

# Coastal Dungeness Crab Advisory Board Meeting

July 22, 2024

3:00 PM



Washington  
Department of  
**FISH &  
WILDLIFE**

# Proposed Agenda

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
3:00 – 3:05 PM	Introductions and Purpose of the Meeting	Heather Hall
3:05 – 3:10 PM	2024 Entanglement Updates	Megan Hintz
3:10 – 4:00 PM	Line marking rule proposal	Megan Hintz
4:00 – 4:15 PM	Take Reduction Team (TRT) update	Megan Hintz
4:15 – 4:30 PM	Coastal Dungeness Crab Policy	Lorna Wargo
4:30 – 4:45 PM	Fisheries Management Plan	Lorna Wargo
4:45 – 4:55 PM	Adjourn	Lorna Wargo



# 2024 whale entanglement updates

# 2024 whale entanglements in WA D. crab gear

## Gray whale

- Reported entangled and alive in Grays Harbor on April 16, poor visibility and entangled gear was not visible
- Higher than average number of vessels fishing in Grays Harbor
- Later observed the whale deceased off the OR coast (May 30)
- Multiple gear entangled,  $\geq 7$  unique pots

## Humpback (?) whale

- Observed entangled on July 19
- Long Beach, WA



Entangled deceased gray whale with multiple gears

# What to do if you observe an entanglement?



## REPORT Entangled Whales IMMEDIATELY

1-877-SOS-WHALE (1-877-767-9425) or hail the U.S. Coast Guard on Channel 16

- DO Report** Immediate reporting is critical to give the best chance for response teams to remove life-threatening gear from the whale and gather information to understand where, when and how entanglements occur to prevent future ones. Preventing future entanglements will help preserve our fishery.
- DO Stand By** If possible please stand by and keep sight of the whale. It is difficult and rare to relocate an entangled whale if a boat does not stay with the whale. Stay at least 100 yards away.
- DO Photograph Entangled Whales** WHALE: side view of dorsal fin (or hump); flukes (especially if underside is raised); head; any part of the body where gear may be present. ENTANGLEMENT: buoy(s); tags; lines on the body; trailing lines (including distance from whale); netting or other gear (if present); other gear if present.
- DO Respond Promptly if Contacted** If you are contacted about a whale entangled in your gear, please respond. You can help prevent future entanglements by providing as much information as possible about your fishing gear and practices.
- DO NOT ATTEMPT to disentangle the whale** Removing the easily accessible lines at the surface will leave the life-threatening lines attached to the whale and may make it impossible for responders to detect and remove these. Entangled whales are very rarely in immediate danger of drowning.



# Line Marking

# Goals of comprehensive line marking

- Line marking easily visible from reported entanglement photos and videos
- Negative attribution

## NMFS guidance

- Multiple marks
- More and larger marks than current WA requirement
- Top and upper portion of gear
- Marking at least every few fathoms, especially in the top half of line
- “Maximum extent practicable”

Washington line marking documented on gear recovered from an entangled whale



# West Coast coordinated line marking proposals

## CA D. Crab

Purple and black

### Surface gear:

- All line marked

### Main line:

- top 15 fathoms
- shallow depth provisions

### Marking options:

- manufactured line
- painted to cover entirety of line

### Implementation:

- Nov 1, 2025 – Surface gear
- Nov 1, 2028 – Main line

## OR D. Crab

Yellow and black

### Surface gear:

- All line marked  
(excl. buoy gangions)

### Main line:

- top 15 fathoms
- shallow depth provisions are under consideration

### Marking options:

- manufactured line
- Temporary solid mark options, sunsets 2033

### Implementation:

- Dec 1, 2025 – Surface gear
- Dec 1, 2028 – Main line

## Federal sablefish

Colors TBD

### Surface gear:

- No line marked, buoy tags on every buoy

### Main line:

- top 20 fathoms

### Marking options:

- manufactured line
- Continuous temporary markings in alternating bands of gear-specific colors allowed for a 3-year transition period

### Implementation:

- January 1, 2026



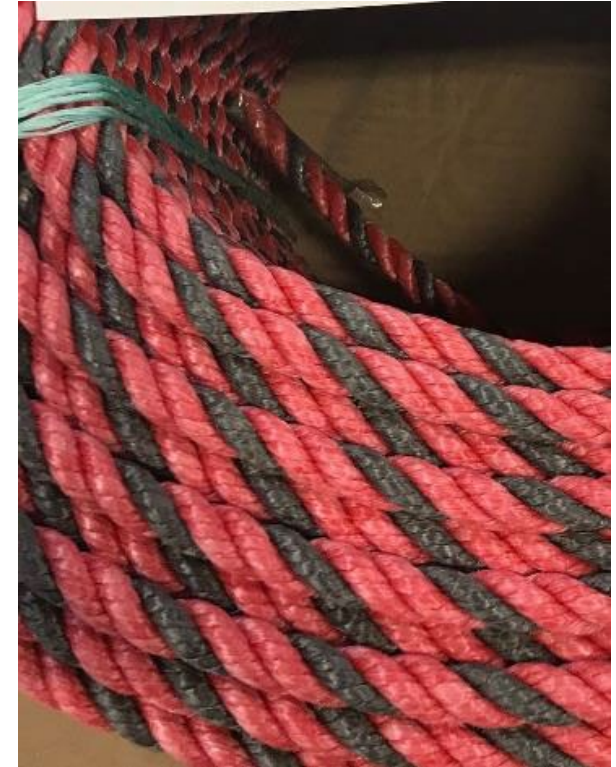
# Proposed new line marking regulations

## Line marking:

- WA D Crab: Red and black
- Manufactured line or solid marks
- Surface gear and top portion of vertical line

