Oregon Dungeness crab industry public meeting

May 7, 2026 – North Bend Public Library

May 12, 2026 – Oregon Coast Community College, Newport Campus

May 14, 2026 – Astoria Public Library

Ground rules

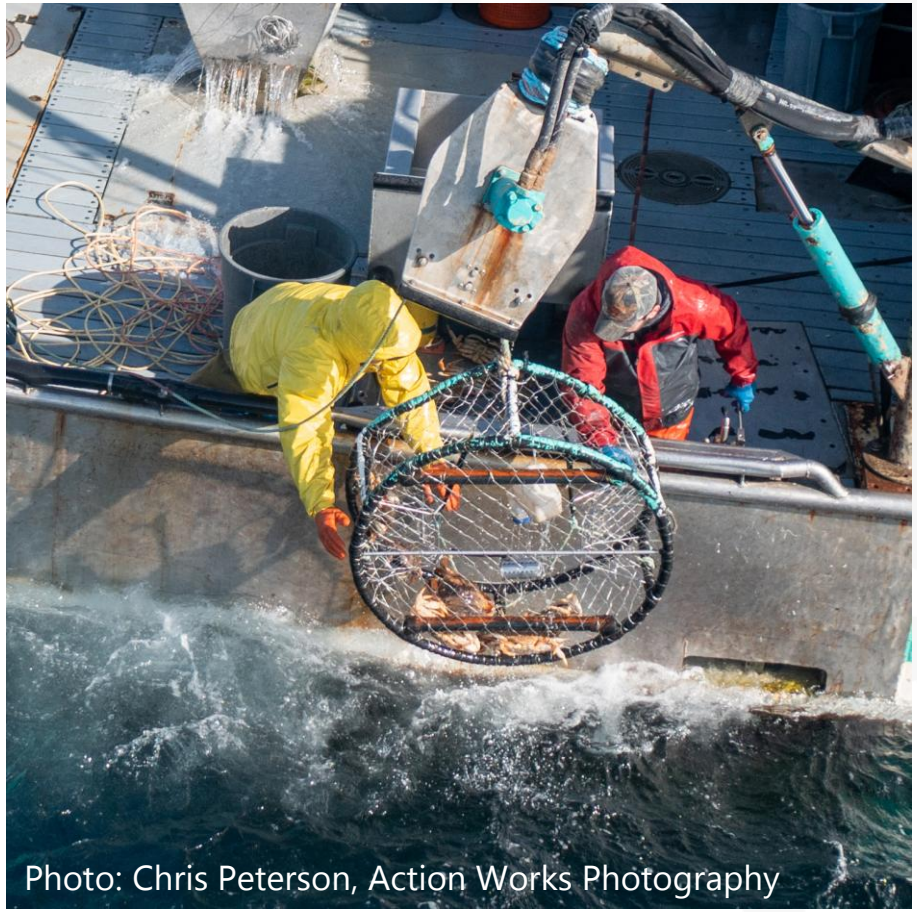


Photo: Chris Peterson, Action Works Photography

- 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

Marine life entanglement updates

- Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission petition
- Planned future rulemaking
- Conservation Plan status & key elements

Five-year risk reduction measures evaluation

--BREAK--

Vessel monitoring & electronic logbooks

Pop-up & longline experimental fishing gear permits

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

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

Conservation Plan status and scope

- **Covered species**: CAM and MX DPS humpback whales, blue whales, fin whales
- Key remaining steps:
  - **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
    - 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

Draft CP conservation measures

Avoidance

- ✓ Late-season pot limit reduction & depth restriction
- ✓ Elimination of post-season gear clean-up period
- ✓ Elimination of standard replacement tags
- ✓ Biotoxin management to minimize delay in peak harvest effort
- ✓ Increased season opening flexibility to minimize delay in peak harvest effort

Minimization

- • In-season & post-season derelict gear recovery
- ✓ Requirement for maintenance of taut lines
- ✓ Limitation of maximum surface gear
- • Crab industry education & outreach

Mitigation

- ○ Requirement for and promotion of Level 1 first responder training
- • Entanglement response efforts
- ○ Experimental Fishing Gear Permit program
- ○ Gear workshops
- • Aerial surveys for improved whale distribution information
- ✓ Monitoring measures in other fisheries (e.g., rec crab)
- • Outreach to other ocean users

