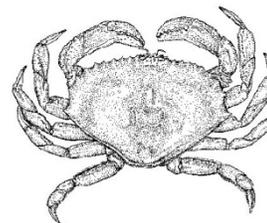

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Date: June, 10, 2011
Time: 4:00 p.m.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT

Douglas... The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today that the season for the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Registration Area A (Southeast) will open by regulation at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, June 15, 2011 consistent with 5 AAC 32.110. The following information applies to the fishery for the 2011/12 commercial season.

Buoy Tags, Registration, and Pot Storage:

Dungeness crab fishermen must register their vessels and gear with the department. Buoy tags must be purchased prior to fishing [5 AAC 32.126]. The price for crab buoy tags is currently \$1.25 each. Increasing costs for buoy tag production and shipping may lead to a price increase for buoy tags at any time. **Buoy tags purchased for the 2010/11 season will remain valid for the 2011/12 commercial season.** Buoy tags may be replaced when pots are lost. To get replacement tags, fishermen must report the unique number of the lost tags on a 'Tag Replacement Affidavit'. These forms are available at all area offices along with buoy tags. Please refer to regulation 5 AAC 32.126(a) for proper tag placement on the buoy assembly. Tenders must also register [5 AAC 32.033] with the department prior to the start of the season. After the season is closed, all Dungeness pots must be removed from the water except that pots may be stored on the grounds with all pot doors secured fully open and all bait and bait containers removed for no more than seven days after the Dungeness fishery region-wide closure in Registration Area A, or for no more than 72 hours after a partial area closure [5 AAC 32.052(b)(1)&(2)]. **Reporting of lost pots, or pots left in a closed area in fishing condition should be directed to the Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT) offices in Juneau or Ketchikan** (contact numbers are listed below).

Fishery Management:

The department will use the first week's catch to predict the total harvest and compare the prediction to thresholds according to the Dungeness crab management plan [5 AAC 32.146] to adjust the season length if necessary. Fishermen can expect a news release by June 29th informing the fleet of the region-wide season length. The department will be conducting dockside sampling in all major ports and aerial surveys on the grounds to check on fleet distribution.

Surface Transport:

Surface shipment of Dungeness crabs out of Southeast Alaska will be permissible this season [SEC 16.10.240(b)]. Fishermen are reminded that prior to transporting crabs out of state fish tickets **MUST** be written [5 AAC 39.130(c)]. However, there are restrictions governing the transshipment of crab through

Canadian waters and delivery of crabs to Canadian ports. Similarly, there are restrictions on foreign vessels wishing to purchase crabs in Alaskan waters under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. For more information regarding these restrictions please contact Joe Stratman at 772-5238 or Adam Messmer at 465-4853.

Recent Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) action on Southeast Dungeness:

The BOF met in January of 2009 to discuss proposals specific to Southeast and Yakutat shellfish fisheries. Changes to the Dungeness commercial fishery that were carried by the BOF include:

- Waters of Chaik Bay [5 AAC 32.150(16)] were reopened to commercial fishing.
- Waters of Whale Pass [5 AAC 32.150(15)] were reopened to commercial fishing, but will have a separate season description from the rest of District 6.
- Language requiring that multiple permit holders all be onboard the vessel [5 AAC 32.125] while gear is being set or hauled was clarified.
- The Dungeness crab management plan was amended to give the department more flexibility to conduct a regular fall fishery if the thresholds which shorten the fall season are reached due to soft crab discarded at sea.
- The season description for Districts 1 & 2 was changed to allow for summer (June 15 – August 15) and fall (October 1 – November 30) seasons.

At the BOF's October 2009 work session, the BOF agreed to an agenda change request (ACR) to close a portion of District 2 to commercial fishing in the summer season. This ACR was heard at the March 2010 BOF meeting. At this meeting the BOF carried the proposal as amended; changing the season description for all of District 2 to match what had been in regulation prior to the BOF's January 2009 meeting. **District 2 now has a fall/winter season and is open October 1 through February 28.** The season description for District 1 remained unchanged. District 1 has summer and fall seasons and is open June 15 through August 15, and from October 1 through November 30. This recent change to the season description for District 2 went into effect on June 10, 2010. For questions regarding the change to the season description for District 2, or any other questions on season descriptions for the Dungeness crab fishery in Registration Area A, please contact Joe Stratman at 772-5238 or Adam Messmer at 465-4853.

