



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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September 13, 2013

WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

- Please Note: Permitted gear recovery will be allowed beginning September 20, 2013.
- Reminder: WDFW has decided to return to a one-year buoy tag rotation.

GEAR RECOVERY:

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 2012-2013 commercial crab season. 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. **Permitted gear recovery will be allowed beginning September 20, 2013.**

Be aware that it is illegal to leave your gear in the water after the close of the season (11:59 pm, September 15).

In regards to final deposition 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.

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 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.

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

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
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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

BUOY TAGS:

WDFW has decided to return to one season buoy tags beginning with the upcoming 2013 – 2014 season. WDFW implemented a two season buoy tag program beginning with the 2011-2012. The change to two season tags was made to alleviate costs to the crab industry. However, the program was implemented with the understanding that if it compromised WDFW's ability to enforce pot limits we would return to a one season buoy tag. During the two seasons that the buoy tag program has been in place, WDFW has heard comments from industry members and the WDFW enforcement program in support of returning to a one season tag. The primary issue raised by industry members is similar to concerns raised by enforcement officers which is related to the enforceability of the pot limit primarily during the second season of the two season tag. In 2012, WDFW initiated an industry survey to fully gauge industry's preference for one or two season buoy tags which indicated a preference for returning to one season buoy tags.