✓ = Adopted in rule
• = Ongoing implementation/improvement
○ = Future commitment

Draft CP monitoring strategy

Fishery monitoring

Electronic fish tickets
- Require fleetwide

Electronic vessel monitoring
- Require fleetwide
(*by the 2026-27 season)*

Electronic logbooks
- Establish voluntary program
(*by the 2026-27 season)*
- Require fleetwide
(*by the 2030-31 season)*

Entanglement monitoring

Improve identification of Oregon crab gear

Buoy marking improvements
- Require buoy color pattern registration
- Modify/coordinate buoy tag color/shape
- Require additional late-season tag

Line marking
- Require surface and vertical line marking
(by the 2026-27 and 2028-29 seasons, respectively)

Improve detection & documentation

Direct surveys
- Conduct periodic aerial surveys

First responder training
- Enhance requirements for Level 1 whale entanglement response training
- Conduct annual outreach strongly encouraging training & proper reporting by commercial crab fleet & other ocean users

Draft CP adaptive management strategy

1 Late-season entanglement risk trigger

5-year running average active vertical line-days fished from May 1 through end of season reduced by less than 20%, relative to baseline level

Management response options

- Adjust late-season pot limit reduction %
- Adjust season opening date
- Adjust season closure date
- Adjust trip limit start date or amount

2 Confirmed entanglement triggers

- **Humpback whales**: DPS-specific 5-year running totals;
- **Blue and fin whales**: Thresholds based on point in permit term

Management response options

- Adjust late-season pot limit reduction %
- Adjust season opening date
- Adjust season closure date
- Adjust trip limit start date or amount
- Adjust pot limit reduction start date
- Adjust depth restriction start date or depth
- Area closure
- Additional derelict gear recovery provisions
- Gear modification or technology

3 Permitted take trigger

Permitted take level reached for any covered species

Management response

Initiate **immediate fishery closure**; Reopen fishery under jointly agreed upon conditions

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 that we may 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

