



Marine
Resources

Oregon Entanglement Advisory Committee

April 14, 2026

9am-2pm



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Ground rules



Photo: Chris Peterson, Action Works Photography

- Listen to understand and ask questions.
- Focus on interests and ideas, not positions or single solutions. Share your expertise.
- Respect different viewpoints. Speak honestly and disagree without being disagreeable.
- Share the airtime. Everyone participate, no one dominate. One speaker at a time.



Agenda

Welcome and agenda overview

- Upcoming recruitment needs

ODFW updates

- Sablefish Pot Take Reduction Team
- Recent entanglement record
- Conservation Plan development
- Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission petition
- Planned future rulemaking

Pop-up and longline experimental fishing gear permit program development

Efforts to build entanglement response capacity in Oregon – *Doug Sandilands, Cascadia Research Collective*

Oregon research updates – *Drs. Leigh Torres and Lindsay Wickman, Oregon State University, GEMM Lab*

- Overlap Predictions About Large whales (OPAL) project
- Upcoming work
- Magrath Award recognition

---LUNCH BREAK---

Five-year risk reduction measures evaluation

Public comment



West Coast (Sablefish Pot) Take Reduction Team

- In-person meeting (March 30 - April 2) produced near-full consensus on comprehensive mitigation package for reducing humpback whale entanglement risk
- **Stock Status Updates:** Updated abundance estimates determined the level of mitigation measures needed to meet short and long-term TRT goals for the stocks.
- **TRT Recommendations:** Mitigation measure package (includes mostly voluntary actions), agency recommendations (reduce administrative burden), and research and data needs (focused on bycatch estimates, stock assessment information, and on demand gear).



2025 West Coast whale entanglements

NMFS fishery attribution	Humpback whales	Gray whales
OR commercial Dungeness crab	4	-
CA commercial Dungeness crab	4	-
WA tribal Dungeness crab	-	1
CA commercial coonstripe shrimp	2	-
CA commercial rock crab	2	1*
Canadian recreational	2	-
Sablefish pot	1	-
Gillnet	3	2*
Netting	1	-
Monofilament	3	-
Hook and line	1	-
Unidentified	8	-
TOTAL	31	3

*One gray whale entanglement involved both gillnet and CA commercial rock crab gear. It is included in each fishery category but counted only once in the total.



2025 entanglements attributed by NMFS to OR crab gear

- Jan 6 – **Humpback whale**
 - Reported off Pacific City, OR
 - Multiple gear sets including at least two OR commercial crab
 - Unauthorized partial disentanglement
 - Main season 2024-25 tags only
- Sept 25 – **Humpback whale**
 - Reported off Baja CA
 - Multiple gear sets including at least one OR commercial crab
 - Unauthorized partial disentanglement
 - Main season 2024-25 tag only
- Sept 26 – **Humpback whale**
 - Reported off Moss Landing, CA
 - Gear owner could not be identified
 - Unsuccessful response efforts, but whale documented gear free in Jan 2026
 - Main season 2022-23 tag only (presumed derelict gear)
- Nov 15 – **Humpback whale**
 - Stranded alive near Yachats, OR
 - Humanely euthanized after unsuccessful rescue attempts
 - Necropsy indicated “significant acute and chronic disease processes present in the whale” that likely contributed to the stranding
 - Main season 2023-24 tag only (presumed derelict gear)

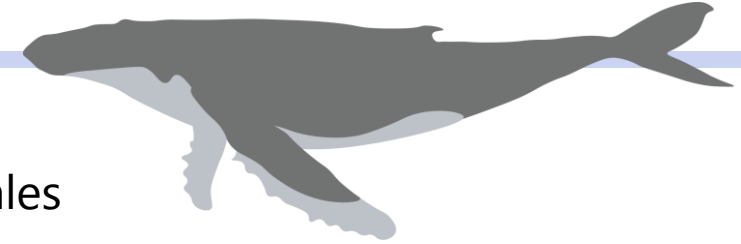


2026 West Coast whale entanglements (to date)

NMFS fishery attribution	Humpback whales	Transient killer whales
OR commercial Dungeness crab	1	-
CA commercial coonstripe shrimp	1	-
Gillnet	1	-
Unidentified	3	1
TOTAL	6	1

