



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

December 20, 2023

WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

Season Opening Delayed in Washington, Oregon

On December 20, 2023, Tri-State policy representatives from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) agreed to delay the opening of the 2023-24 Coastal Dungeness crab fishery from Cape Falcon (45° 46' 0" N. Lat.) to the US/Canada border through at least January 15, 2023. The section of Oregon coast from Cape Falcon to Cape Foulweather (44° 46' 24" N. Lat.) will open December 31, 2023. Vessels that participate in the Dungeness crab fishery south of Cape Falcon, OR may only deliver into the ports of Ilwaco and Chinook until further notice. Participants in the area south of Cape Falcon, OR should note ODFW closed area transit allowance requirements and new WDFW electronic monitoring requirement that go into effect on Jan 1, 2024.

The decision to delay is based on crab condition tests conducted by WDFW and ODFW that indicate shell condition and meat recovery within the Long Beach and Astoria Test Areas do not currently meet the minimum meat recovery criteria as defined in the Tri-State Dungeness Crab Pre-Season Testing Protocols (23% north of Cascade Head and 24% south of Cascade Head). Test results were previously published as part of an industry notice on December 18, 2023; a summary of these results is also included at the end of this notice. WDFW and ODFW will be exercising their option to conduct a fourth test within the Long Beach and Astoria Test Areas before January 7, 2024 and will provide additional information regarding the season opening as soon as possible. If both areas meet 23% meat recovery in a fourth round of testing, these areas will open January 15th. If one or both areas do not meet 23% meat recovery, both areas will open in coordination on February 1st.

Tribal Co-management in Washington

WDFW has finalized 2023-24 State/Tribal Dungeness crab co-management agreements with the Quileute Tribe, Makah Tribe, Hoh Tribe, and Quinault Indian Nation (QIN). QIN opened their commercial Dungeness crab fishery within their U&A (between Point Chehalis and Destruction Island) on Monday, December 11, 2023. In accordance with the provisions of the State-QIN agreement, the parties will use the first 30 days of QIN catch to determine the number of QIN head-start days. Based on the QIN season opening date of December 11, 2023 and the agreed to sliding scale, the state season opening in the Quinault U&A will be between January 28 and February 1, 2024. WDFW will publish additional details around the season opening in the area north of Klipsan Beach in a subsequent notice.

If you have any questions pertaining to this notice, contact the Washington Coastal Shellfish Manager at Matthew.George@dfw.wa.gov or 360-640-1066.

