

You are receiving this message because you have requested to be placed on the WDFW email distribution list for information regarding Washington State's commercial Dungeness crab fishery. If you do not wish to receive future messages, please reply by return e-mail with the word "delete" in the subject heading.

December 23, 2025

## **WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE**

### **2025-26 Season Opening(s)**

#### **CORRECTION: Fair start provisions and opening of area between Queets River and Destruction Island**

Coastal Dungeness crab Tri-State policy representatives from the Washington, Oregon, and California Departments of Fish and Wildlife have agreed to open the commercial Dungeness crab season within the following areas:

#### **Klipsan Beach, Washington (46° 28' 00" N. Lat.) (including Willapa Bay) to Cape Falcon, Oregon (45° 46' 00" N. Lat.)**

- 73-hour presoak begins (setting gear): 8:00 am on December 28, 2025
- Hold Inspections: beginning at 12:00 pm on December 30, 2025
- Start date (pulling gear): 9:00 am on December 31, 2025
- A reduced pot limit will be in effect until 8:00 am on January 1, 2026 (see below)

#### **Klipsan Beach, Washington (46° 28' 00" N. Lat.) to Destruction Island (47° 40' 30" N. Lat.) (including Grays Harbor)**

- 73-hour presoak begins (setting gear): 8:00 am on January 1, 2026
- Hold Inspections: beginning at 12:00 pm on January 3, 2026
- Start date (pulling gear): 9:00 am on January 4, 2026

The decision to open the area between Cape Falcon, OR and Klipsan Beach, WA is based on crab condition tests conducted by WDFW that indicate shell condition and meat recovery within the Long Beach Test Area currently meet the minimum meat recovery criteria as defined in the Tri-State Dungeness Crab Pre-Season Testing Protocols (23% north of Cascade Head and 24% south of Cascade Head). Test results are included at the end of this notice.

The season opening between Point Chehalis, WA and Destruction Island was made based on the terms of harvest management plans and in coordination with tribal co-managers. The State-Quinault Harvest Management Plan for the 2025-2026 season uses a sliding scale based on landings during the first 31 days of the Quinault fishery to determine the head-start for the Quinault fleet. Co-managers agreed to a 47-day delay of the state fishery in the area between Pt. Chehalis and Destruction Island, including Grays Harbor, resulting in an opener on January 4, 2026.

WDFW's co-management agreement with the Quileute Tribe uses different criteria to open the state fishery between the Queets River and Destruction Island and for the area north of Destruction Island. The agreement uses a sliding scale approach based on Quileute catch in the entire Quileute U&A for the area between Queets and Destruction Island. Low early season catch for Quileute

allows for the area between Queets River and Destruction Island to open on January 4, 2026, concurrent with the opening north of Klipsan Beach. In addition, the State-Quileute Harvest Management Plan ensures there are 20 fishable days for Quileute fishers between December 1 and January 15, prior to opening the state season north of Destruction Island. WDFW and Quileute managers will continue tracking fishable days and will announce the opening of this area in a future notice.

#### **POT LIMITS:**

Fishers participating in the fishery south of Klipsan Beach or in Willapa Bay are subject to reduced pot limits. Fishers with permanent pot limits of 500 and 300 will be allowed to use 400 or 250 pots, respectively until 8:00 am on January 1, 2026. Unused buoy tags are prohibited from being attached to crab gear and must be on board any participating vessel until the temporary pot limits are lifted. Vessels are prohibited from storing or possessing crab pots on board in excess of the vessels pot limit more than 48-hours prior to pot limits being lifted.

#### **SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS (SMA):**

##### **Quinault SMA:**

The Quinault primary SMA will be closed to state fishers beginning at 8:00 AM January 1, 2026. The primary SMA is scheduled to remain closed to state fishers until further notice.

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 (Raft River): 47° 28.00' N. Lat. 124° 20.70' W. Lon.
- Northwest Corner: 47° 28.00' N. Lat. 124° 34.00' W. Lon.
- Southwest Corner: 47° 08.00' N. Lat. 124° 25.50' W. Lon.
- Southeast Corner (Copalis River): 47° 08.00' N. Lat. 124° 11.20' W. Lon.

