



REGION 6

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Annual Letter to Industry

March 17, 2011

Dear Coastal Pink Shrimp Fisher:

Please find the enclosed summaries of Washington landings for the 2010 coastal pink shrimp fishery. This information and more can be found on-line at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/shrimp/comm/index.html>. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) annual pink shrimp newsletter is also included since it provides information pertinent to the Washington fishery. (The newsletter is only provided to those that did not receive it directly from ODFW).

WDFW Observer Project

WDFW received funding to place observers on Washington-licensed shrimp trawl vessels from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in October 2010. The primary purpose of the observer project is to determine fishery encounters with eulachon smelt. In 2010, eulachon smelt were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. In the listing, the pink shrimp fishery was deemed a moderate threat to recovery. Current information regarding the catch of eulachon smelt in shrimp trawl fisheries is limited; project data will be used to allow fishery managers to maximize economic benefits, while protecting this ESA listed species.

Beginning April 2011, WDFW will place observers on Washington-licensed shrimp trawl vessels. Vessels will be randomly selected and assigned an observer on a trip-by-trip basis. The West Coast Groundfish Observer Program will continue to place federal observers on pink shrimp trawl vessels in 2011. Federal observers are assigned for a full month to a particular vessel. A vessel selected to carry a federal observer will not be selected during that same month for state observer coverage.

Fishery Regulations and Permit Conditions

Gear Rules

Washington gear regulations for the coastal pink shrimp fishery remain unchanged for 2011. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has adopted new gear rules for Oregon-licensed vessels. The new excluder (or biological reduction device, BRD) rules prohibit the use of soft-panels, and for rigid-grates, set the maximum bar spacing at 1" for 2011 and ¾" for 2012. WDFW will be considering adopting similar

rules for 2012 to address both the conservation issues confronting the fishery and for ensuring consistent regulations between states. Washington fishers should anticipate that soft panel excluders will no longer be allowed after 2011 and that the maximum bar spacing on rigid grates will be decreased to ¾".

WA Shrimp Trawl Logbook

Please note there are some changes to the fishery permit conditions. New for 2011, all Washington-licensed shrimp trawl fishers will be required to maintain a logbook for all shrimp fishing activity. This will be required, even for those fishers already required to maintain a logbook for ODFW, at least for the duration of WDFW's shrimp trawl observer research project. The WDFW logbook requests information linked to the research project that is not required on the ODFW logbook. It is likely that WDFW will continue the logbook program following the conclusion of the research project, but will look for options that don't require fishers to maintain two separate logbooks. The WDFW logbook will not have duplicate pages; photocopies of submitted logs will be provided to fishers upon request. Logbooks will be distributed at the meetings referenced below or mailed to those not in attendance.

WA Observer Project – Vessel Manual

Fishery permit conditions also specify license owners/operators will comply with observer project protocols. These protocols are described in the enclosed handout *WDFW Pink Shrimp Observer Project – Vessel Manual*. The purpose of these protocols is to ensure that project objectives can be achieved. Please review the protocols; it is also important that vessel skippers and crew are familiar with them as well.

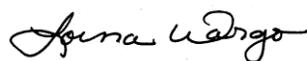
Informational Meetings

The Department will provide more information about the observer program at an industry sponsored meeting scheduled for Washington Crab Producers at Westport, Washington on Friday, March 18, 2011. A **public meeting** is also scheduled for:

**10 a.m. Friday, March 25
Port of Ilwaco Office
165 Howerton Avenue, Ilwaco WA 98624**

The same information and materials will be distributed at each meeting. If you are unable to attend either meeting, and need more information, please contact Lorna Wargo at (360) 249-1221 or (360) 489-4679.

Sincerely,



Lorna Wargo
Marine Fisheries Biologist
Enclosures (2)