



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Region Six • 48 Devonshire Road • Montesano, Washington 98563-9618 • (360) 249-4628 • FAX (360) 249-1229

Tuesday, August 19, 2014

Dear Washington Commercial Dungeness Crab License Owner,

This letter is to inform you of the outcome of the discussions that occurred during 2014 Tri-State Dungeness Crab Committee meeting held in May and to update you regarding proposed rule changes we anticipate will be in place for the 2014-15 season.

Tri-State Meeting Results

The Tri-State meeting was held on May 20-21, 2014 in Sacramento, California. The following members of the Coastal Dungeness Crab Advisory board represented the Washington crab industry at the meeting; Larry Thevik, Libbie Cain, Dwight Eager, Dale Beasley and Jim Long.

Washington's delegation joined industry representatives from Oregon and California and fishery managers from the state fish and wildlife agencies in discussing several issues at length.

The primary discussion centered on revisions to pre-season testing protocols with the intent to continue to improve test consistency among the three states and ultimately improve crab quality at the opening of the season. These changes have now been incorporated into the Tri-State Pre-Season Testing Protocols and are available on the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission web site at:

<http://www.psmfc.org/crab/>

During the meeting the Tri-State Committee was also updated regarding the on-going discussions by the California Dungeness Crab Task Force to bring more California area (including district 10) into the Tri-State MOU. The Tri-State Committee agreed to discuss this further (at a future meeting) if the California Task Force can agree to an implementation that follows the current Tri-State pre-season testing and season opening criteria including a fair start period.

Finally, the Tri-State Committee discussed and approved extending the pre-season gear-soak period to allow for a fishery opening to occur during daylight hours. This change would improve WDFW enforcement capabilities to ensure there is no fishing prior to the legal start time and could make the fishery opening safer for some vessels. Such a move would require a WDFW rule change through the Fish and Wildlife Commission process. WDFW described to the Tri-State Committee our intention to retain flexibility regarding the length of the pre-soak period for the season opening north of Klipsan Beach.

The final meeting notes will also soon be posted on the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission web site at: <http://www.psmfc.org/crab/>

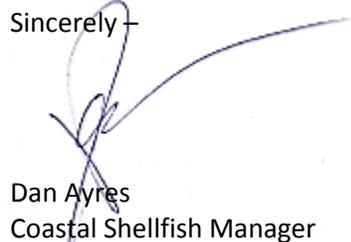
Proposed Rule Changes

Over the last year or so we have had several detailed discussions with both the Washington Dungeness Crab Advisory Board and an ad hoc group of industry members regarding a variety of potential changes to improve how the fishery is operated. We feel that sufficient consensus has been reached during these discussions to move forward with proposing the following rules changes to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission for consideration:

- Logbooks: Currently, crab caught in Oregon and landed into Washington are not required to be recorded in a logbook. We are proposing to revise the current rule to insure that all crab landed into Washington are captured in WDFW logbooks.
- Replacement buoy tags: While there seems to be increasing support to eliminate replacement buoy tags altogether, this proposed rule change would revise the tag replacement schedule so it is not tied to a specific season opening date and would reduce the number of tags issued from 15 to 10 percent of the total amount allowed. We plan to solicit more input from industry on whether or not to continue issuing replacement tags in the future.
- Gear tending rule: The intent of this proposed rule is to reduce issues with derelict gear associated with leaving crab gear in the water for long periods of time without being fished. The proposed rule would prohibit crab gear from being deployed for more than 21 days without making a landing from May 1 through September 15.

These rule changes will be made through the Fish and Wildlife Commission adoption process. Additional information will be coming with details of the proposed rule changes and opportunities to provide input. In the meantime, feel free to direct any questions you have to me.

Sincerely –



Dan Ayres
Coastal Shellfish Manager

Cc. Heather Reed
Steve Thiesfeld