



State of Washington
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

Whale strandings and entanglement reporting

The seasonal migration of whales on the Washington Coast has begun with the arrival of gray whales. In recent years there has been a pattern of increasing numbers of grays whales feeding on the Washington coast, and unfortunately many whales have been observed in poor health. Multiple gray whales have stranded on the Washington Coast this April, representing the highest number recorded this early in spring. More information on the gray whale strandings can be found on the [Cascadia Research Collective website](#).

This industry notice is a reminder of fishing best practices to reduce whale entanglements and how to report entanglements and strandings.

Best Fishing Practices:

1. Remove any fishing gear you are not actively tending (WAC 220-340-480).
2. Minimize scope. Use only the amount necessary to compensate for tides, currents, and weather (WAC 220-340-430).
3. Minimize excess surface gear, no more than 3 buoys and 36 feet of line are allowed (WAC 220-340-430).
4. When changing set location across depths, adjust the length of pot lines by adjusting shots (i.e., measured lengths of line) to maintain the minimum amount of scope necessary to compensate for currents and tides (WAC 220-340-430).
5. Avoid setting gear in the vicinity of whales when possible. Communicate the locations of high whale activity with other crabbers.

Report entangled and dead whales

Dead whales, floating offshore or washed ashore, should be reported to the **West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Hotline: 1-866-767-6114**. Any whale entangled in fishing gear must be reported immediately. You can report entangled whales to the U.S. Coast Guard on VHF Ch-16 or the entanglement response hotline (877) 767-9425.

It is important to provide the necessary information and documentation when reporting.

- The condition of the whale (alive or dead) and species (if known)
- **Location** of the whale including general landmarks and specific GPS coordinates, and the time of the sighting
- **Videos and photos** showing the condition of the whale, any fishing gear, and any identifying information. For more information NOAA has species specific checklists linked here: [Gray whale](#), and [Humpback whale](#)



Report Entangled Whales IMMEDIATELY

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