## Held small industry workshops to get feedback on:

- Phased implementation schedule
- Alternative to manufactured line (temporary or permanent)
- Shallow depth provisions
- Needs for easy integration
- Any concerns with the proposal



WA Coastal D. Crab manufactured line

## Proposed WA D Crab Line Marking: Timeline

### Phase 1: December 1, 2025

- Surface gear line marking
- Maintain current 12-inch continuous mark in the top fathom until transition to new main line marking requirements (phase 2)
- Bottom 12-inch solid red mark (within one fathom of the pot) is **no longer required**, but will not be prohibited in gear

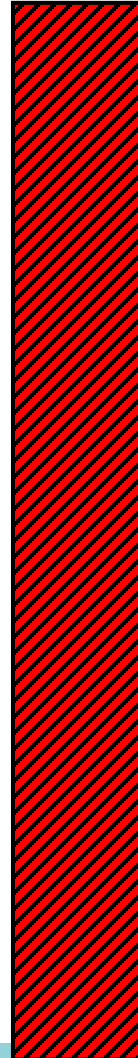
### Phase 2: December 1, 2028

- Main line (main buoy to pot) top 15 fathoms of line marked *in addition to surface gear*
- Shallow depth provision allows for < 15 fathoms of line to be marked

# Proposed WA D Crab Line Marking: Line Marking Options

## Manufactured Line:

3 strands;  
2 strands red and  
1 strand black



### Manufactured line:

Language will allow for  
tracers in floating line

## Solid markings:

Sets of solid marks;

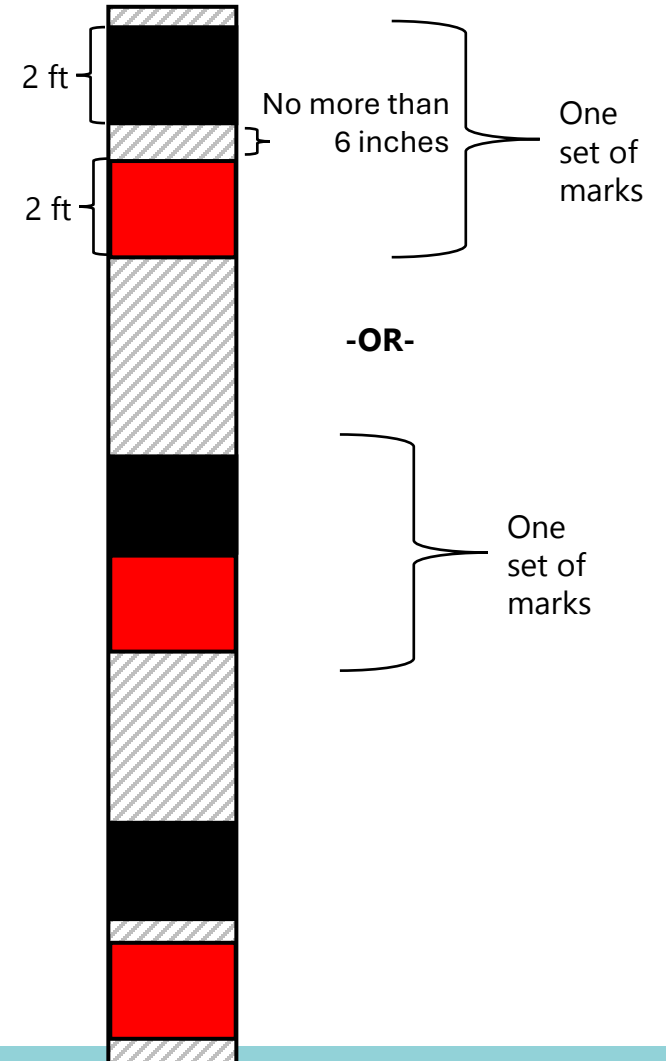
One set:

