

December 21, 2004



ODFW INDUSTRY NOTICE TO: COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERS AND PROCESSORS

Information on 2004-2005 Commercial Dungeness Crab Season Opener Regulations

THIRD NOTICE

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has adopted a temporary rule to open the ocean commercial Dungeness crab fishery in the area north of Cape Falcon on January 15, 2005. In late November, ODFW adopted a temporary rule to split the opening date for the 2004-05 ocean commercial Dungeness crab fishery. This was in response to low pick-out rates for crab in the Columbia River coastal area. The temporary rule, effective only for the 2004-05 season, split Oregon's traditional December 1 opening date into two opening dates and locations, divided at Cape Falcon. The area from Cape Falcon (45°46' 00" N. Lat.) south to the OR/CA border, as well as California north of Sonoma county, opened on December 1, 2004. The area north of Cape Falcon to the OR/WA border remained closed while additional testing was conducted. Recent crab quality (softshell) testing results indicate crab in the area north of Cape Falcon will meet the minimum criteria to open the fishery on January 15, 2005, the latest opening date specified under the Tri-State process. Consequently, the season opener for the north is delayed until January 15, 2005, and the fishery south of Cape Falcon remains open:

- OR/WA border south to Cape Falcon (45°46'00" N. Lat.): Closed until January 15, 2005.
- Cape Falcon (45°46'00" N. Lat.) south to the OR/CA border: Opened December 1, 2004.

Under the Pacific States Marine Fishery Commission (PSMFC) Dungeness Crab Tri-state process, Oregon, Washington and California's Fish and Wildlife agencies consult on issues affecting the commercial Dungeness crab fishery. The Tri-state agreement includes procedures for pre-season meat pick-out testing of Dungeness crab. If crab meat fill out rates are not met (23% north and 25% south of Cascade Head in Oregon), a procedure is adopted to delay the season on all or part of the West Coast

Crab Pot Pre-Soak Requirements:

The ocean commercial Dungeness crab fishery pre-soak period is 64 hours prior to the opening of the fishery. For the area north of Cape Falcon, pre-soak begins at 8:00 a.m. on January 12, 2005.

Vessel Hold Inspections:

The date for hold inspections for vessels planning to fish north of Cape Falcon is January 14, 2005, for ports north of Cape Falcon, including the Warrenton/Astoria area. The vessel hold inspection has an added requirement for fishermen to specify the maximum number of pots they intend to fish. Each vessel hold inspection certificate must be signed by the vessel operator or owner, not by a crewman. If a vessel plans to fish south of Cape Falcon before the end of December, 2004, and has not yet had a hold inspection, the owner or operator may call their local Oregon State Police Office to schedule a hold inspection. The vessel operator or owner must declare their intention to fish north or south of Cape Falcon.

Vessels That Declared to Fish South:

Those vessels fishing south of Cape Falcon must wait 30 days following the opening date north of Cape Falcon to fish in the northern area. Due to the delayed opener north of Cape Falcon until January 15, 2005, the date for vessels fishing south to begin fishing north of Cape Falcon is February 14, 2005.

Reminder: Washington Tribal Area Closed until March 1, 2005

Due to an extended closure by the State of Washington off of the North coast of Washington to accommodate the Tribal fisheries, Oregon fishers will be prohibited from fishing off those fishing grounds through March 1st. It is unlawful for any boat carrying an Oregon permit to take, land, or possess Dungeness crab taken north of a line at 46°53'18" N. Latitude (Point Chehalis) until March 1, 2005. When that fishery re-opens on March 1, 2005, the state of Washington will impose a 100 pot limit in those waters.

Please contact ODFW Marine Resources Program or Oregon State Police if you have further questions.

For general questions call Keith Matteson or Cyreis Schmitt in the Newport MRP office at (541) 867-4741. The media contact is Brandon Ford at (541) 867-4741.

For questions specific to your area, contact your local MRP field office:

Astoria Marine Field Lab (503) 325-2462

Charleston Field Office (541) 888-5515

Brookings Field Office (541) 412-7364

For vessel hold inspections please call the Oregon State Police

Astoria: (503) 325-5515

Coos Bay: (541) 269-5999

Gold Beach: (541) 247-6641

Newport: (541) 265-5354

Tillamook: (503) 842-2899