north of the Oregon/California border to Klipsan Beach, Washington until 30 days after that area opens.

While crab tested to date in Washington are below the U.S Food and Drug Administration action levels, WDFW and WDOH plan additional testing to collect crab from a wider range of depth zones as an added precaution.

More details will be provided as additional test results are available. Complete domoic acid testing results in crab can be found on our web site at:

http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/commercial/crab/coastal/letters_notices.html under general information on the right side of the page.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) have recently agreed to the terms of a Harvest Management Agreement for the 2016-17 season. WDFW has also finalized management agreements with the Makah and Quileute Tribes. The specific details of locations of the agreed to Special Management Areas (SMA), and the dates they are closed to non-tribal fishers are provided below.

The 2016-17 management agreement with QIN includes a 47 day head-start to Quinault fishers prior to the state season opening and, the Primary Special Management Area (PSMA) will be closed the same number of days as was in place for the 2015-2016 season. In addition, the agreement includes a provision that managers and policy makers will share early season catch data in January and meet the last week in January to evaluate state and QIN catch early in the season and gauge the potential need for in-season adjustments needed to reach each our respective harvest sharing goals.

The 2016-17 agreement with the Quileute Tribe extends the head-start area for Quileute fishermen to include the area between the Queets River and Destruction Island in recognition of their expanded Usual and Accustomed (U &A) fishing area. The area from Queets to Destruction Island will not open before January 1 but will not be subject to the same “fishable day” criteria in place from Destruction Island to Cape Alava. Instead, the opening date for the area between Queets and Destruction Island will be based on the early harvest rates of Quileute fishermen in that area. WDFW will provide an update on the season opening in the Quileute U&A both in the area between Queets and Destruction Island and the area north of Destruction Island as information on Quileute catch and fishable day results is compiled.

The provisions in the harvest management agreement with the Makah Tribe are the same as those that have been in place in recent years.

STATE SEASON OPENING NORTH OF KLIPSAN BEACH:

The area between Destruction Island and the U.S. - Canada border will not open prior to January 15, 2016. The harvest management plan with the Quileute Tribe continues to include a provision to ensure that there are 20 fishable days for Quileute fishers between December 1 and January 15th prior to opening the state fishery north of Destruction Island. Details regarding the opening north of Destruction Island will be provided in a future letter when the specific opening date has been determined.

- **The state coastal commercial Dungeness crab fishery between Klipsan Beach (46°28.00) and Destruction Island will open at 12:01 am, January 7, 2017.**
- A **64-hour** gear pre-set period will begin at 8:00 am January 4, 2017.
- **Hold inspections** will be conducted starting at noon on **January 6, 2017.**

- Temporary pot limits in place south of Klipsan Beach will be removed at 8:00 am January 4, 2017.

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:

The Quinault **primary SMA** will be closed to state fishers beginning at 8:00 AM January 4, 2017. The **primary SMA** is scheduled to remain closed to state fishers until 8:00 am March 4, 2017.

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 (Raft River): 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 (Copalis River): 47°08.00' N. Lat. – 124°11.20' W. Lon.

A Quinault **secondary SMA** (SSMA) will be established on 8:00 am March 4, 2017 to include the area shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve between the mouth of the Copalis River (47°08.00) and Split Rock (47°24.50) according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner (Split Rock): 47°24.50' N. Lat. 124°20.00' W. Lon.
- Northwest Corner: 47°24.50' N. Lat. 124°32.40' W. Lon.
- Southwest Corner: 47°08.00' N. Lat. 124°25.50' W. Lon.
- Southeast Corner (Copalis River): 47°08.00' N. Lat. 124°11.20' W. Lon.

When the area between Split Rock and Raft River opens, state fishers must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear in this area. Specific details regarding SMA openings and pot limits will be made available prior to opening.

FAIR START PROVISIONS:

Licenses and vessels designated to those licenses that fish (as defined by WAC 220-52-036) in the coastal commercial Dungeness crab fishery in the waters from Point Arena, California, to Klipsan Beach, Washington, (including Willapa Bay) before **February 11, 2017** are subject to the **Fair Start Provisions** described below.

Fair Start Provisions:

- **Klipsan Beach (46°28.00) to Oysterville (46°33.00):** Licenses and vessels designated to those licenses that fish (as defined by WAC 220-52-036) in the fishery between Point Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach, WA, including Willapa Bay, before the area north of Klipsan Beach opens will be allowed to fish in the area between Klipsan Beach and Oysterville at **8:00 am on January 17, 2017.**
- **Oysterville (46°33.00) to the U.S. - Canada Border:** Licenses and vessels designated to those licenses that fish (as defined by WAC 220-52-036) in the fishery between Point Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach, WA, including Willapa Bay, before the area north of Oysterville opens will be allowed to fish in the area between Oysterville and Destruction Island at **8:00 am on February 11, 2017.**
- **WAC 220-52-036 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:

- All 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.
- Notification to WDFW Enforcement is required when transiting crab through closed areas. Notification is to be made 24-hours prior to entering the area north of 47°00.00 N. Latitude by calling Sgt. Tony Leonetti at 360-485-8149, and reporting the vessel name, operator name, estimated amount of crab to be delivered in pounds, and the estimated date, time, and location of delivery. The following situations will require notification.
 - a. Vessels transiting north of Grays Harbor with crab caught south of Klipsan beach (46°28.00) or Willapa Bay prior to the area north of Klipsan beach opening.
 - b. Vessels transiting north of Grays Harbor with crab caught south of Destruction Island (47°40.50) prior to the area north of Destruction Island opening.
- A hold inspection certificate number is required on all fish tickets through February 10, 2017.

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- 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.

Each season opening presents its own set of challenges and this year was no different. I appreciate the input and support from the Coastal Dungeness crab Advisory Board and industry members during this year's season setting process. I hope you have a safe and successful 2015-16 crab season.

Sincerely,



Heather Reed

Coastal Marine Resources Policy Coordinator

cc: Michele Culver
Annette Hoffmann
Dan Ayres