



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

November 20, 2009

Dear Coastal Dungeness Crab Fisher:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the details relative to the opening of the 2009-2010 coastal Dungeness crab fishery. Washington, Oregon and California have all completed pre-season test fishing necessary to set the season opening date. In addition, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has finalized management agreements with the Makah and the Quileute Tribes. WDFW is continuing to work with the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) on the final details of our state/tribal management agreement for the 2009-2010 season.

Although discussions with QIN have not been completed, we are attempting to resolve the remaining issues so that we can implement our fishery regulations based on a joint management plan. One outstanding issue that we will continue to discuss with QIN is to clarify the language that describes the potential opening of the Secondary Special Management Areas (SSMAs). Outlined below are management measures that represent the state's intent for the 2009-2010 season. WDFW will provide QIN with the same head-start provisions and Special Management Area (SMA) boundaries that were in place during the last two seasons.

As you know, state/tribal management plans have relied on tribal fishery head-starts and Special Management Areas (SMAs) to achieve fair sharing of the harvest opportunity. However, uncertainties in crab abundance and unpredictable weather can make it difficult to achieve harvest sharing goals discussed pre-season. This year, if weather conditions or crab abundance are poor during the QIN head start period, WDFW may require state fishers, fishing north of Klipsan Beach, to start the season with a temporary reduced pot limit. If a reduced pot limit is implemented it will be the same as the reduced pot limit that is in place south of Klipsan Beach. License owners with permanent 500 or 300 pot limits will be allowed 400 and 250 pots respectively. While the reduced pot limit is in effect, all un-used buoy tags must be on board the vessel at all times. Fishers will be notified by mid-December if it is necessary to open the fishery with a temporary reduced pot limit north of Klipsan Beach.

Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the management measures described below before you begin your fishing operations and stay informed relative to additional changes.

OPENING DATES AND FAIR START PROVISIONS:

Klipsan Beach to WA/OR Border including Willapa Bay:

The coastal Dungeness crab fishery will open to state fishers from Klipsan Beach (46°28.00) to the WA/OR border (46°15.00), including Willapa Bay (*recall the western boundary description was revised last year), on **December 1, 2009**. A 64-hour gear pre-set period starting at 8:00 AM, November 28, 2009 will precede the opening. Vessel hold inspections will be conducted on November 30, 2009, starting at noon. Fishers can begin fishing in this area at 12:01 a.m. on December 1, 2009.

- Fishers participating in the fishery south of Klipsan Beach or in Willapa Bay are subject to reduced pot limits. Fishers with permanent pot limits of 500 and 300 will be allowed to use 400 or 250 pots, respectively. Unused buoy tags must be on board vessels until the temporary pot limit is lifted. **If a temporary pot limit is implemented in the area north of Klipsan Beach the reduced pot limit south of Klipsan Beach will remain in place until the northern reduced pot limit is lifted.**
- Vessels that fish in the area between Point Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach and/or in Willapa Bay before the ocean area north of Klipsan Beach opens are subject to the fair start provisions described below.
- The boundary between the Willapa Bay and the ocean waters is distinguished by a straight line connecting the following coordinates:

*Cape Shoalwater: 46°44.76 N - 124°05.76 W

Leadbetter Point: 46°38.93 N - 124°04.33 W

Klipsan Beach to Destruction Island:

The state commercial fishery from **Klipsan Beach to Destruction Island will open at 12:01 am, January 2, 2010**. A 64-hour gear pre-set period will begin at 8:00 am December 30, 2009, hold inspections will be conducted starting at noon on January 1, 2010. **Fishers may be required to use a temporary reduced pot limit upon the opening in this area. If in effect, fishers with permanent pot limits of 500 and 300 will be allowed to use 400 or 250 pots, respectively. Unused buoy tags must be on board vessels until the temporary pot limit is lifted.**

Destruction Island to U.S.-Canadian Border:

The state commercial fishery from Destruction Island to the U.S. Canadian border will not open before on **12:01 AM, January 15, 2010**. **The opening in this area may be delayed past January 15 as necessary to provide 20 fishable days between December 1, 2009 and January 15, 2010**. There will **not** be a 64-hour pre-set period before the

opening in this area. **Fishers may be subject to a temporary reduced pot limit if one is implemented for the opening between Klipsan Beach and Destruction Island until such time that the reduced pot limit is lifted.**

Fair Start Provisions:

- **Klipsan Beach (46°28.00) to Oysterville (46°33.00):** Vessels that fish between Point Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach, WA, including Willapa Bay, before the area north of Klipsan Beach opens will be allowed to fish in the area between Klipsan Beach and Oysterville at **8:00 am on January 12, 2010.**
- **Oysterville (46°33.00) to U.S. - Canadian Border:** Vessels that participate in the fishery between Point Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach, WA, including Willapa Bay, before the area north of Oysterville opens will be allowed to fish in the area between Oysterville and U.S. - Canadian border at **8:00 am February 6, 2010.**

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS:

Quinault:

The Quinault **primary SMA** will be closed to state fishers beginning at 12:01 AM January 2, 2010. The **primary SMA** is scheduled to remain closed to state fishers through February 28, 2010; however, is subject to change based on actual state and tribal catches observed in-season.