2 feet of black  
within 6 inches of  
2 feet of red

### Solid marking methods:

*Paint or tape*

The circumference of the  
line needs to be covered to  
be solid marking



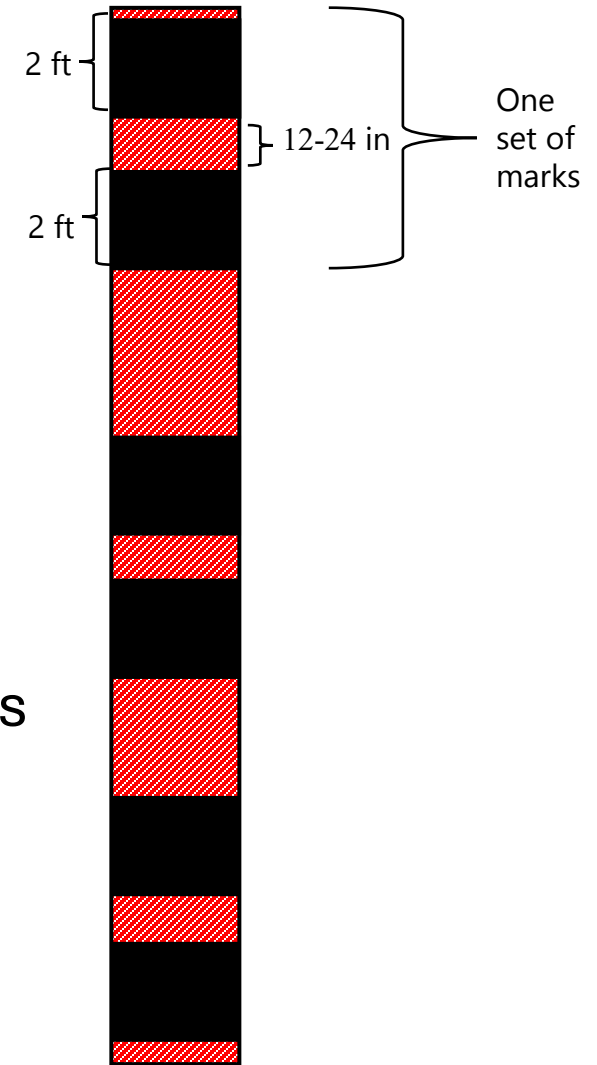
# Proposed WA D Crab Line Marking: Line Marking Options

## *Solution for existing red line:* **Solid markings on red line**

Both marks in each set of marks will be black

**Note:**  
larger space required  
between the two marks in  
the set

**Solid markings:**  
Sets of solid marks;  
One set:  
2 feet of black  
within 12 to 24 inches  
of 2 feet of black



# Proposed WA D Crab Line Marking: Surface Gear Configuration

## Phase 1 - Surface gear marking

*Proposed Effective Date: December 1, 2025*

### Surface gear marking:

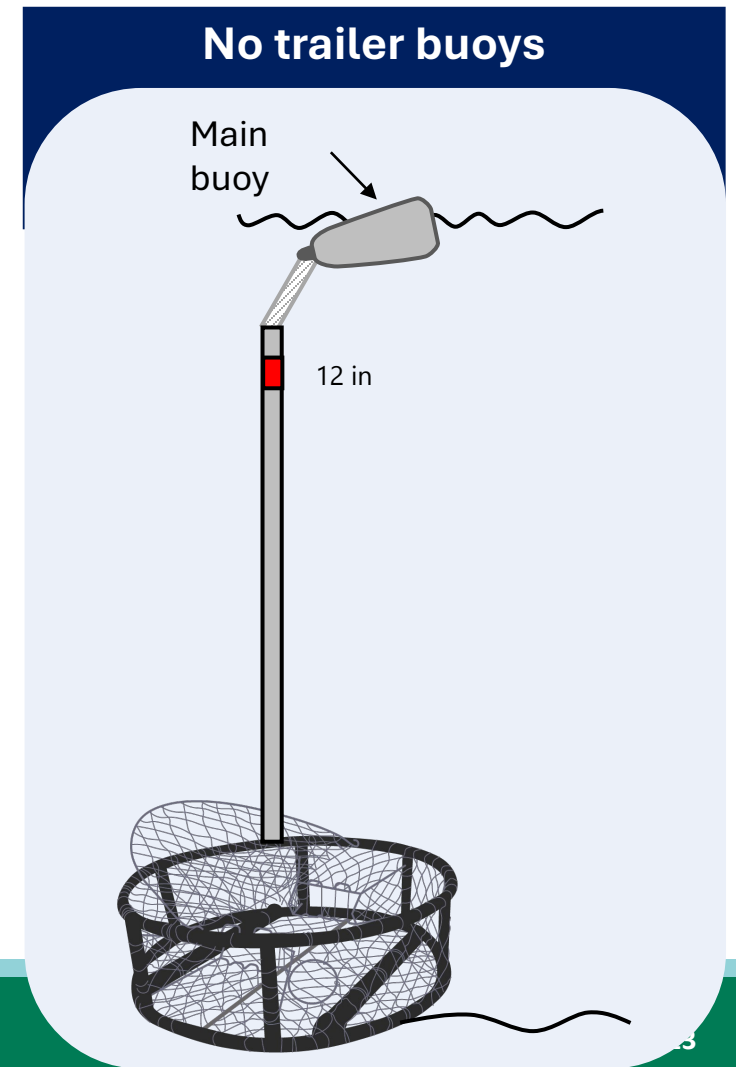
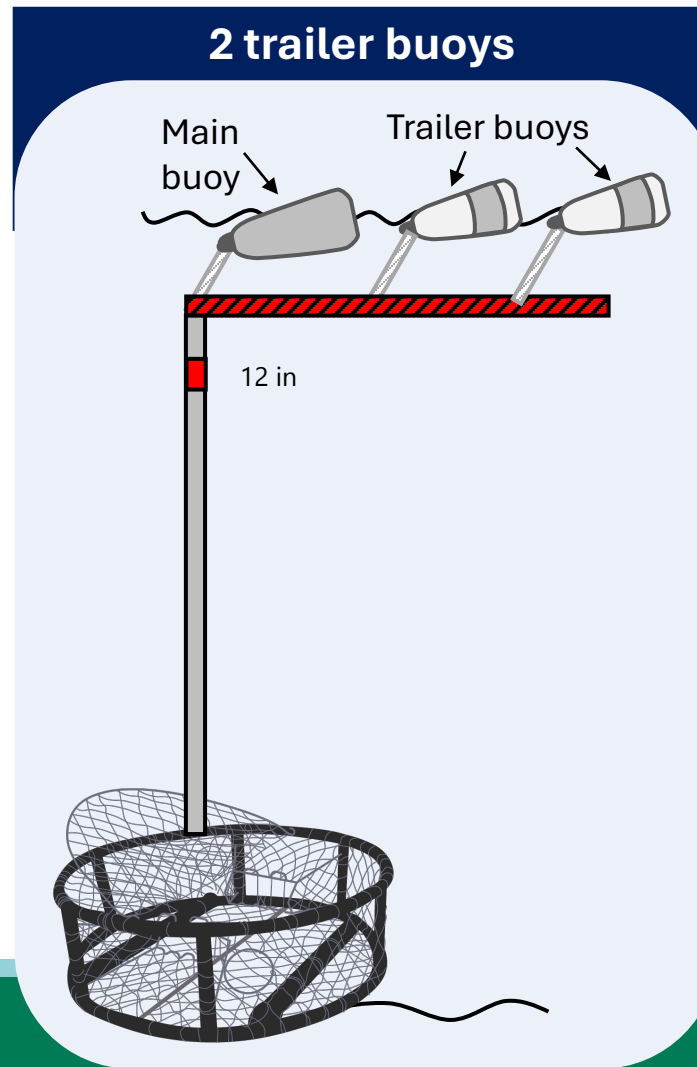
- all surface gear marked (red and black manufactured line **OR** one set of marks on trailer line connecting buoys)
- Surface line = trailer line connecting two buoys

