

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

POLICY TITLE: **Puget Sound Crab Fishery**

POLICY NUMBER: C-3609

Cancels: C-3005, effective 11/2/96

Effective Date: February 5, 2000

Termination Date (if applicable):

See Also:

Approved by: *Russell W. Cahill*

General Policies

- Preserve, protect, and perpetuate Puget Sound Dungeness crab resources and associated habitat.
- Minimize, as practical, bycatch mortalities of Dungeness crab from other fisheries, and crab-fishery induced mortalities during the molting/soft shell period.
- Allocate the harvest opportunity between state and treaty Indian fisheries consistent with applicable federal court orders.
- Accurately monitor all recreational and commercial Dungeness crab harvests within budget constraints.
- Ensure regulations pertaining to sex and size limits and the recording of all landings are adhered to.
- Manage the Puget Sound crab fisheries conservatively to prevent over harvest and provide for consistent sustained yields.

Regional Management Policies

- Region 1 - Provide for an economically viable and stable commercial harvest opportunity for high quality crab. Maintain a quality recreational fishery with emphasis on spring and summer seasons and recreational exclusive use areas. Seek to provide reasonable recreational fishing opportunity to recover from impacts of the treaty summer fishery.
- Region 2 - Provide for an economically viable and stable commercial harvest opportunity for high quality crab. Maintain a quality recreational fishery with emphasis on spring and summer seasons and recreational exclusive use areas. Seek to provide reasonable recreational fishing opportunity to recover from impacts of the treaty summer fishery in the western portion of this region. The state fishery in Port Townsend Bay will be managed for the primary benefit of the recreational fishery.

- Region 3 - Provide for an economically viable and stable commercial harvest opportunity for high quality crab. Maintain a quality recreational fishery with emphasis on spring and summer seasons and recreational exclusive use areas. Seek to provide reasonable recreational fishing opportunity to recover from impacts of the treaty summer fishery. The state fisheries in Discovery Bay, Sequim Bay, Port Angeles Harbor, and Dungeness Bay will be managed for the primary benefit of the recreational fishery.
- Regions 4, 5, and 6 - The state fishery in these areas will be managed for the exclusive benefit of the recreational fishery. The Department will consider opening a limited commercial fishery in Region 4 if it is determined that there is a significant increase in crab abundance, provided conservation goals have been met.

Additional Objectives for the Puget Sound Commercial Crab Fishery

- Support the use of federal and/or state funded buyback programs.
- Support the use of buoy and pot tagging programs.