9TH EDITION - 2023 SEASON SUMMARY

Washington Pink Shrimp Fishery Newsletter 2024

Learn More

Washington Department of FISH & WILDLIFE

Inside you will find information about the 2023 commercial pink shrimp season, historical trends, and news about the 2024 season.

Learn more at wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/commercial/shrimp/coastal.

14.3 M
pounds of shrimp landed

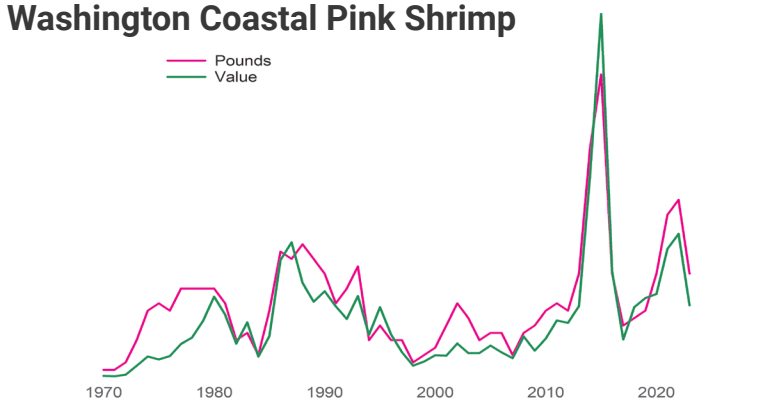
Shrimp count per pound improved

Lower price per pound

Better than average CPUE

Washington's 2023 coastal pink shrimp season had a better than average catch per unit effort (CPUE).

Where to find it!



Pounds and ex-vessel value of pink shrimp landings into Washington, 1970-2023.

2023 Season Summary

Following back-to-back years with near record-breaking catch in 2021 and 2022, Washington's 2023 pink shrimp fishery returned to a more typical season. During the 2023 season, which opened as usual April 1 and ended Oct. 31, fishers landed a total of 14.3 million pounds (Figure 1).

Although total landings in 2023 were significantly lower than the 2021 and 2022 totals of just over 22 million and 24 million pounds, respectively, the season remained above the historical average of 10.5 million pounds (between 1992 and 2022). The total ex-vessel value paid to fishers at the time of landing was $5.8 million — $6 million less than the previous year. The average price per pound in 2023 was 41 cents — below the 10-year average of 56 cents (Figure 2).

The Washington pink shrimp trawl fishery is managed under a limited entry program; any license that is not renewed annually is returned to the state and not re-issued. Since the inception of the limited entry program in 1996, the total number of licenses has declined from 129 to 74 in 2023. Most of the decline occurred by 2004, and since then an additional 13

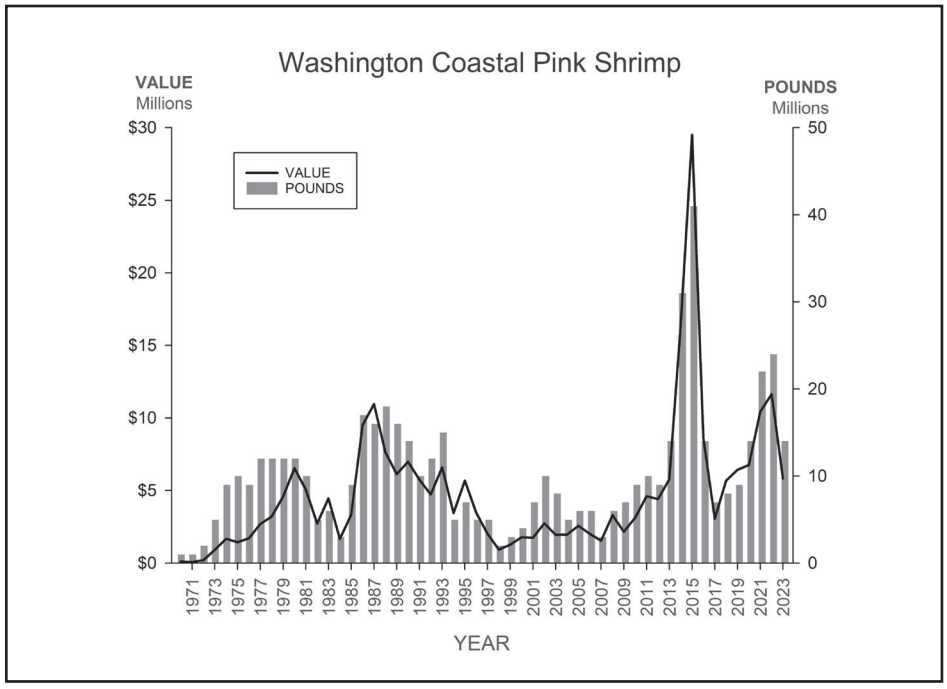


Figure 1. Annual landings and ex-vessel value of pink shrimp into Washington, 1970-2023.

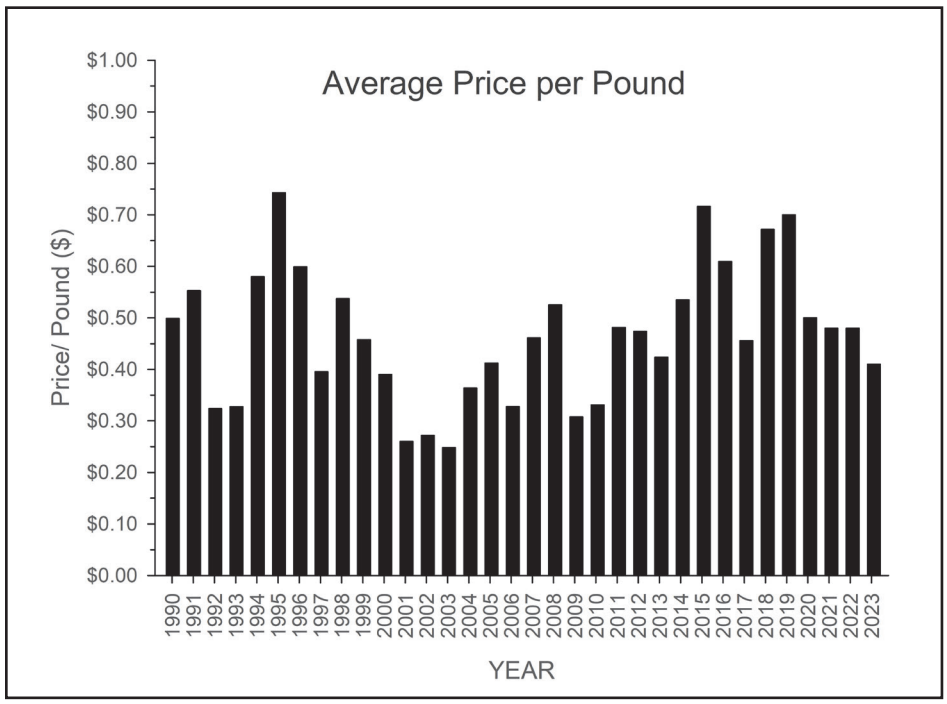


Figure 2. Average price per pound, 1990-2023.

licenses have sunsetted.

In 2023, the number of active vessels decreased from 23 the previous season to 18 (Figure 3), similar to participation in the 2017-2019 fisheries. The total number of landings made into Washington ports in 2023 was also down from the previous year, with 296 deliveries into Washington (Figure 4).

A large portion of shrimp landed in the state in 2023 was caught in waters off of Washington, with a 10% increase from the previous season of shrimp coming from out-of-state waters (Figure 5). After two exceptional seasons, landings in nearly every month of 2023 were similar to the 10-year average. Changing fishing conditions and a decrease in catch per unit effort (CPUE) further depressed landings in August (Figure 6).

Background on pink shrimp fishery

Commercial shrimp fishing off Washington began in the late 1950s. While other species of shrimp inhabit coastal waters, only pink shrimp (Pandalus jordani) has been abundant enough to support a large, long-term commercial fishery. Pink shrimp are caught by trawl gear; the majority of active vessels in the Washington fleet are double-rigged with semi-pelagic, fine-meshed shrimp nets.

