



Commercial and Recreational Fixed-gear Fishing Marine Life Entanglement Advisory

August 23, 2024

Marine Resources Program
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
2040 SE Marine Science Drive
Newport, OR 97365
www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP

Fleet advisory for fixed-gear commercial and recreational fisheries

A humpback whale entangled in multiple sets of commercial crab gear from different states was reported off the southern central Oregon coast this week. This marks the third humpback entanglement attributed by the National Marine Fisheries Service to Oregon commercial crab gear this year.

Researchers have observed aggregations of humpback whales, primarily in around 55-70 fathoms (100-130 m), but with some whales closer to shore. Blue whales were also observed in waters shallower than 70 fathoms. These sightings were made off the southern Oregon coast from Charleston to Gold Beach; however, researchers suspect whale concentrations extend south to the CA-OR border. These reports represent only a small area and time span so be aware that whale aggregations may exist in other areas and may shift over short periods of time.

ODFW is issuing this **fleet advisory for both recreational and commercial fixed-gear fisheries from Charleston to Gold Beach**. Fishing captains and crews should remain vigilant and move or avoid setting gear in areas where whales are transiting or foraging to minimize risk of entanglement as much as possible. This advisory is effective immediately and remains in effect through **Sept. 6, 2024**.

We remind fishery participants about best fixed-gear fishing practices to help reduce risk of entanglements at all times, but especially now when higher numbers of ESA-listed humpback whales are present off Oregon. Please remember to:

- Remove any fishing gear you are not actively tending and promptly remove all gear from the ocean when finished fishing.
- Use the minimum amount of scope required to compensate for tides, currents, and weather.
- Adjust the length of buoy lines when moving gear to shallower water to maintain taut vertical lines.
- Minimize surface gear and ensure no excess line is floating at the surface.
- Avoid setting gear in the vicinity of large feeding aggregations of whales.
- Maintain gear to ensure lines and buoys are in good working condition and clearly marked.
- Report any derelict gear to ODFW by emailing Jill.M.Smith@odfw.oregon.gov.
- If commercially licensed, bring in derelict gear to shore and/or participate in the Post-Season Derelict Gear Recovery Program by getting a permit to recover gear or reporting locations of derelict gear for permitted vessels to target for removal.

Please share this advisory and reminders about fixed-gear fishing best practices to reduce risk of marine life entanglements with your networks. Also, consider reporting whale sightings using the WhaleAlert app and sharing the locations of unusually high whale or sea turtle activity with ODFW and with other fishers. **All entangled marine mammals or sea turtles should be promptly reported by calling 1-877-SOS-WHALE (1-877-767-9425).** **Keep a safe distance and do not attempt disentangling.**

Thank you for taking these important, proactive steps to avoid entanglements with fishing gear.

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