Example Catch Card Program for Fish and Crab Species in the Northwest

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Catch Record Card Program

September 2013

Background

❖ The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife uses catch cards for all kept sturgeon, steelhead, salmon, and halibut.

❖ There is a separate catch card for Puget Sound Dungeness crab.

❖ The program has been ongoing for 50+ years.

❖ Catch cards are required to be in the owner's possession when fishing for any of the above species.

❖ Catch cards are required to be sent back by a date specified by the agency, which is also printed on the card.

❖ For Dungeness crab there is an option to fill out the catch card data via the internet.

Data Collected

The fish catch card is divided into four sections, one for each species.

On the card the angler must record:

❖ Species caught (species codes are provided for salmon and sturgeon)

❖ Where the fish was caught using a location code.

❖ When the fish was caught.

❖ Length of fish (for sturgeon only)

Data Collected

❖ For salmon, whether or not the adipose fin has been clipped, which indicates a hatchery fish.

❖ For halibut, whether the fish was harvested from a private vessel or from a charter boat.

❖ Cards must be sent back even if no fish are harvested.

❖ Instructions for filling out the catch card are available online. http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/catch_record_card/ crc_instructions.pdf

How are the Data Used?

❖ Data are used to estimate harvest using a correction factor for the number of cards not turned in.

❖ The catch cards generally provide the <u>official</u> harvest estimates for the four fish species in the program; however, creel surveys are also done and may be used as the official estimates.

❖ Catch card data are used to identify trends on a watershed basis.

❖ For Dungeness crab, the catch cards are the <u>primary</u> source of harvest information.

❖ The data are also used to track the health of fish stocks.

Cost of Catch Cards

❖ The first catch card is free and is sent with the license when purchased.

❖ The license costs anywhere between $11.35 and $84.50 depending on residency, military status, length of time the license is valid, type if fishing (salt or freshwater), and age (child vs. adult).

❖ Purchase of any additional catch cards is $12.10.

❖ A lost card can only be replaced by purchasing a new one.

❖ If one card is filled up another card must be purchased to continue fishing.

Compliance

Compliance rates for returning fish catch cards are:

❖ 20% with no reminder post card sent.

❖ 45%-50% with reminder post card sent.

❖ There is no penalty for not turning in a fish catch card.

Compliance rates for returning <u>Dungeness crab </u>catch cards are:

❖ 55%-60%.

❖ There is a $10.00 penalty for not returning a Dungeness crab catch card.

Processing of Cards and Data

❖ The WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife processes approximately 250,000 catch cards each year.

❖ 2-3 staff members process the incoming cards.

❖ 4-5 staff enter the data.

❖ 3-4 months to process the data.

Acknowledgement

Thank you to Mr. Eric Kraig

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Catch Record Card

Program Manager

For more information on this program please visit:
https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/wdfw/licenses_crc.html

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