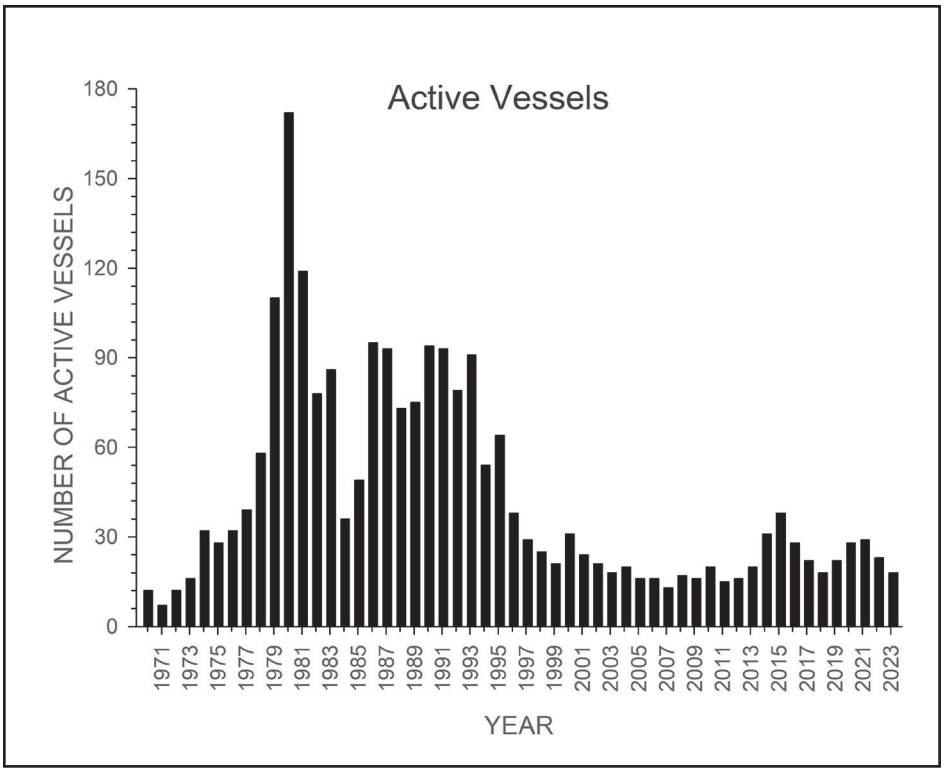


Figure 3. Number of vessels actively fishing, 1970-2023.

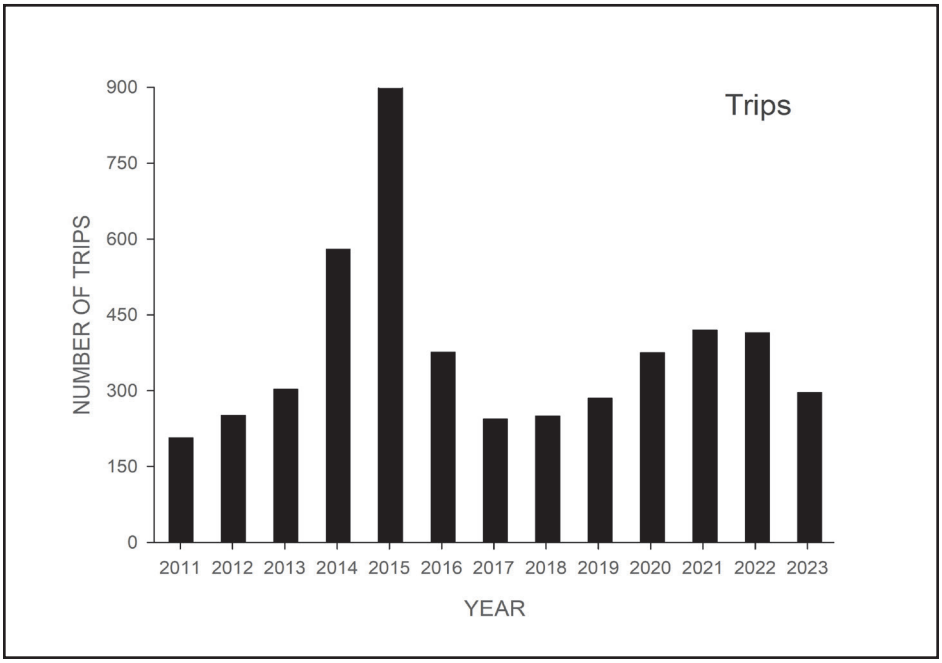


Figure 4. Number of fishing trips, 2011-2023.

Along the Washington coast, the pink shrimp fishery operates only in federal waters (3-200 miles). Within Washington state waters (0-3 miles) most commercial gears, including trawl, are prohibited.

In 1982, the states of Washington, Oregon, and California established a common season and a maximum count per pound regulation to minimize regulatory conflicts. The fishing season is fixed in permanent regulation, opening April 1 and closing Oct. 31. Since that time, state fishery managers have worked collaboratively with industry, federal, and research partners to develop additional regulatory measures. The establishment of limited entry license programs, fishery permits, reference points for season closures, gear modifications, and fishery monitoring programs have contributed to a sustainable fishery over its history.

In 2018, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) adopted a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) formally establishing a framework and set of principles to guide coastal pink shrimp fishery management. Included in the FMP is a commitment to continue to coordinate management of the coastal pink shrimp fishery with the states of Oregon and California.

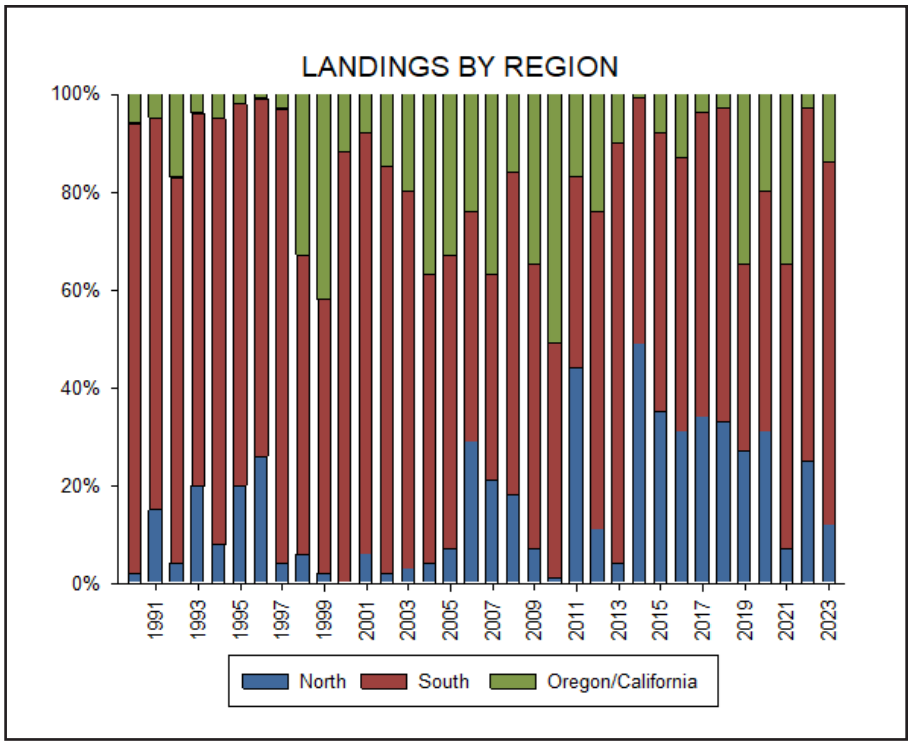


Figure 5. Shrimp fishery landings by region, 1990-2023.

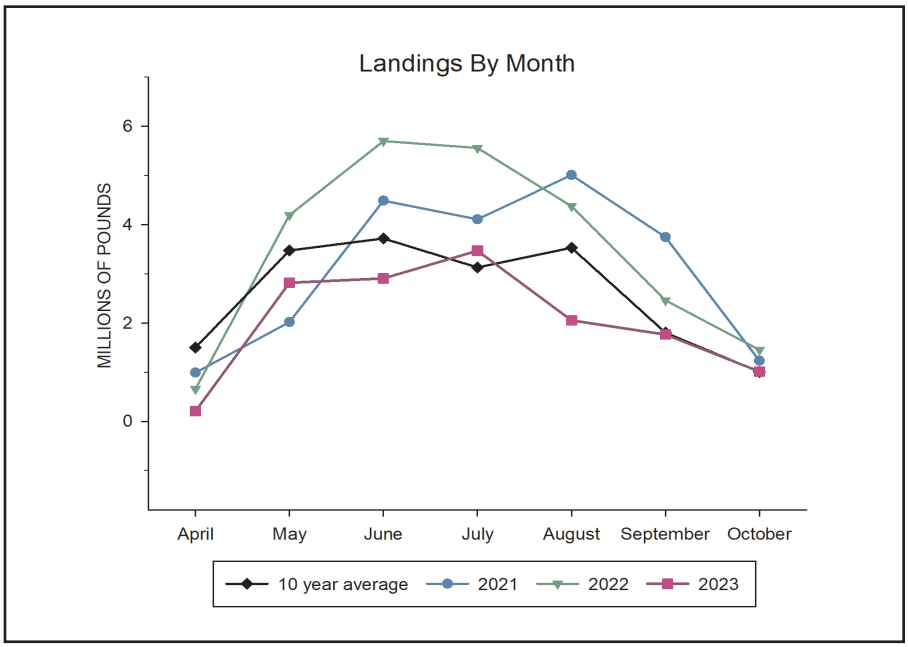


Figure 6. Washington pink shrimp landings by month for 2021-2023, and the 10-year average.

Fisheries Research and Monitoring

Effort

Effort, as measured by the number of hours fished in 2023, continued to trend downward from the recent high in 2020 (Figure 7). Here, fishing hours are estimated as "single-rig equivalents," or SREs. In the past, most vessels towed only one net, i.e., a single rig. Now, double-rig vessels are the most common. To maintain a consistent dataset, fishing hours for "double-rig" vessels are multiplied by 1.6.

Shrimping efforts shifted slightly southward in 2023, with increased effort primarily off the Oregon coast. Compared with other recent years (2019-2021), the majority of shrimping effort remained centered on the Washington coast (Figure 8). Except for a few vessels that started fishing in Oregon, shrimpers began their efforts close to "home" in the Grays Harbor management area in April and May.