#### **FAIR START PROVISIONS:**

- **Oysterville (46° 33.00) to Cape Falcon, OR (45° 46.00):** Licenses and vessels designated to those licenses that fish (as defined by WAC 220-340-400) in the coastal commercial Dungeness crab fishery in the waters between CA/OR border and Cape Falcon, OR before this area opens will not be allowed to fish in this area until **9:00 am on January 30, 2026**.

Licenses and vessels designated to those licenses that fish (set gear) in the area between Klipsan Beach, Washington and the OR-CA border prior to 8:00 AM on January 1, 2026, will be subject to the following fair start provisions:

- **Klipsan Beach (46° 28.00) to Oysterville (46° 33.00):** Licenses and vessels designated to those licenses that fish (as defined by WAC 220-340-400) in the fishery between **Cape Falcon, OR** and Klipsan Beach, WA, including Willapa Bay, before the area north of Klipsan Beach opens will be allowed to fish in the area between Klipsan Beach and Oysterville at **9:00 am on January 14, 2026**.
- **Oysterville (46° 33.00) to Destruction Island (47° 40.50):** Licenses and vessels designated to those licenses that fish (as defined by WAC 220-340-

400) in the fishery between CA/OR border and Klipsan Beach, WA, including Willapa Bay, before the area north of Klipsan Beach opens will be allowed to fish in the area between Oysterville and **Destruction Island** at **9:00 am on February 8, 2026.**

- **WAC 220-340-400 Definition—Commercial crab fishing:** “Commercial crab fishing” means any taking, fishing, use, or operation of gear to fish for crab for commercial purposes and includes the possession of crab on the water for commercial purposes, and the landing or initial delivery of crab for commercial purposes.

#### **OTHER REQUIREMENTS:**

- A hold inspection certificate number is required on all fish tickets until further notice.
- All vessels must have a qualifying electronic monitoring (EM) system installed, activated, and transmitting data to the Pacific States Marine Fishery Commission (PSMFC) before participating in the coastal Dungeness crab fishery. More information on EM can be found at this link: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/commercial/crab/coastal/electronic-monitoring>
- Each crab pot must be rigged with all surface line (trailer line) marked with red and black, and 12 inches of continuous red, no more than one fathom from the main buoy on the line connecting the main buoy to the pot. [WAC 220-340-430](#)
- New surface gear limitations are in place this season that limit the number of buoys and the length of surface line to 36ft. More information on surface gear requirements can be found at this link: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-10/20251028-industry-notice-line-marking-reminder-correction.pdf>
- License owners or alternate operators MUST register one unique buoy color scheme **annually** using the WDFW online registration form. Buoy registration must be completed before fishing. If you are a new participant in the coastal Dungeness crab fishery, contact Jamie Fuller at 360-580-0875 to verify your color scheme is available. To access the registration form visit: <http://qrcodes.pro/jDEArX>. If you do not have a smartphone or are unable to complete the registration, contact Jamie Fuller at 360-580-0875 or [Jamie.Fuller@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Jamie.Fuller@dfw.wa.gov).
- No deliveries of crab caught south of Cape Falcon will be allowed into any ports north of the Columbia River except the ports of Ilwaco and Chinook, until 9:00 a.m., December 31, 2025. Vessels must adhere to ODFW’s closed area transit allowance requirements.

#### **WASHINGTON TEST RESULTS**

Testing was conducted in the Long Beach test area on December 13, 2025. The results are summarized below. Coastwide results are included on the following page.

Test Area	Date	Shell Grade				Meat Recovery	Domoic Acid (ppm) levels per crab
		1A	1B	II	III		
Long Beach	12/13/25	7.9%	43.7%	48.4%	0%	28.1%	No Test

WDFW is grateful to the fishers and processors that work cooperatively with WDFW to successfully complete this important work.

If you have any questions pertaining to this notice, contact Matt George at [Matthew.George@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Matthew.George@dfw.wa.gov) or 360-640-1066 or Jamie Fuller at [Jamie.Fuller@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Jamie.Fuller@dfw.wa.gov) or 360-580-0875.

#### **COASTWIDE TEST RESULTS**

Coastwide test meat recovery results to date can be found at this link:

[https://old.psmfc.org/crab/2025-2026%20files/Tri-StatePreseasonCoastwideResults\\_2025.pdf](https://old.psmfc.org/crab/2025-2026%20files/Tri-StatePreseasonCoastwideResults_2025.pdf)