**- AND -**

- maintain current 12-inch continuous red mark on main line

 = Marked line

 = unmarked line



# Proposed WA D Crab Line Marking: Main Line Gear Configuration

## Phase 2 - Main line marking

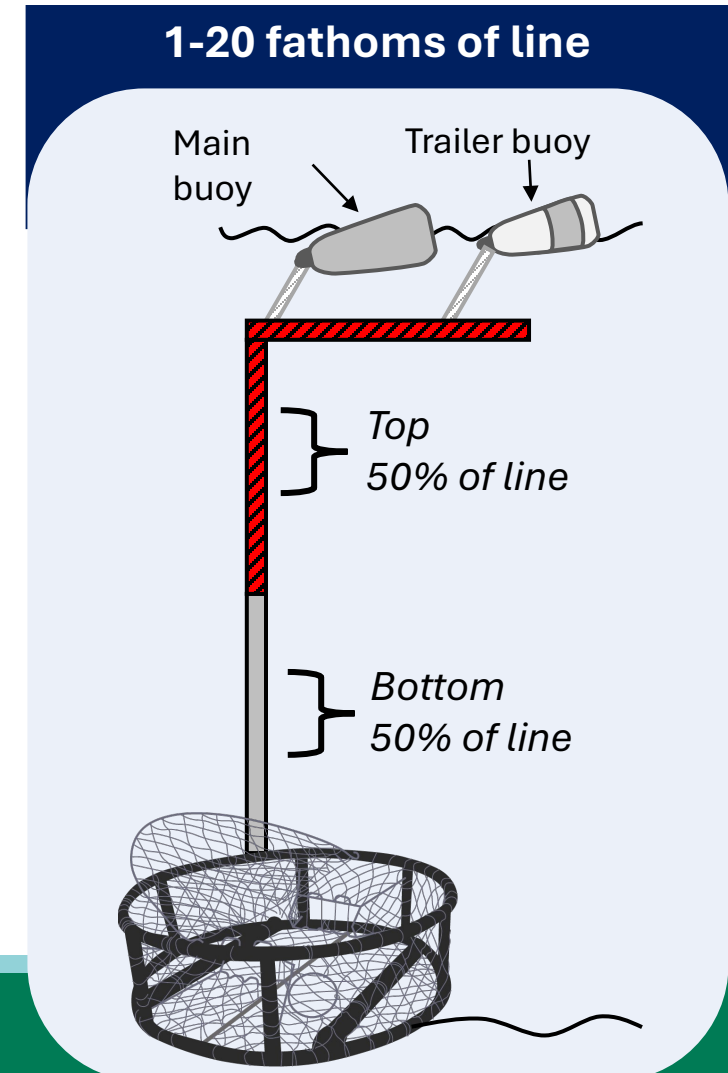
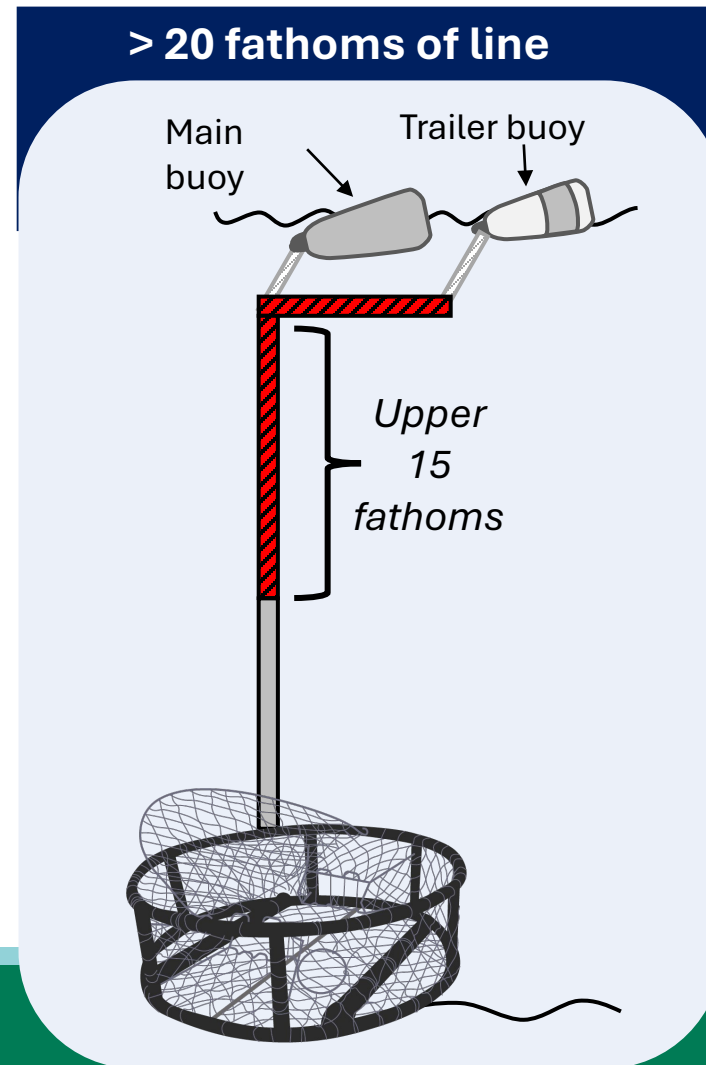
*Proposed Effective Date: December 1, 2028*

