



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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September 15, 2011

To all Coastal Dungeness Crab License Owners:

The purpose of this message is to let you know that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will be issuing permits to coastal Dungeness crab license owners who are interested in recovering crab gear left in the ocean following the close of the 2010-2011 commercial crab season. Permitted gear recovery will be allowed beginning September 20, 2011.

Participants with a WDFW issued gear recovery permit will be able to recover state owned crab gear that remains in the ocean and will be exempt from lost and found property laws allowing them to keep any state gear they recover or, arrangements can be made to return the gear to the original owner. 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.

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. Dan Chadwick at 360-581-3337) prior to the vessel leaving the dock and 2-hours prior to returning to the dock during recovery operations (regardless if gear was recovered).
- Recording all recovered gear in a special log book specific to derelict gear recovery.
- Registration, inspection and marking of all recovered gear prior to removing it from the participating vessel.

Contact Carol Henry at 360-249-4628 ext. 254 to request a permit or Dan Chadwick at 360-581-3337 to discuss an exemption.

This fall, in addition to the permitted gear recovery, WDFW staff will resume derelict crab gear recovery as part of our project funded in part by a grant from NOAA's Community-based Marine Debris Prevention and Removal Program. Gear recovered during this project will be returned to the owner.

The NOAA project also has a component where a chartered vessel will recover cut-off crab gear in one, one square mile areas near the Columbia River to estimate the amount of lost crab pots in this high impact areas. This area will be identified and will be off limits to gear recovery work under the WDFW permitted program until this portion of the project is complete.

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 both the permitted gear recovery and the federally funded projects.

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.htm