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

Fishery impacts

Active permits

Landings/value

By pot limit and/or port

Entanglement risk reduction

Full and late-season line-days

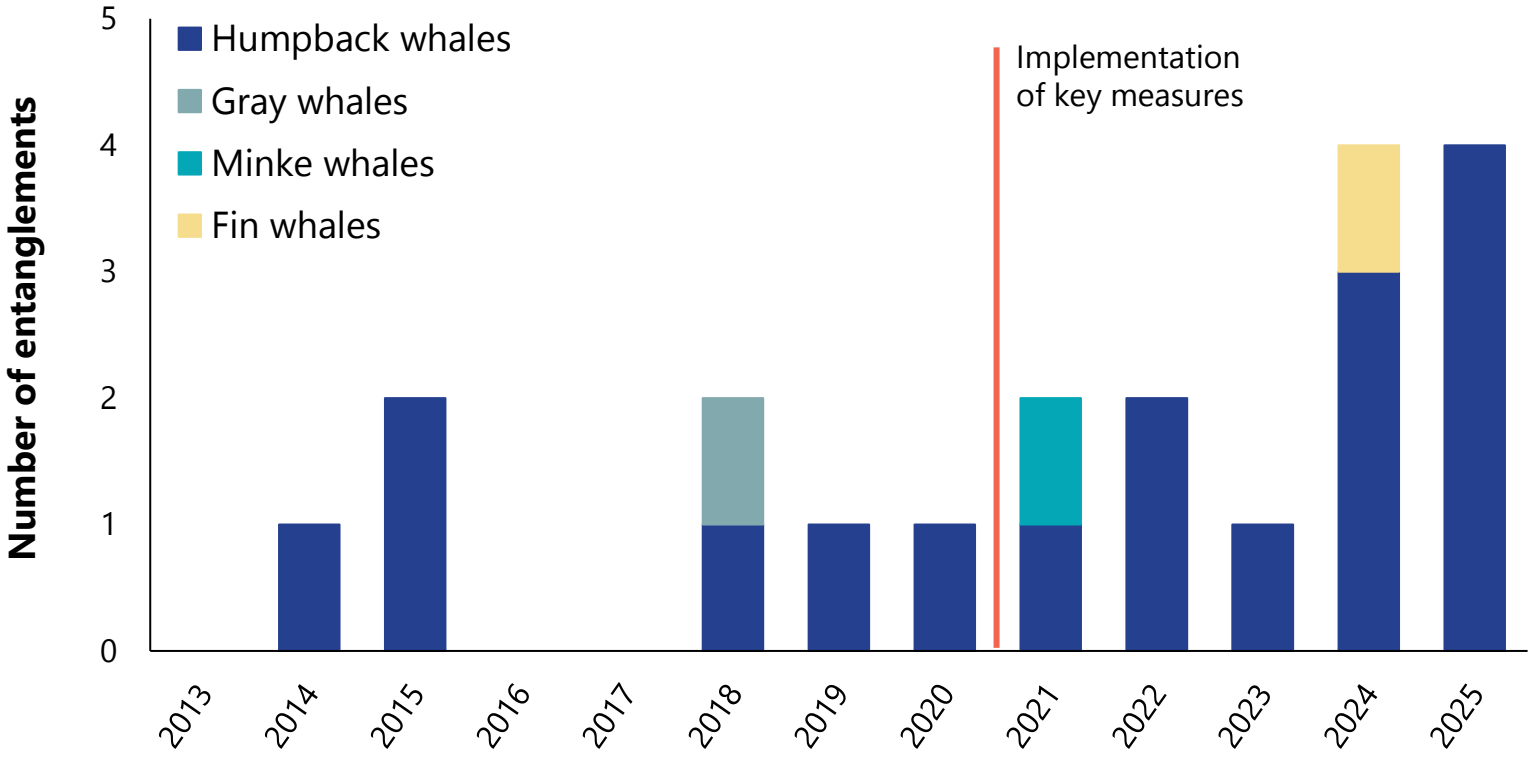
Fishing effort inside/outside 40 fm

Compliance

Enforcement actions taken

Five-year evaluation: Confirmed entanglements

Oregon commercial crab entanglements*



Pre-implementation (2013-2020)

- Average: 0.875/yr
- One suspected to involve derelict gear (reported 2015)

Post-implementation (2021-2025)

- Average: 2.6/yr
- 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

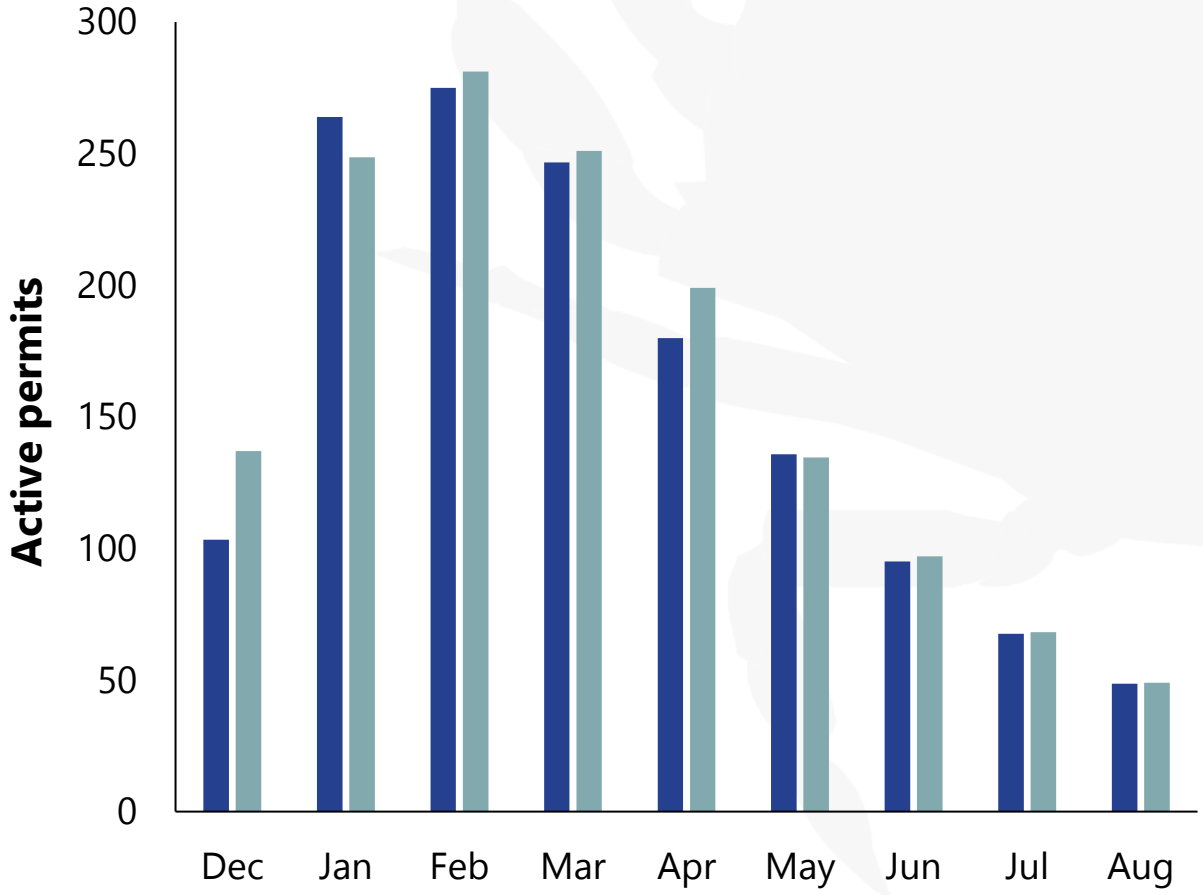
Five-year evaluation: Entanglement risk reduction

