



State of Washington  
**Department of Fish and Wildlife**

**48 Devonshire Road, Montesano, Washington 98563-9618 (360) 249-4628 FAX (360) 249-1229**

August 13, 2024

Dear Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishery Participant:

The purpose of this letter is to share draft proposed changes to Washington Fish and Wildlife Dungeness Crab Policy C-3604 (Policy) and to inform you about development of a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the coastal Dungeness crab fishery.

The current Policy adopted by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) in 1999 has served us well for 25 years. The proposed changes aim to maintain existing policy and modernize the format and language by adding three objectives that address new needs in the coastal Dungeness crab fishery, including:

- Reducing the risk of marine life entanglements in crab gear
- Management/monitoring of the recreational crab fishery
- Supporting a climate-resilient fishery

The first addition supports efforts to reduce entanglement risks, including seeking an Incidental Take Permit for the fishery under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Historically, WDFW has lacked the ability to estimate recreational crab harvest on the coast; the second policy update reflects the new WDFW coastal recreational monitoring program that addresses this data gap. The third objective adds support for research and initiatives aimed at developing climate-resilient fishery management strategies.

The current Policy and proposed revisions are included in this letter for your review. Two webinars will be held to present the proposal for discussion and seek public input.

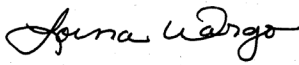
<p><b>3:00 – 4:30 p.m. August 28, 2024</b> <b><u>Coastal Dungeness Crab Fishery Participant</u></b> <b><u>Webinar</u></b></p> <p><b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 222 509 968 619 Passcode: PeKWES</p> <p><b>Dial in by phone</b> <a href="#">1-564-999-2000</a> Phone conference ID: 348 607 490#</p>	<p><b>5:00 - 6:30 p.m. August 28, 2024</b> <b><u>Virtual Townhall – General Public</u></b></p> <p><b>Microsoft Teams</b> <a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 261 498 306 092 Passcode: C7mJMv</p> <p><b>Dial in by phone</b> <a href="#">1-564-999-2000</a> Phone conference ID: 266 549 559#</p>
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The Commission will be briefed on proposed changes to the Policy at their September 26-28, 2024 meeting with potential action scheduled for their October 24-26, 2024 meeting. Both meetings offer opportunity for public comment, for instructions go to: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/commission/meetings#public-testimony>

Finally, a Conservation Plan (CP) is required for the Incidental Take Permit application. We've put significant effort into crafting the CP to fully describe the fishery and history of actions that contribute to reducing entanglement risks. However, this has resulted in a lengthy document. Recognizing a streamlined CP would be more effective, we are creating a separate FMP. The FMP comprehensively documents the coastal Dungeness crab resource and fishery, including crab biology, fishery governance, and management approaches. A draft FMP will be available for industry and public review this fall.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions at [Lorna.Wargo@dfw.gov](mailto:Lorna.Wargo@dfw.gov) or by calling 360.581.5611.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorna Wargo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Lorna Wargo  
Intergovernmental Ocean Policy Coordinator

## **Current Coastal Dungeness Crab Policy C-3604 (1999)**

### **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.

# Draft Proposal for Review (2024)

## 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.