



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

December 18, 2009

Dear Coastal Dungeness Crab Fisher:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with updated information regarding the opening of the 2009-2010 coastal Dungeness crab fishery in the area between Klipsan Beach, Washington and Destruction Island.

We met with the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) yesterday to finalize a management plan for the 2009-10 season. The final details of the agreement include the already negotiated head start for the QIN fleet and a state season opening of January 2, 2010.

In the last letter that was sent on November 20, 2009, I explained that the state fleet could potentially start the season in the area north of Klipsan Beach with a temporary reduced pot limit based on the fishing opportunity for QIN during the head-start period. The QIN head-start has been comparable to previous seasons and therefore, **the state fleet will not be required to start the season with a temporary reduced pot limit; fishers will be allowed to deploy gear up to their permanent limit of 500 or 300 pots.**

The 2009-2010 management plan includes a Primary SMA (PSMA) and a Secondary Special Management Area (SSMA) with the same boundaries that have been in place for the past two seasons. As in the past, the PSMA includes the area from Raft River to the Copalis River out to 27 fathoms and will be closed to state fishers at the start of the state season. On March 1, 2010 the PSMA will be converted to one SSMA, which maintains the closed area from Split Rock to the Copalis River out to 27 fathoms but results in an open area for state fishers from Raft River to Split Rock out to 27 fathoms. Fishers that fish in the area from Raft River to Split Rock will be required to use a reduced pot limit and must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear. The difference with the SSMA structure this season as compared to the 2008-09 season is that there will only be one SSMA that covers the area between Split Rock and Copalis River. The SSMA will be in place through the end of the season but state and QIN fishery managers will monitor in-season catch information and have reserved the flexibility to make changes as necessary according to harvest sharing data.

Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the management measures described below before you begin your fishing operations.

OPENING DATES AND FAIR START PROVISIONS:

Klipsan Beach to WA/OR Border including Willapa Bay:

The coastal Dungeness crab fishery opened to state fishers from Klipsan Beach (46°28.00) to the WA/OR border (46°15.00), including Willapa Bay (*recall the western boundary description was revised last year), on December 1, 2009.

- Fishers participating in the fishery south of Klipsan Beach or in Willapa Bay are subject to reduced pot limits until 12:01 AM January 2, 2010. Fishers with permanent pot limits of 500 and 300 are 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 and/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 state commercial fishery from **Klipsan Beach to Destruction Island will open at 12:01 am, January 2, 2010.** A 64-hour gear pre-set period will begin at 8:00 am December 30, 2009, hold inspections will be conducted starting at noon on January 1, 2010. **Fishers may use up to the permanent pot limit (300 or 500) assigned to their license.**

Destruction Island to U.S.-Canadian Border:

The state commercial fishery from Destruction Island to the U.S. Canadian border will not open before **12:01 AM, January 15, 2010.** **The opening in this area may be delayed past January 15 as necessary to provide 20 fishable days between December 1, 2009 and January 15, 2010.** There will **not** be a 64-hour pre-set period before the opening in this area. Final opening information will be forthcoming.

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 be allowed to fish in the area between Klipsan Beach and Oysterville at **8:00 am on January 12, 2010.**
- **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 be allowed to fish in the area between Oysterville and U.S. - Canadian border at **8:00 am February 6, 2010.**

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS:

Quinault:

The Quinault **primary SMA** will be closed to state fishers beginning at 12:01 AM January 2, 2010. The **primary SMA** is scheduled to remain closed to state fishers through February 28, 2010.

The Quinault **primary SMA** is described as the coastal waters shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve between Raft River (47°28.00) and Copalis River (47°08.00) according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: 47°28.00N. – 124° 20.70
- Northwest Corner: 47°28.00N. – 124°34.00
- Southwest Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124°25.50*
- Southeast Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124° 11.20

The area from Raft River to Split Rock will open to state fishers on March 1, 2010.

There will be a pot limit in the area and fishers must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear in this area. Specific details regarding SMA openings and pot limits will be made available prior to opening.

A Quinault **secondary SMA** (SSMA) will be established to include the area shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve between the mouth of the Copalis River (47°08.00) and Split Rock (47°24.50) according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner (Split Rock): 47°24.50 N. Lat. 124°20.00 W. Lon.
- Northwest Corner: 47°24.50 N. Lat. 124°32.40 W. Lon.
- Southwest Corner: 47°08.00 N. Lat. 124°25.50 W. Lon.*
- Southeast Corner (Copalis River): 47°08.00 N. Lat. 124°11.20 W. Lon.

***Note:** this coordinate has been revised to better reflect the intention of following the 27 fathom depth contour.

Quileute:

The Quileute SMA will be closed to state fishers beginning immediately upon the opening of the state fishery in the area from Destruction Island to U.S. Canadian border. The Quileute SMA will open to state fishers beginning at 8:00 AM, May 1, 2010.

The Quileute SMA is described as the area from Cape Johnson to Destruction Island shoreward of a line approximating 30 fathoms according to the following points:

- Northeast Corner; Cape Johnson 47°58.00 - 124°40.40
- Northwest Corner; 47°58.00 N. - 124°49.00W.
- Southwest Corner; 47°40.50 N. - 124°40.00'W.
- Southeast Corner; Destruction Island 47°40.50 - 124° 24.43

There will be a 100-pot limit in the SMA from May 1, 2010, through May 31, 2010. Fishers must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear in this area.

Makah SMA:

The Makah SMA will be closed to state fishers immediately upon the opening of the state fishery in the area between Destruction Island and U.S. Canadian border and will remain closed for 30-days.

There will be a 200-pot limit in the SMA for the first 30-days following the opening of the SMA to state fishers. Fishers must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear in this area.

The Makah SMA is described as the coastal waters between 48°02.15N. to 48°19.50N. east of a line connecting those points approximating the 25-fathom line according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner; Tatoosh Island
- Northwest Corner; 48°19.50 N. – 124°50.45 W.
- Southwest Corner; 48°02.15 N. – 124°50.45 W.
- Southeast Corner, 48°02.15 N. – 124°41.00 W.

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. WDFW revised the format of the logbooks to collect more reliable data and to allow for better tracking, the new logbooks will be will be distributed during hold inspections.
- c. The ports of Neah Bay, La Push, Westport and Ilwaco/Chinook will have coverage during hold inspections starting at noon on January 1, 2010. Fishers needing a hold inspection outside of these areas need to contact Sergeant Dan Chadwick at 360-581-3337 to make arrangements.

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- d. A hold inspection certificate number is required on all fish tickets through January 31, 2010.
- 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 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.

Sincerely,



Heather Reed
Coastal Marine Resources Policy Coordinator
WDFW

cc: Phil Anderson
Dan Ayres