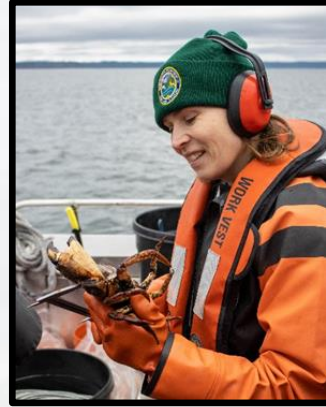


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Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE

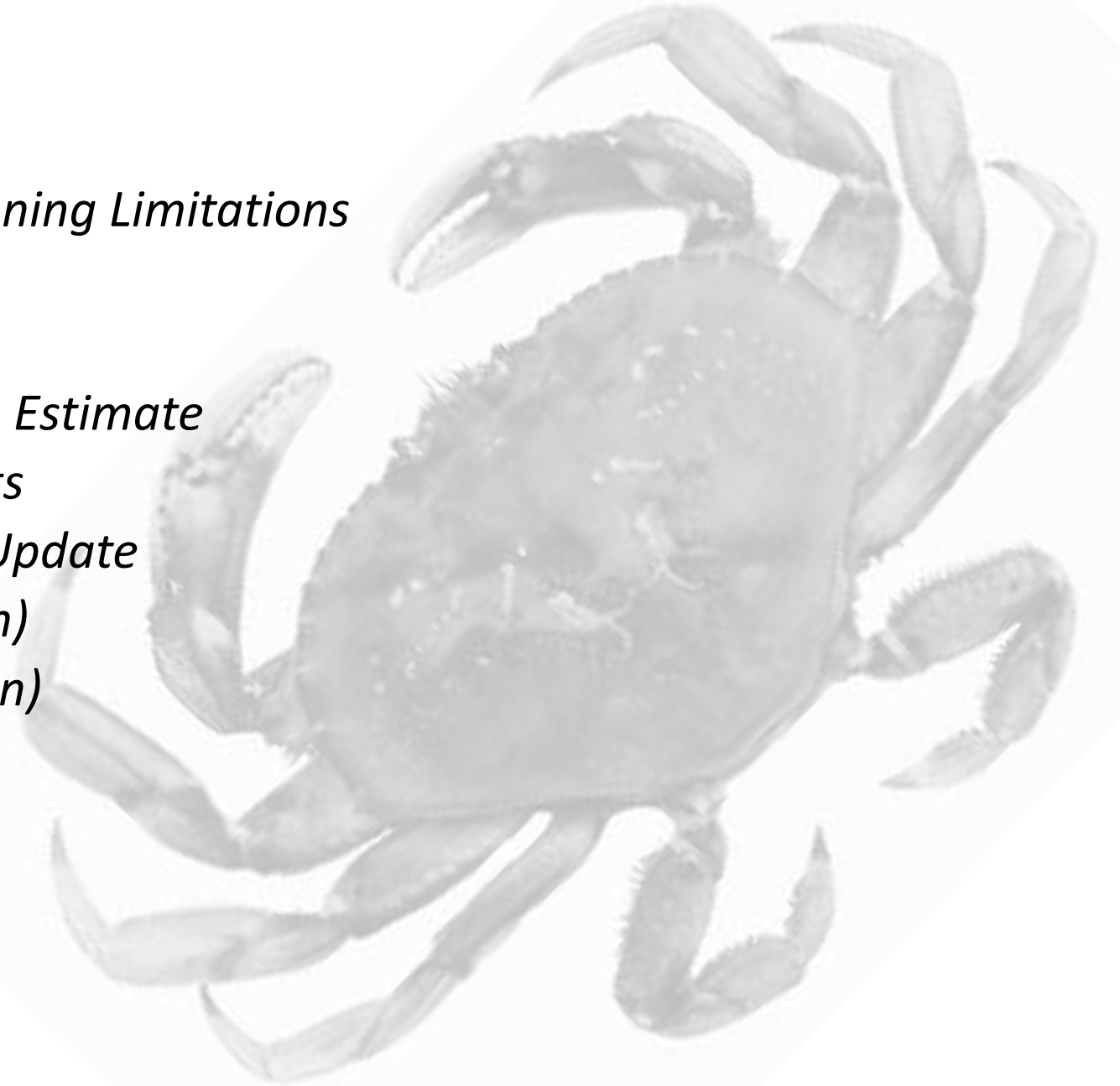
Puget Sound Commercial Crab Advisory Group Meeting

September 26, 2023

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Meeting Agenda

1. *Welcome and housekeeping*
2. *WDFW Rulemaking and Season Planning Limitations*
3. *State Fishery Management Updates*
 - a. *WaTix Fisher Profile Changes*
 - b. *Preliminary Recreational Catch Estimate*
 - c. *Preliminary Commercial Targets*
4. *State / Treaty Fishery Coordination Update*
5. *Market Status & Updates (Discussion)*
6. *Season Opening Proposals (Discussion)*
 - a. *Set Asides*
 - b. *Fishery Start Date*
 - c. *Time Between Openings*



WDFW Rulemaking and Season Planning Limitations

WDFW does not have the legal authority to open and close fisheries solely due to market conditions (emergency rules).

