



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

November 22, 2014

Dear Coastal Dungeness Crab Fisher:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information regarding the opening of the 2014-15 coastal Dungeness crab fishery in the area south of Klipsan Beach, Washington and preliminary information regarding the opening of the crab fishery in the area north of Klipsan Beach. Pre-season test fishing necessary to set the season opening date has been completed, final test fishing results indicate that crab condition criteria has been met in Washington, Oregon and California. The area between Klipsan Beach, Washington and Point Arena, California will open on December 1, 2014, with a gear set period beginning at 8:00 A.M. on November 28, 2014.

As you have previously been informed, *in Washington and Oregon the gear setting period has been extended and the time fishing (pulling gear) will begin has changed to **9:00 A.M.** on December 1, 2014.* The Tri-State Dungeness Crab Committee (Tri-State Committee) met this spring and agreed to revise the pre-season gear set period in Washington and Oregon. This change to extend the pre-season gear set period from 64 hours to 73 hours prior to the season opening is so that commercial fishermen will be retrieving their gear in daylight hours rather than in the dark. This change will improve safety, enhance enforceability and provide for a coordinated season opening for the Washington and Oregon commercial Dungeness crab fisheries. The time fishing will begin will remain 12:00 midnight on December 1, 2014 in California.

At this point, discussions for all state-tribal harvest management agreements are on-going and as a result we have not finalized the details relative to the state season opening in the area north of Klipsan Beach, WA. A follow up letter will be provided as soon as possible with complete information on the opening in this area.

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 (*note the western

boundary description), on **December 1, 2014**. A 73-hour gear pre-set period starting at 8:00 A.M., November 28, 2014 will precede the opening. Vessel hold inspections will be conducted on November 30, 2014, starting at noon. Fishers can begin fishing in this area at **9:00 A.M.** on December 1, 2014.

- 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.
- Vessels that fish in the area between Point Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach 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 opening date for this area has not been determined. We will provide you with an additional letter containing the specific regulations for this area as soon as possible.

Destruction Island to U.S.-Canadian Border:

The state commercial fishery from Destruction Island to the U.S. Canadian border will not open before **January 15, 2015**. We will provide you with an additional letter containing the specific regulations for this area as soon as possible.

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 not be allowed to fish in the area between Klipsan Beach and Oysterville until **10-days** after the area from Klipsan Beach to Oysterville opens.
- **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 not be allowed to fish in the area between Oysterville and U.S. - Canadian border until **35-days** after the area from Oysterville to Destruction Island opens.

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.
- 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 until further notice. The specific date when this requirement will no longer be in effect will depend on when the area north of Klipsan opens.
- 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, specific pre-season test results 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.

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

Sincerely,

Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishers

November 22, 2014

Page 4

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

Heather Reed

Coastal Marine Resources Policy Coordinator

cc: Phil Anderson
Michele Culver
Steve Thiesfield
Dan Ayres