The Quinault **primary SMA** is described as the coastal waters shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve between Raft River (47°28.00) and Copalis River (47°08.00) according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: 47°28.00N. – 124° 20.70
- Northwest Corner: 47°28.00N. – 124°34.00
- Southwest Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124°24.75
- Southeast Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124° 11.20

There will be a 100-pot limit in the areas opened to the state fishery shoreward of 27 fathoms from Raft River to Copalis River. Fishers must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear in this area. Specific details regarding SMA openings and pot limits will be made available prior to opening.

A Quinault **secondary SMA** (SSMA) will be established to include the area shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve between the mouth of the Copalis River and Point Grenville according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: 47°18.35N. - 124°16.00

- Northwest Corner: 47°18.35N. – 124°29.55
- Southwest Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124°24.75
- Southeast Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124°11.20

A second Quinalt SSMA will be established to include the area shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve from Point Grenville to Split Rock according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: 47°24.50N. - 124°20.00
- Northwest Corner: 47°24.50N. - 124°32.40
- Southwest Corner: 47°18.35N. - 124°29.55
- Southeast Corner: 47°18.35N. – 124°16.00

Quileute:

The Quileute SMA will be closed to state fishers beginning immediately upon the opening of the state fishery in the area from Destruction Island to U.S. Canadian border. The Quileute SMA will open to state fishers beginning at 8:00 AM, May 1, 2010.

The Quileute SMA is described as the area from Cape Johnson to Destruction Island shoreward of a line approximating 30 fathoms according to the following points:

- Northeast Corner; Cape Johnson 47°58.00 - 124°40.40
- Northwest Corner; 47°58.00 N. - 124°49.00W.
- Southwest Corner; 47°40.50 N. - 124°40.00'W.
- Southeast Corner; Destruction Island 47°40.50 - 124° 24.43

There will be a 100-pot limit in the SMA from May 1, 2010, through May 31, 2010. Fishers must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear in this area.

Makah SMA:

The Makah SMA will be closed to state fishers immediately upon the opening of the state fishery in the area between Destruction Island and U.S. Canadian border and will remain closed for 30-days.

There will be a 200-pot limit in the SMA for the first 30-days following the opening of the SMA to state fishers. Fishers must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear in this area.

The Makah SMA is described as the coastal waters between 48°02.15N. to 48°19.50N. east of a line connecting those points approximating the 25-fathom line according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner; Tatoosh Island
- Northwest Corner; 48°19.50 N. – 124°50.45 W.

- Southwest Corner; 48°02.15 N. – 124°50.45 W.
- Southeast Corner, 48°02.15 N. – 124°41.00 W.

Other Requirements:

- a. Vessels not designated on a coastal Dungeness crab fishery license are permitted to transport or deploy up to 250 pots during the pre-soak period. The primary operator of the vessel associated with the pots being transported must be aboard the vessel while they are being deployed.
- b. All license holders will be required to carry, complete, and submit logbooks to WDFW. This information will greatly assist us in managing our fishery in the future. WDFW revised the format of the logbooks to collect more reliable data and to allow for better tracking, the new logbooks will be distributed during hold inspections.
- c. Notification to WDFW Enforcement is required when transiting crab through closed areas. Notification is to be made 24-hours prior to entering the area north of 47°00.00 N. Latitude by calling 360-581-3337, and reporting the vessel name, operator name, estimated amount of crab to be delivered in pounds, and the estimated date, time, and location of delivery. The following situations will require notification.
 - a. Vessels transiting north of Grays Harbor with crab caught south of Klipsan beach (46°28.00) or Willapa Bay prior to the area north of Klipsan beach opening.
 - b. Vessels transiting north of Grays Harbor with crab caught south of Destruction Island (47°40.50) prior to the area north of Destruction Island opening.
- d. A hold inspection certificate number is required on all fish tickets through January 31, 2010.
- e. WDFW would like your help, please call the coastal crab hotline (360-249-4628, extension 260) if you witness or have information regarding enforcement violations including fishing in closed areas, starting early, pots without buoy tags, etc.

This information and future updates will also be available on WDFW web page:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/comcrab/coast/>

If you have questions regarding the information contained in this letter or other regulations pertaining to the coastal Dungeness crab fishery, please contact Dan Ayres at (360) 249-4628 ext. 209.

Coastal Dungeness Crab Fisher

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Thank you for your patience and your help as we continue to work through this year's preseason management process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Reed". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'H'.

Heather Reed
Coastal Marine Resources Policy Coordinator
WDFW

cc: Phil Anderson
Dan Ayres