

Summary Sheet

Meeting dates: April 13, 2018

Agenda item: Results of the 2017 Puget Sound Dungeness Crab Fishery (Briefing)

Presenter(s): Bob Sizemore, Puget Sound Shellfish Manager, Fish Program
Mike Cenci, Deputy Chief, Enforcement Program

Background summary:

The Puget Sound crab fishery policy (Policy C3609) was reviewed and revised by the Commission on October 1, 2010. The policy stipulates that a Department report summarizing the Puget Sound crab fishery will be given to the Commission on an annual basis. This briefing will summarize the performance and harvest of both commercial and recreational fisheries and regulation compliance during the 2017 season.

The Puget Sound crab fishery is trending toward recent averages, with peak landings in 2015 and declines from that peak in 2016 and 2017. Landings and population assessments in southern reaches of Hood Canal and Puget Sound indicate declines in recruitment in those areas. Annual recreational crab endorsement sales in 2017 were about 222,000, a decrease of 10% over the previous year. New crab fishers comprised about 28% of the total crab endorsement sales in 2017. There is an intensive enforcement effort for this fishery. Catch record card violations and retention of undersized crab continue to be issues during enforcement contacts with recreational fishers. A pilot creel survey of recreational crab harvest was completed in July 2017 in the Everett Area, and results will be presented. Commercial crab licenses have been limited entry since 1981 and the total number licenses is 249. Commercial crab harvest is limited to northern Puget Sound and 2017 ex-vessel crab value exceeds \$12.8 million. A preliminary outlook of 2018 crab fishery season and management strategies will be discussed.

Staff recommendation:

None. Briefing only.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

None. Briefing only.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

None. Briefing only.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

A voluntary creel survey was conducted in the Everett area in 2017 and data informed managers and enforcement staff of catch compliance metrics. On-going dialog with crab advisors and the commercial crabbers association informs managers of in-season fishery performance.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

None. Briefing only.

Draft motion language:

Motion: I move to _____ (adopt/amend/deny) _____ (rule(s)/petition) as presented by staff (if appropriate)

Is there a "second"?

If so, then motion maker discusses basis for motion; other Commissioners discuss views on motion; amendments, if any, proposed and addressed

Post decision communications plan:

No decision requested. Briefing only.