Late-season (May-Aug) line-days

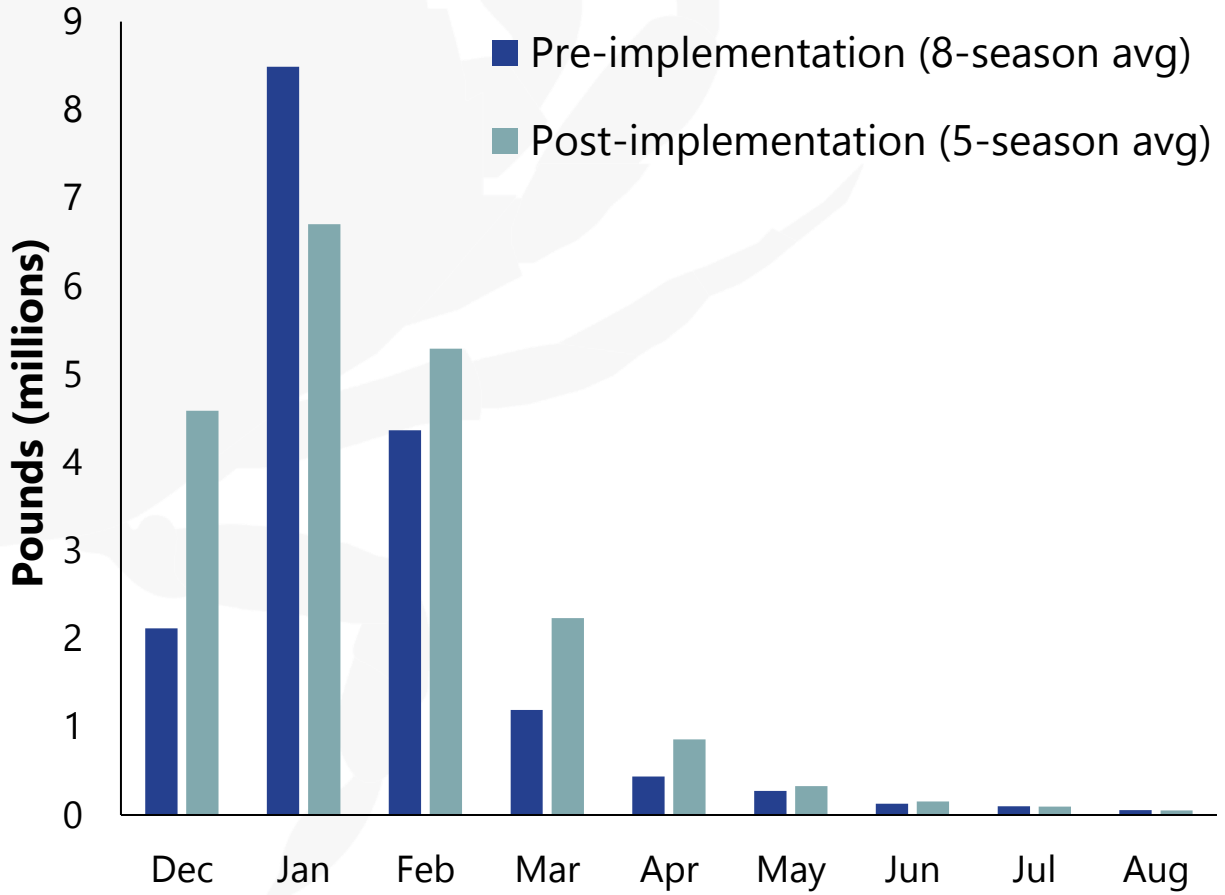
	Total	Line-day change	% change
Average pre-implementation (2012-13 - 2019-20)	2,758,024		
2020-21	1,808,320	**-949,704**	**-34.4**
2021-22	1,767,280	**-990,744**	**-35.9**
2022-23	3,175,120	**+417,097**	**15.1**
2023-24	2,027,920	**-730,104**	**-26.5**
2024-25	1,623,280	**-1,134,744**	**-41.1**
Average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