### Vertical line marking

When fishing a total line length:

- Greater than 20 fathoms:  
Top 15 fathoms marked
- Less than 20 fathoms:  
Top 50% of the line marked

 = Marked line     = unmarked line



# Proposed WA D Crab Line Marking: Solid Marking Intervals

## Allowance:

- Indefinitely (no sunset)

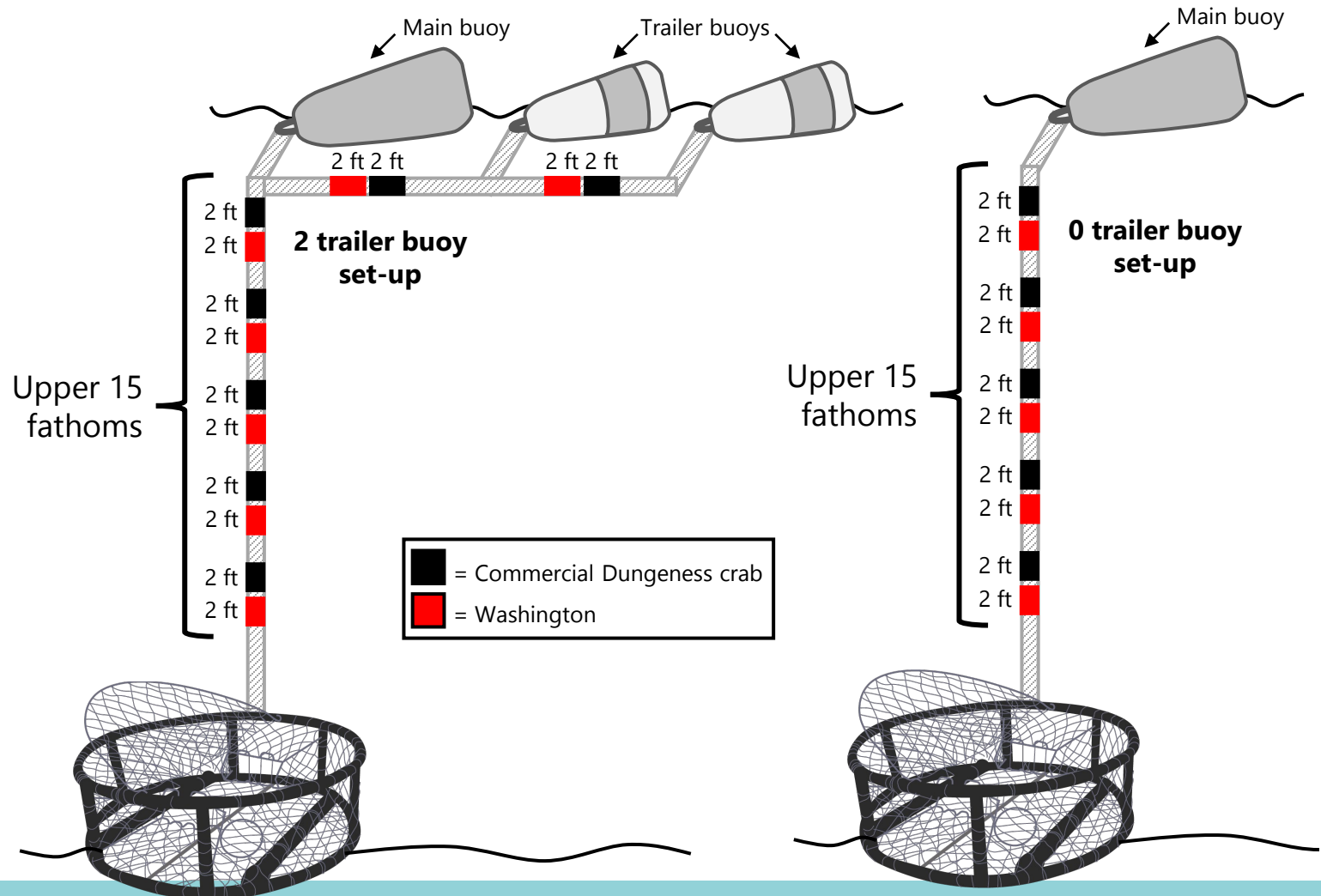
## Surface line:

