



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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January 8, 2009

Dear Coastal Dungeness Crab Fisher:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with final details regarding the opening of the coastal crab fishery for the 2008-09 season.

The one outstanding issue regarding the 2008-09 season opening has been finalizing the opening date for the commercial fishery in the area north of Destruction Island. The opening of the commercial crab fishery in this area is dependant on providing the Quileute Tribe with 20-days of fishing between December 1 and January 15 when favorable weather conditions exist or when a tribal fisher has made a landing of 500 pounds or more. Staff from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Quileute Tribe have been tracking weather conditions and landings and have agreed that the fishable day criteria has been met and that the state commercial crab season will open in the area north of Destruction Island on January 15, 2009.

The final opening provisions for the area north of Destruction Island, a summary of the fair start provisions for fishers that fished in the area between Point Arena, California and Klipsan Beach, Washington prior to the openings north of Klipsan Beach and a summary of the 2008-09 Special Management Areas are provided below.

OPENING DATES:

Area	Gear Set Period	Hold Inspection	Opening Date
WA/OR Border to Klipsan Beach/Willapa Bay	Nov. 28, 2008 8:00 AM	Nov. 30, 2008 Noon	Dec. 1, 2008 12:01 AM
Klipsan Beach to Destruction Island	Jan. 12, 2009 8:00 AM	Jan. 14, 2009 Noon	Jan. 15, 2009 12:01 AM
Destruction Island to U.S. Canada Border	*Jan. 12, 2009 8:00 AM	Jan. 14, 2009 Noon	Jan. 15, 2009 12:01 AM

FAIR START PROVISIONS:

Vessels that fished between Pt. Arena, CA and Klipsan Beach, WA prior to the openings north of Klipsan Beach are permitted to fish...	
Area	Date
Klipsan Beach to Oysterville	8:00 AM, January 22, 2009
Oysterville to Destruction Island	8:00 AM, February 16, 2009
Destruction Island to U.S. Canada Border	8:00 AM, February 1, 2009

***Please note that the letter dated December 23, 2008 incorrectly stated that there would not be a 64-hour pre-set period for the opening north of Destruction Island.**

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS:

Quinault:

The Quinault **primary SMA** will be closed to state fishers beginning at 8:00 AM January 12, 2009. The **primary SMA** is scheduled to remain closed to state fishers through February 28, 2009; however, is subject to change based on actual state and tribal catches observed inseason.

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°24.75
- Southeast Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124° 11.20

There will be a 100-pot limit in the areas opened to the state fishery shoreward of 27 fathoms from Raft River to Copalis River through April 30, 2009. Fishers must pre-register with the Department 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 and Point Grenville according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: 47°18.35N. - 124°16.00
- Northwest Corner: 47°18.35N. – 124°29.55
- Southwest Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124°24.75
- Southeast Corner: 47°08.00N. – 124°11.20

This area will be closed to the state fishery from the time the primary SMA closure ends until such time that QIN and the Department of Fish and Wildlife determine that QIN will harvest 50% of the annual catch projection within the 60A-1 catch reporting area.

A second Quinault SSMA will be established to include the area shoreward of a line approximating the 27-fathom depth curve from Point Grenville to Split Rock according to the following coordinates:

- Northeast Corner: 47°24.50N. - 124°20.00
- Northwest Corner: 47°24.50N. - 124°32.40
- Southwest Corner: 47°18.35N. - 124°29.55
- Southeast Corner: 47°18.35N. – 124°16.00

This area will be closed to the state fishery from the time the PSMA closure ends until such time that QIN and state policy representatives determine that QIN will harvest 50% of the annual catch projection within the 59A-2 catch reporting area.

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, 2009.

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, 2009, through May 31, 2009. Fishers must pre-register with the Department 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 the Department 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. Vessel **hold inspections will be conducted at noon on January 14, 2009** for all vessels that have not fished in the area from Klipsan Beach, WA to Point Arena, CA prior to the openings of the fishery north of Klipsan Beach, WA. **Please make sure that there is a clear opening to your vessel's hold, an inspection certificate will not be issued if the hold cannot be checked.**
- c. All license holders will be required to carry, complete, and submit logbooks to the Department. This information will greatly assist us in managing our fishery in the future.

- d. A hold inspection certificate number is required on all fish tickets through January 31, 2009.
- e. WDFW staff and industry have been working to clarify the current language describing the requirement to register buoy colors. To gather additional information, staff will be surveying the fleet during hold inspections. We will also have cameras available during hold inspections if you would like to update your buoy photo.
- f. Make sure that your escape mechanism meets the requirements of WAC 220-52-035; this regulation is intended to allow crab to escape when a crab pot becomes lost or abandoned. You will have through the end of March to change your escape mechanism so that it meets this requirement.
- g. The Department 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 the Department web page:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/shelfish/crabreg/comcrab/coast/>

If you have any questions please contact Brandon Bryant at 360-249-1229 bryablb@dfw.wa.gov or me at 360-249-1202 reedhjr@dfw.wa.gov

Again, we thank-you for your input and your patience during this year's season setting process. Have a safe and prosperous season.

Sincerely,



Heather J. Reed
Coastal Marine Resources Policy Coordinator

cc: Phil Anderson
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