Five-year evaluation: Fishery impacts

Average monthly active permits



Average monthly pounds landed



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

Five-year evaluation: 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?


Photo: Lacey Desserault, OSU

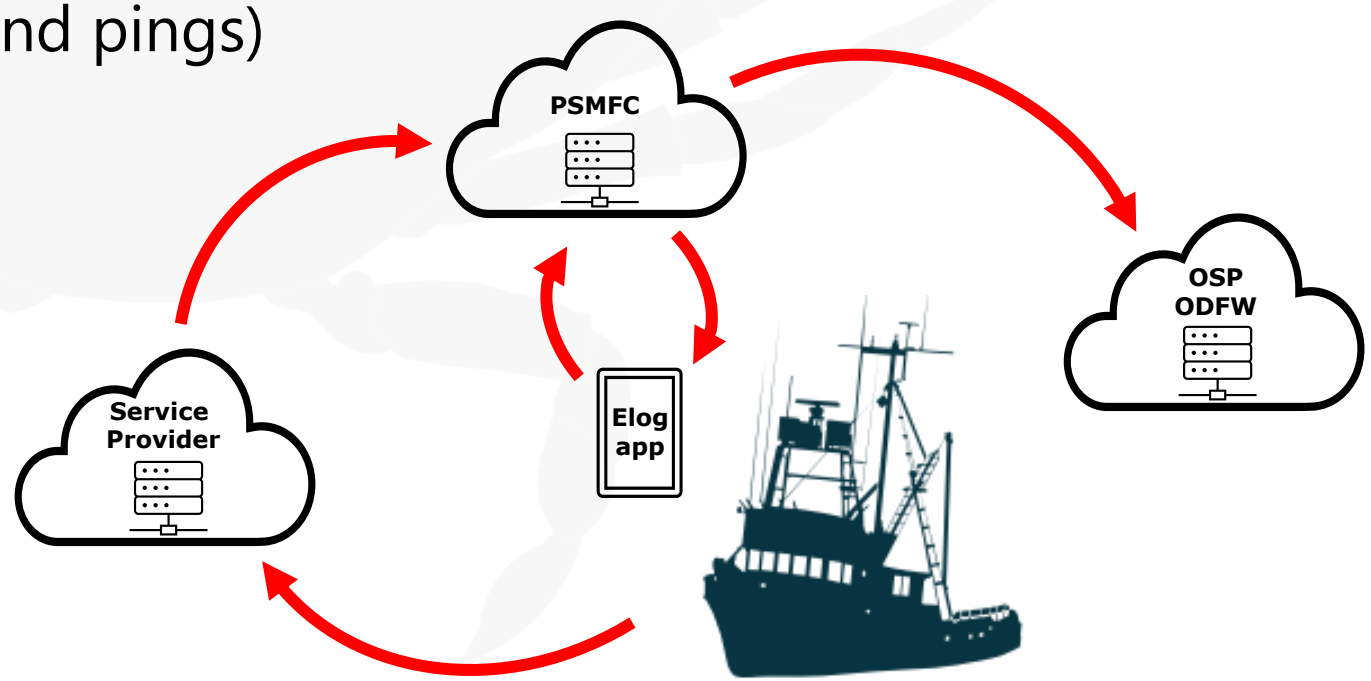
Break

Vessel Monitoring

Electronic monitoring (EM): a vessel monitoring system that automatically determines a vessel's position, records individual pot retrieval via a hydraulic pressure reading, and transmits this information to an EM system service provider.