In June and July, effort was split fairly evenly between Grays Harbor and Destruction Island. While effort along the Washington coast continued to shift north through the end of the season, some effort also shifted to Oregon waters off Cape Lookout.

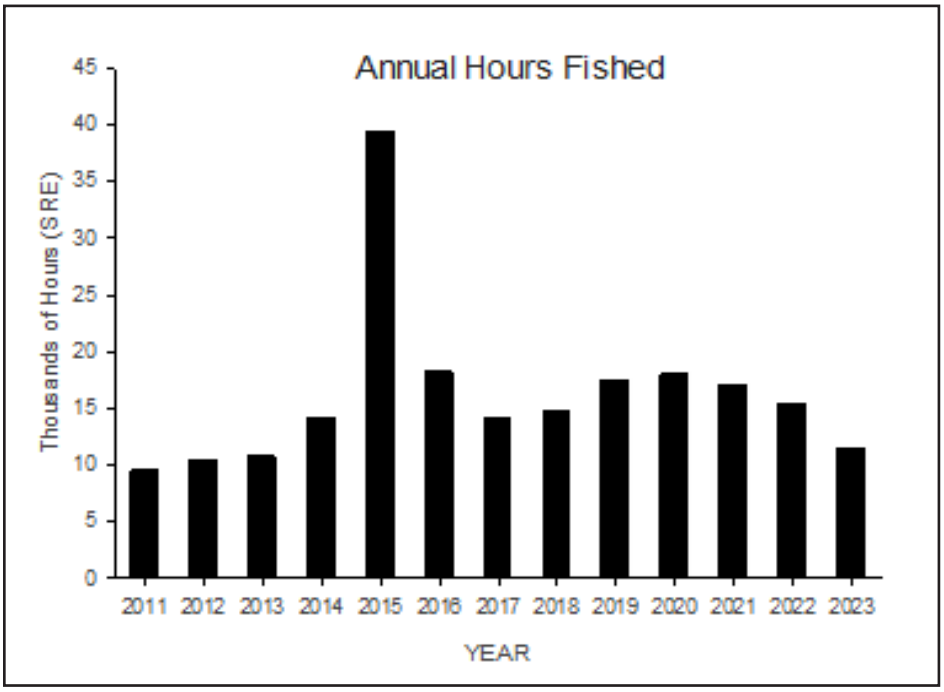


Figure 7. Estimated number of hours fished annually (1000's), 2011-2023.

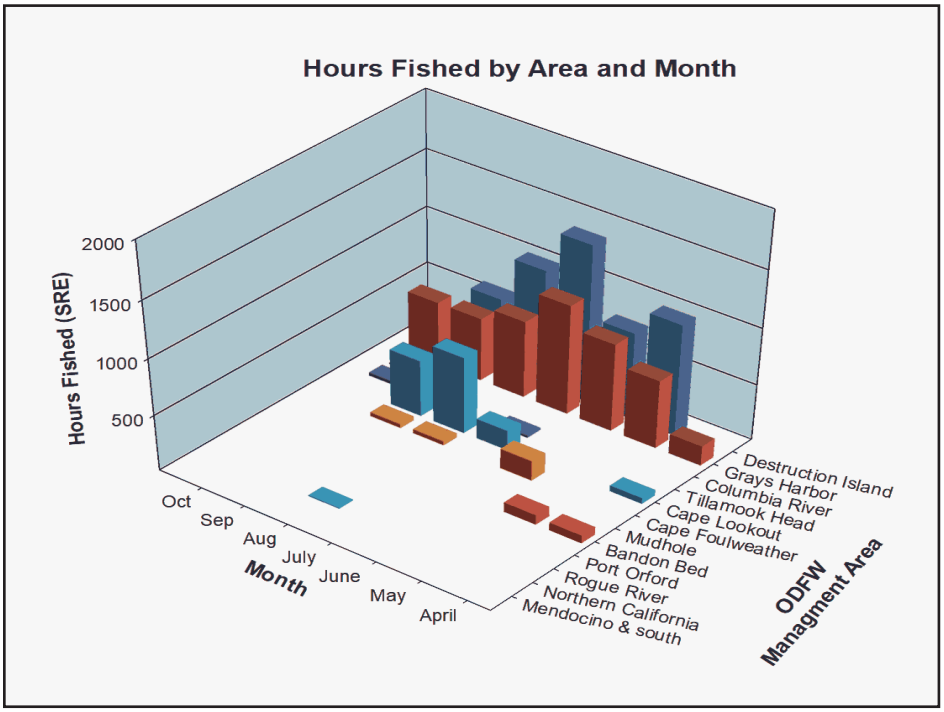


Figure 8. Estimated hours fished by area and month in 2023.

Catch Distribution

The heat map (Figure 9) displays the locations where shrimp landed in Washington were caught, with red indicating more catch came from that location. As in recent years, the majority of shrimp landed in Washington came from the northern areas. In 2023, catch from the Destruction Island area increased from 35% to 48%, while catch from the Grays Harbor area decreased from 61% to 36%. The volume of landings from Oregon and California increased, constituting 15% of the total annual landings.

Figure 10 illustrates pounds of shrimp landed by month and management area. With very little effort in April, shrimp catches did not pick up until May. Catch remained relatively consistent through the end of the season, with some effort shifting south off Oregon from July to September. Peak landings occurred in the Destruction Island and Grays Harbor management areas from May to August. In 2023, 85% of the shrimp landed in the state were caught off Washington, with most of that catch from the Destruction Island management area.

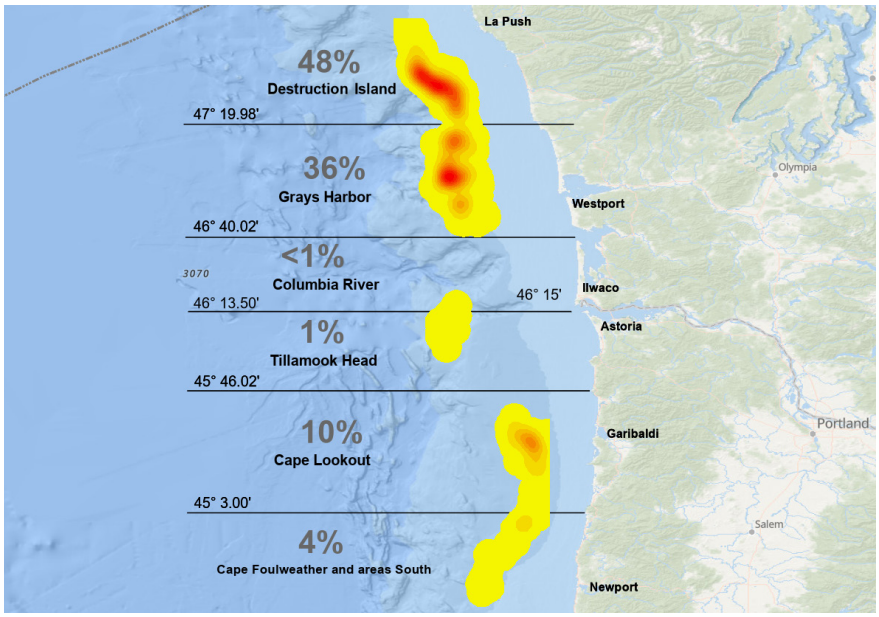


Figure 9. Percentage of 2023 catch by management area and distribution of effort. Fishing activity south of Cape Foulweather, Ore., not pictured.

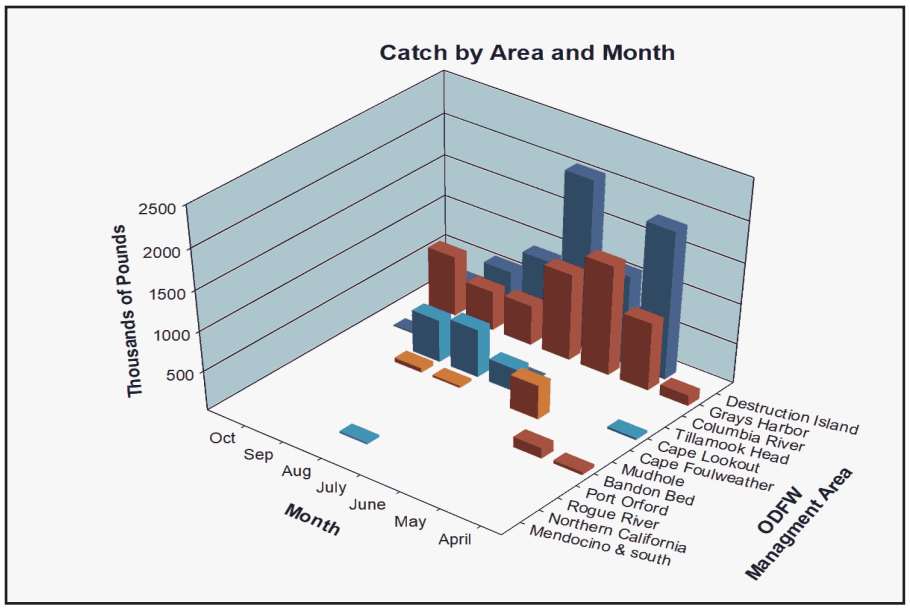


Figure 10. Estimated pink shrimp pounds landed into Washington by area and month, 2023.

