



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
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EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



December 21, 2018

Subject: 2018-19 Dungeness Crab Northern Season Delay Notification – Final Date Revision

Fish and Game Code (FGC) Section 8276.2 (c) provides the Director with the authority to delay the December 1 season opening, due to soft-shell or poor quality crab conditions, in Fish and Game Districts 6, 7, 8 & 9 (Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties) in increments of 15 days to a date no later than January 15, 2019.

Crab quality tests conducted in northern California on November 3 and December 4, 2018 indicated that crabs would not be ready for harvest, resulting in a delay of the season until December 31, 2018, pending further testing results. **A third round of quality tests could not be completed by December 22 due to ocean conditions that prevented vessels from safely deploying and retrieving traps per the Tri-State Coastal Dungeness Crab Commercial Fishery Pre-Season Testing Protocol. Since tests could not be completed in the areas that previously resulted in low meat recovery, I am further delaying the opening of the Dungeness crab season in northern California (Districts 6, 7, 8 & 9) until 12:01 am January 15, 2019.**

Pursuant to FGC Section 8276.3 (b), the opening date in Districts 6, 7, 8 and 9 shall be preceded by a 64-hour gear-setting period. Therefore, crab gear may be set no earlier than 8:01 am on January 12, 2018. **The opening and gear-setting dates are subject to continued domoic acid testing and may be further delayed.**

As provided in FGC Section 8276.3 no vessel may take or land crab within Districts 6, 7, 8 & 9 during the closure period. **In addition, FGC Section 8279.1 prohibits a vessel that took, possessed onboard, or landed crab from ocean waters outside of Districts 6, 7, 8 & 9 from participating in the crab fishery in Districts 6, 7, 8 & 9 for 30 days following the opening of those areas.**

Sincerely,

Charlton H. Bonham
Director