- 2022-23 early season closure was pursued because market conditions were such that there were wastage/conservation issues.

Due to:

- Legislative authorities granted the department when making emergency rules.
- Internal department policy.

Pre-season Fisheries Planning can be accommodated

- Pulse openings (with constraints)
- Delays
- Set asides
- Pot limits
- Potentially other mechanisms

In-season decisions to pause or modify that plan based on purely on price or market conditions, is not something the department will do.

WDFW Rulemaking and Season Planning Limitations

Cannot Accommodate	Can <i>possibly</i> Accommodate (with modifications or restrictions)	Can Accommodate
Modifications to pre-season plans for market reasons	Pulse-openings	Pre and Mid-season pot limit modifications (up or down)
Pulse-openers where pounds are the only structural consideration	Set-aside pounds for delayed harvest	Split commercial region opening (i.e. delayed opening in 2E)
Different open/closing dates by area for pulse openings	More than one short pulse-opener	
Pulse-openers less than five days		

WDFW Rulemaking and Season Planning Limitations – *Cannot Accommodate*

1. Modifying pre-season plans for market conditions alone.
 - Conflicts with Department policy
 - Outside mandated authority of emergency regulations
2. Pulse-openings where pounds are the only structural consideration.
 - Pound-based fisheries will vary in duration and impart additional unpredictability
 - Pound-based targets will be hard to achieve due to administrative constraints
 - Pulse openings based on a certain number of pre-determined days are preferred
3. Different opening / closing dates for crab management regions during pulse-openings.
 - Temporary constraint
 - Adds additional complexity; want to become more familiar with this fishery structure and our constraints before adding more elements
4. Pulse-openings that are less than 5 days in duration.
 - Equity, stability and the ability of the department to respond to changing conditions make shorter duration fisheries harder to accommodate

WDFW Rulemaking and Season Planning Limitations – *Can possibly accommodate (with modifications / restrictions)*

1. Pulse-openings.

- 5 day minimum duration
- All areas operating under the same structure (except pot limits)
- Structured around number of days not number of pounds

2. Set-aside pounds for delayed harvest.

- Want date determined beforehand
- Criteria to determine if set-aside is followed or not.
- Minimizing the number of times we go on and off the water is a department consideration due to the additional co-manager conversations that result.

3. More than one pulse opener per season.

- Minimizing the number of times we go on and off the water is a department consideration due to the additional co-manager conversations that result.
- More openings are harder to plan and more likely to be impacted by external factors.

WDFW Rulemaking and Season Planning Limitations – *Can Accommodate*

1. Pre or mid-season modifications to regional pot limits.
 - Not below 30 pots
 - Historically the department has modified pot limits in season and will be amenable to doing so
2. Split commercial season openings by region (i.e. 2E opening independently).
 - Not the preferred approach of the department (or industry) but has occurred when the recreational target has been too variable to allow for an Oct 1 opening in all areas.
 - Not supportive of individual openings in each region at this time.

WDFW Rulemaking and Season Planning Limitations – *Set-Asides*

Set-Aside Reasons:

- Late season harvest (max price per pound)
- Secure quota increase (?)

Set-Aside Constraints:

- Divisive issue
- Hard to navigate the poundage target.
- Easy to miss market targets (external factors unpredictable)
- Increase comanager conversations (late season discussions regarding fisher coordination)
- Limit quota increase discussions (in recent years)
- Pounds may go away as catch is updated (summer and winter recreational targets; catch accounting issues; enforcement issues; survey method updates)

Management Updates – Electronic fish ticket rule changes

Proposed rule changes would require electronic tickets that are completed using a mobile device be ***filled out immediately on-site*** and submitted immediately following the completion of a delivery prior to leaving the delivery location.

- If there are network issues fish tickets must be filled out and signed using the transportation ticket method and ***submitted*** once access service is regained.
- If there is cellular service fish tickets must be ***submitted immediately***.

What this means:

- Fishers should be asked to verify catch and review a fish ticker prior to catch leaving their vicinity.
 - Verification code on phone and reviewing dealer's phone.
 - Exchanging a transportation ticket with a signature with the dealer.
- **Dealers will no longer be issued transportation tickets.**
- Fishers will continue to be issued transportation tickets.