Annual estimate of shrimp caught off Washington and landed in Oregon

Not all shrimp caught off Washington are landed into Washington ports. If shrimpers hold the appropriate state license, they can land in either Washington or Oregon.

Year	Millions of Pounds
2023	8.9
2022	16.8
2021	5.4
2020	6.7
2019	5.1
2018	5.0

Catch Rates

Fishing efficiency, or CPUE, was 1,254 pounds per hour (in single-rig equivalents) for the 2023 season (Figure 11). This is a slight decrease from the 2022 CPUE, representing the first year-over-year decline in CPUE since recovering from the low of 480 in 2017. After a slow start in April, catch rates significantly increased in May, June, and July. CPUE in catch areas off the Washington and Oregon coasts both decreased in August, improving again for those who finished their season in Washington in October (Figure 12).

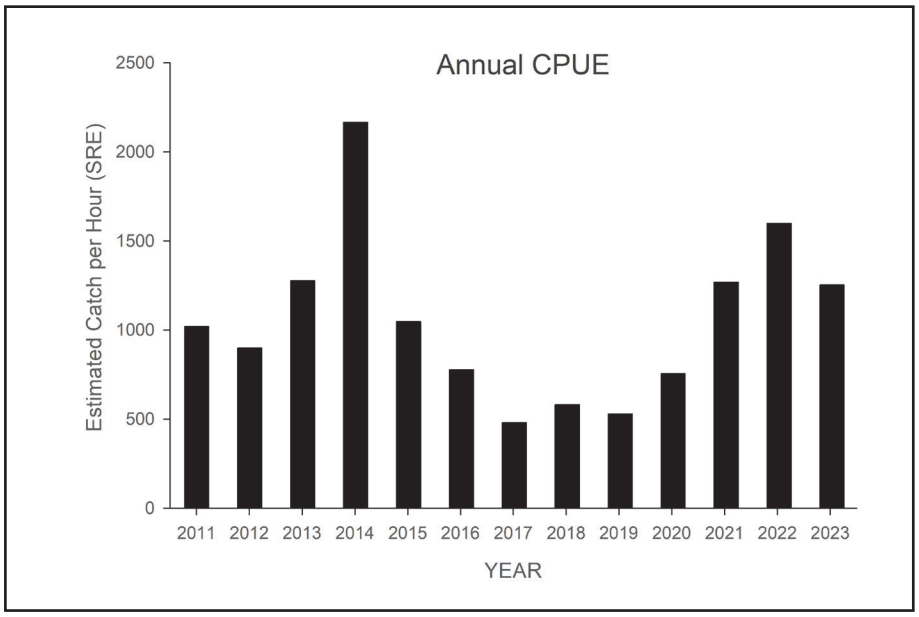


Figure 11. Estimated pounds of catch per single-rig equivalent hour, 2011-2023.

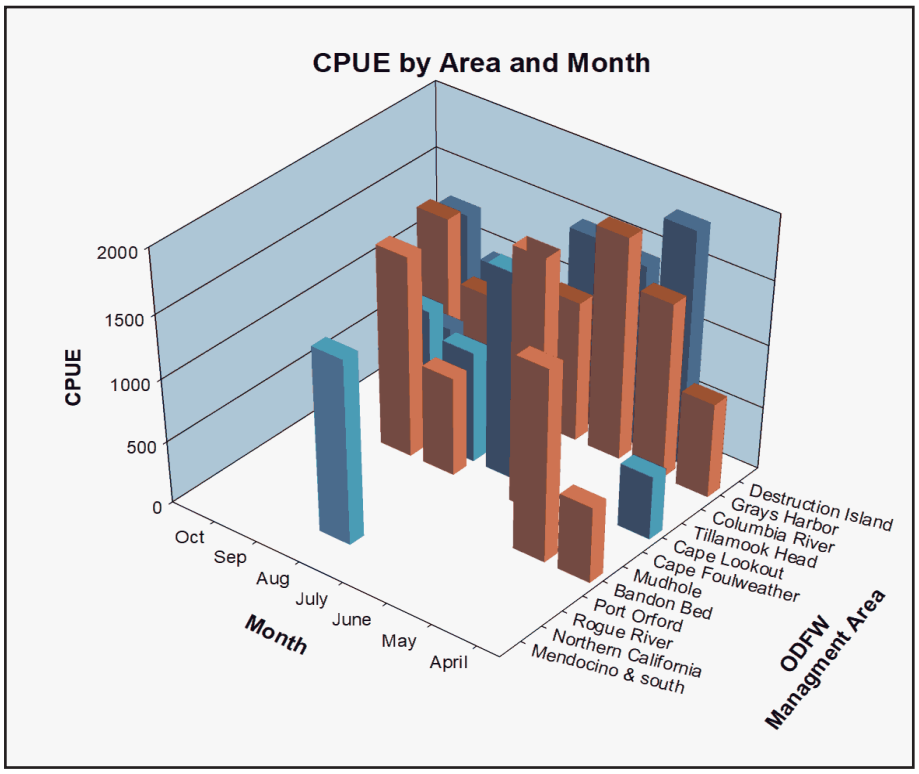


Figure 12. Estimated pounds of shrimp caught per hour (in single-rig equivalents) by area and month, 2023.

Biological Sampling

WDFW's pink shrimp sampling program aims to collect count per pound, length, and sex data following protocols consistent with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). WDFW samples landings at Westport and Ilwaco weekly, collecting data from catch that originates off of Washington and Oregon. Similarly, ODFW samples catch landed at Oregon ports that was caught off Washington. Biological data is exchanged so each state receives all the data collected for its respective catch areas.

WDFW technicians collected 53 samples (approximately 100 shrimp per sample), measuring shrimp length, sex, and the count

per pound; 46 samples were from Washington catch areas and seven were from Oregon catch areas. Oregon staff at Astoria collected an additional 36 samples of Washington-caught shrimp.

In total, WDFW and ODFW staff collected 89 samples representing shrimp caught off Washington during the 2023 season.

Count per Pound

Shrimp size in the fishery is managed by count per pound. The legal maximum is 160 shrimp per pound.

- Season average for Washington catch areas only: 126 shrimp per pound
- Shrimp count per pound fluctuated throughout the season, with the lowest average occurring in September (112) and highest in May (139).
- Only one sample landed into Washington in May exceeded the 160-count limit (Figure 13).

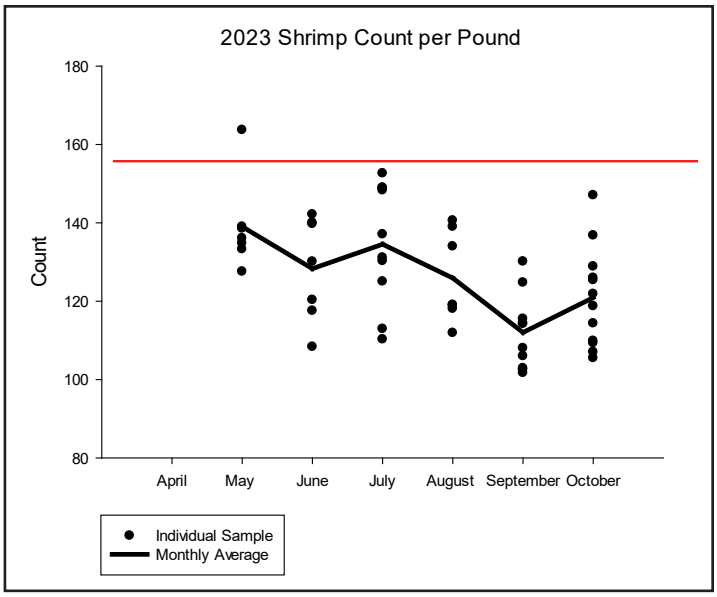


Figure 13. Average count per pound from WDFW samples, 2023. Each point represents a sample of 100 shrimp. The red line indicates the legal maximum of 160 shrimp per pound.

Shrimp Age Classes

Shrimp lack physical "age" structures or body parts like otoliths (ear-bones) or scales that are typically used to age fish. Instead, carapace (back shell) length is measured. Because shrimp eggs are released at the same general time, shrimp of similar size are assumed to be the same age. By grouping carapace lengths and plotting this data, we can visually characterize the age classes present in the fishery.

Figure 14 shows each month of the season in a separate panel, April through October. This figure includes only shrimp caught off Washington. The line in each panel represents the relative amount that each age contributed to the catch for that month.

