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

Conserving California’s Wildlife Since 1870