

Amending Coastal Recreational Dungeness Crab Rules

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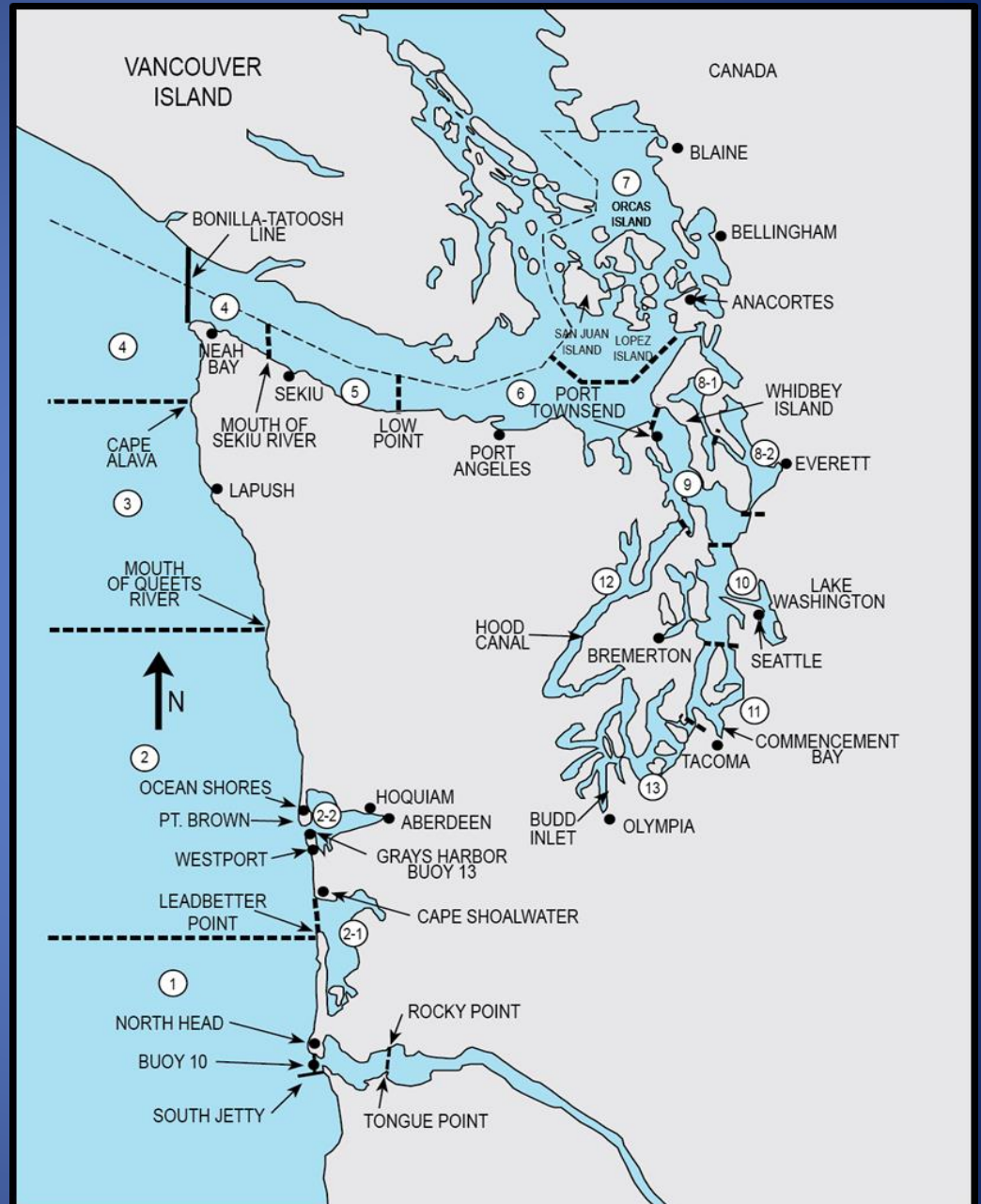
Coastal Recreational Crab Fishery Overview



- **Recreational and commercial fisheries are managed by size, sex and season**
 - Minimum size 6 inches (commercial 6 1/4), males only, closed during the primary molt period (September 15 – November 30)
- **Average catch 2002-2007:**
 - Commercial: 15.9 million pounds
 - Recreational (CRC): 49.8 thousand pounds

Coastal Marine Areas 1 – 4

- Proposed changes would apply to Marine Areas 1 through 4
- Changes to the Columbia River area are not proposed



Information is subject to changes and amendments over time.

Purpose and Need for Rule Changes

- **The coastal Dungeness crab fishery is a winter fishery that opens on Dec. 1**
 - commercial pots can be set as early as November 28
- **Weather can be prohibitive for recreational crabbers**
 - Effort focused Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay
- **Gear conflict between commercial and recreational users can be an issue in areas where the fisheries operate together**

Proposed Action

- **Revise the opening of the recreational crab pot season to open on November 15, two weeks earlier than the current December 1 opening**
- **Affect:**
 - **Reduce gear conflict between recreational and commercial users**
 - **Provide additional access to recreational users**
 - **Minimal, if any, impact to the Dungeness crab resource**

Policy Issues

- **Dungeness Crab Resource:**
 - **Earlier opening could increase encounters with soft crab**
 - **The commercial sector may feel there is an unfair advantage to the recreational sector**
 - **Given the minor change in regulations and the limited effort in the recreational sector, no negative impacts to the resource are expected**

Policy Issues

- **Sport Rule Making Timeline:**
 - Sport rule changes are typically considered through the WDFW sport rule process which would begin in July 2019 and effective July 2020
 - This proposal was originally submitted to the WDFW Rules Coordinator as a petition to the Fish and Wildlife Commission
 - As an alternative, the change is being consider outside the WDFW sport rule process to allow for more timely implementation and through the Commission process which allows for more discussion and public input than the petition process

Questions or Comments?