



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Marine Resources Program

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April 11, 2022

Oregon commercial crab industry participants, businesses, conservation organizations, and other interested parties:

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is announcing the opening of an application period for a new Oregon Entanglement Advisory Committee (OEAC). This group was first convened by Oregon Sea Grant in May 2017 as the Oregon Whale Entanglement Working Group (OWEWG) in response to an increase of large whale entanglements in fixed-gear fisheries gear along the West Coast, including gear that has been definitively linked to Oregon's crab fishery. From May 2017 through July 2019, the OWEWG held regular meetings, which provided an important avenue for ODFW to gather public input regarding the fishery and best practices. In addition to serving as a forum for collaboration, the OWEWG produced a voluntary best fishing practices directive, gathered feedback from the broader fleet through an industry survey, and developed preliminary recommendations focused on improving information about entanglement and management options to reduce risk, which formed the basis of many of the conservation management measures that have been implemented in Oregon to date.

From July 2019 through early 2022, the OWEWG met less frequently to address specific entanglement issues and serve as a hub for communication and idea sharing at strategic points during ODFW regulations development. Starting in 2022, ODFW will be facilitating this committee, renamed the Oregon Entanglement Advisory Committee (OEAC), and will resume more regular meetings relative to the objectives in and implementation of Oregon's [Conservation Plan](#) (CP) to address marine life entanglement in Oregon's crab fishery.

OEAC Purpose

The purpose of the OEAC is to serve as an advisory body to ODFW on efforts to reduce the risk of marine life entanglements in Oregon Dungeness crab gear and support ODFW commitments detailed in the CP. The OEAC is intended to provide ODFW with information and broad perspectives from a range of stakeholders on strategies to support the co-occurrence of economically viable fixed gear fisheries and thriving marine life populations off Oregon.

Expectations

ODFW aims to maintain a committee size of 15 to 20 members, representing the commercial crab industry (including different roles, ports, business plans, etc.), recreational crab industry, conservation organizations, researchers, and other subject matter experts (e.g., policy, gear, disentanglement, citizen science). When selecting members, priority will be given to applicants representing Oregon-based industries, businesses, or organizations.

Member names and affiliation will be posted on the ODFW website. Member terms will be for three years, and active members may be reappointed at ODFW's discretion. ODFW may also solicit



applications for or appoint new members at any time to address gaps in representation or emerging needs.

Members are expected to represent perspectives of participants who are similarly situated, not limited to their own viewpoint. This means reaching out to contacts in their port, community, or professional network to get broader input on topics under discussion and sharing that with the panel. Members are expected to be courteous, professional, and respectful towards all OEAC meeting attendees. Priority will be given to discussion with members, with a brief opportunity for public input at the end of each meeting, if time allows.

In the short-term, the OEAC is expected to focus primarily on the crab fishery and CP covered species (humpback whales, blue whales, leatherback sea turtles); however, the committee may be consulted in the future on other entanglement-related issues if ODFW identifies additional needs and active committee members have interest. The committee may also choose in certain circumstances to invite guest advisors/presenters on a variety of entanglement-related issues. ODFW will also continue to maintain the industry advisory committee, Oregon Dungeness Crab Advisory Committee (ODCAC), to consult on issues that require industry-specific feedback, particularly those related to fishery operations. Active members of both the OEAC and ODCAC will be asked to participate in Oregon Entanglement Summits, at least every five years, to evaluate and provide recommendations to ODFW on gear marking and modifications, adaptations to the overall entanglement mitigation strategy, and research priorities.

OEAC meetings will be held at least annually, with additional meetings as needed. Webinar and conference call options will be available for all meetings, so that in-person attendance is not required. Meetings will be open to the public and announced on the ODFW website. Meetings will not be recorded, but ODFW staff will take minutes. Meeting summaries will be posted on the ODFW website.

Application and appointment

An application form is attached to this announcement. ODFW will consider the information on the application to select members representing the diversity of industry participants and interested stakeholders, including consideration of past participation in OWEWG, relevant expertise in addressing marine life entanglements in fishing gear, home port, and participation in West Coast fixed gear fisheries. ODFW may also consider licensing, landing, enforcement, and other relevant information in selecting members. We plan to announce appointments sometime in June.

If interested in participating as a member of this advisory committee, please return completed applications by email to Kelly.C.Corbett@odfw.oregon.gov or by mail to ODFW Marine Resources Program, 2040 SE Marine Science Drive, Newport OR, 97365. **Applications must be postmarked or emailed by May 20, 2022.**

Sincerely,

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