Closed Waters:

Regulatory closed waters are listed in 5 AAC 32.150. District 16 was opened for 2 weeks in the 2003/04 season; there were no landings, although limited effort did occur. The closure in District 16 that had been in effect since 2003/04 was rescinded prior to the start of the 2009/10 season to allow harvest opportunity. There were no landings reported from District 16 in the 2009/10 and 2010/11 seasons. Permit holders intending to fish in District 16 are asked to contact Joe Stratman at 772-5238 or Adam Messmer at 465-4853 prior to fishing District 16. The Yakutat Dungeness fishery will remain closed and will be discussed in subsequent news releases. Glacier Bay is closed by federal regulation to commercial Dungeness crab fishing. Fishermen may contact the Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve at (907) 697-2230 for more information.

Other Regulations:

A person may not participate in a commercial Dungeness crab fishery in a Dungeness crab registration area if the person operated commercial, subsistence, sport, or personal use pots of any type during the 14 day period immediately before the opening of a commercial Dungeness crab fishery [5 AAC 32.053(b)(1)]; or operates a vessel that was used or operated by the person or by another person operating pots of any type in a commercial, subsistence, sport, or personal use fishery during the 14 day period immediately before the opening of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery [5 AAC 32.053(b)(2)]; except that a person or vessel that operates commercial king crab pots in waters deeper than 100 fathoms during the 14 day period immediately before the opening of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Registration Area A, may participate in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery [5 AAC 32.128].

Other Permits Required:

A catcher/seller permit is required to sell raw, unprocessed fish and/or shellfish (other than bivalve mollusks) to unlicensed buyers. Examples would be selling or attempting to sell to the general public dockside for non-commercial purposes, or to a restaurant, grocery store, or established fish market that has a processing

waiver from ADEC. The catcher/seller permit application can be found at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishlicense.sellers>.

Catcher/sellers are required to complete a fish ticket indicating the estimated number and weight of crab by species before any crab are removed from their vessel [5 AAC 32.143]. A catcher/processor permit is required for fishermen who receive, prepare, process, or transport seafood or fishery product including roe recovery to sell for human consumption or a person who custom processes a seafood or fishery product. Processing is any activity that modifies the physical condition of a seafood or fishery resource. This permit is included in the Alaska Seafood Processor and Exporter License and Permit Application Intent to Operate found on the department website at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/license/fishing/pdfs/1100-701.pdf>.

Bait:

A separate miscellaneous finish permit card is not needed to fish for groundfish for bait unless you intend to sell the groundfish commercially or to others for use as bait. Fishermen are reminded to account for all groundfish bait on their crab fish tickets at the time of landing the crab for which the bait was taken. Prohibited species for use as bait include sablefish, lingcod, thornyhead, shorttraker, roughey, and yelloweye rockfish. See 5 AAC 28.190 in the 2010-2011 Statewide Commercial Groundfish Fishing Regulations for more information on harvest of bait by commercial permit holders.

Other information:

Handling of soft-shell crabs results in increased mortality. Fishermen are asked to consult with their buyers on shell hardness before harvesting crab. Fishermen are also reminded to review the 2009–2012 Statewide Commercial Shrimp, Dungeness crab, and Miscellaneous Shellfish Fishing Regulations prior to the fishery.

News releases web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

<i>Office</i>	<i>Ketchikan</i>	<i>Petersburg</i>	<i>Wrangell</i>	<i>Sitka</i>	<i>Juneau</i>	<i>Haines</i>	<i>Yakutat</i>
<i>ADFG</i>	<i>225-5195</i>	<i>772-3801</i>	<i>874-3822</i>	<i>747-6688</i>	<i>465-4250</i>	<i>766-2830</i>	<i>784-3255</i>
<i>AWT</i>	<i>225-5111</i>	<i>772-3983</i>	<i>874-3215</i>	<i>747-3254</i>	<i>465-4000</i>	<i>766-2533</i>	<i>784-3220</i>