- Jan 6 – [Humpback whale](#)
 - Reported off Los Cabos, MX
 - NMFS notified by Mexico entanglement response partners at end of March
 - Partial disentanglement
 - Identified as OR commercial crab gear based on buoy brand and markings (no tags visible)
 - NMFS is still seeking additional details/documentation

Conservation Plan status and scope



- **Covered species:** CAM and MX DPS humpback whales, blue whales, fin whales
- Key remaining steps:
 - Apply feedback on full draft received from NMFS Office of Protected Resources at end of Jan
 - Mid-May: Submit another full draft to NMFS for “full team” final review
 - ODFW review/apply “full team” feedback in consultation with NMFS
 - Late 2026: Formally submit CP/ITP application
 - NMFS reviews for sufficiency and, if necessary, works with ODFW to resolve any issues to deem the application ‘Adequate and Complete’
 - NMFS carries out NEPA evaluation, Section 7 consultation, MMPA permit authorization*, public comment periods
 - NMFS makes ITP issuance determination



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Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission petition



- Received: December 11, 2025
- Petitioners: Center for Biological Diversity, Oceana, Natural Resources Defense Council, the American Cetacean Society
- Proposed crab fishery rule changes related to:
 - Pop-up gear
 - Late-season vertical line restrictions
 - Public notice of entanglements
 - Emergency procedures
- Commission denied the petition and directed staff to continue planned rulemaking processes and engagement with NOAA Fisheries to obtain ESA coverage



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Planned future rulemaking

- **August 2026**
 - Five-year risk reduction measures evaluation
 - Vessel monitoring requirements
 - Pop-up and longline experimental fishing gear permits
- Additional rulemaking as needed, pending outcomes of gear testing, work with stakeholders, and federal review of the CP





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Experimental Fishing Gear Permits (EFGP)

Controlled test of pop-up and longline gear in Oregon

- Alone or in combination
- Collect data to evaluate full authorization in designated times and areas
- Consider enforcement issues, gear conflicts

Timeline

- Rulemaking August 2026
- Issue permits spring 2027

OEAC feedback request

- Incentives to participate
- Information and data to collect
- Eligibility criteria
- Number of permits
- Time and area for testing
- Gear configurations





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Experimental Fishing Gear Permits (EFGP)

Pop-up gear basics

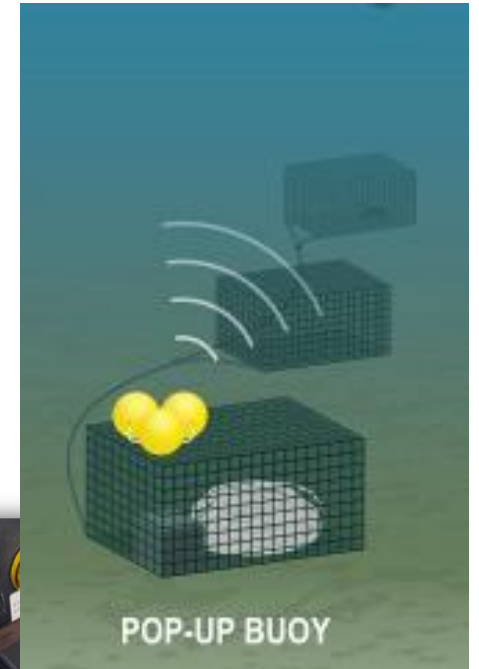
- Acoustic or timed release
- Acoustic release typically combined with longlining
- Virtual gear marking

Cost

- Timed release systems
 - Less expensive, potential for single pot use (~\$250-\$600 ea.)
- Acoustic "on-demand" systems
 - Deck box (one per boat) ~\$2,000-\$16,000
 - Line containment "sled" (one or two per string) ~\$950-\$9,500

Training requirements

- NMFS level 1 disentanglement training
- Gear use and location tracking, manufacturer or third party



*Image courtesy
of Oceana*



Experimental Fishing Gear Permits (EFGP)

Potential incentives

- Access areas closed for entanglement risk
- Restore reduced pot limits
- Access gear at no or reduced cost (gear library)

Information and data to collect

- Efficiency
- Reliability
- Gear movement
- Gear conflict
- How to track and manage
- Enforceability

Gear configurations

- Number of pots, strings, or vertical lines
- Sinking, floating, or neutral groundline

Eligibility criteria

- No civil/criminal violations of fishery laws for last x years
- No convictions for crab or pot theft for last x years
- No violation of EFGP terms and conditions

