



THE STATE
of ALASKA
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of
Fish and Game

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
Headquarters Office

1255 West 8th Street
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526
Main: 907.465.4210
Fax: 907.465.2604

June 30, 2014

RECEIVED Haines Borough

JUN 08 2014

Clerk's Office

The Honorable Stephanie Scott
Mayor, Haines Borough
PO Box 1209
Haines, AK 99827

Dear Mayor Scott:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the Dungeness crab resource in Upper Lynn Canal. Commissioner Campbell asked me to respond on her behalf.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has continued to receive correspondence from several Upper Lynn Canal residents and members of the Upper Lynn Canal Fish and Game Advisory Committee (ULCAC) voicing concern over the health of the Dungeness crab resource in Upper Lynn Canal and describing gear conflicts between user groups. In response to these concerns, ADF&G staff gave presentations on Dungeness crab fishery management to both the Haines Borough Assembly and ULCAC in late 2012 and early 2013. Since those meetings, ADF&G responded to several Dungeness crab data requests from the ULCAC and public within the last several months. Most recently, the department and members of the public participated in a Dungeness crab task force meeting in March 2014.

As explained in the 2012 and 2013 presentations, the *Southeastern Alaska Dungeness Crab Management Plan* (5 AAC 32.146) directs ADF&G to manage the Dungeness crab resource in Southeast Alaska as a single unit under a size, sex, and season (3S) approach; the management plan does not direct ADF&G to manage Dungeness crab on a fine scale within the region. A fishery resource managed under the 3S approach will support harvests that vary annually based on both abundance of animals of harvestable size and amount of fishing effort. The management plan also directs ADF&G to project the total season harvest no later than 14 days into the commercial summer season and adjust fishing periods if the estimated harvest is below thresholds specified in the plan.

As required by regulation, ADF&G did project the total 2013 season harvest based on landings and effort data from the first full week of fishing in June of 2013. The projection indicated that the total season harvest would not exceed 2.25 million pounds, but would fall near the upper end of the range described in 5 AAC 32.146(2)(B). The commercial Dungeness crab summer fishing season in Southeast Alaska closed at 11:59 p.m. Thursday, August 8, 2013, a seven-day reduction in fishing time from the maximum allowed. That early closure included waters in the vicinity of Haines. This was the first time

that the commercial Dungeness crab fishing season was altered since the management plan was adopted in 2000. After evaluating data from the summer season, ADF&G determined that the season length for the 2013/14 commercial Dungeness crab fall fishing season in a majority of the region would be as specified in regulation (October 1 – November 30). Results of the most recent Dungeness crab commercial fishing season as well as historical information is presented in Tables 1 (information for Registration Area A) and 2 (information for Upper Lynn Canal).

Table 1. Registration Area A (Southeast Alaska) commercial Dungeness crab fishery harvest and effort, 1985/86 season to present.

Year/Season	Permits	Landings	Crab	Pounds	Pounds per Permit	Pots Lifted	CPUE
5-Year Average	180	2,336	1,602,505	3,299,966	18,092	480,572	3.2
2013/14	150	2,226	1,288,148	2,589,872	17,266	393,227	3.3
2012/13	160	2,199	1,123,480	2,359,309	14,746	398,162	2.8
2011/12	162	2,014	1,235,641	2,594,847	16,018	376,856	3.3
2010/11	176	2,208	1,578,047	3,245,265	18,439	445,348	3.5
2009/10	194	2,441	1,747,512	3,569,697	18,401	535,685	3.3
2008/09	207	2,816	2,327,846	4,730,711	22,858	646,811	3.6
2007/08	193	2,841	2,657,986	5,408,355	28,023	647,401	4.1
2006/07	171	2,074	2,228,852	4,503,970	26,339	468,426	4.8
2005/06	189	2,203	2,039,101	4,205,480	22,251	468,400	4.4
2004/05	199	2,409	2,239,558	4,589,001	23,060	564,558	4.0
2003/04	209	2,931	2,184,724	4,537,049	21,708	609,085	3.6
2002/03	220	3,561	3,512,242	7,332,665	33,330	785,936	4.5
2001/02	209	3,059	2,099,643	4,104,128	19,637	539,636	3.9
2000/01	199	2,380	1,254,573	2,565,410	12,892	400,616	3.1
1999/00	198	2,862	1,611,136	3,280,503	16,568	474,986	3.4
1998/99	244	3,134	1,132,885	2,329,499	9,547	481,214	2.4
1997/98	232	4,043	1,921,545	4,062,543	17,511	616,608	3.1
1996/97	203	2,896	2,406,434	5,005,840	24,659	399,472	6.0
1995/96	201	2,737	2,176,200	4,404,519	21,913	460,378	4.7
1994/95	184	1,787	927,878	1,920,378	10,444	230,595	4.0
1993/94	198	1,956	1,167,481	2,536,701	12,812	271,474	4.3
1992/93	245	2,497	1,424,742	3,094,079	12,634	313,522	4.5
1991/92	318	3,386	2,260,678	4,707,106	14,802	462,425	4.9
1990/91	243	2,342	1,293,809	2,662,792	10,958	329,916	3.9
1989/90	245	2,096	875,861	1,907,276	7,832	194,239	4.5
1988/89	264	2,683	1,517,105	3,321,734	12,582	248,755	6.1
1987/88	241	2,746	1,611,101	3,391,699	14,073	279,244	5.8
1986/87	224	2,330	1,184,771	2,453,055	10,951	232,328	5.1
1985/86	216	2,077	1,059,747	2,316,885	10,727	159,300	6.7

