

Puget Sound Recreational Crabbing

Recreational crabbing is an important pastime for Washingtonians and important to our state's economy. Selective harvest of crabs has resulted in a sustainable fishery that brings over \$23 million in Net Economic Value ("NEV") to Washington. Over 50% of this economic value is derived from the recreational sector, yet only 10% of the harvestable crabs are allocated to this sector. Since our inception, CCA Washington has recognized the need for fairness in harvest management. Our position statement on harvest management states in part: *"Since the fisheries resources of Washington are the property of present and future generations, harvestable surpluses should be utilized in a manner that optimizes their benefits to all of our citizens."*

Selective Harvest, its in place for crabs and it works!

The "Three S" Dungeness crab management has been in place for decades in Washington State. Season, Size, and Sex selective harvest has resulted in one of the state's most sustainable fisheries. CCA Washington recognizes that conservation should be the driving consideration in the management of Puget Sound Dungeness crab, and we oppose increasing the overall Puget Sound Dungeness crab harvest unless corresponding increases in abundance are achieved through other conservation measures. Further conservation measures are needed, in particular to reduce the damage caused by derelict fishing gear. However, the population is healthy enough to support significant harvest and the question is; how should this resource be allocated to best benefit all citizens?

Allocation – It's a shell game.

In 1995 management of the Dungeness crab fishery within Washington State changed substantially. The 9th Circuit Court delivered an order known as the Rafeedie Decision, requiring that the harvestable surplus of shellfish in Washington be allocated equally (50/50) between the Treaty Tribes and State fisheries. CCA Washington recognizes and respects the tribal right to 50% of harvest. This tribal harvest is an important segment of the commercial crab fishery and provides the non-crabbing public access to this resource. The remaining 50% allocated to nontribal interest is currently being allocated 2/3 commercial to 1/3 recreational. On the surface, 1/3 of the crabs going to recreational crabbers doesn't sound too bad, until you realize that this is 1/3 of one half! Add to this that allocation goals and reality don't always meet, and in many years the recreational sector receives less than 10% of the harvest.

Washington is an amazing place to live. Our outdoor activities are one of the reasons this is a special place. The Puget Sound offers a unique opportunity for our citizens and tourists to experience the outdoors and a marine environment in protected waters. Recreational crabbing in the Puget Sound is a great family friendly activity and an excellent way to introduce kids to the outdoors. That's worth more than 10%.

Your CCA has developed a policy statement regarding Puget Sound recreational crabbing and is actively advocating for more opportunity for the recreational sector.

-The Net Economic Value (“NEV”) for commercial harvesters and processors generated by the 2006 harvest from Washington was estimated at \$17,480,000. Yet the NEV generated in 2006 by recreational anglers for crab was \$23,521,000 (*Table 8.*)³