

Mike Rutzer Proposal 170

To whom it may concern my name is Mike Rutzer. I've been a commercial Dungeness Crab fishermen for over 40 years in areas such as Oregon, Washington, and Alaska (Copper River and Flats, Icy Bay, Kodiak and Area J). The Last two crab seasons I have been in Area J. In my lifetime I have seen the Copper river flats, Icy bay, Yukata Dungeness Crab fishery close for over 30 years. It is still closed to this date due to over participation from aggressive fishing with unlimited pots. The last two seasons fishing area J (north pen) has been interesting, a lot of good grounds of Dungeness habitat to possibly to explore. And I do a lot of looking (prospecting). It seems to me that the crab are not everywhere. When I do find a spot where crab seem to be abundant (large volume), It does not seem to take long to catch all legal crab in that spot. Numbers of crab per pot (catch rate/ overall average) starts to diminish, and we move the gear again looking for better fishing. The number of juvenile, recruitment crab is not at large numbers, from what we can see since starting fishing area J two years ago. Inclusion I personally do not think there is some supper bio-mass of crab on the grounds to support a large fleet of vessels year after year with no pot limit.

I'm in favor of a pot limit but NO pot cap. If no regulations are put in place for 2023, I worry for area J (north pen) to be over fished with the amount of participants predicted to fish with unlimited amounts of gear in the up coming season. It would be nice to make this a sustainable fishery for years to come for future generations.

Sincerely Mike R