



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

Information Regarding Crab Deliveries from Southern Oregon and Northern California

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) follows a biotoxin monitoring plan overseen by the Washington Department of Health (DOH). The monitoring plan requires action when crab viscera is tested at or above 30 ppm for domoic acid; however, DOH can authorize evisceration when crab meat from the same test is shown to be below an action level of 20 ppm. WDFW is adopting an emergency rule to address the deliveries of crab harvested from an area with test results consistent with DOH action levels.

In a notice issued last week, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announced the opening of their commercial Dungeness crab fishery in northern California at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, January 25, 2019. This area was opened based on testing by California public health agencies that determined that domoic acid did not pose a significant risk to public health. However, the test results included crab from the Trinidad area that tested at 30 ppm in the viscera. The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard determined that crab would need to be above 30 ppm to continue the closure. It is our understanding that crab meat from this area was not tested for domoic acid, which is required for DOH to allow evisceration.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is scheduled to open the area south of Cape Arago on February 1, 2019. This area has also been closed due to domoic acid in crab viscera that is above the 30 ppm action level, however, based on test results which showed that meat was below the 20 ppm action level, ODFW has been authorized to open that area under an evisceration order.

WDFW has the authority to regulate crab landings into Washington ports, which is what our emergency rule addresses; it does not address crab that are transported into Washington from another state. Based on a recommendation from Washington DOH, WDFW will allow crab landed into a Washington port to be delivered into a processing facility with an approved Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan in place for evisceration provided the crab were harvested in an area where the crab meat had been tested and was below the 20 ppm action level. Therefore, crab caught in the area from Cape Blanco to Gold Beach Oregon (OR area 50-K) or Gold Beach to the Oregon/California border (OR area 50-L) may be landed into a Washington port to be delivered into a HACCP-permitted processing facility for evisceration.

If you have questions regarding crab that were caught in an area with domoic acid above DOH action levels, and landed into another state, and then transported into Washington, please contact Jerry Borchert at DOH at (360) 236-3328 or, Jerry.Borchert@DOH.WA.GOV . It is our understanding that DOH may require crab to be embargoed that are not authorized to be eviscerated. WDFW encourages buyers planning to have crab transported into Washington that were caught in any of the areas described above to contact DOH prior to receiving those crab to ensure compliance with state laws and regulations.

WDFW will handle crab deliveries into Washington ports from California and the ODFW biotoxin management areas as described above until testing indicates that domoic acid levels meet the standards prescribed in the DOH biotoxin management plan.