- One set of marks on trailer line connecting two buoys

## Main line:

- 1 set of marks every 3 fathoms
  - 5 sets of marks in 15 fathoms

Solid marks (paint or tape)



# Surface gear maximum allowance

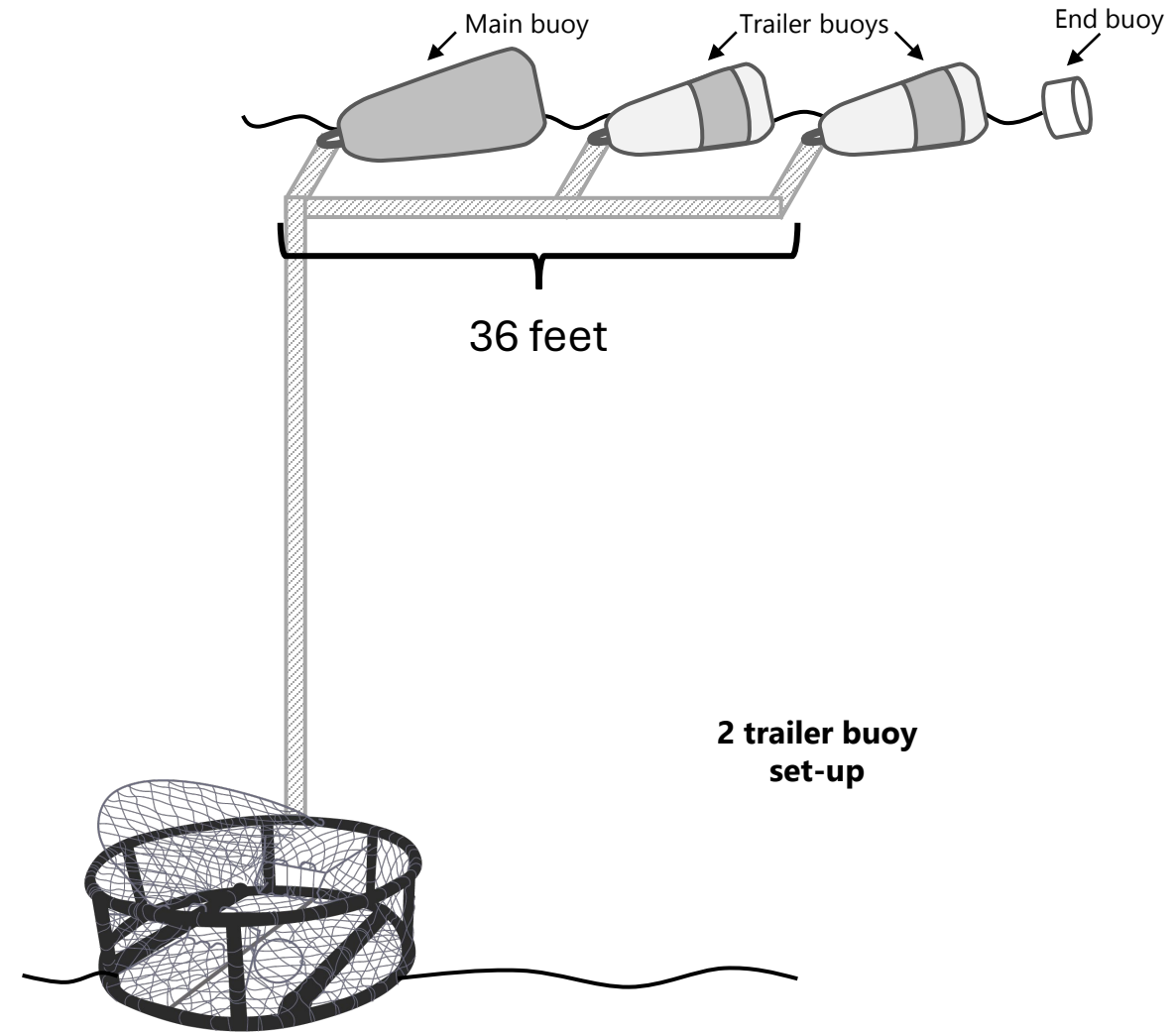
*Proposal to implement with phase 1 of line marking (Dec 1, 2025)*

