



State of Washington  
**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

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July 21, 2021

Dear Commercial Harvesters and Buyers of Fish and Shellfish:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is proposing changes to our fish receiving ticket (“fish ticket”) regulations. You are receiving this letter because you are currently licensed to harvest, deliver, or receive commercial shellfish in the state or held such a license during 2018-2021. If you are unfamiliar with the state’s rule making process, the proposed changes and related information are given on form CR-102, which you can find posted on the [WDFW Rules Information Center webpage](#)<sup>1</sup>. In addition to proposed changes to fish ticket regulations, changes to coastal commercial Dungeness crab regulations are included. Both are described below.

**1. Expanding mandatory use of electronic fish tickets to crab and shrimp deliveries on the coast and in Puget Sound.**

Electronic fish tickets are currently mandatory for most commercial groundfish and Pacific halibut delivered into the state. Electronic fish ticket reporting of deliveries from the groundfish individual fishing quota program were made mandatory in 2011. This requirement was expanded in 2017 to include limited entry and open access non-trawl groundfish fisheries, and again in 2018 to include Pacific halibut and deliveries made by vessels conducting research on groundfish and Pacific halibut.

This 2021 proposed change would further expand mandatory electronic fish ticket reporting to include Dungeness crab, ocean pink shrimp, pink shrimp, coonstripe shrimp, sidestripe shrimp, and spot shrimp deliveries into all Washington ports including both those on the coast and in Puget Sound. Coastal deliveries impacted by this rule change are coastal Dungeness crab, ocean pink shrimp, and spot shrimp. Puget Sound deliveries impacted by this rule change are Puget Sound Dungeness crab, pink shrimp, spot shrimp, coonstripe shrimp, and sidestripe shrimp. For Puget Sound fisheries, these changes will eventually remove the need for buyer quick reporting.

Adding these fisheries to mandatory electronic fish ticket reporting would reduce the time between landings and when catch information is available to managers, increasing efficiency for WDFW and facilitating improved management of the fisheries resources.

Many businesses that would be affected by this expansion are already using electronic fish tickets for West Coast or Alaska caught groundfish. For other businesses, the CR-102 includes information on the costs that could be expected upon becoming subject to the mandatory electronic fish ticket requirement for the first time. Comments and feedback on costs and logistics of using electronic fish tickets would be particularly helpful to this rule making.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/about/regulations/filings/2021/wsr\\_21-14-001\\_0.pdf](https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/about/regulations/filings/2021/wsr_21-14-001_0.pdf)

## 2. Coastal commercial Dungeness crab rule changes

Proposed changes to coastal commercial Dungeness crab regulations are part of the same CR-102 as the electronic fish ticket reporting proposal for coastal and Puget Sound shellfish. These proposed changes build on changes adopted in 2020 and align with conservation plan objectives directed at reducing the risk of marine life entanglements in coastal Dungeness crab gear pursuant to federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) requirements. Below is a summary of changes proposed only for the coastal Dungeness crab fishery, including other minor changes to clarify existing rules:

- Eliminate the replacement buoy tag program (WAC 220-340-430).
- Revise the gear tending requirement from 21 days to 14 days (WAC 220-340-480).
- Allow experimental gear testing when authorized by permit issued from the director (WAC 220-340-430, WAC 220-353-020, WAC 220-340-480).
- Codify a 73-hour gear pre-set period, currently adopted each year by emergency rule (WAC 220-340-420)
- Clarify that gear recovery is now allowed after May 1, and after the September 15 close of the coastal commercial crab season (WAC 220-340-490)
- Clarify that fair start provisions will be applied when the crab season is delayed due to meat quality and the presence of biotoxins (WAC 220-340-450)

A public hearing and briefing will take place during the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission webinar September 16-18, 2021. Visit the Commission's web page at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/commission/meetings>, contact the Commission office at (360) 902-2267, or email: [commission@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:commission@dfw.wa.gov) for instructions on how to join the meeting. To identify special accommodation needs, contact the Title VI Compliance Coordinator at (360) 902-2703 or email: [title6@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:title6@dfw.wa.gov).<sup>2</sup> Please monitor the [Commission's web page](#) for final scheduling details.

In addition to submitting public comment to the Commission in person, you may also provide public comment to Heather Hall by email ([commercialcrab@PublicInput.com](mailto:commercialcrab@PublicInput.com)) or via WDFW's public comment website (<https://publicinput.com/commercialcrab>). The deadline for written comments is September 15, 2021.

Sincerely,

Heather Hall  
Intergovernmental Ocean Policy Manager

Cc: Chief Steve Bear  
Captain Dan Chadwick  
Aaron Dufault  
Dan Ayres  
Lorna Wargo  
Katelyn Bosley  
Marjorie Morningstar

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<sup>2</sup> <https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requests-accommodation>