



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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September 10, 2015

WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

The Washington Coastal Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery ends at 11:59 pm on September 15, 2015. Fishers are reminded that all crab must be landed and all crab gear must be removed from coastal waters prior to 11:59 pm on September 15, 2015.

Beginning September 21, 2015, permitted gear recovery will be expanded to include all coastal waters between the Washington/Oregon border (46°15.00) and the US / Canada Border, including the Columbia River, Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor.

WDFW is now issuing permits to coastal Dungeness crab license owners who are interested in recovering crab gear left in the ocean following the close of the 2014-15 commercial crab season. *Those fishers who received permits to recover gear south of Point Chehalis (starting September 7) and wish to expand their recovery operations into the area North of Point Chehalis will need to apply for a new permit.* Please note, gear recovery remains limited to the area between the WA/OR border and Point Chehalis, including the Columbia River and Willapa Bay until September 21, 2015. License owners that have been unable to recover their gear prior to the close of the season due to an **emergency situation** can request an exemption from the removal program by calling Sgt. Tony Leonetti at 360-485-8149.

A PERMIT IS REQUIRED to participate in this program.

- **Contact Carol Henry at 360-249-4628 ext. 254 to request a permit.**

Participants with a WDFW issued gear recovery permit will be able to recover crab gear owned by Washington state licensed fishers that remains in the ocean and will be exempt from lost and found property laws allowing them to keep any such gear they recover or, arrangements can be made to return the gear to the original owner. *This permit does not allow the recovery of crab gear owned by tribal fishers.* Gear recovery is permitted through October 31, 2015.

In regards to final disposition of recovered gear, remember that it is always an option for those participating in the permitted gear recovery program to give the owner of any gear they recover the right of first refusal.

To allow for data collection and monitoring of the program, gear recovery permits will require:

- That the permit is on board the participating vessel anytime it is engaged in recovery operations or has recovered gear onboard.
- Notification to Department staff (by calling Sgt. Tony Leonetti at 360-485-8149) prior to the vessel leaving the dock and 2-hours prior to returning to the dock during recovery operations (regardless if any gear was recovered).
- Recording all recovered gear in a special log book specific to derelict gear recovery (this log book will be provided with your permit.)
- Registration, inspection and marking of all recovered gear prior to removing it from the participating vessel.

In order to locate and recover as much abandoned crab gear as possible the Department has set up an abandoned gear reporting hotline for coastal areas. Any information on the specific location of crab pots that are not actively fishing will aid to the success of the permitted gear recovery project.

To report lost or abandoned crab gear call 360-249-4628 extension 263 and leave as much information as possible including, your name, phone number, general location, latitude and longitude and approximate amount of lost gear. Information on derelict crab gear can also be provided electronically by using the WDFW on line reporting form at the following link:

http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/derelict/derelict_gear.html