Buoys:

1. No more than two trailer buoys
2. One end marker buoy, less than 5 inches in diameter, cannot extend greater than 3 feet behind last trailer buoy

Trailer line length:

1. Maximum of 36 feet (6 fathoms)





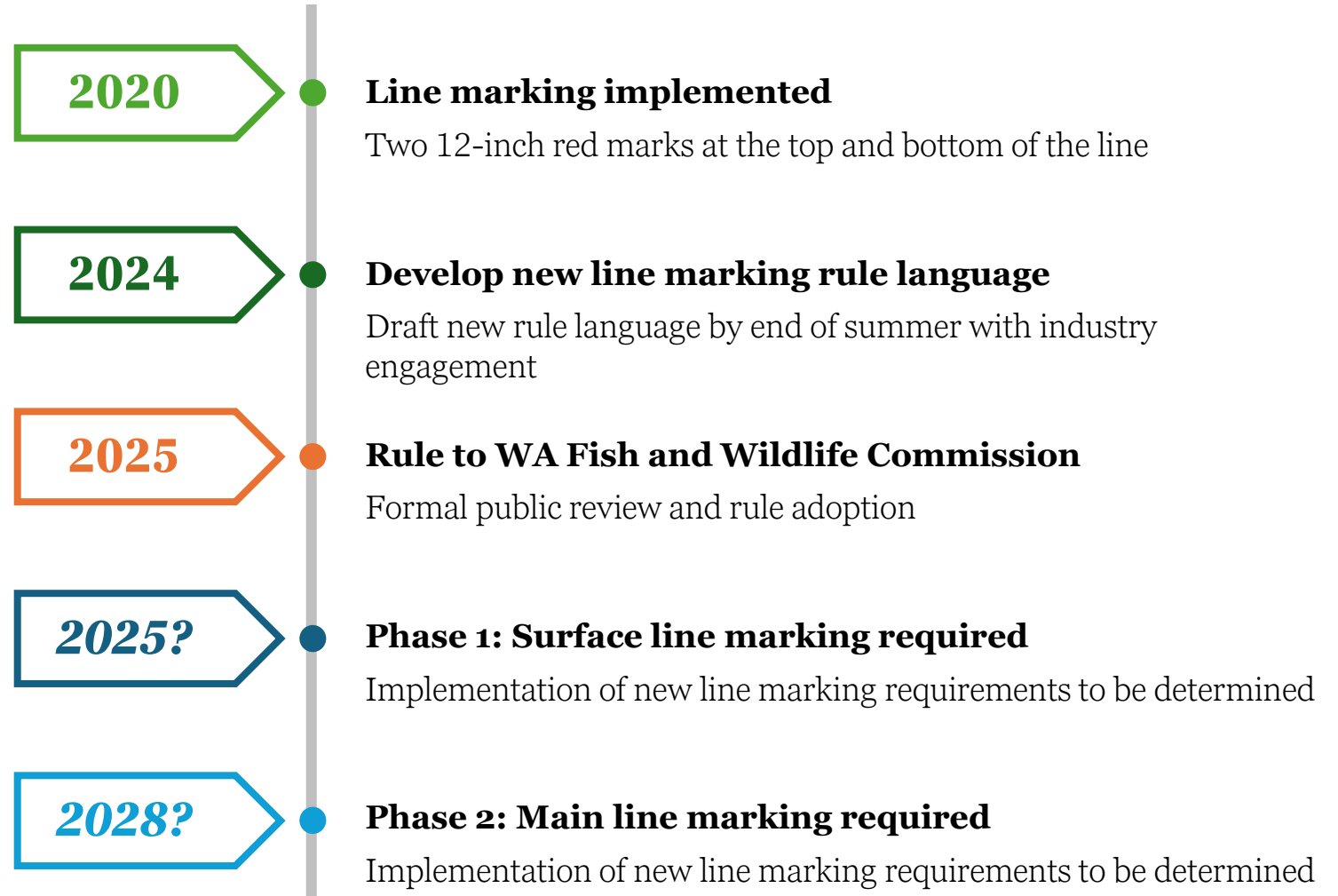
# Proposed WA D Crab Line Marking: Next Steps

## Engage with industry:

- ✓ Hold small workshops
- ✓ Advisory board
- ☐ Public meeting (Sept)

