



Director's Report to the Commission

January 2019

Fish Program

Coastal Commercial Crab Fishery

The Washington Coastal Commercial Dungeness crab fishery opened in the area south of Klipsan Beach on Friday, January 4. The opening is preceded by a 73-hour gear set period provides for small and large vessels to get their gear in the water on a somewhat level playing field before the opening.

The opening south of Klipsan Beach is coordinated with Oregon and California through the Tri-State Dungeness Crab Committee which is facilitated by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. The opening is dependent on crab reaching a minimum meat pick-out amount that shows that they have completed their molt and sufficiently filled with meat. State agencies in Washington, Oregon, and California coordinate test fisheries in early November to determine the quality of crab and formulate a coordinated season opening from southern Washington to Point Arena, California. This year, meat recovery results off southern Washington and in some Oregon areas did not meet the meat recovery criteria necessary to open the fishery on December 1, which resulted in a season delay to December 15 to allow the crab to fill out. A January 1 season opening would be announced pending completion of another round of test fishing in areas where meat recovery was below the minimum criteria, which included test stations of southern Washington. Completion of these tests were hampered by severe ocean conditions, which prevented WDFW test boats from collecting crab until December 28. However, once complete, those results showed that crab off southern Washington were well above the minimum meat recovery criteria to open the fishery on January 4. Establishing the season opening required significant input from the Washington coastal Dungeness crab advisory group members and others from the commercial Dungeness crab industry on the West Coast as well as close coordination and agreement with the Tri-State Dungeness Crab Committee.

The commercial Dungeness crab fishery in the area north of Klipsan Beach, Washington will open on Thursday, January 10, also preceded by a 73-hour gear set that begins at 8:00 a.m. on January 7. This opening is based on the same meat recovery criteria used for the opening south of Klipsan Beach but is also contingent on state-tribal harvest management agreements in place with the Quinalt Indian Nation and the Quileute and Makah Tribes. These agreements include early exclusive fishing opportunity for tribal fisheries and special management areas that are closed to state crabbers for a specified amount of time. Tribal crab fisheries have been underway since later November with crab condition much better than on the southern Washington coast. Quinalt landings through early January suggest that abundance is similar to last season where total state-tribal landings were over 15 million pounds compared to long-term average of ~9 million pounds.

Commission Update Hatchery and Fishery Reform Project

DRAFT

Status as of: January 2019

<p>Brief Description: At the direction of the Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC), the Director is tasked to conduct a review of all sections and aspects of the Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy (C3619).</p> <p>The review should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of performance results since the Policy was adopted, • Update of scientific elements • Update appropriate policy language <p>Considerations from the Commissioners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the tone and language about the positive value of hatchery programs • Consider inclusion of following elements in policy revisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add categorical designation for mitigation hatcheries • Accommodate for SRKW prey initiatives • Account for different levels of hatchery-wild interactions that take into account the evolving (theoretical and empirical) science on genetic risks 	
<p>Strategic Plan Goal/Objective/Strategy Being Implemented: Evaluate and update WDFW’s Fishery and Hatchery Reform Policy (C3619)</p> <p>Policy C3619 Purpose The purpose of this Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife policy is to advance the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead by promoting and guiding the implementation of hatchery reform.</p> <p>Definition and Intent Hatchery reform is the scientific and systematic redesign of hatchery programs to help recover wild salmon and steelhead and support sustainable fisheries. The intent of hatchery reform is to improve hatchery effectiveness, ensure compatibility between hatchery production and salmon recovery plans and rebuilding programs, and support sustainable fisheries.</p> <p>General Policy Statement The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) shall promote the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead and provide fishery-related benefits by establishing clear goals for each state hatchery, conducting scientifically defensible-operations, and using informed decision making to improve management. Furthermore, it is recognized that many state operated hatcheries are subject to provisions under U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and that hatchery reform actions must be done in close coordination with tribal co-managers.</p>	<p>Strategic Plan Number N/A</p>

Commission Update Hatchery and Fishery Reform Project

Project Lead/Program: Erik Neatherlin/Fish Program		Phone: 360-902-2559	Executive Sponsor Ron Warren
Brief Statement of Problem/Issue Being Addressed: The Fish and Wildlife Commission directed a review, evaluation, and recommendations to update and improve the Fishery and Hatchery Reform policy (C3619)			
Brief Statement of Expected Results: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Assess performance results since the policy was adopted 2) Update science elements 3) Provide recommendations to update the policy language 			
Performance Measures/Indicators of Success: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The review process is understood and transparent to our public 2) The science synthesis update is independent and credible 3) Final report contains policy evaluation and recommendations for policy updates 4) Fish and Wildlife Commission has clear pathway for decision 			Planned Completion Date: November 2019
Key Actions/Deliverables:		Target Date:	Status:
1) Develop Agency Policy Position a. Letter from Director to serve as agency policy position		Aug 2018	Complete
2) Establish Core Process and Working Groups		Oct 2018	Complete
3) Secure contract with Washington State Academy of Sciences		Jan 2019	Complete
4) Fish and Wildlife Commission Project Update Briefing		Feb 2019	On Track
5) Draft Reports: Policy Review and Science Update		June 2019	
6) Director Briefing		July 2019	
7) Final Draft Report and Fish and Wildlife Commission Briefing		Sept 2019	
8) Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation and Decision		Nov 2019	
Team Members: Erik Neatherlin, Ken Warheit, Andrew Murdoch, Joe Anderson, Eric Kinne, Gary Marston			