



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

48 Devonshire Road, Montesano, Washington 98563-9618 (360) 249-4628 FAX (360) 249-1229

April 12, 2023

WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

Contact: Jamie Fuller at 360-580-0875

Beginning at 8:01 am on May 1, 2023, permitted gear recovery will be allowed in coastal waters between the Washington/Oregon border (46°15.00) and the US / Canada Border, including the Columbia River, Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor. Gear recovery will not be allowed in any SMA closed to state licensed fisherman.

WDFW is now issuing permits to coastal Dungeness crab license owners who are interested in recovering crab gear left in the ocean without summer buoy tags attached. Gear recovery is permitted from May 1 through October 31, 2023. With an exception described below, any state licensed crab gear left in the ocean after April 30, 2023, without summer buoy tags attached will be subject to gear recovery. **Please remember to remove your regular season tag by May 1st and leave only the summer tag attached to your buoy setup.**

In-season gear recovery: May 1-September 15, 2023

- Participants with a WDFW issued gear recovery permit will be able to recover crab gear owned by state licensed fishers that remains in the ocean that does not have a **summer buoy tag attached**.

Post-season gear recovery: September 16-October 31, 2023

- Participants with a WDFW issued gear recovery permit will be able to recover **all** crab gear owned by state licensed fishers that remains in the ocean.

Summer Tags: Not recoverable during the in-season gear recovery May 1 – Sept 15, 2023.



Recoverable Tags: Can be recovered after May 1 with state issued permit.



Prior to the start of the May 1 gear recovery period, WDFW is asking fishers to help the owners of the F/V Ethel May locate gear that has not yet been recovered. These pots were initially set in the area between the mouth of Willapa Bay and Klipsan Beach at a depth of approximately 50 feet. If you see any of this gear prior to May 1, please notify WDFW with location information which will be forwarded to the owners. **As a reminder, it is unlawful to recover any gear prior to May 1.**

From May 1 through October 31, permitted gear recovery participants can bring in gear belonging to the Ethel May but, because of the tragic circumstances associated with the Ethel May, all gear belonging to this vessel must be provided to WDFW enforcement or staff upon return to port. WDFW will facilitate the return of all recovered Ethel May gear to the owners. If recovered, this gear must be kept separate from any other recovered gear on board the vessel. If you see any derelict gear belonging to the Ethel May but choose to not recover them, please notify WDFW with location information which will be forwarded to the owners.

Ethel May Buoys and Current Season Buoy Tag:



A PERMIT IS REQUIRED to participate in this program.

➤ **TO REQUEST A PERMIT contact:**

Jamie Fuller at 360-580-0875

jamie.fuller@dfw.wa.gov

Permit holders will be exempt from lost and found property laws allowing them to keep any crab gear they recover or can return the gear to the original owner. ***This permit does not allow the recovery of crab gear owned by tribal fishers.***

Regarding 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 or texting (text is preferred) Sergeant Brian Alexander (Westport) at 360-580-6200 or Sergeant Todd Dielman (Ilwaco/Chinook) at 360-581-3423** 2-hours prior to returning to the dock if any gear was recovered.
- Recording all recovered gear in a special logbook specific to derelict gear recovery (this logbook will be provided with your permit.)
- Registration, inspection and marking of all recovered gear prior to removing it from the participating vessel.