- WA and CA both require units that record vessel position (60-second pings), WA requires a hydraulic sensor (10-second pings)
- Data transmitted to PSMFC

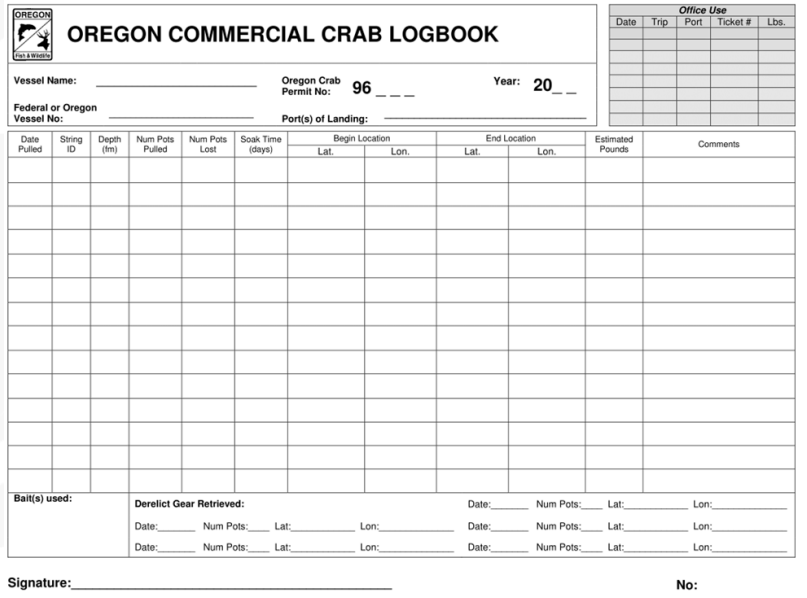
No video camera or observer requirements



Vessel Monitoring

EM is a **key** Conservation Plan monitoring measure to:

- Further increase vessel accountability
- Streamline the data collection process
- Aid in coastwide monitoring and enforcement
- Better-understand overlap between the crab fishery and whales



OREGON COMMERCIAL CRAB LOGBOOK

Vessel Name: _____ Oregon Crab Permit No: 96 _ _ _ Year: 20_ _

Federal or Oregon Vessel No: _____ Port(s) of Landing: _____

Office Use

Date	Trip	Port	Ticket #	Lbs.

Date Pulled	String ID	Depth (fm)	Num Pots Pulled	Num Pots Lost	Soak Time (days)	Begin Location Lat.	Begin Location Lon.	End Location Lat.	End Location Lon.	Estimated Pounds	Comments

Bait(s) used:

Derelict Gear Retrieved: Date:___ Num Pots:___ Lat:___ Lon:___

Date:___ Num Pots:___ Lat:___ Lon:___ Date:___ Num Pots:___ Lat:___ Lon:___

Date:___ Num Pots:___ Lat:___ Lon:___ Date:___ Num Pots:___ Lat:___ Lon:___

Signature:_____ No:

Currently, logbook pages are received, processed, entered, and assessed by MRP staff

Logbook limitations:

- Compliance rates (submission and quality)
- Labor-intensive data entry process, backlogged data

Vessel Monitoring

Viatrax: boatcommand.com/

LIME: archipelago.ca/

Proposed rulemaking at Aug 2026 Commission meeting:

- EM required for all vessels participating in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery by **December 1, 2026**
- VMS unit that records location every 60 seconds
- Sensor unit that records hydraulic pressure data every 10 seconds
- Service provider must feed data into PSFMC data dashboard, data uploaded to server when vessel is in cellular range

Costs

- Reimbursement program to fund initial purchase of onboard units and hydraulic sensors
- Data subscription service and replacement units paid for by industry

