

Summary

Meeting dates: December 11, 2015.

Agenda item: 2015 Major West Coast Harmful Algal Bloom – (Briefing)

Presenter(s): Dan Ayres, WDFW Coastal Shellfish Manager

Background summary:

Starting in late April 2015, a massive harmful algal bloom (HAB) of the marine diatom *Pseudo-nitzschia* came ashore along the west coast from central California to Alaska. This HAB resulted in significant fisheries closures, including Washington's important commercial Dungeness crab and recreational razor clam fisheries. The briefing will include information on the impacts to these fisheries and the communities that depend on them and emerging information about possible causes of this year's HAB.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

None, this is a briefing only.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Through the use of WDFW news releases, updates on the agency web site, and many interactions with the news media, we have been keeping interested shellfish harvesters apprised of this evolving situation. In November 2015 WDFW was invited by NOAA to travel to Washington D.C. Staff participated in a NOAA briefing to congressional staff regarding the impacts this West Coast HAB event is having on our fisheries management and in the small coastal communities in Washington State. In each of these forums, we have received support in our efforts to learn more about the dynamics behind the naturally occurring harmful algal blooms that can result in increased levels of domoic acid in shellfish and the resulting fishery disruptions.

Action requested:

Draft motion language:

Justification for Commission action:

Communications Plan:
