



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

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September 11, 2019

Dear Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishery Participant:

This spring, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) hosted two public meetings to share the status of whale entanglements on the west coast and Washington specifically. Those discussions included proposed measures to avoid or reduce the likelihood of whale entanglements in crab gear. Since then, staff have worked with the coastal Dungeness crab Advisory Board to develop proposed rule language to implement those measures.

WDFW has scheduled a public meeting to review the proposed rule changes with industry members and discuss next steps before we brief the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Enclosed is a general summary of the proposed changes, process, and timeline.

The industry meeting will be held on Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to noon, at Montesano City Hall, 112 North Main Street in Montesano.

A copy of the exact proposed rule language will be sent to you in early October. There will be public comment opportunities at the Commission briefing in October and at a public hearing on November 6, 2019.

For more information, you can contact me at 360-902-2487 or [Heather.Hall@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Heather.Hall@dfw.wa.gov)

Sincerely,

Heather Hall  
Intergovernmental Ocean Policy

cc: Michele Culver  
Dan Ayres  
Victoria Knorr

# **WDFW Regulatory Proposal and Next Steps (September 2019)**

## **Preliminary Proposal**

### **Gear Requirements**

#### **Year – Round**

- Require line be kept taut and vertical
- Require line marking for “WA crab fishery”

#### **Beginning May 1:**

- Reduce pot limit by one-third: 500 pots to 330 / 300 pots to 200
- Require summer buoy tags on all pots beginning May 1
  - Remove all other gear by May 15

### **Derelict Gear Removal**

- Effective May 16, allow all gear without summer buoy tag to be brought in and reported

### **Additional Ideas and Concepts for Further Exploration**

- Breakaway devices – further discussion by Whale Working Group – WDFW studies
- Pilot electronic monitoring program – NOAA grant proposal for 2020
- Electronic fish tickets – voluntary in 2019-20, consider mandatory for 2020-21
- Other

### **Next Steps**

September 30 – Industry meeting – Montesano City Hall

October 18 – FWC Meeting – Rule Briefing with public comment – Natural Resources Building, Olympia

November 6 – Industry meeting and public hearing on proposed rule changes – Montesano City Hall

Jan 2020 – FWC Meeting – Rule adoption