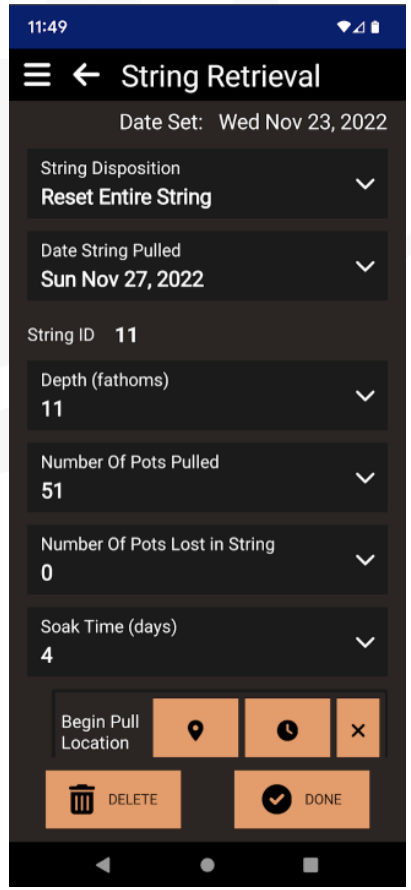
Benefits

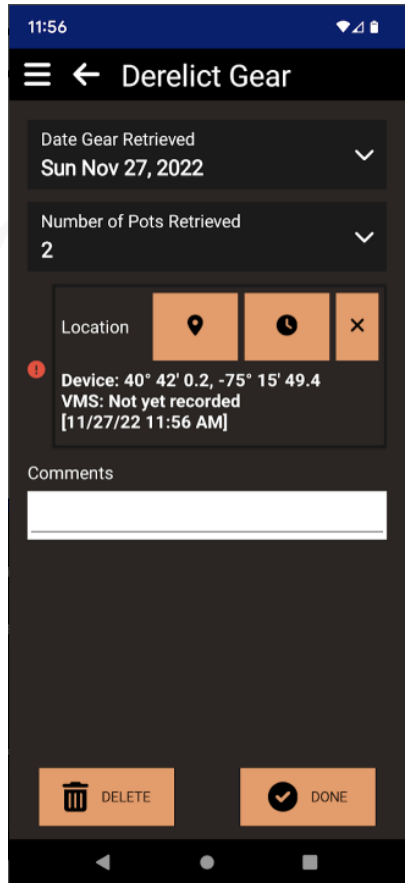
- Strengthen crab traceability regulations
- Inform effectiveness and compliance with marine life entanglement mitigation measures
- Track fishery reference points closer to real-time
- Enforce season opening provisions, pot theft, crab theft, etc.

Vessel Monitoring

Electronic logbook application

- ODFW pilot program: 20 captains over 3+ seasons (2022-23)
- Fishing location, pot counts, catch per string, soak time
- Start/Stop/Stack/Add pots
- Record locations where derelict gear is observed or recovered





E-logbook will be voluntary until **December 1, 2030**, after which it will come mandatory

- In the interim, those who choose not to adopt will still be required to maintain paper logbooks

Experimental Fishing Gear Permits (EFGP)

Controlled test of longline and pop-up gear in Oregon

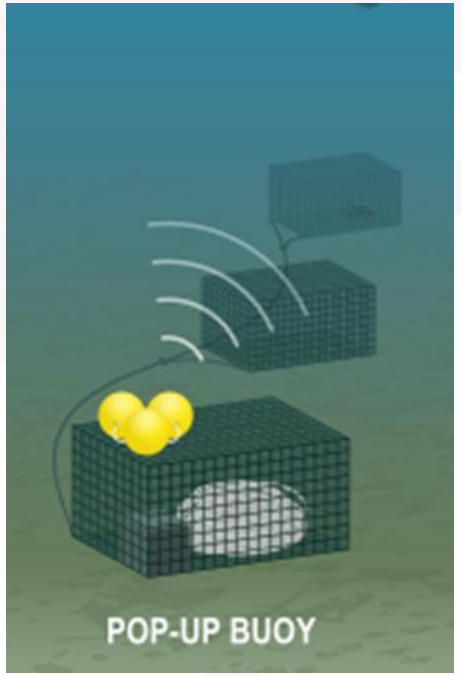
- Alone or in combination
- Evaluate future use in designated times and areas
- Consider enforcement issues, gear conflicts, safety

Timeline

- Rulemaking August 2026
- Issue permits spring 2027

Pop-up gear basics

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



Experimental Fishing Gear Permits (EFGP)

Defining success

- Efficient
- Reliable
- Safe
- Manageable
- Enforceable
- Scalable

When and where?

- Avoid gear conflicts
- Test in realistic conditions
- Testing zones

How much?

- Number of permits
- Number of pots, strings, or vertical lines
- Consider different vessel sizes, areas (ports), gear types

Incentives

- Access areas closed for entanglement risk
- Not counted against reduced pot limit
- Access gear at no or reduced cost (gear library)

Eligibility

- Fishery participant
- Acceptable compliance history
- Training requirements