



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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April 16, 2024

WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

Beginning at 8:00 am on May 8, 2024, permitted recovery of commercial crab gear 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 8 through October 31, 2024. With an exception described below, any state licensed crab gear left in the ocean after 11:59 pm on May 7, 2024, 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.**

Please note the change in the start date for gear recovery. Delaying gear recovery until May 8 will allow vessels time to remove regular season tags from gear prior to the start of gear recovery. This in no way allows vessels to fish gear in excess of the reduced pot limits or without summer buoy tags after May 1.

In-season gear recovery: May 8-September 15, 2024

- 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**.
- **An active Electronic Monitoring system is required on the vessel and must remain on at any time crab pot recovery work is being conducted.**
- Retention of crab from recovered pots is only **ALLOWED** for licenses/vessels participating in the summer crab fishery (license/vessel was issued summer buoy tags).
- Retention of crab from recovered pots is **PROHIBITED** for any license/vessel **NOT** participating in the summer crab fishery.

Post-season gear recovery: September 16-October 31, 2024

- 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.
- Retention of crab from recovered pots is **PROHIBITED** for all licenses/vessels.

Summer Tags: Not recoverable during the in-season gear recovery May 8 – Sept 15, 2024.



Recoverable Tags: Can be recovered after May 8 with state issued permit.



Before the start of the 2023-24 WA Dungeness crab season, 7 WA licensed vessels lost a significant amount of gear in the fire at Ilwaco Landing. From May 1 through October 31, permitted gear recovery participants can bring in gear belonging to the 7 vessels listed below but, because of the tragic circumstances associated with these vessels gear, all gear belonging to or fished by these vessels must be provided to WDFW enforcement or staff upon return to port. WDFW will facilitate the return of all recovered gear to the owners.

Some of these vessels were issued a red replacement tag with a license number handwritten on them, shown in the picture below. Any gear with one of the replacement tags attached or gear containing tags with the following license numbers must be provided to WDFW upon returning to port.

Vessel Name	WA License #
Iron Clad	59945
Brandy	58186
Sojourn	58126
Sunset Charge	60302
Miss Pacific	58201
Judy S	58194
Rigorous	58101



If you see any derelict gear belonging to these 7 vessels but choose to not recover them, please notify WDFW with location information which will be forwarded to the owners.

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.