

Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishery Policy Update

Lorna Wargo, Intergovernmental Ocean Policy Coordinator
Heather Hall, Region 6 Director

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Presentation Outline

- Introduction
 - Purpose
 - Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishery Background
- Policy Proposal
- Public Process and Next Steps

Introduction

What has brought us here today

Coastal Dungeness Crab Policy C-3604

- Adopted by Commission in 1999
- Has guided Department actions for 25 years
- Has served us well, but updates are needed



WDFW Photo

Introduction

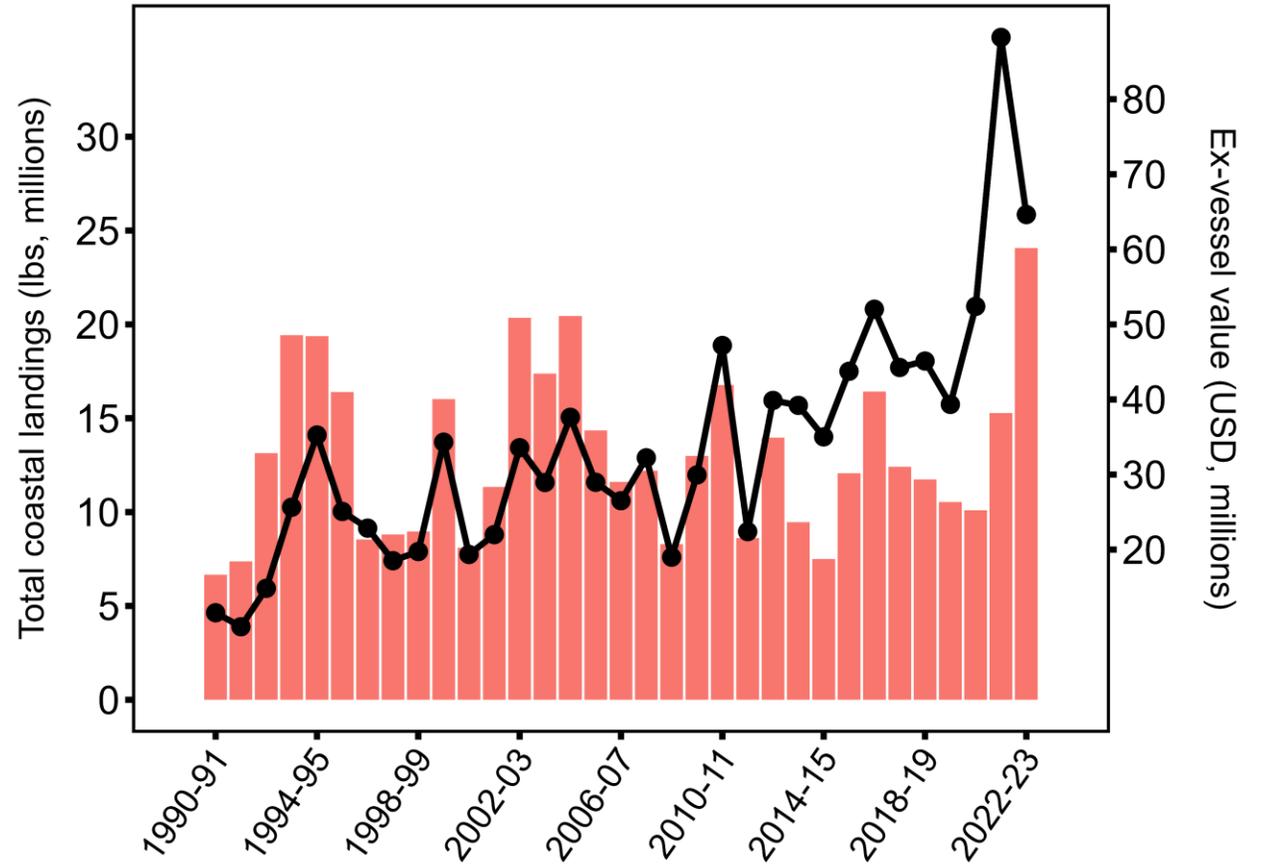
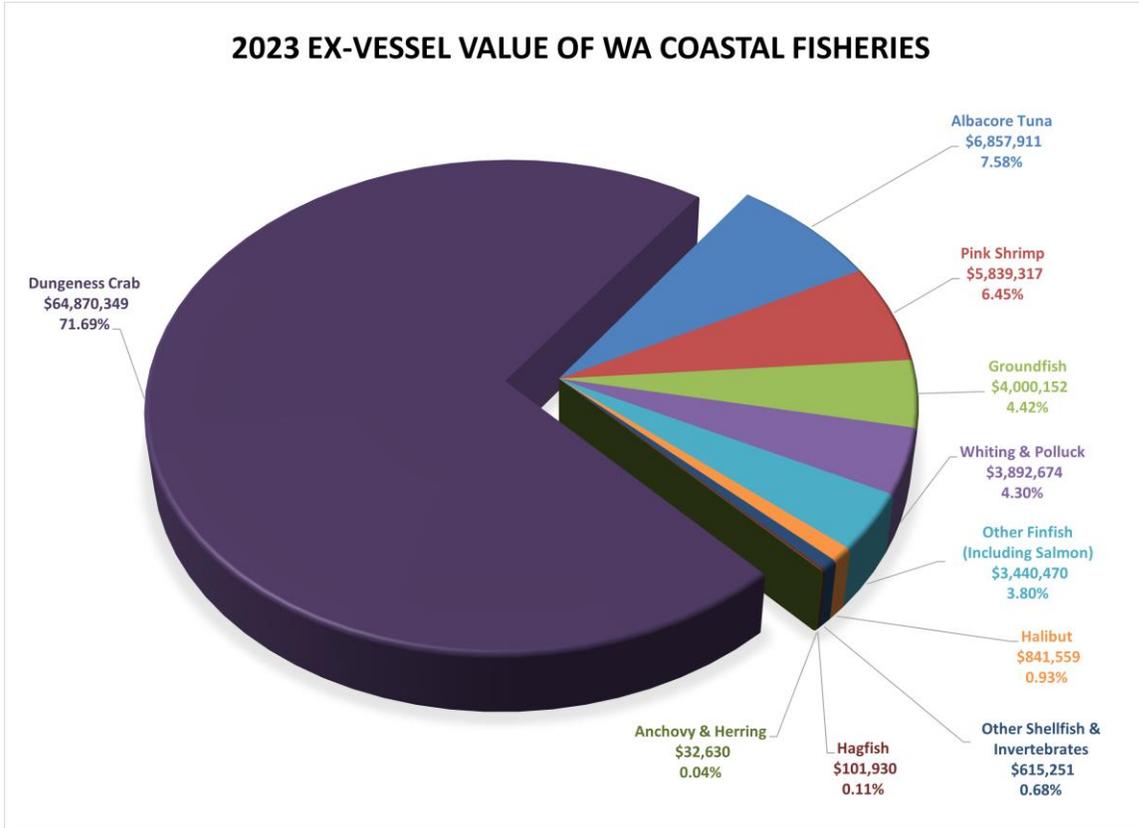
Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishery

