



# Oregon

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Department of Fish and Wildlife

Marine Resources Program

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July 11, 2013

TO: Oregon Dungeness Crab Industry  
Participants and Interested Persons

FROM: Troy Buell, State Fishery Manager  
Kelly Corbett, Commercial Crab Project Leader

RE: 2013 Oregon Dungeness Crab Industry Summit and Tri-State Summary

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, a Tri-State Dungeness Crab Committee (Tri-State) meeting was hosted by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission in Portland, OR to discuss management of the Dungeness crab fishery in Washington, Oregon, and California (summary enclosed and available at [http://www.psmfc.org/crab/2012-2013%20files/MeetingSummary2013\\_Final.pdf](http://www.psmfc.org/crab/2012-2013%20files/MeetingSummary2013_Final.pdf)). Tri-State is comprised of one agency representative from each state, advised by six members of industry. The main purpose of this meeting was to address concerns and a general lack of confidence in the preseason testing protocols that determine whether or not a delay in the season opening date is needed to allow crab quality (i.e., meat recovery) to improve further. Prior to the Tri-State meeting, ODFW held public "Crab Summit" meetings in Brookings, Coos Bay, and Astoria to discuss with industry ways to improve the preseason testing protocols, among other topics (summary available at [http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/shellfish/commercial/crab/news\\_publications.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/shellfish/commercial/crab/news_publications.asp)). We used the valuable industry feedback from those meetings to inform our positions and priorities going into the Tri-State meeting.

Several decisions were made at the 2013 Tri-State meeting that will affect the process for opening of the 2013-2014 crab season. All three states agreed to end the practice of projecting meat recovery rates and to revise the preseason testing schedule so that fishers are notified of a season opening at least five days in advance of the gear setting period. However, decision makers will retain the flexibility to reduce the notification period taking into account the needs of the industry. As a result of these changes, Oregon will no longer conduct a mid-October test. The first Oregon test will occur in mid-November, and will inform the decision to open December 1<sup>st</sup> or delay. If the season is delayed, further testing will occur as time and resources allow and the season will be delayed until each test area meets the minimum meat recovery criteria without using projections. January 15<sup>th</sup> remains the latest possible opening date.

Finally, all three states agreed to end the practice of rounding meat recovery results for the area north of Cascade Head. This decision was a compromise between those who would like to see criteria raised to 25% north of Cascade Head and those who prefer status quo. While ODFW is supportive

of other options that received broad industry support at the Summits, such as moving the target start date and making criteria consistent coast-wide, agreement between all three states could not be reached for a variety of reasons. All three states agreed to meet again in one year to revisit issues that could not be resolved at this meeting (see summary for more detail on topics tabled for next year).

We will ask the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt rules implementing these changes at their October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting in Newport. Commission meetings are public hearings, and you are welcome to provide public testimony on the proposed changes at that time.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please feel free to contact us at 541.867.4741.

Sincerely,

Troy Buell  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Marine Resources Program  
State Fishery Management Program Leader

Kelly Corbett  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Marine Resources Program  
Commercial Crab Management Project Leader