## Rule to Commission

## Implement new line marking requirements





# Take Reduction Team

# West Coast Take Reduction Team

## Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) Section 118

- *Preliminary Scope*
  - Species: Central America/Southern Mexico humpback whales, Mainland Mexico humpback whales, Eastern North Pacific blue whales
  - Fisheries: Federal sablefish pot, CA Dungeness crab pot, OR Dungeness crab pot, WA coastal commercial Dungeness crab pot, CA spot prawn pot
- Goal: reduce mortality and serious injury (M/SI) below each stocks Potential Biological Removal (PBR)
- TRT Members: State fisheries managers, Federal, Scientists, Conservationists (NGOs), Fishery

# West Coast Take Reduction Team

**WDFW has been asked to recommend WA D crab industry representatives to serve on the TRT**

NOAA is looking for:

- 4-6 West Coast Dungeness crab fishermen that collectively represent the states, vessel size, multi-state and multi-species fishers, summer and winter fisheries. This means 1-2 seats for a WA D. crab fishermen.
- Individual criteria:
  - Active fishermen
  - Knowledgeable about the fisheries and whale species
  - Have effective networks (able to gather and share information and perspectives with the TRT)
  - Proven track record of effectiveness around the table
  - Available to participate and travel
- For each representative, there will be a primary and an alternate

# TRT Process and *tentative* timeline

When	What
Aug-Sept 2024	NOAA Consultants interview potential TRT members
Fall 2024	TRT members are selected by NOAA
~Jan-May 2025	Preparation for TRT with informational webinars, meetings, and planning/scheduling TRT (virtual)
June/July 2025 – Nov/Dec 2025	<p>Official TRT convenes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. 6 months to develop a take reduction plan</li> <li>B. Approx. 4 week-long <b>in person</b> meetings in alternating west coast locations</li> <li>C. Workgroups and state meetings in between</li> <li>D. Final plan recommended by consensus to NOAA</li> </ul>
2026 – TBD	<p>Post take reduction plan development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Updates and informational webinars, evaluation of plan at meeting objectives</li> <li>B. TRT will re-convene, if necessary, timeline TBD</li> </ul>



# Coastal Crab Policy

# Background

Current coastal Dungeness crab policy, C-3604, adopted by Commission in 1999

- ❖ Has guided Department actions for 25 years
- ❖ Has served us well
  - Expanding framework for managing Coastal Dungeness crab fishery
    - Conservation Plan
    - New Fishery Management Plan
  - Recreational Crab Fishery Monitoring Program
  - New Climate and Ecosystem Fisheries Research Scientist

# Proposed Approach

- Maintain existing policy
- Revise policy format
- Update policy to:
  - include commitment to reduce marine life entanglement risks pursuant to ESA and MMPA through Conservation Plan and ITP process
  - reflect new recreational crab fishery monitoring needs and program
  - support work to develop climate-resilient measures
- recognize Fishery Management Plan



# 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 Revision

## **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 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

# Timeline: July – December 2024

- Coastal Dungeness Crab Advisory Board Meeting, July 22
- Letter to all Coastal Dungeness Crab license holders early August
- Industry Meeting, August 28
- Commission Meetings, September and October
- Share outcome in annual Coastal Dungeness Crab Newsletter, December



WDFW Photo



# Expanding Management Framework

# Coastal Dungeness Crab Plans

## *Conservation Plan*

- Required component of the Incidental Take permit application
- Describes the Department's risk reduction and mitigation program
- Elements to address and format prescribed by NMFS
- Foundation for risk reduction and adaptive management
- Inform TRT process

## *Fishery Management Plan*

- Describes the Department goals, objectives, strategies, management programs and measures consistent with and necessary to implement Commission policy guidelines
- Formalizes and assembles existing management strategies and measures
- Documents fishery description, history, economics, regulations, crab biology, ecosystem considerations, data and science needs
- Intended to be flexible and responsive to emergent needs

# Timelines

## *Conservation Plan*

- Draft CP
  - Submit for informal NMFS review, Spring 2025
  - Share with AB and License holders, Spring 2025
- Final CP
  - TBD, Account for TRT process and timeline, and NMFS review

## *Fishery Management Plan*

- Industry meeting, August 28
- Plan available for review, August-September
- Fish and Wildlife Commission
  - Informational item
  - September and October 2024 meetings
- SEPA, October-November
  - Formal comment opportunity
- Final FMP, January 2025

# Project timeline summary

## Crab Policy

2024

- Aug 28: Industry meeting
- Sept/Oct: FWC meetings
- Oct: Policy adopted

## FMP

2024

- Aug 28: Industry meeting
- Aug/Sept: Industry review
- Nov: SEPA

2025

- FMP finalized

## Line marking

2024

- Sept: Public Meeting

2025

- Spring: Rule to FWC
- Dec: Phase 1 implementation

## CP

2025

- Spring: draft publicly available
- NOAA review & feedback

TBD:

- Final submission to NOAA



# Questions?

**Megan Hintz**

**[Megan.Hintz@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Megan.Hintz@dfw.wa.gov)**

**564-215-1757**

**Lorna Wargo**

**[Lorna.Wargo@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Lorna.Wargo@dfw.wa.gov)**

**360-581-5611**