Number of permits

- Consider need for data from different vessel sizes, areas (ports), gear types

Times and areas to test

- Avoid gear conflicts
- Test in realistic conditions



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Lunch break
(12 – 12:30pm)

Five-year evaluation: Overview



Requested by the OFWC in Aug 2023

To provide an assessment of the measures after five years of data are available



Planned for Aug 2026 OFWC meeting

May include staff recommendation for rule change, depending on full evaluation results and input from advisors and industry

Only rule change likely ready to recommend in Aug 2026 would be permanent change of late-season measures implementation date to April 1

Other changes could be considered in the longer term



OEAC feedback request

Metrics/information to include in evaluation

Additional short- and longer-term regulatory changes, if any

Five-year evaluation: Key measures to reduce vertical lines



Late-season measures, starting May 1

20% pot limit reduction

40-fathom depth restriction

Requirement for additional late-season tag



Elimination of standard replacement tag allowance

Up to 10% of pot limit



Elimination of two-week post-season gear clean-up period

Five-year evaluation: Metrics



Confirmed entanglements

Rate and species

Estimated gear set timing, depth, region



Entanglement risk reduction

Full and late-season line-days

Fishing effort inside/outside 40 fm



Fishery impacts

Active permits

Landings/value

By pot limit and/or port

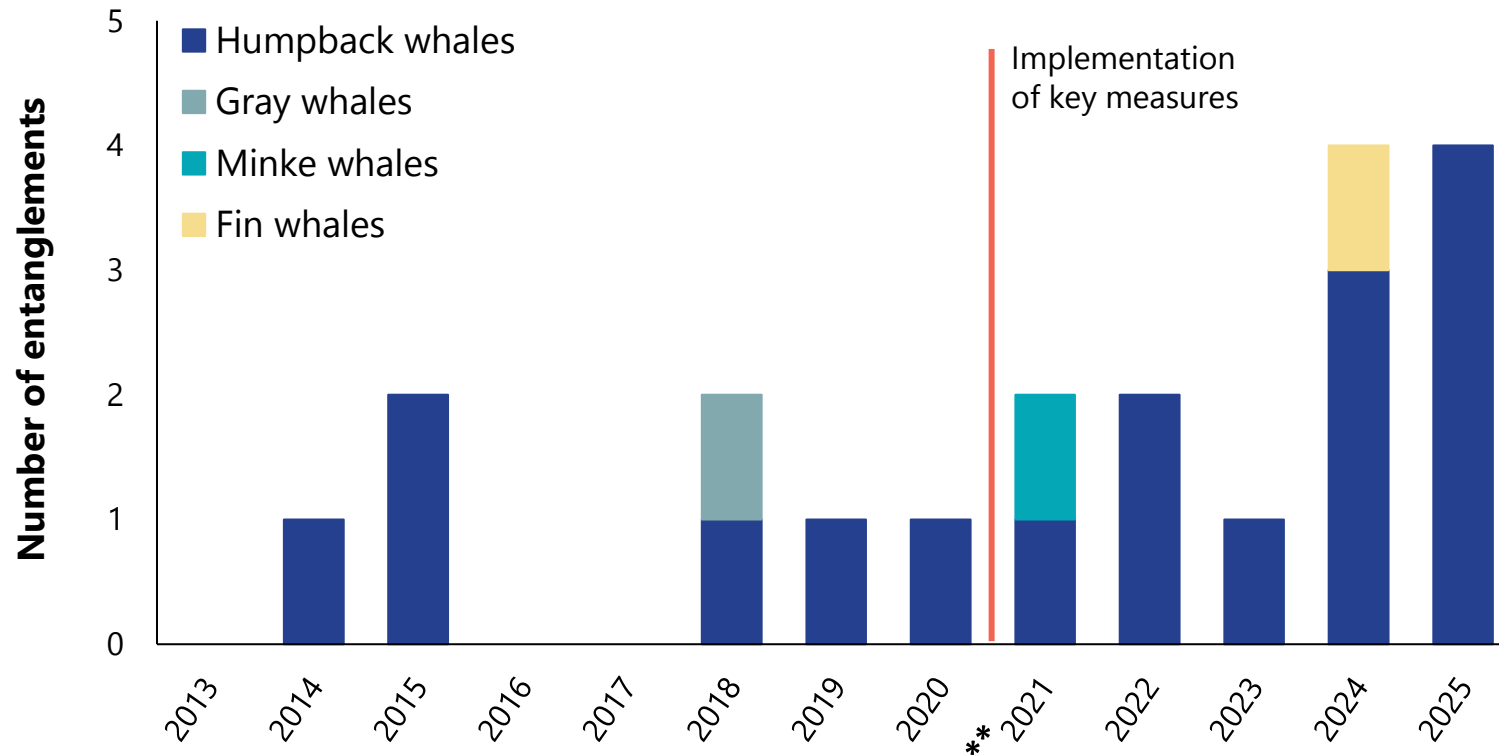


Compliance

Enforcement actions taken

Five-year evaluation: Confirmed entanglements

Oregon commercial crab entanglements*



Pre-implementation (2013 – 2020)

- Average: 0.875/yr
- 6 humpbacks, 1 gray

Post-implementation (2021 - 2025)

- Average: 2.6/yr
- 11 humpbacks, 1 minke, 1 fin

*Entanglements attributed to the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab fishery by NMFS

**2021 entanglements likely originated prior to implementation of key measures



Five-year evaluation: Confirmed entanglements

Fast facts – Oregon commercial crab humpback entanglements*

Pre-implementation (2013 – 2020, n=6)

- Reported Apr - Oct
- Reported Mexico, CA, and WA
- One suspected to involve derelict gear (reported 2015)

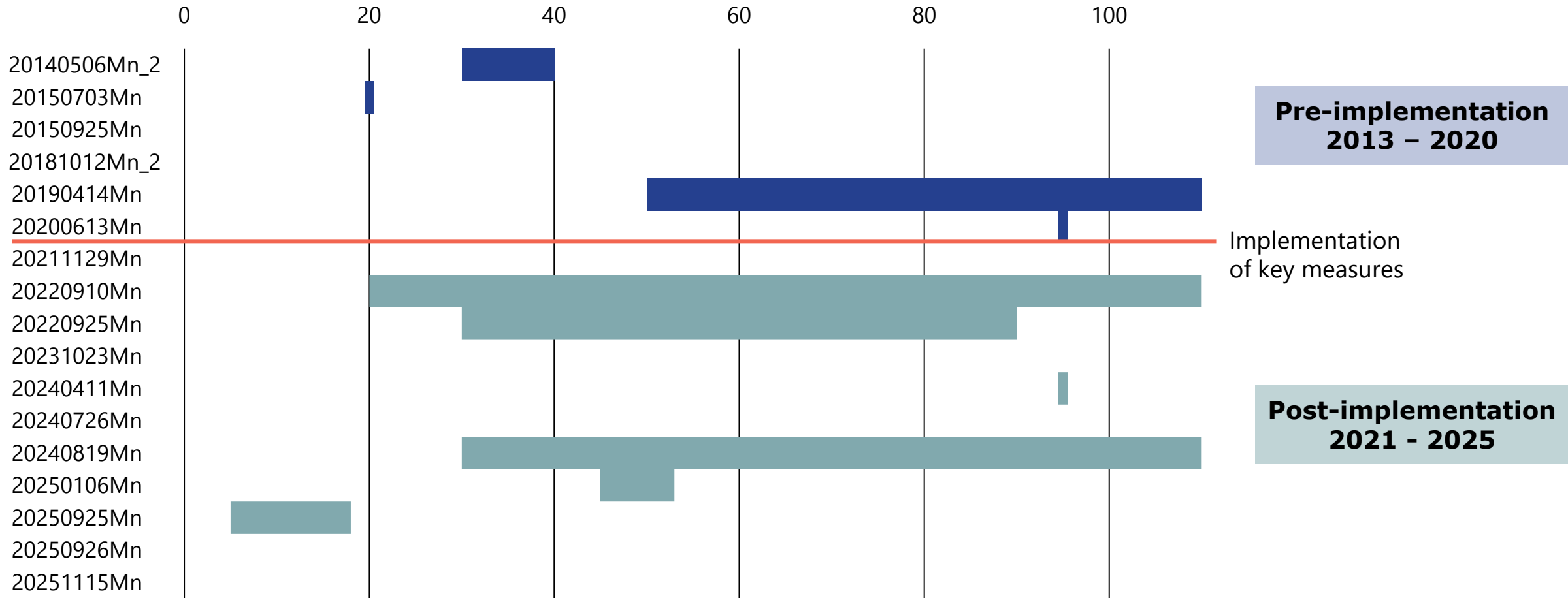
Post-implementation (2021 – 2025, n=11)

