

Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishery Policy Update

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Introduction

- Background
- Proposed Approach
- Draft Language
- Timeline



WDFW Photo

Background – What brought us here today

Current 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

Proposed Approach

Update policy to:

- Reorganize format
- Include commitment to reduce marine life entanglement risk pursuant to ESA and MMPA
- Address recreational crab fishery monitoring
- Support work to develop climate-resilient measures

Highlights – How do the versions compare?

Current	First Draft Proposed
Structure: Bullet list of goals and policies	Structure: Purpose statement and list of policy guidelines
Protect crab resource and habitat	Protect crab resource and habitat
Manage fishery with tribal co-managers	Manage fishery with tribal co-managers
Health and Safety	Health and Safety
Fairly distribute commercial opportunity and impacts, "Even-flow"	Fairly distribute commercial opportunity and impacts, "Even-flow"
Involve commercial representatives	Involve commercial/recreational fishing representatives
Maximize the economic benefit of the resource and manage the fishery to primarily benefit the commercial fishery	Optimize economic returns from the Dungeness crab resource for the commercial sector while also providing recreational opportunities
	Reduce entanglement risks
	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.

First Draft Proposal

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 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 reducing 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.
- Implement climate-resilient measures.
- Involve commercial and recreational fishing representatives in the management of the fishery.
- 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 optimize economic returns 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 all industry sectors.
- Provide administrative support for industry-led programs aimed at reducing fishing capacity and enhancing sustainability.

Revised Draft Proposal

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 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 ~~reducing~~ 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 ~~implement~~ climate-resilient management measures.
- Involve commercial and recreational fishing representatives in the management of the respective sectors of the fishery.
- 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 ~~optimize~~ maximize economic ~~returns~~ 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 ~~all~~ commercial industry sectors.
- Provide administrative support for industry-led programs aimed at reducing fishing capacity and enhancing sustainability.

Public Process: 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, mid-August
- Coastal Dungeness Crab Advisory Board meeting, August 22
- **Public Crab Industry Meeting, September 5**
- F&W Commission – Fish Committee and Commission Briefing, September 26-28
- F&W Commission Hearing, October
- F&W Commission Meeting (Decision), December
- Share outcome in annual Coastal Dungeness Crab Newsletter, December



WDFW Photo



Questions?

Request this information in an alternative format or language at wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requests-accommodation, 833-885-1012, TTY (711), or CivilRightsTeam@dfw.wa.gov.

Agency Mandate

RCW [77.04.012](#) Mandate of department and commission.

Wildlife, fish, and shellfish are the property of the state. The commission, director, and the department shall preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish in state waters and offshore waters.

The department shall conserve the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish resources in a manner that does not impair the resource. In a manner consistent with this goal, the department shall seek to maintain the economic well-being and stability of the fishing industry in the state. The department shall promote orderly fisheries and shall enhance and improve recreational and commercial fishing in this state.

The commission may authorize the taking of wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish only at times or places, or in manners or quantities, as in the judgment of the commission does not impair the supply of these resources.

The commission shall attempt to maximize the public recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens, including juvenile, disabled, and senior citizens.

Recognizing that the management of our state wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish resources depends heavily on the assistance of volunteers, the department shall work cooperatively with volunteer groups and individuals to achieve the goals of this title to the greatest extent possible.

Nothing in this title shall be construed to infringe on the right of a private property owner to control the owner's private property.

Terms

Maximizing and optimizing are related concepts, but they have different meanings and approaches:

Maximizing

Means to make something as big or great as possible, or to fit in as much work as possible. In commercial strategy, maximizing revenue might mean focusing on specific metrics. Maximizing can also be about raw return, like getting maximum profits and revenues.

Optimizing

Means to make the best or most effective use of something, or to ensure work has the greatest impact possible. In commercial strategy, optimizing profitability might mean taking a more holistic approach that considers various factors to achieve the best outcomes. Optimizing can also be about balancing effectiveness and efficiency, and prioritizing sustainable growth.