In 2023, the fishery saw three age classes of shrimp (Figure 15). The oldest shrimp, age 3, were born in 2020 and the youngest, age 1, were born in 2022. Early catch was primarily comprised of age 2

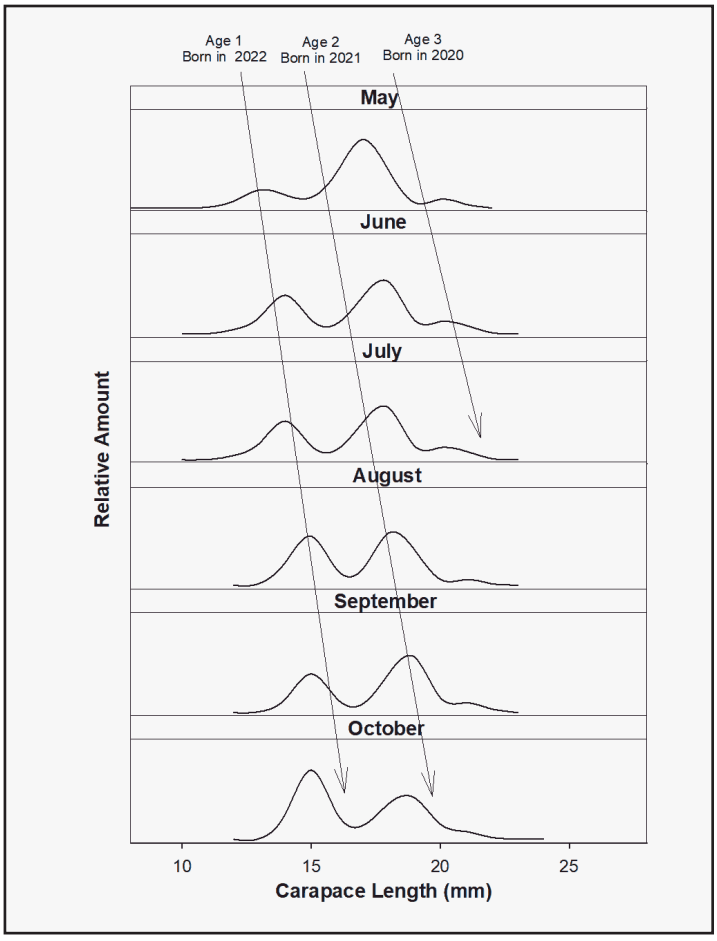


Figure 14. Size distribution of pink shrimp, May- October 2023.

shrimp; however, a large number of shrimp caught through June belonged to the age 3 class. Due to favorable overwintering conditions, a large number of age 2 class shrimp were retained by the 2023 fishery — a result that was consistent with expectations based on the distribution of age classes observed in the 2022 season.

Catches of age 1 class shrimp increased mid-season, constituting nearly half of the catch in July and slightly more in August and October. Overall, age 2 shrimp remained the primary catch component throughout the 2023 season. The last biological sample was collected Oct. 29, and fishing ceased in Washington on Oct. 30.

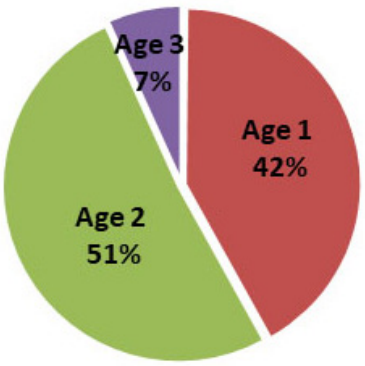


Figure 15. Proportion of individual shrimp by age landed into Washington, 2023.

At-sea Fishery Observation and Bycatch

Two decades of research, gear innovation, and regulatory actions have reduced bycatch in the Washington pink shrimp fishery. Driven initially by rockfish and eulachon conservation concerns, over a decade of onboard monitoring data has produced insights into the fishery's interactions with other marine organisms. Species of particular concern include eulachon (Thaleichthys pacificus), which are federally listed as a threatened species; yelloweye rockfish (Sebates ruberrimus), which are under a federal rebuilding plan; and chinook and coho salmon (Oncorhynchus spp).

The West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP) has documented bycatch within the Washington pink shrimp fishery since 2010 using onboard fishery observers. Coverage of the fishery is measured as the proportion of total observed shrimp pounds to total shrimp pounds landed and has averaged 12% since 2011 (Figure 16).

Figure 17 shows the number of vessels, trips, and tows observed each year from 2011 to 2022, and Table 1 includes published bycatch data for marine fish and shellfish species[1,2]. Since observation began, estimated bycatch in the Washington fishery has averaged 400 metric tons (mt; SD 245) per year. As a percentage of total catch (sum of Washington fish landing receipts and WCGOP bycatch estimator), bycatch has ranged from 2% to almost 12% of the total catch, averaging about 6% (Figure 18).

Altogether, observers have documented nearly 185 bycatch

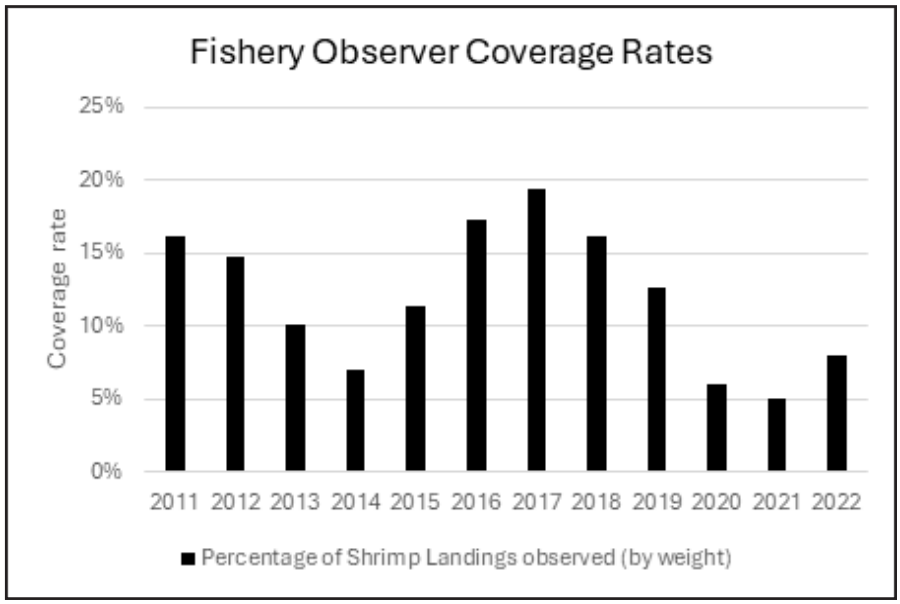


Figure 16. Federal observer coverage rate of Washington vessels, in terms of pounds of shrimp caught[3].

species or species groups. Table 1 shows the top 20 species ranked by cumulative weight from 2011 to 2022. By this measure, eulachon ranked second as the dominant bycatch species and Pacific hake was third. Rounding out the top 10 are soles, salps (a pelagic tunicate), smelt species, Pacific herring, and eelpouts. Figure 19 lists another 21 species and groups frequently caught, though in low volume, including additional species of rockfish, spiny dogfish shark, and northern anchovy. The total combined weight of these for the 2012-2022 period was 52 mt.

The remaining approximately 142 species and groups recorded are infrequently caught, i.e., one or two instances, and in low volumes. Included are species of particular management interest. In 2015, 5 pounds of coho and 4 pounds of chum salmon were documented in two out of 9,745* hauls where at least part of the tow was off Washington[3]. No chinook salmon have been observed. Yelloweye rockfish were observed in 2012 (1.3 pounds) and 2019 (less than 1 pound).

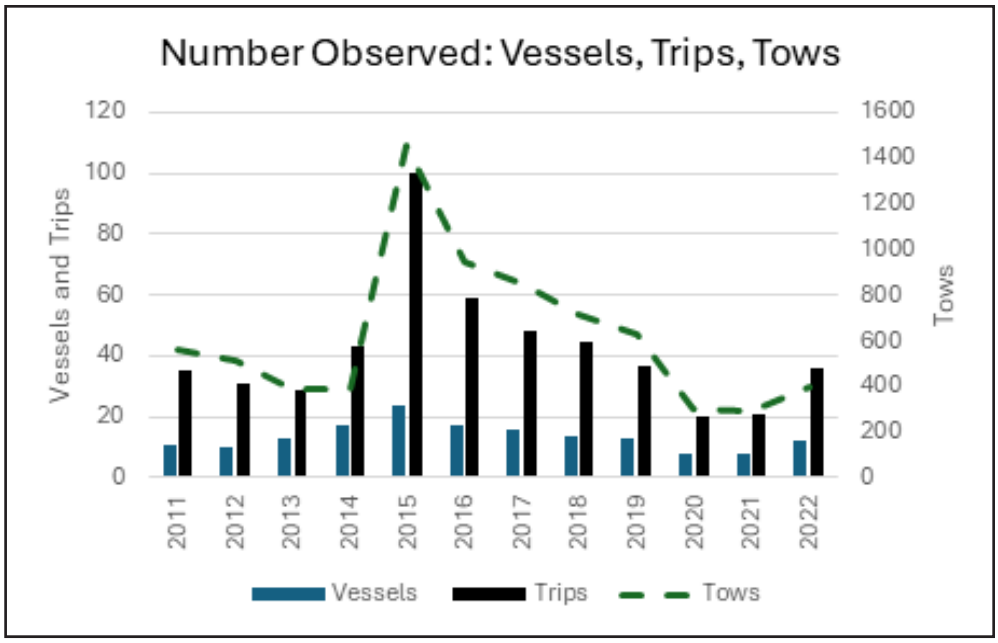


Figure 17. The number of Washington pink shrimp vessels, trips, and tows observed since 2013.