- Reported Jan – Nov, highest number in Sept
- Reported Mexico, CA, and OR
- Three suspected to involve derelict gear (reported 2021, and two in 2025)
- No late-season tags present

*Entanglements attributed to the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab fishery by NMFS

Five-year evaluation: Confirmed entanglements

Estimated gear set depth (fm) - Oregon commercial crab humpback entanglements*



*Entanglements attributed to the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab fishery by NMFS



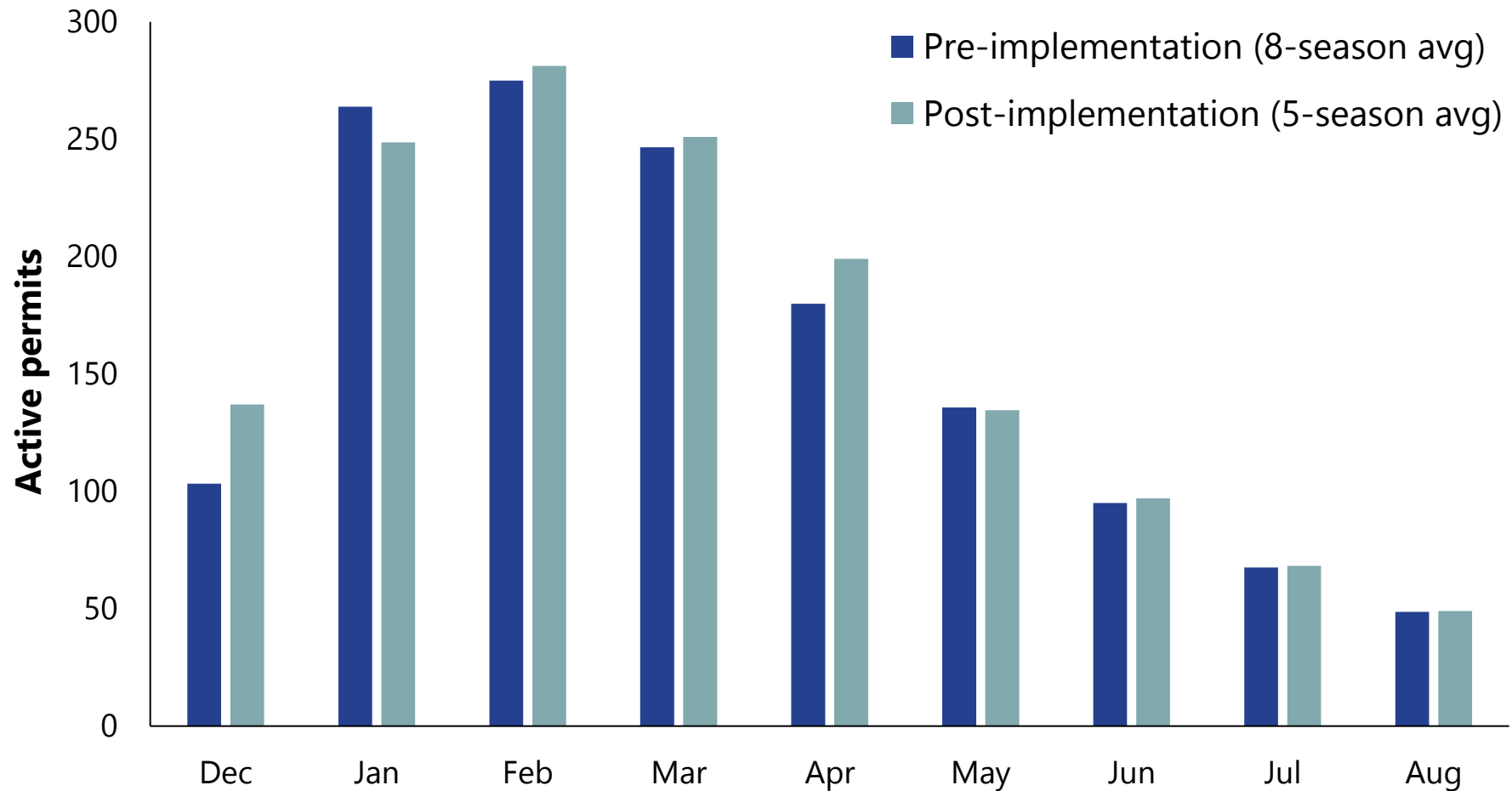
Five-year evaluation: Entanglement risk reduction

