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STATUS OF THE 1969-70 PACIFIC COAST DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY

The preliminary 1969-70 season total of 47.0 million pounds of Dungeness crab for the combined landings of Washington, Oregon, and California are the highest ever recorded for the three contiguous states and is 2.9 million pounds higher than the previous record season of 1968-69. The catch for the West Coast, excluding Canada, was 54.1 million pounds (Figure 1). This exceeds the Pacific Coast 15-year mean of 34.1 million pounds by 20.0 million pounds and is 0.9 million pounds greater than the previous record landings of 1968-69.

Alaska 1/

Landings in Alaska through August totaled 7.1 million pounds or 2.0 million pounds less than for the same period in 1968-69 (Figure 2). In the Kodiak area the catch per unit of effort in 1970 was much lower than in the preceding 2 years.

British Columbia

Total Dungeness crab landings in British Columbia through August were 1.6 million pounds, a reduction of 0.9 million pounds for the same period in 1969. The total catch in 1969 was 3.7 million pounds; the 1970 total is not expected to reach 3.0 million pounds. It is not known at this time if the reduced landings reflect decreased effort or crab scarcity.

Washington

Preliminary coastal crab landings in Washington total 17.5 million pounds (Figure 2). This is 0.9 million pounds less than last year's all time record. Due to the extraordinarily poor condition of the crab,

1/ Alaska data are summarized by calendar year.

