

European Green Crab Management Update

December 2022



Incident Command System deployed, 269,500+ crabs removed in 2022

In 2021, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), tribal co-managers, and partners identified an exponential increase of invasive [European green crabs](#) (EGC), *Carcinus maenas*, in the Lummi Nation's Sea Pond within the Salish Sea, and in areas of the Washington Coast including Makah Bay, Grays Harbor, and Willapa Bay.

On Dec. 14, 2021, WDFW Director Susewind submitted an [emergency measures request](#) under RCW 77.135.090 for EGC response to Governor Jay Inslee. On Jan. 19, 2022, Governor Inslee [issued](#) an [emergency proclamation](#) (#22-02) to address the exponential increase in EGC populations across Washington's marine shorelines. The proclamation directed WDFW to eradicate, reduce, or contain EGC in Washington, and to increase coordination with partner agencies and Native American tribes. On March 31, the Washington State Legislature approved \$8,568,000 in emergency funding in the 2022 Supplemental Budget to facilitate increased EGC management efforts. Multiple efforts to detect, trap, and remove EGC that had already been underway since 2015 were ramped up immediately.

After meeting with other state and federal agencies, Director Susewind formally implemented an Incident Command System (ICS) on May 5 in delegating authority to Allen Pleus, WDFW's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Policy Coordinator, to serve as Incident Commander. **ICS objectives include the reduction of EGC populations to below levels harmful to Washington's environmental, economic, or cultural resources.** The ICS also identifies Coastal and Salish Sea management branches. See our [news release](#) for additional details on emergency measures deployment.

With the Governor's emergency order, emergency measures funding, and establishment of the ICS, WDFW significantly increased both the Department's own EGC trapping and monitoring as well as coordination between tribes, state and federal agencies, shellfish growers and tidelands owners, and other organizations and partners. This coordinated emergency response was exemplified in May and June when EGC were [detected in Hood Canal](#) for the first time through Washington Sea Grant's "Crab Team" community science program. Within 72 hours of detection, extensive "rapid response" trapping was deployed by WDFW and partners to assess the level of infestation, remove as many EGC as possible, which has appeared to have prevented a population from taking hold.

As of November 30, 2022, WDFW staff and crews from tribes, shellfish growers, and other partners have removed more than 269,500 EGC from Washington waters, most from the coast and Lummi Bay. No new areas of significant EGC infestation have emerged. **To date, European green crab populations are responding to control in the Salish Sea Branch, including Lummi sea pond, but not yet in the Coastal Branch management areas.** State funds have been disbursed to tribes, agencies, and local communities to support their EGC control efforts. Ongoing emergency measures and coordination through the ICS will be needed in 2023, with increased efforts towards the Coastal Branch management areas.

[Visit our webpage](#) for regular EGC Public Updates or the [EGC Quarterly Progress Report](#)

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