



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Region Six • 48 Devonshire Road • Montesano, Washington 98563-9618 • (360) 249-4628 • FAX (360) 664-0689

WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

March 31, 2023

The purpose of this notice is to inform you of upcoming changes to the Quinault Special Management Area (SMA).

According to the terms of the State-Quinault Harvest Management Agreement, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) agree to exchange catch data and discuss the need for inseason action if needed to balance State-Quinault harvest sharing. In addition to exchanging weekly catch data, State and QIN managers also review historical catch to estimate what the end of season harvest sharing might look like. In general, based on experience, in seasons where crab abundance is higher than average, the state can catch more than 50 percent of the crab in the QIN U&A. In contrast, in seasons with lower crab abundance, state catch at the end of the season can fall below 50 percent.

This season, abundance appears to be well above average based on landings by both the state and QIN fleet through the end of March. Neither state nor QIN landings have been as large as they are now at similar points in past seasons. However, abundance was not clear based on state landings which were slowed by poor weather at the start of the state season and until recently, harvest sharing showed the state well behind QIN. The situation changed quite drastically in the last couple of weeks when landings picked up significantly for the state fleet as weather improved and fair start restrictions were removed allowing more vessels to move north. The most recent catch update with landings through March 28, 2023, shows harvest sharing in the QIN U&A very close to 50-50 with state catch at 3,853,425 lbs. and QIN at 3,841,632 lbs.

WDFW managers are responding to this in accordance with overarching principles agreed to by State and QIN policy representatives to use inseason management tools to balance harvest sharing when needed. WDFW considered reducing the pot limit for vessels fishing in the QIN U&A earlier than the reduction that will occur on May 1, but this option would be difficult if not impossible to enforce. A change to the SMA preserves the pot limit for the state fleet but attempts to slow the pace of the state catch by increasing the size of the SMA and opens areas for the QIN fleet to continue harvesting crab remaining in the U&A.

Effective at 8:00 AM, April 10, 2023, WDFW is revising the coordinates of the Quinault SMA moving the southern boundary approximately 2 miles south and extending the western boundary to a line approximating 30 fathoms (see below for details). The revisions to the SMA boundaries distributes the impacts broadly by revising both the southern and western boundaries. WDFW and QIN managers will continue to track catch and harvest sharing and will consider other management measures if needed. WDFW understands that there appears to be a significant amount of crab available to be harvested and notes that harvest sharing results for this



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season should be evaluated based on an awareness of the participation of both the state and QIN fleets.

Quinault:

Effective at 8:00 a.m., April 10, 2023, until further notice, the Quinault Secondary Special Management Area (SSMA) is closed to fishing for Dungeness crab. The SSMA is defined by the following points:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (a) Northeast Corner: | 47°28.00' N. Lat. 124°20.70' W. Lon. |
| (b) Northwest Corner: | 47°28.00' N. Lat. 124°36.00' W. Lon. |
| (c) Southwest Corner: | 47°06.00' N. Lat. 124°27.10' W. Lon. |
| (d) Southeast Corner: | 47°06.00' N. Lat. 124°11.00' W. Lon. |

Quileute SMA:

We also want to remind you of the details of the Quileute Special Management Area. There have been no changes in this area.

The Quileute SMA was closed to state fishers beginning at 8:00 a.m. February 3, 2023. The Quileute SMA will open to state fishers beginning at 8:00 a.m., May 1, 2023. There will be a 100-pot limit in the Quileute SMA from May 1, 2023, through May 31, 2023. Fishers must pre-register with WDFW prior to deploying gear in this area.

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' N. Lat. - 124°40.40' W. Lon.
- Northwest Corner: 47°58.00' N. Lat. - 124°49.00' W. Lon.
- Southwest Corner: 47°40.50' N. Lat. - 124°40.00' W. Lon.
- Southeast Corner (Destruction Island): 47°40.50' N. Lat. - 124°24.43 W. Lon.

For more information about this notice, contact Heather Hall at Heather.Hall@dfw.wa.gov