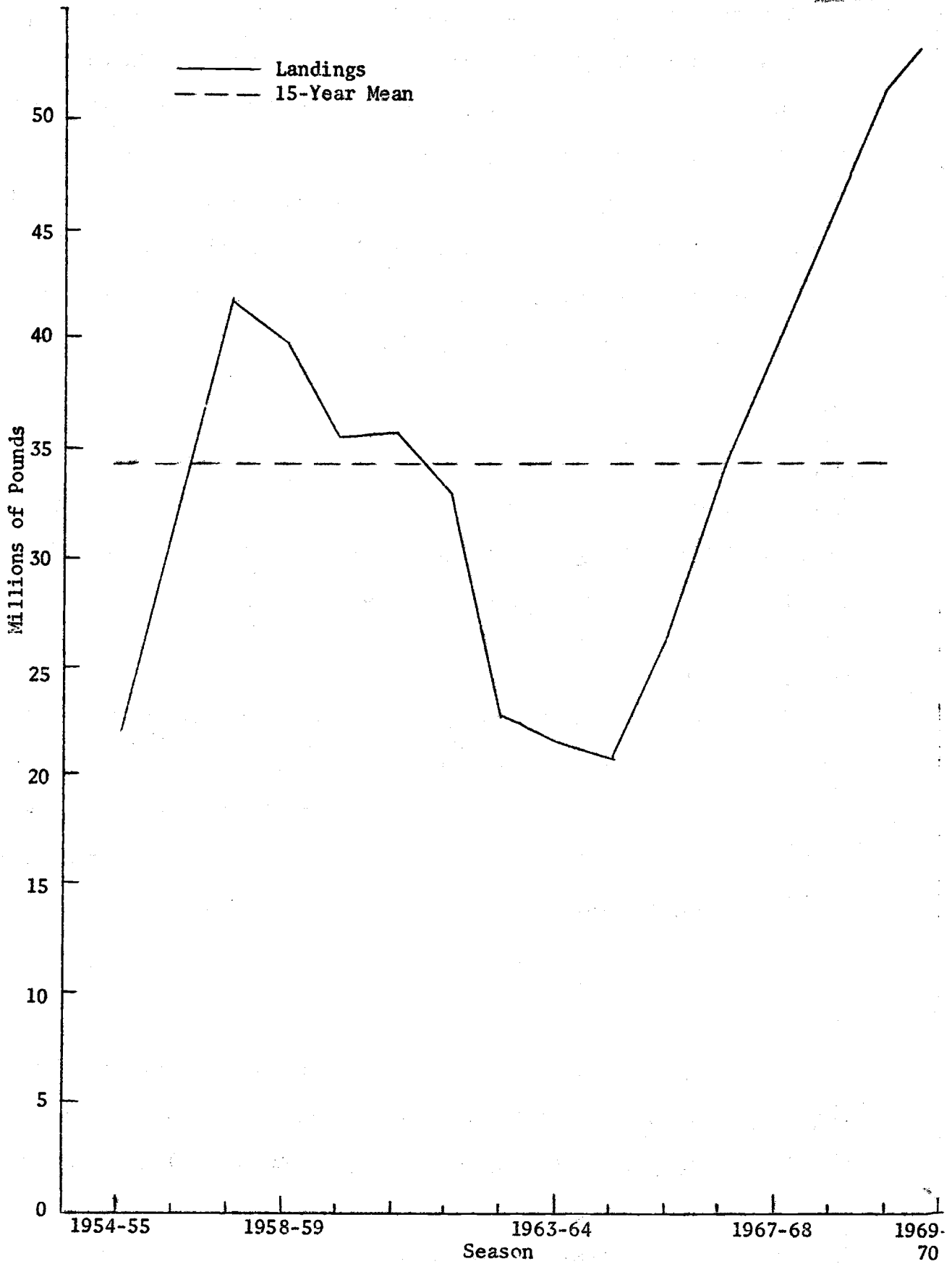


Figure 1. Pacific Coast Crab Landings by Season Excluding British Columbia

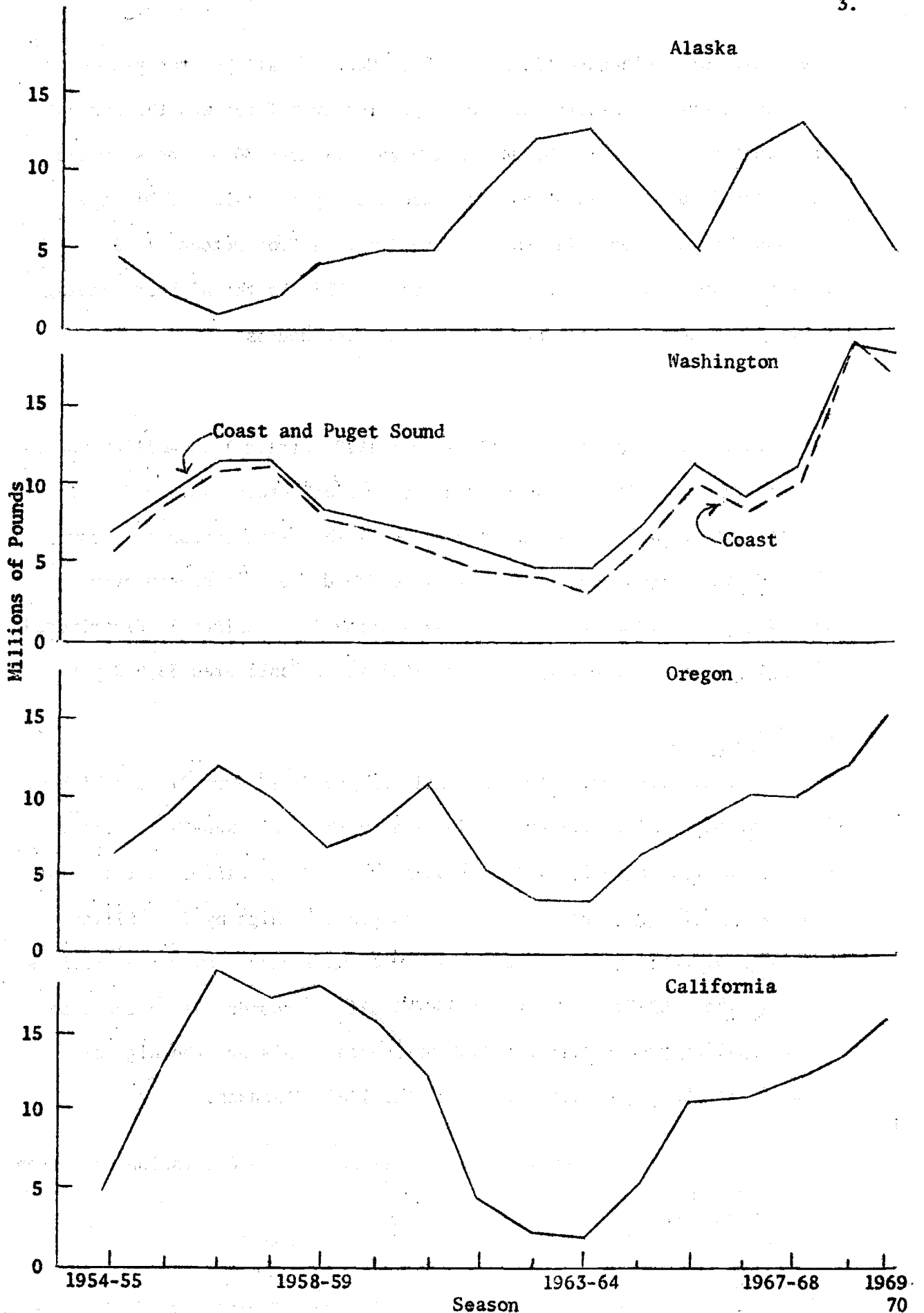


Figure 2. Crab Landings by Season, 1954-55 through 1969-70

the season was delayed until January 1. However, all but two processors refused to buy crab until late January. The crab fleet was the largest in recent years with 108 boats fishing an estimated 30,000 pots in the ocean and 30 boats fishing an estimated 4,000 pots inside of Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor. The Puget Sound landings from October 1969 through September 1970 totaled 900,000 pounds. This is the highest landing since 1966 when the total was over a million pounds.

Oregon

Oregon crab landings through August 1970 totaled 13.8 million pounds (Figure 2). The season total is expected to be between 13.9 and 14.1 million pounds (Figure 2). This represents the fifth season in a row when 10 million or more pounds were landed and the best season ever recorded. The catch, as reflected by landings, was uniformly distributed along the coast and ^{was} made by 141 boats fishing an estimated 33,000 pots.

California

Statewide landings total 15.5 million pounds (Figure 2), the highest in 10 years, and 1.8 million pounds greater than the 1968-69 landings. Landings in excess of 14 million pounds in northern California represent a new record for that area exceeding the previous high by 1.8 million pounds. The San Francisco area also showed an increase over the previous season. The 1969-70 season total of 1.5 million pounds was an increase of 0.6 million pounds over the 1968-69 season. This was the highest total in the San Francisco area since the 1960-61 season.

Compiled by C. Dale Snow, Fish Commission of Oregon

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