

Outline of Tri-State Issues for Review by the California Dungeness Crab Task Force
Prepared by California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the
June 5-6, 2018 DCTF Meeting

This document has been drafted by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to inform discussions by the California Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF) during its June 5-6, 2018 meeting. Background information on Tri-State protocols is provided, along with questions for the DCTF's consideration. CDFW has identified the questions for the DCTF's consideration to inform the upcoming July 24-25, 2018 Tri-State Meeting in Portland, Oregon. The questions in **bold** will be prioritized for discussion during the DCTF meeting. Remaining considerations related to Tri-State protocols may be discussed by the DCTF at a future time.

Pre-Season Quality Testing Protocols

Quality Testing Rounds, Timing, and Delays

Pre-season quality testing is described in the Tri-State testing protocol and solidified by statute in Section 8276.2 of the California Fish and Game Code. Under this code section, California testing is only required north of the Mendocino-Sonoma County line, delays are announced by CDFW Director in 15-day increments from December 1 until January 15, and the sale of crab meat is allowed during the pre-season test. All other testing protocol details are mapped out in the Tri-State testing protocol. Target date of each round of testing was set to accommodate each state's gear setting window and the 15-day increments set in California statute.

California pre-season quality testing as provided in Section 8276.2 of the Fish and Game Code:

- 1st Round – Target on or about Nov 1
- 2nd Round – Target on or about Nov 15
 - Director Delays until Dec 16
- 3rd Round – Target on or about Dec 1
 - Director Delays until Dec 31
- 4th Round can be authorized by Director, no specific target date, however no testing beyond Jan 1
 - Director Delays until Jan 15

Note: If passed, Senate Bill (SB) 1310 includes a provision that would allow additional tests beyond January 1 until January 15. However, there are no management implications for test results past January 1. OR and WA allow continued testing beyond January 1.

Tri-State pre-season quality testing protocol:

- Optional End-of-October Test
- 1st Round – Target by Nov 15, no later than Nov 22; CA conducted on 11/6/2017
 - Tri-State Delay until Dec 16

- 2nd Round – Target by Dec 7; CA conducted on 12/5/2017
 - Tri-State Delay until Dec 31
- 3rd Round – Target by Dec 22; CA conducted on 12/19/2017
 - Tri-State Delay until Jan 15 (WA, OR and CA can't delay past this date)

Considerations for Testing Rounds, Timing and Delays

In recent years, the Tri-State committee, agencies, and fishermen have highlighted key questions on the testing protocols for consideration, including:

- **Should fishery be allowed to delay beyond Jan. 15 based on crab quality and how would that be implemented (i.e. 15 additional days, not beyond some other drop-dead date)?**
- Should testing rounds stated in CA statute and Tri-State protocol be aligned? Need vessels and processors to be on board with schedule. (Earlier test date accommodates for Nov. 15 opener in area of District 10 south).

Crab Sampling/Collection

Tri-State protocols identify the following sampling/collecting steps:

- Each port will be comprised of 2 stations/locations.
 - 3 strings of 6 traps are set at each depth strata of 15, 30, or 35-45 fathoms for a total of 18 traps at each location, and a grand total of 36 traps deployed from each port.
 - Each pot is baited w/2 baiters filled w/approximately 1lb of squid (or equivalent) for a 24 hour soak time.
- On board the vessel there must be a captain and crew, while agency personnel or authorized observer is on board the 2nd day during crab collection.
- All crab kept regardless of condition and from each port will be combined, must have 300lbs minimum per port area– traps can be reset at discretion of vessel operator and 2nd pull can be combined with first for a single sample if this minimum poundage is not met

Crab Processing

Tri-State protocol outlines the following steps for processing crabs collected for quality testing:

- Processing overseen by an unbiased observer
- Crab combined by port and weighed 30 min after drain for total weight
- Crabs transported in closed container to processing facility
- Crabs are packed and cooked for 12 minutes – all crab meat picked including tips are brined in 90% solution, cleaned, rinsed, and weighed for packed weight
- Calculate packed weight (÷) Calculate total weight = % Percentage Meat Recovery

Considerations for Crab Processing

In recent years, Tri-State committee, agencies, and fishermen have highlighted new considerations on the testing protocols including:

- **Do we want to ensure consistency across the three states by including specificity to processing guidelines (e.g., time from cooking to picking)?**

Meat Recovery Criteria

- North of Cascade Head, OR – 23%
- South of Cascade Head, OR – 25%
- In order to not delay in CA, every northern port in CA must reach 25% (round up to nearest integer, no projections)

Considerations for Meat Recovery Criteria

In recent years, Tri-State committee, agencies, and fishermen have highlighted new considerations on the testing protocols including:

- **Should we establish one standard for meat recovery for all 3 states?**

Establishing Fishing Zones

Tri-State protocol allows for the coastal fishery from Point Arena, CA north to United States-Canadian border to be divided up in to two (2) distinct fishing zones provided the line is set north of the CA/OR border (line is generally set in Oregon) and must take into consideration traditional fishing patterns.

Considerations for Establishing Fishing Zones

In recent years, Tri-State committee, agencies, and fishermen have highlighted new considerations on the testing protocols including:

- **Should Tri-State add lines with separate opening dates based on the results of crab quality testing (i.e. up to two lines dividing area in to three distinct fishing zones)?**
 - **Should CA consider a line be drawn in northern CA for quality (already a line between northern and central)?**

Other Questions for DCTF Consideration

- **Should the Tri-State Agreement include a commitment for the three states to have consistent marine biotoxin plan (e.g. domoic acid sampling) in addition to preseason crab quality testing?**
- Should California consider allowing evisceration orders in the event that domoic acid continues to delay port openers? (Needs continued conversation with California Department of Public Health).