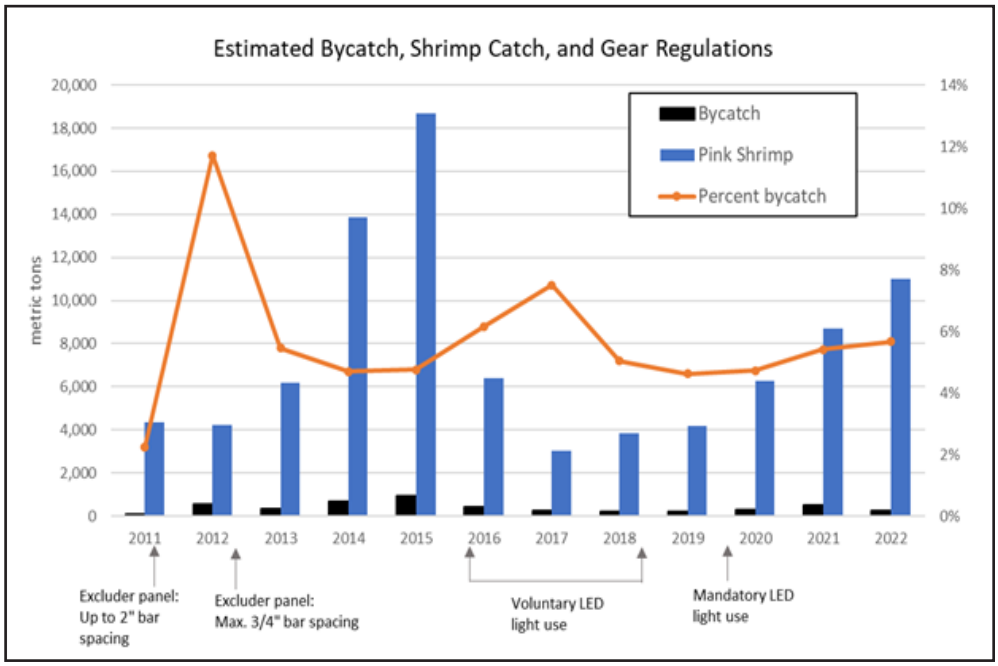


Figure 18. Estimated bycatch (mt), pink shrimp catch (WDFW WaFT), percent bycatch, and excluder panel and fishing light gear requirements for vessels landing in Washington[3].

*The total number of hauls is from any vessel that participated in the 2015 shrimp fishery and completed at least a partial tow in Washington, not just vessels licensed in Washington that were observed. Hence this value is greater than the number of observed tows depicted in Figure 17.

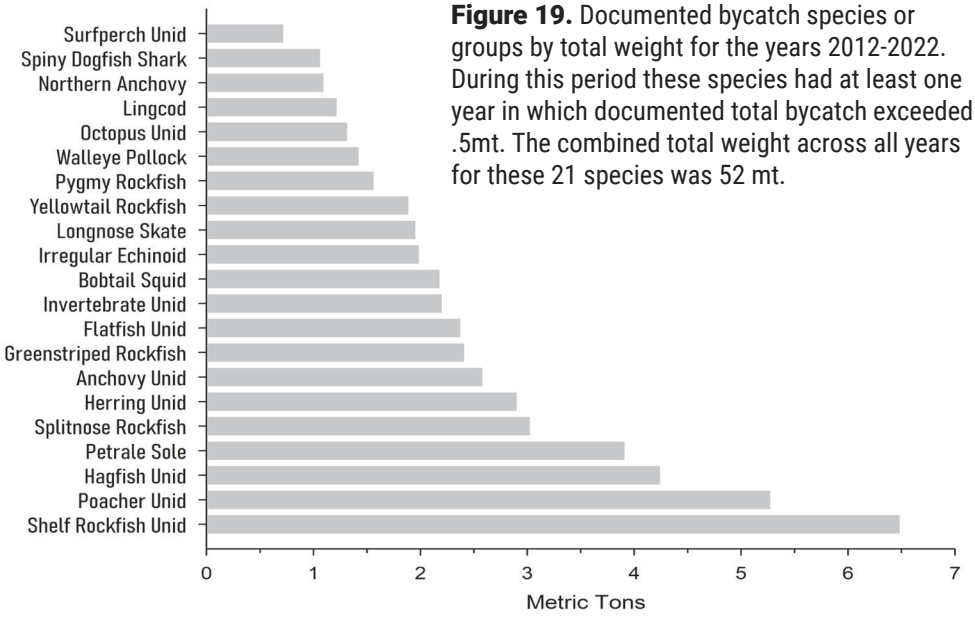


Figure 19. Documented bycatch species or groups by total weight for the years 2012-2022. During this period these species had at least one year in which documented total bycatch exceeded .5mt. The combined total weight across all years for these 21 species was 52 mt.

Care should be taken when evaluating trends in bycatch. Gear underwent significant change during years the fishery has been observed, so there is no clear "before" or "after" point with which to compare bycatch in the fishery. When observation of Washington-licensed vessels began, bycatch reduction devices or excluders were mandatory and the most popular bar spacing on the excluder panels was about 1 ½ inches, although rules allowed up to a 2-inch spacing. Regulations reduced the bar spacing to 3/4 of an inch in 2012 based on research that narrower bar spacing improved exclusion of eulachon. When new research in 2014 demonstrated further reductions in eulachon bycatch could be achieved when footropes were outfitted with LED lights, voluntary usage quickly became widespread. Rules requiring their use went into effect in 2018.

Stock dynamics must also be considered when evaluating bycatch in the fishery. For example, a study looking at the distribution (in space and time) of eulachon and shrimp fishery data and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) research bottom trawl survey data found that increases in eulachon bycatch in 2012 could be attributed to increases in eulachon abundance[4]. However, the bycatch of 99 mt of eulachon in 2022 is lower than average despite runs during 2022 and 2023 being the two highest since 2011. This is the first major reduction in eulachon bycatch since the increase from 32 mt in 2018 to 231 mt in 2021 and may be attributed to fishing location, ocean conditions, better fishing practices, or a combination of factors.

Historically, eulachon have supported directed commercial and recreational fisheries in the mainstem Columbia River and the Cowlitz River, respectively. Closed most years since eulachon were federally listed (2010), indications of stronger run size have supported some limited directed fishing. From 2014 to 2018, the Pacific states worked closely with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to adopt limited, conservation-minded commercial and recreational eulachon fisheries. No fisheries occurred in 2019, but from 2020 to 2023, the states again adopted limited commercial and recreational seasons. In 2023, recreational, commercial, and tribal ceremonial and subsistence fisheries harvested an estimated 68,127 pounds of eulachon.

Note: Due to the availability of final observer data or reports, the information here lags coastal shrimp fishery data by one year.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Shrimp Unid	355.88	112.40	366.46	185.05	179.84	14.38	74.73	18.59	130.24	95.55	117.27
Eulachon	156.69	202.83	144.02	218.09	31.79	11.50	32.32	139.93	135.72	231.39	99.64
Pacific Hake	0.15	0.03	0.01	400.13	170.95	157.38	36.58	2.71	0.85	11.28	0.90
Slender Sole	20.25	21.06	30.33	40.13	13.73	6.31	7.54	18.80	24.14	97.38	17.51
Rex Sole	4.03	4.42	4.02	11.56	3.86	7.50	6.78	6.85	3.58	30.97	5.71
Non-Eulachon Smelt Unid	0.86	1.21	42.92	12.14	0.03	0.85	0.04	0.02	1.75	0.13	2.01
Salp Unid			0.01	0.02	0.29	29.42	30.68	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.02
Whitebait Smelt	2.49	3.28	44.91	1.43	0.01						0.13
Pacific Herring	0.25	0.21	8.42	13.91	2.98	1.42	0.95	0.91	1.35	1.41	2.51
Eelpout Unid	2.00	5.01	4.97	2.46	4.31	1.42	3.30	3.42	1.52	1.44	1.63
Darkblotched Rockfish	1.59	0.44	6.46	1.99	2.90	3.63	1.20	0.71	2.27	7.65	1.45
Non-Humboldt Squid Unid		1.95	8.22	8.76	0.65	0.42	0.16	1.31	0.53	0.77	0.30
Arrowtooth Flounder	2.50	1.04	1.47	2.97	0.25	0.27	0.16	0.25	0.23	4.03	2.45
Pacific Sanddab	0.10	0.01	3.01	5.36	0.55	0.19	1.05	0.31	0.66	1.05	1.86
Jellyfish Unid	0.09	0.25	0.61	8.71	0.28	0.10	0.03	0.33	0.13	0.09	0.02
Pacific Ocean Perch	0.05	0.07	6.63	0.08	0.02	0.19	0.04	0.06	0.10	2.43	0.67
Flathead Sole	1.76	0.52	0.21	4.63	0.68	0.33	0.09	0.05	0.05	0.14	0.31
Dover Sole	0.46	0.22	0.48	1.40	0.57	0.39	0.39	1.05	0.66	2.17	0.46
Shortbelly Rockfish			0.31	0.18	0.24	5.05	0.97	0.31	0.03	0.05	0.45
Shelf Rockfish Unid	3.07	0.01	0.81	0.27	0.10	0.64	0.04	0.03	0.01	1.49	

Table 1. The top 20 bycatch species ranked by total cumulative metric tons for the 2012-2022 period.