Management

- **3-S strategy – Size, Sex, Season**
- Limited Entry License Program – 223 coastal licenses
- Pot Limitation Program – 500 or 300 pots license assignment
- Pot and Buoy Tags – Identify owner, Buoy tags specific to State, Year, and Season
- Limited Entry 200 – License may only be used to fish off issuing state, including federal waters
- Derelict Gear Program (2009) – Expanded Program (2020)
- Electronic Catch Reporting – real time reporting of landings
- Summer Pot Reduction Program – aligned with large whale migration/presence timing
- Electronic Monitoring Program – replaced paper logs, provides pot-level location data
- Line Marking – Each vertical line marked, distinctive to WA coastal D. crab
- **Recreational Fishery Sampling Program (new)**

Introduction

Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishery



Policy Updates

- Reorganize format
- Include commitment to address marine life entanglement risk pursuant to Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Address recreational crab fishery management - monitoring
- Support work to develop climate-resilient management measures



Highlights – How do the versions compare?

	Current	Proposed
1	Structure: Bullet list of goals and policies	Structure: Purpose statement and list of policy guidelines
2	Protect crab resource and habitat	Protect crab resource and habitat
3	Manage fishery with tribal co-managers	Manage fishery with tribal co-managers
4	Health and Safety	Health and Safety
5	Fairly distribute commercial opportunity and impacts, "Even-flow"	Fairly distribute commercial opportunity and impacts, "Even-flow"
6	Involve commercial representatives	Involve commercial and recreational fishing representatives
7	Maximize the economic benefit of the resource and manage the fishery to primarily benefit the commercial fishery	Maximize economic benefits from the Dungeness crab resource for the commercial sector while also providing recreational opportunities
8		Address entanglement risks
9		Address climate-resiliency

Current Policy

Goals

- To protect the reproductive capacity of the stock.
- To involve the commercial fishing industry representatives in the management of the fishery.
- To protect public health.
- To maximize the economic benefit from the resource.
- To adopt regulations which seek to achieve safe and orderly fisheries.
- To provide a sustainable Dungeness crab fishery of high-quality product consistent with the "even flow" legislative mandate.
- To provide support to industry buyback initiatives.
- To protect Dungeness crab habitat.

Policies

- Comply with the federal court order relative to treaty/non-treaty sharing of coastal shellfish resources.
- Manage the fishery to primarily benefit the commercial fishery.
- Cooperate with other states' fish and wildlife agencies.
- Seek to achieve a fair and equitable distribution across industry sectors of the effects resulting from the design and implementation of "even flow" management measures.
- Manage the coastal Dungeness crab fishery consistent with the preferred alternative in the Even Flow Harvest Management Plan.

Proposed Policy for Public Review

New elements highlighted in yellow

General Policy Statement

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) shall promote a healthy and sustainable population of Dungeness crab and work cooperatively with the Tribal Co-Managers in structuring management measures to ensure a healthy, sustainable resource and fishery that achieve Treaty/Non-treaty fair sharing of the harvestable resource.

The management intent is to provide for the economic viability of the coastal Dungeness crab resource, **implement measures consistent with addressing entanglement risks to marine life** and for the Department to work collaboratively with partner state and federal agencies and fishery stakeholders to promote shared stewardship.

The Department will articulate goals, objectives, and strategies consistent with this policy and its guidelines through the Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishery Management Plan and Coastal Dungeness Crab Conservation Plan.

Policy Guidelines

- Protect the reproductive capacity of the stock.
- Protect Dungeness crab habitat.
- **Achieve and maintain federal coverage for ESA listed marine mammal impacts in the coastal fishery.**
- **Investigate and consider climate-resilient management measures.**
- Involve commercial and **recreational** fishing representatives in the management of the respective sectors of the fishery to address crab fishery issues.
- Adopt regulations which promote safe and orderly fisheries.
- Implement measures that ensure the safety and health of consumers and the public.
- Manage the fishery to maximize economic benefits from the Dungeness crab resource for the commercial sector **while also providing recreational opportunities.**
- Consistent with the legislative “even-flow” mandate, achieve high quality product and strive for a fair and equitable distribution of the impacts and benefits from management measures across commercial industry sectors.
- Provide administrative support for industry-led programs aimed at reducing fishing capacity (e.g., “buy-back”) and enhancing sustainability.

Public Process and Next Steps: July – December 2024

- ✓ Coastal Dungeness Crab Advisory Board Meeting, July 22
- ✓ F&W Commission – Fish Committee Briefing, August 8
- ✓ Letter to all Coastal Dungeness Crab License Holders, August
- ✓ Coastal Dungeness Crab Advisory Board meeting, August 22
- ✓ Public Crab Industry Meeting, September 5
- F&W Commission – Fish Committee and Commission Briefing, September 26 – 27
- Public Townhall, Online Comment Portal
- F&W Commission Hearing, October
- F&W Commission Meeting (Decision), December
- Share outcome in annual Coastal Dungeness Crab Newsletter, December



WDFW Photo



Questions?

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