



Commercial Crab Industry Notice

May 2, 2025

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

The purpose of this notice is to provide information on two topics related to reducing marine life entanglements with Oregon Dungeness crab gear. These include: 1) Potential need for adaptive management in 2025, and 2) Updates on the West Coast Take Reduction Team (TRT).

1. Potential need for adaptive management

In 2024, a record high of three humpback whale entanglements were reported involving gear attributed by NMFS to the Oregon commercial crab fishery. In January 2025, another humpback whale entangled in multiple sets of commercial crab gear attributed to Oregon by NMFS was reported. These events prompted ODFW to issue fleet advisories in August 2024 and January 2025 advising fishers to remain vigilant, exercise caution setting and moving gear, participate in derelict gear recovery, and use best practices to reduce the risk of entanglements.

Despite these actions, we remain concerned about the elevated rate of NMFS-confirmed entanglements with Oregon crab gear. **ODFW is considering the potential need to take additional regulatory action this year if humpback whale entanglements attributed by NMFS to Oregon crab gear continue to be elevated in 2025.** Our efforts to develop an adequate and complete Conservation Plan (CP) in support of an incidental take permit (ITP) application to NMFS are ongoing so it is important to keep entanglement levels low. Interim regulatory action would aim to reduce impacts to threatened and endangered humpback whales off Oregon, reduce the likelihood of more extreme management actions in the future, increase the likelihood of ITP approval, and position the fishery for success in coastwide TRT negotiations (see below for update).

ODFW hosted an Oregon Entanglement Advisory Committee (OEAC) meeting on April 4, 2025. At this meeting, we discussed these concerns and the potential need to take regulatory action this year. The list of potential management measures discussed included additional depth or pot limit restrictions, closing the season early, adjusting time or amount of trip limits, opening as early as possible under the Tri-State protocol, additional derelict gear recovery provisions and area closures. A summary of the group's discussion is posted [here](#).

For any future entanglement events this year we plan to use the input we received from OEAC, any additional stakeholder input we receive, any additional information we have at that time, and the specific circumstances of an entanglement event to help inform an appropriate management response. Decisions will be based on how effective actions are likely to be, how ready they are to implement, and how much they will impact the industry

2. West Coast Take Reduction Team updates

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced that they have reduced the initial scope of the [West Coast TRT](#) to include only two whale stocks (Central America/Southern Mexico and Mainland Mexico stocks of humpback whales) and only the

federal sablefish pot fishery. Under terms of a 2023 settlement agreement, NMFS still plans to establish the team by October 31, 2025, and the first meeting will be convened by November 30, 2025. **It is unclear at this time when the Tri-State Dungeness crab fisheries may be brought into the TRT process.** We will continue to engage with NOAA to learn more about if or how these changes may impact our conservation plan and incidental take permit application process.

Thank you for reviewing this information. Please contact us if you have any questions.

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