Eulachon Management and Research

WDFW completed the following projects in 2023 to better understand eulachon population abundance and dynamics:

- Completed the Washington and Oregon Eulachon Management Plan 2nd Edition.
- Secured state funding through the WDFW biodiversity package to continue annual spawning stock biomass estimation for the Columbia River (Figure 20).
- Compared adult eulachon CPUE in the mainstem Columbia River commercial gillnet fishery and mean larval densities (Figure 21).
- Continued to collaborate with Eulachon Technical Recovery and Implementation Team (ETRIT).
- Completed the 2024 ODFW and WDFW joint staff report concerning stock status and fisheries for sturgeon and smelt. The report can be found here.

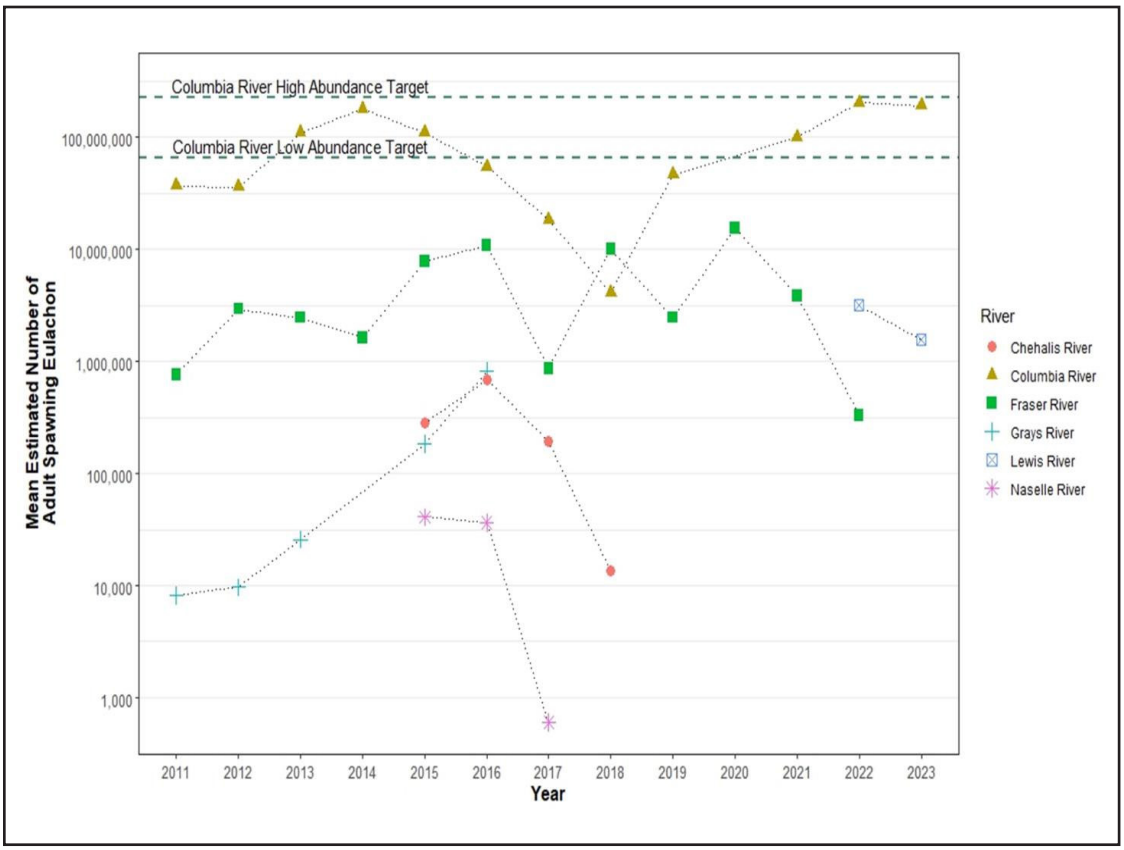


Figure 20. The estimated number of eulachon spawning in the Columbia, Fraser, Chehalis, Naselle, and Grays rivers from 2011 to 2023. Estimates are calculated by multiplying the annual spawning stock biomass (SSB) total weight by a standard 11.16 fish per pound. Estimates for the Fraser River were derived from data provided by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The Fraser River estimate for 2022 was not finalized at the time of this publication. No estimate for the Columbia River is available for 2020 due to truncated sampling.

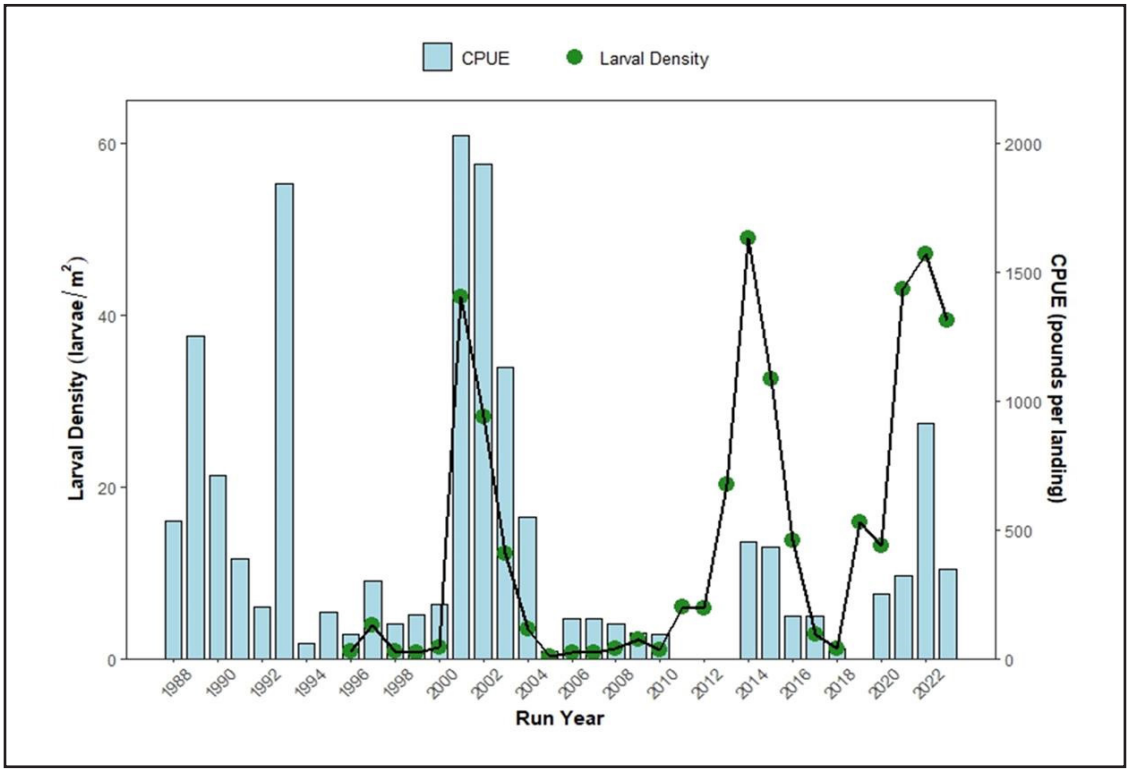


Figure 21. Comparison of adult eulachon CPUE in terms of total pounds per landing in the mainstem Columbia River commercial gillnet fishery and mean larval densities captured at mainstem Columbia index sites using plankton tow nets, 1988–2023. Commercial fisheries CPUE data is not available for 2011–2013 or 2019 due to no fisheries occurring in those years.

2023 Accomplishments

Logbook Reporting

Documenting fishing location is important for marine spatial planning. Logbook data provides information necessary to evaluate the potential impacts of ocean energy projects and address new conservation challenges.

Logbook compliance improved in 2023 with over 98% of trips having a completed logbook, which is an increase of 2% from 2022 (Figure 22) and exceeds our goal of having a completed logbook for 95% of shrimp trips. We appreciate your effort to routinely turn in your logbooks throughout the season. This year was exemplary; keep it up!

Figure 22. Percentage of trips each year with a submitted logbook.

The drop box located at Washington Crab is a convenient way to submit logbooks; we hope as awareness increases, it will become a habit to use each trip. Logbooks can also be mailed and/or handed to a WDFW shellfish technician at port. Logbooks are legally due by the 10th of the month following any month you've actively fished. Turning in your logbook on time helps us to process and enter the data as it comes in.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certification


CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD MSC www.msc.org

Certificate of Conformity

MSC Fisheries

MRAG Americas certifies that

Washington and California Pink Shrimp Trawl Fishery

Pacific Seafood Group

16797 SE 130th Avenue, Clackamas, OR 97015, USA

meets the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Fisheries Standard, and that the fishery is well-managed and sustainable.

