



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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April 13, 2026

WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

Permitted Gear Recovery to Begin May 1

Beginning at 8:00 am on May 1, 2026, permitted recovery of commercial crab gear that do not have summer buoys tags attached will be allowed in coastal waters between the Washington/Oregon border (46° 15.00) and the US / Canada Border, including Grays Harbor, Willapa Bay, and the Columbia River. Gear recovery will not be allowed in any SMA closed to state licensed fisherman and recovery of tribal crab pots is prohibited.

Gear recovery is limited to licensed coastal Dungeness crab fishery participants. If you are interested in participating in gear recovery, you must apply for a permit from WDFW.

- **To request a permit contact Jamie Fuller at:**

- Call or text: 360-580-0875
- Email: jamie.fuller@dfw.wa.gov

As a reminder, **any gear recovered under a gear recovery permit must remain on the participating vessel until it has been inspected, registered, and tagged by WDFW enforcement or staff.**

Notification Requirement Change:

Notification is required at least 2 hours prior to returning to the dock if any gear was recovered by calling **WILDCOMM dispatch at 360-902-2936 (Option 1)**. The following information must be provided to ensure your call gets dispatched to the correct area:

- Name
- Vessel Name
- Port
- Phone Number
- Date, time, and location in the port you will be to get gear tagged

You will be prompted to leave a message if calls are made outside of working hours for WILDCOMM dispatch. Include the information listed above in your message and your call will be dispatched to officers during working hours.

Any calls made directly to enforcement officers may result in a delayed response to getting recovered gear registered and tagged.

In-season gear recovery: May 1-September 15, 2026

- Participants with a WDFW issued gear recovery permit will be able to recover crab gear owned by state licensed fishers that remain in the water that does not have a **summer buoy tag attached**.
- An active Electronic Monitoring system is required on the vessel and must remain on at any time crab pot recovery work is being conducted.
- Retention of crab from recovered pots is only **ALLOWED** for licenses/vessels participating in the summer crab fishery (license/vessel was issued summer buoy tags).
- Retention of crab from recovered pots is **PROHIBITED** for any license/vessel **NOT** participating in the summer crab fishery.

Summer Tags: Not recoverable during the in-season gear recovery May 1 – Sept 15, 2026.



Recoverable Tags: Can be recovered after May 1 with state issued permit.



Post-season gear recovery: September 16-October 31, 2025

- Participants with a WDFW issued gear recovery permit will be able to recover **ALL** crab gear owned by state licensed fishers that remain in the ocean.
- Retention of crab from recovered pots is **PROHIBITED** for all licenses/vessels.

Summer Tag Reminder:

Summer tags may be attached to gear starting April 15. As a reminder, regular season tags must remain on your gear until May 1, so both tags will need to be attached to your gear if you decide to attach summer tags prior to May 1. If conditions around May 1 prevent the removal of your regular season tags from gear that has a summer tag on it, please remove the regular season tag as soon as conditions allow after May 1. **Please contact department staff immediately with any concerns of gear tampering or recovery of gear that was properly tagged with summer tags. Gear recovery is thoroughly monitored with Electronic Monitoring (EM) and WDFW will enforce non-permitted gear recovery activity.**

Permit holders will be exempt from lost and found property laws allowing them to keep any crab gear they recover or can return the gear to the original owner. *This permit does not allow the recovery of crab gear owned by tribal fishers.*

Regarding final disposition of recovered gear, remember that it is always an option for those participating in the permitted gear recovery program to give the owner of any gear they recover the right of first refusal.

To allow for data collection and monitoring of the program, gear recovery permits will require:

- That the permit is on board the participating vessel anytime it is engaged in recovery operations or has recovered gear onboard.
- Notification to Department staff **by calling WILDCOMM at 360-902-2936** 2-hours prior to returning to the dock if any gear was recovered.
- Recording all recovered gear in a special logbook specific to derelict gear recovery (this logbook will be provided with your permit).
- Registration, inspection and marking of all recovered gear prior to removing it from the participating vessel.