Management Updates – Summer Recreational Estimate

Management Region	Marine Area	Regional State Share	State Summer Recreational Catch	State Summer EUC
1	7	2,300,000	373,045	37,193
2E	8-1,8-2	969,501	456,572	45,520
2W	9	208,015	97,886	9,759
3-1	6, N	44,415	1,637	163
3-2	6, SE	350,000	98,608	9,831
3-3	6, W	15,500	2,046	204
3-4	4, 5	9,500	4,701	469
4	10	40,000	69,125	6,892
5	12	240,200	79,130	7,889
6	11	42,000	56,818	5,665
7	13	0	177	18
STATE HARVEST TOTALS		4,219,131	1,239,744	123,602

19.2% Summer CRC's reporting, Estimate from 09/25/2023

Management Updates – Preliminary Commercial Targets

Management Region	Commercial Target (includes EUC)
1	1,817,475
2E	404,584
2W	69,115
3-1	41,839
3-2	218,084
3-3	12,681
3-4	3,405

State / Treaty Fishery Coordination Update

Treaty tribes are targeting 1.2 million between mid-September and mid-October (1.5 million total for the season todate).

Region 1 Treaty Fishery: Sept. 29/30 (*weather dependent*), 500,000 pound target.

Additional fisheries are being planned but are not finalized.

Additional conversations regarding fishery coordination are tentative.

Market Status & Updates

Are there any new or developing issues that may impact the market cap?

Are there any other constraints that we need to be aware of to plan the commercial season?

2023 / 2024 Commercial Season - Proposal #1

Proposal 1: Short initial pulse opener, with a pause in fishing and late season set aside in region 1.

Pulse Opening Date: October 15, 2023.

Pulse Closing Date: October 21, 2023.

Areas effected: All areas.

Pounds Targeted: ~725,000 lbs.

(5yr avg)

Fishery Duration: 7 Days.

Pot limit: 30

Time between openings: 15 days

Second Opening Date: Nov. 6, 2023

Second Closing Date: TBD

Late Season Set Aside: 250,000lbs. Reg 1

Target Date for Set Aside: TBD

Fishery Duration: Variable by area.

Pot limit: 30



2023 / 2024 Commercial Season - Proposal #1

Proposal 1: Short initial pulse opener, with a pause in fishing and late season set aside in region 1.

- This is the department preference.
 - Requires less coordination with co-managers.
 - Less sensitive to influence from changing market or supply conditions.
 - Simpler of the *new approaches*
- Elements to refine:
 - Start date (taking into account treaty fisheries as much as is practical)
 - Length of time between first and second opening
 - Duration of pulse fishery
 - Set-aside



2023 / 2024 Commercial Season - Proposal #2

Proposal 2: Two 5-day pulse fisheries followed by a thanksgiving transition to the typical fishery structure.

Pulse 1 Opening: October 10, 2023.

Pulse 1 Closing: October 14, 2023.

Areas effected: All areas.

Pounds Targeted: ~525,000 lbs.

Fishery Duration: 5 Days.

Pot limit: 30

Time between openings: 15 days

Pulse 2 Opening: Nov. 1, 2023.

Pulse 2 Closing: Nov. 4, 2023.

Areas effected: All areas.

Pounds Targeted: ~525,000 lbs.

Fishery Duration: 5 Days.

Pot limit: 30

Time between openings: 15 days

Third opening: Nov 16, 2023

Third Closing: TBD, area dependent

Late Season Set-aside: 250,000 lbs

Pot Limit: 30



2023 / 2024 Commercial Season - Proposal #2

Proposal 2: Two 5-day pulse fisheries followed by a thanksgiving transition to the typical fishery structure.

- Not supported, as initially described:
 - More complex of the proposed options.
 - Potential issues with short duration exacerbating initially poor catches (i.e. missing the crab)
 - Very sensitive to treaty fishing plans.
 - Long time period makes it sensitive to external factors that we may not be able to be responsive to.
 - Requires additional coordination in advance to have plan that we set in advance and don't change (department constraint)



2023 / 2024 Commercial Season - Proposal #3

Proposal 3: No pulse fishery. Delayed standard opening with Region 1 set aside.

Opening: October 15, 2023.

Closing: TBD

Areas effected: All areas.

Late Season Set-aside: 250,000 lbs

Pot Limit: 30



2023 / 2024 Commercial Season - Proposal #3

Proposal 3: No pulse fishery. Delayed standard opening with Region 1 set aside.

- Traditional fishery structure
- Does not try to address underlying supply problems that resulted in market issues last year.
- Elements to refine:
 - Start date
 - Set-aside details



2023 / 2024 Commercial Season – Summary

Department prefers **Proposal 1** or **Proposal 3**

What are the constraints with these as proposed? (Discussion)

- What works?
- What doesn't?

Final determination will be by the department.

- Industry input and perspectives will be strongly considered.
- Final structure will look functionally similar to industry preference if the department can implement
- Details may change slightly (openings date, closing date, etc.)
 - Factors that we have to consider that may come up between final implementation.



Alternative Mechanisms – Future Seasons

1. Mid to Late September commercial openings.
2. Temporary per license landing limits.
3. Tiered pot limits based on the number of licenses stacked on a vessel.



Adjourn Thank you!