Late-season (May-Aug) line-days

	Total	Line-day change	% change
Average pre-implementation (2012-13 - 2019-20)	2,758,024		
2020-21	1,808,320	-949,704	-34.4
2021-22	1,767,280	-990,744	-35.9
2022-23	3,175,120	+417,097	15.1
2023-24	2,027,920	-730,104	-26.5
2024-25	1,623,280	-1,134,744	-41.1
Average post-implementation (2020-21 – 2024-25)	2,080,384	-677,640	-24.6

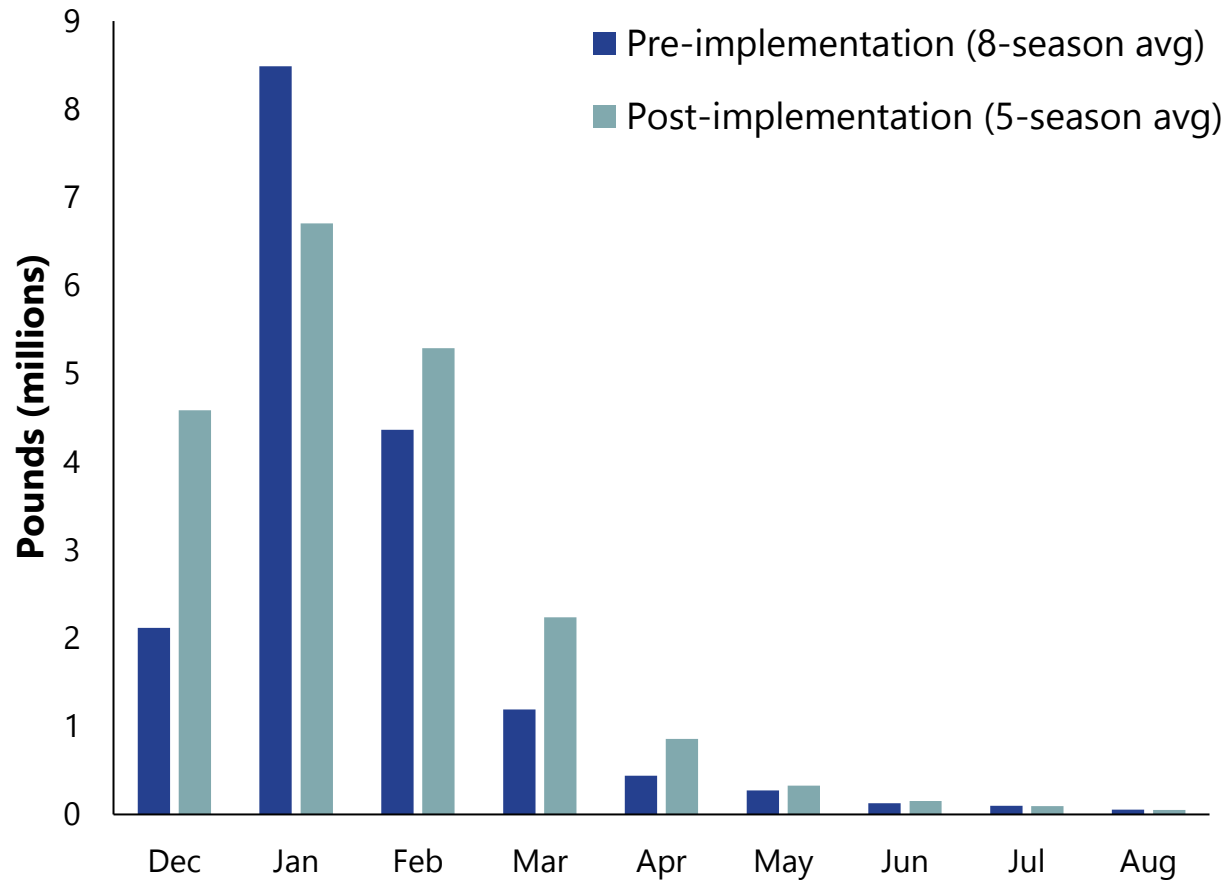
Five-year evaluation: Fishery impacts

Average monthly active permits

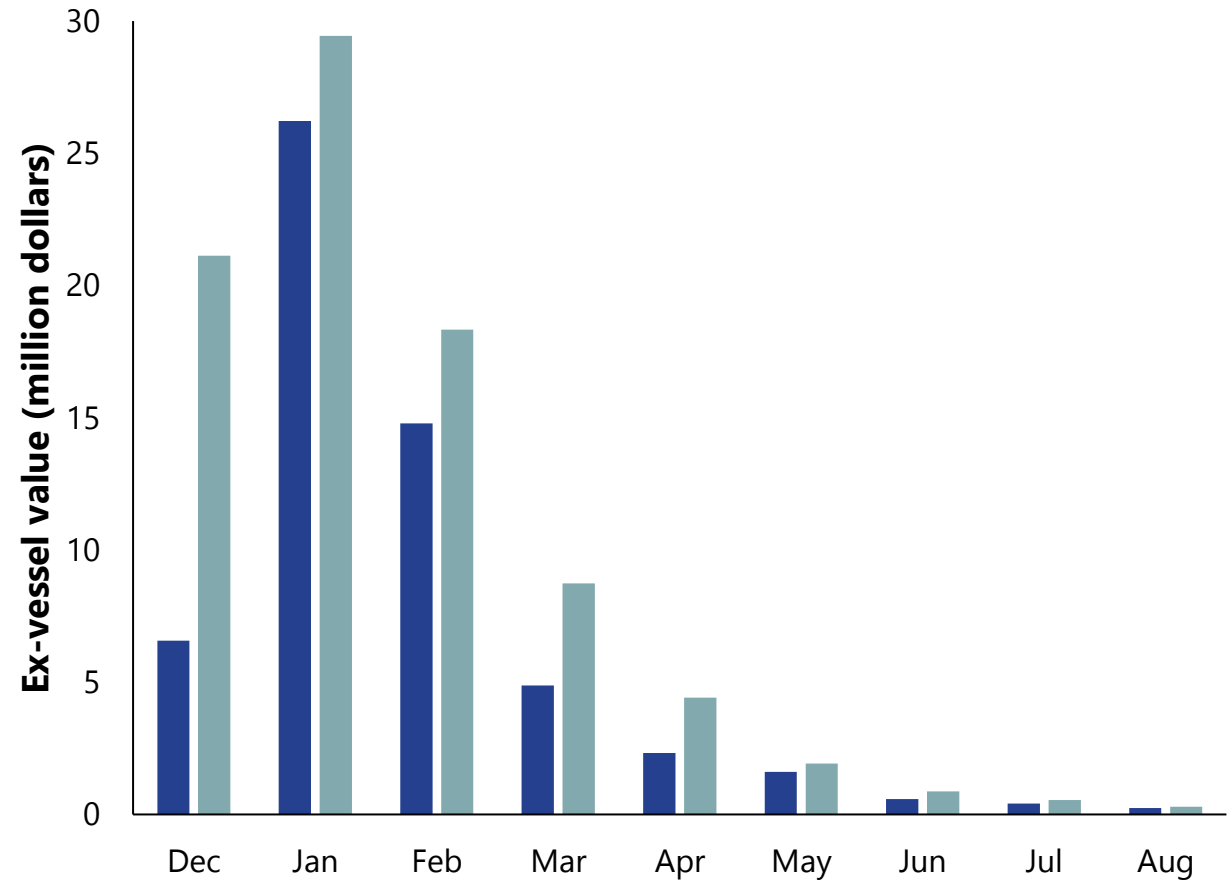


Five-year evaluation: Fishery impacts

Average monthly pounds landed

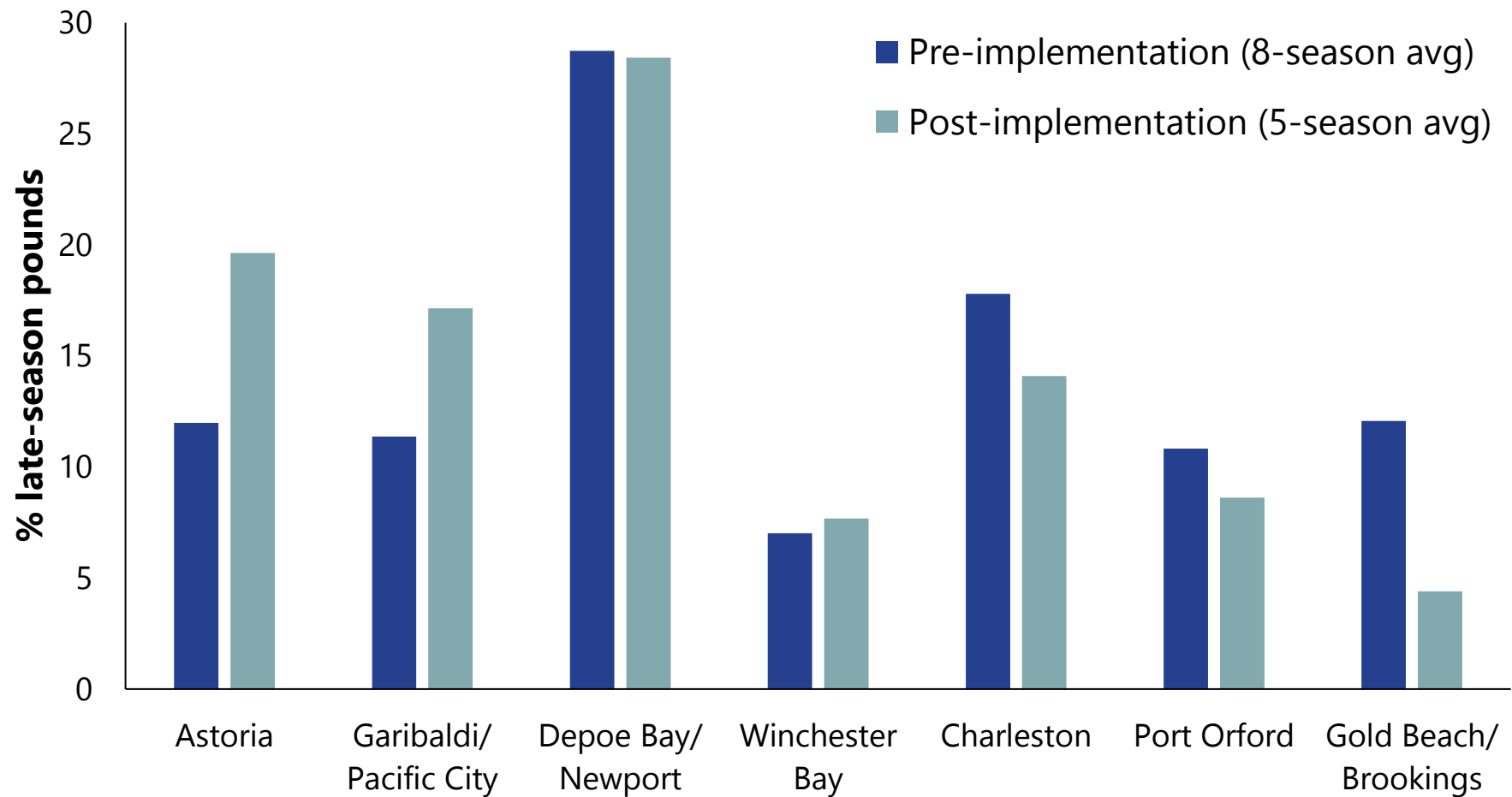


Average monthly ex-vessel value



Five-year evaluation: Fishery impacts

Average percent late-season pounds by port



Five-year evaluation: Preliminary staff assessment



Confirmed entanglements

Humpback entanglement rate in OR crab gear* has been elevated relative to historical levels



Entanglement risk reduction

Late-season risk has been reduced as intended



Fishery impacts

Little impact to overall fishery participation/landings/value, but potential impacts to certain segments or ports



Compliance

Compliance with late-season measures has been good overall, but challenges exist

*Entanglements attributed to the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab fishery by NMFS



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Five-year evaluation: Advisor feedback request

What other metrics or information should we be looking at?

- Confirmed entanglements
- Entanglement risk reduction
- Fishery impacts
- Compliance

What additional regulatory changes, if any, should we be considering in the short- and longer-term?





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A large, light gray silhouette of a crab is centered in the background of the slide.

Public comment