

Attachment B. Notes on Department Meeting with Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) Operators in Greater Bay Area on Proposed Changes to Recreational Dungeness Crab Regulations

Location: Santa Rosa Marine Department Office

Date: May 19, 2015

Time: 5:30-7:00pm

CDFW Staff attended:

Christy Juhasz, Environmental Scientist, Marine Region

Bob Puccinelli, Captain, Law Enforcement Division

CPFV operators in affected area (Sonoma to Monterey counties) were invited via mailed Department letter that was sent to those operators who had log books showing Dungeness crab caught in the last year at ports in affected area.

Nine recreational anglers contacted me via email and four of these anglers identified themselves as current or past CPFV operators, but did not attend the meeting. One of these anglers identified as a CPFV captain supported status quo on the issue of statewide uniform bag and size limits (parity). All other anglers supported parity for the daily bag limit only. Of these anglers, most expressed that they wanted parity for the size limit as well to increase consistency in the regulations, but did not specify which limit they prefer. One angler contacted me via the phone and supported uniform bag limits of ten crab per day.

Nine CPFV operators attended meeting and were given a short presentation by C. Juhasz on the background and proposed regulations package:

1. Uniform daily bag and size limits at 10 crab/day and 5.75 inches minimum size limit
2. Marking buoys on crab traps from private vessels with GO ID number
3. Destruct device
4. Seven day moratorium on deploying crab traps prior to start of Dungeness crab season
5. Clarify location of Point Arguello in Santa Barbara County

CPFV operators found no issue with items #2-5.

-One person commented that the benefit of this seven day moratorium could be that enforcement would be able to pick up derelict gear in water just prior to start of season

CPFV operators were concerned with item #1, so the following votes were taken on this issue and related issues that were also suggested:

1. Uniform daily bag and size limits or parity:
 - a) Parity: make daily bag limit and size limit for CPFVs in Bay Area to be 10 crab/day at a minimum of 5.75 inches.
Support: 5 votes
No Support/Status quo (no change): 4 votes

-issues brought up to support this was that fishery has limited or incomplete data and better science is needed to support increasing daily bag limit and increasing take of smaller sized Dungeness crab

-size of 5.75" is too small for harvesting because crabs generally do not have enough meat at this size

-FYI, the Department utilized CRFS data to estimate recreational take limited to Sonoma and San Mateo counties for the months of November and December in 2013 & 2014 and presented this data at the meeting. Take home result is that monthly recreational catch accounts for only 2-3% of total take when compared with commercial take

b) Parity at 10 daily bag limit, and what is your preference of minimum size limit?:

6 inches: 3 votes

5.75 inches: 5 votes

Neutral: 1 vote

-neutral vote had issue with increasing limits to 6 inches for anglers that are pier fishing where crab sizes are generally smaller

-one person in support of 5.75 inches preferred having a wider range between commercial size limit of 6.25 inches and said increasing to 6 inches would shorten that range

2. If daily bag limit were to increase, then the 60 crab trap limit would be inadequate for large CPFV vessels versus smaller vessels like six-packs and CPFV operators. It was suggested repealing the 60 trap limit on CPFVs if daily bag limit increase is adopted

Support: 9 votes

No support: 0 votes

3. CPFV operators suggested limiting the number of traps deployed by private vessels, and enforcement personnel explained that this would only be enforceable if buoys are labelled using the operator's GO ID number. CPFV operators alternatively suggested using the vessel's CF number to label buoys.

a) Set trap limit on private recreational vessels if GO ID number is used to label buoys

Support: 1 vote

No support: 7 votes

Neutral: 1 vote

- Issue is that limiting individuals using GO ID would not necessarily reduce total number of traps used by private vessels, since each fisherman aboard would have his own trap limit.

b) Set trap limit on private recreational vessels if CF vessel number is used to label buoys

Support: 8 votes

No support: 0 votes

Neutral: 1 vote

1. What limits for private vessels would you consider?

20 trap limit: 5 votes

30 trap limit: 2 votes

40 trap limit: 1 vote

Neutral: 1 vote

4. Although CPFV operators supported the seven day moratorium on deploying crab traps they suggested that a pre-soak period of time be instituted similar to the commercial fishery (current limits are 18hr for District 10/Central CA and 64hr for Northern CA) and the recreational season begins the first Saturday of November.

a) Institute a Pre-soak period?

Support: 9 votes

No Support: 0 votes

-Safety concerns regarding running gear in inclement weather as well as safety about running gear while carrying passengers as there are stability and weight capacity issues (potentially enforced by Coast Guard requirements)

b) What time periods for a pre-soak do you prefer?

24 hours translates to 12:01am, Friday before season starts: 1 vote

42 hours translates to 6:01am, Thursday before season starts: 6 votes

64 hours translates to 8:01am, Wednesday before season starts: 2 votes