



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

WDFW is implementing the following change to coastal commercial Dungeness crab regulations effective August 21, 2016:

It is unlawful for any person licensed to fish under a Dungeness crab-coastal fishery license to possess or land crab in excess of 1,200 pounds during any weekly catch accounting period (Sunday through Saturday). See the list of catch accounting periods below.

Any crab taken prior to August 21, 2016, and not landed before 11:59 p.m. August 20, 2016, become part of the August 21-27, 2016 accounting period catch.

Weekly Catch Accounting Periods:

- August 21 – August 27, 2016
- August 28 – September 3, 2016
- September 4 – September 10, 2016
- September 11 – September 15, 2016

JUSTIFICATION:

The Summer Fishery Management Plan (Plan) calls for the implementation of management measures intended to protect the Dungeness crab resource when significant amounts of soft-shelled crab are present during the commercial crab fishery.

Specifically, the Plan states: If any single shell condition test conducted during a ride-along trip indicates that less than 50% of the male crabs sampled are grades 1A and/or 1B OR, if any three shell condition tests conducted during random dockside sampling within a two week period as described in Appendix B indicates that less than 75% of the crab sampled are grades 1A and 1B, WDFW will impose a 1,200 pound weekly landing limit.

This week crab condition data has met the above criteria. Sampling by WDFW staff found less than 50% hard crab in one shipboard trip, triggering a reduced weekly landing limit. In addition, two dockside samples from different vessels fishing in different areas found less than 75% hard crab confirming that soft crab are widespread.

After the imposition of landing limits, the Plan directs WDFW to continue sampling.

If any single shell condition test conducted during a ride-along trip indicates that more than 50% of the male crabs sampled are grades 1A and/or 1B AND, if any three shell condition tests conducted during random dockside sampling within a two week period following the implementation of the 1,200 pound landing limit indicate that more than 75% of the crab in the sample are grades 1A and 1B, WDFW will increase the weekly landing limit to 2,500 pounds.