CERTIFICATE NO: MSC-F-31355

ISSUE DATE: 12 August 2023

EXPIRY DATE: 11 August 2028

Unit of Certification:

Species: pink shrimp (*Pandalus jordani*)

Harvest method: Otter trawl

Geographical area: West Coast USA EEZ – Oregon, Washington, California (WOC), FAO area 67

Stock: Washington and California pink shrimp

This UoC applies to vessels licensed to land in the state of Washington and California

Certificate Issued by: MRAG Americas Certification Committee

Signature

MRAG AMERICAS, INC.
8950 MLK St N, Suite 202
St. Petersburg FL 33702
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MRAG Americas

This Certificate is the property of MRAG Americas, and its use is subject to conformance with the standards of the Marine Stewardship Council.

Independent reviewers audit fishery performance annually. The most recent surveillance audit found the Washington pink shrimp fishery "continues to be a highly performing fishery and an excellent example of state-level and coordinated management" and "this fishery continues to meet the MSC Fisheries Standard and shall remain certified."

The MSC recently completed the most comprehensive review of the MSC Fisheries Standard ever undertaken in its 25-year history. The new Standard (version 3.0) went into effect May 1, 2023. It includes significant improvements, including better protections for marine life, as well as stronger fisheries management and compliance requirements. These improvements will ensure that MSC-certified fisheries continue to be recognized as world leaders in sustainability.

For more on the MSC program, visit msc.org. Find notices, assessments, and audit reports specific to the U.S. West Coast pink shrimp fishery on this webpage.

Why is certification important?

Markets are dynamic, but preference for responsibly harvested seafood continues to grow. As much as 50% or more of the shrimp landed in Washington and Oregon are destined for markets that demand sustainably sourced seafood. Fishery sustainability has long been a factor for gaining and maintaining access to European markets; this is true for the United States as well.

New for 2024

Shrimping Prospects for 2024

We look to two models developed by ODFW and the relative strength of the year classes in 2023 to forecast shrimp production for the coming season.

For 2024, models suggest Oregon landings will be around 25 million pounds (environmental model) to 30 million pounds (sampling model). The predicted catch for Oregon in 2023 was between 34 million and 38 million pounds; the 2023 season total for Oregon was 44 million pounds.[7]

Three year classes will contribute to shrimp catch in 2024:

- 2023 – Age 1
- 2022 – Age 2
- 2021 – Age 3

The environmental conditions for larval shrimp in 2023 were considered less than favorable with warming ocean waters in the spring and the return to El Nino conditions in June. WDFW expects to see less recruitment of age 1 shrimp in the coming season. Unlike the strong 2022 age class that produced high catches of age 2 shrimp in 2023, suboptimal overwintering environmental conditions for age class 1 shrimp are expected to reduce their contribution to the catch for the 2024 season.

Age class 3 shrimp may round out the catch, although few live to their third year due to natural and fishing mortality. On a positive note, the NOAA Climate Prediction Center is forecasting the return to more ENSO-neutral conditions by spring, with an increasing chance of La Nina conditions by summer, leading to more favorable conditions for larval shrimp in 2024.

Models and projections are never certain, but indications point to a lower abundance of shrimp and likely depressed catch in 2024.

An ODFW model comparing many years of shrimp population and environmental data demonstrates a relationship between ocean conditions and shrimp recruitment to the fishery. Sea-level height measured at Crescent City, Calif., has proven to be a useful indicator, with lower sea-level heights associated with better shrimp recruitment in Oregon. How well this model applies to shrimp recruitment off Washington is uncertain.

ALERT - Scientific Moorings North of Grays Harbor

Through funding from the National Science Foundation, Quinault Indian Nation, and Quileute Indian Tribe, in collaboration with the Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing System, will deploy three wave sensor buoys in 2024. The mooring buoys are located on the Washington shelf between Moclips and Cape Johnson and measure just over 12 inches in height and 16 inches across.

These instruments are designed to:

- Provide real-time, publicly accessible wave data.
- Improve understanding of hydrodynamic processes.
- Inform coastal management best practices.
- Enhance the safety of fishers operating off the Washington coast.

Once deployed, the location coordinates will be provided in updates to all ocean users.

Questions? Contact:

- Jennifer.hagen@quileutention.org or
- jschumacker@quinault.org

Enforcement

As in previous seasons, the WDFW Police Coastal Region Detachments saw no increased or significant enforcement issues in 2023. Coverage specific to the pink shrimp fishery included:

- License inspections
- Monitoring offloads
- Vessel/processor contacts
- Gear compliance checks

The WDFW Enforcement program continues to engage and adapt to new challenges on the coast. With the Enforcement program's veteran crew of officers patrolling with the necessary offshore patrol assets, crews are engaged in making both offshore contacts as well as dockside inspections.

Management

Collaboration

ODFW and WDFW continue to benefit from a long-standing collaboration that includes coordination of fishery management activities, including data sharing, cross-training, enforcement activities, and regular communication. Collaboration is expanding as managers from Washington, Oregon, and California increasingly consult with one another and share information in joint emails and meetings.

Industry Engagement

Effective fisheries management depends on hearing from shrimpers and processors first-hand. While we value our interactions at the dock, we also recognize the importance of formal industry meetings and updates. In the past, managers were able to piggy-back on industry pre-season meetings.

While we continue to value in-person meetings, we also recognize a virtual format allows greater participation. Meetings typically occur in February or March with advanced notice provided to license holders, vessel operators, processors, and interested stakeholders.

Coastal Pink Shrimp Fishery Listserv

If you would like to receive coastal pink shrimp notices from WDFW, please email:

Travis.Haring@dfw.wa.gov

Fishing Regulations

Coordination with Oregon and California

While most regulations are similar, when fishing offshore another state, shrimpers should confirm their operations conform to that state's regulations. For example, Oregon law does not authorize the landing of frozen shrimp, but this activity is allowed with a permit in Washington. Also, Oregon-licensed shrimpers can trawl in that state's territorial waters; conversely, Washington does not allow any trawling in its coastal territorial waters (0-3 miles).

Fishing lights are required in all three states.

Both WDFW and ODFW require shrimp trawl logbooks, and each agency will accept the other state's logbook.

Freezing at Sea

Washington regulations do not explicitly prohibit freezing catch at sea. However, to address fishery-specific needs, the pink shrimp trawl fishery permit requires those who intend to process shrimp at sea off Washington by freezing their catch to:

- notify WDFW of their intent to do so;
- notify WDFW personnel 24 hours in advance of landing; and
- provide (upon request) WDFW with a sample of 25 pounds of whole shrimp processed at sea by freezing and a sample of 25 pounds of fresh shrimp from the same trip.

Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requires any vessel using non-groundfish trawl gear in federal waters to have a vessel monitoring system installed. Declaration reports are also mandated prior to fishing. Specific compliance information can be found at the NMFS Vessel Monitoring System website or by calling the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement at 206.526.6140.

Groundfish Limits

Limits have not changed from 2021.

Shrimp trawlers are limited to 1,500 pounds of groundfish per trip with a daily limit of 500 pounds. Included in the daily and trip limits are sub-limits for: lingcod at 300 pounds per month with a 24-inch minimum size and sablefish at 2,000 pounds per month. Canary rockfish, yelloweye rockfish, and thornyhead rockfish are all prohibited.

All other groundfish species taken count toward the 500 per day or 1,500-pound trip limits and do not have species-specific limits. The amount of groundfish landed may not exceed the amount of pink shrimp landed. The pink shrimp fishery is not subject to Rockfish Conservation Area provisions.

A complete copy of Pacific Coast groundfish fishery management measures for 2024, as well as in-season adjustments to trip limits, can be found on NOAA's website.

Fishing Lights

Washington shrimpers are required to use fishing lights on the footrope of each trawl net. Similar rules apply when fishing off Oregon. Shrimpers fishing both Washington and Oregon should note the specifications are the same for both states.

> The need to minimize bycatch is important NOT ONLY when bycatch volumes are high. Low bycatch volumes can reflect poor abundance, **making the use of lights even more important**.

Footrope lighting devices must meet the following criteria:

- Lighting devices must be operational;
- Lighting devices must be securely attached within 6 inches of the forward leading edge of the bottom panel of trawl netting; and
- Each trawl net must have a minimum of five lighting devices, spaced 4 feet apart in the central 16 feet of each net.

Four lighting devices are approved for use. Green is the only approved color.

- Rock-engineering “LED Rope Light”
- Fish Tek Marine, NetLight and PotLight (added in 2022)
- Catch All Tackle “Deep Drop LED Fishing Light”
- Lindgren-Pitman “LP Electrolume Light”

Logbook Drop Box

With the cooperation of Washington Crab Producers Inc., WDFW will continue to maintain a secure logbook drop box in Westport. You will find this in the Washington Crab weigh shack or buying station on the Dock Street dock.

Please use this location to drop off your logbooks at the time of landing. Only WDFW staff will have access to the contents of the box, and they will regularly collect logbooks from this location. We hope this convenience will make it easier for fishers to provide WDFW with logbooks in a timely fashion. Logbooks may still be mailed to WDFW, dropped off at the WDFW Montesano office, or handed to a WDFW shrimp technician at port.

Our office location and mailing address are:

WDFW
Region 6 Office
48 Devonshire Road
Montesano, WA 98563

WDFW logbook drop box in Westport.

Reminder:

Logbooks are due by the 10th day of the month following any shrimp fishing activity.

Contact Information

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Our Website:
wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/commercial/shrimp/coastal

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