Table 2. Registration Area A (Southeast Alaska) commercial Dungeness crab fishery harvest and effort in Upper Lynn Canal (Statistical areas 115-31, -32, -33, -34, & -35) 1999/00 season to present.

Year/Season	Permits	Landings	Crabs	Pounds	Pounds per Permit	Pots Lifted	CPUE
5-Year Average	8	64	54,480	115,712	15,465	12,770	4.3
2013/14	8	78	40,396	85,341	10,668	14,210	2.8
2012/13	8	54	76,511	164,361	20,545	18,034	4.2
2011/12	11	69	38,602	82,048	7,732	8,746	4.4
2010/11	6	56	61,456	131,089	21,848	11,354	5.4
2009/10	7	63	55,433	115,719	16,531	11,508	4.8
2008/09	12	95	84,215	177,708	14,809	16,001	5.3
2007/08	8	85	77,458	163,139	20,392	9,890	7.8
2006/07	4	20	15,716	34,172	8,543	2,096	7.5
2005/06	6	36	16,701	36,658	6,110	2,735	6.1
2004/05	6	37	12,023	25,100	4,183	2,632	4.6
2003/04	8	63	15,862	34,417	4,302	3,984	4.0
2002/03	4	39	8,214	17,293	4,323	1,583	5.2
2001/02	4	19	2,783	5,813	1,453	845	3.3
2000/01	5	18	1,667	3,509	702	469	3.6
1999/00	7	57	4,437	9,357	1,337	2,807	1.6

Information presented in these two tables shows that commercial fishery performance (CPUE) on a regional level improved from the 2012/13 to 2013/14 seasons (2.8 to 3.3 crabs per pot) with roughly similar numbers of pot lifts. For Upper Lynn Canal specifically, commercial fishery performance was worse during the 2013/14 season than 2012/13 season (2.8 to 4.2 crabs per pot) with approximately 4,000 fewer pot lifts in the most current season than in 2012/13. One other bit of information that may be of interest to you is that fishery performance during the 1999/00 season in Upper Lynn Canal was the lowest observed at 1.6 crabs per pot. That metric improved in the following season and has not been below 2.0 crabs per pot since that time.

ADF&G will continue to manage the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in accordance with the management plan (5 AAC 32.146) until such time as that regulation is modified by the Alaska Board of Fisheries (board). I did confirm that Boards Support Section received the proposal from the ULCAC you reference in your letter. The board will consider this proposal and several others during the Southeast Alaska shellfish meeting in Wrangell that will be held January 21-27, 2015. In preparation for the board meeting, ADF&G staff will develop staff comments for each regulatory proposal the board will consider. Those comments will be made available to the public once board members have received them, about two weeks prior to the meeting. It would be premature to provide staff comments on the ULCAC proposal, or any others, at this time.

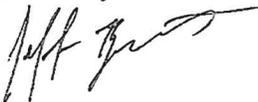
Regarding the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Yakutat (Area D), you are correct when you state that fishery has not been reopened since 2000. You may know that several regulations differ between the

Area D and Area A commercial Dungeness crab fisheries. For example, the summer season in Area D is May 15 through July 14 and in Area A it is June 15 through August 15 (in most of the registration area). The Area D fishery is open access and the Area A fishery is limited entry and the areas have a history of very different pot limits and fishing effort patterns. There are also significant differences in habitat types between the two areas. Whether these differences led to the closure of the Area D fishery is unknown, but directly comparing fishery performance data for the two areas may be confounded by these differences.

If you have questions regarding the process by which the board will consider regulatory proposals pertinent to Dungeness crab during the Wrangell shellfish meeting in January 2015, please contact Glenn Haight, Executive Director of the Alaska Board of Fisheries, at 907-465-6095 or glenn.haight@alaska.gov . General information about the board may be found at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.main>. Specific questions about the Dungeness crab fishery in Southeast Alaska may be directed to Scott Kelley, Fish and Game Coordinator, at 907-465-4250 or scott.kelley@alaska.gov .

Once again, I thank you for sharing your concerns about the Dungeness crab resource in Upper Lynn Canal.

Sincerely,



Jeff Regnart
Director

cc: Governor Sean Parnell
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Dennis Egan
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Sam Kito III
Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Glenn Haight, Executive Director, Board of Fish
Forrest R. Bowers, Deputy Director, Division of Commercial Fisheries
Scott Kelly, Fish and Game Coordinator, Division of Commercial Fisheries