



Oregon

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Governor

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July 2, 2010:

Subject: Crab Pot Release Mechanism Rule changes

Dear Oregon Ocean Commercial Dungeness Crab Permit Holders and Interested Persons;

Pursuant to discussion at last year's Commercial Dungeness Crab Summit in Newport and as noticed to all permit holders in November 2009, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is proposing changes to rule language concerning crab pot release mechanisms. At its August 6, 2010 meeting in Salem, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission will consider these proposed rule changes and, if accepted, will change the rule effective September 1, 2010 (and will be applicable during the 2010-2011 season). Oregon Administrative rule OAR 635-005-0055 (4) specifies how degradable materials are to be used but is unclear in several ways, which has caused multiple interpretations of the intent of the rule and subsequent confusion both with industry and enforcement officers. The ODFW is proposing two significant changes to OAR 635-005-0055 (4) in an effort to clarify the rule for all parties.

First, staff is proposing to remove the option of using degradable metal hooks as a release mechanism method (section (4)(a) of current rule). According to the Oregon Dungeness Crab Advisory Committee (ODCAC meeting 5/6/2010), this method is not used widely by the industry.

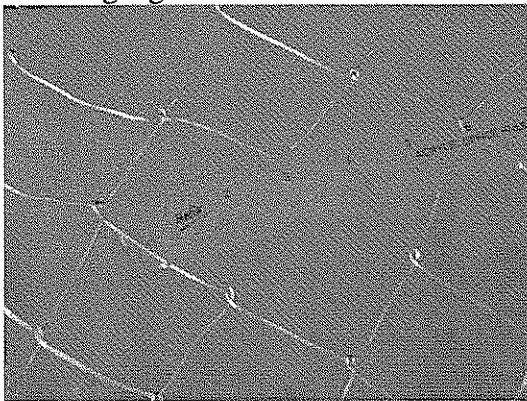
Secondly, staff is proposing changes to section (4)(c) of the current rule to clearly define the minimum size opening and the number of times cotton can be wrapped and knotted to the mesh when utilizing wire mesh release mechanisms. In current rule, the description of the minimum size of the opening does not match how the majority of industry is rigging their release mechanisms or what is biologically required for crab to escape through the release mechanism, should the pot become derelict. The proposed language would allow, as long as all other rule specifications are met, two of the more widespread rigging methods, commonly known as the "V" and "W" methods (Figures 1 and 2 below), and would disallow a method that is not currently intended to be legal, commonly known as the "O" method (Figure 3 below).

The full ODFW staff exhibit, including the proposed language changes, will be available mid-July on our agency website at <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/commission/minutes/>.

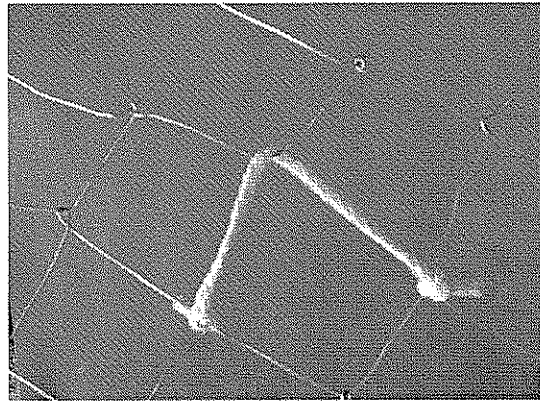
Thanks to all who participated in developing the modified language to better suit the needs of the fishery and its participants. Please don't hesitate to contact me or Kelly Corbett (541-867-4741) with questions or comments.

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Figure 1. Photograph of the 'V' release mechanism both untied (A) and tied (B) closed with cotton. This method would be allowed, as long as all other rule specifications are met, by the new language.

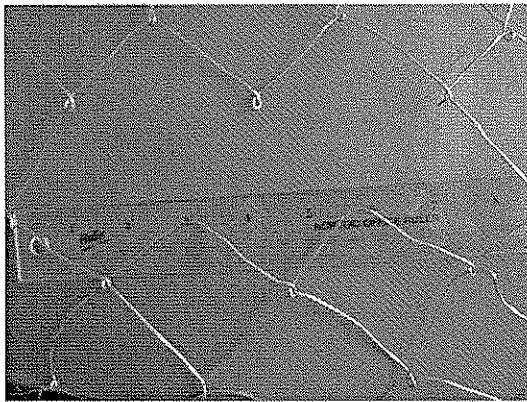


A

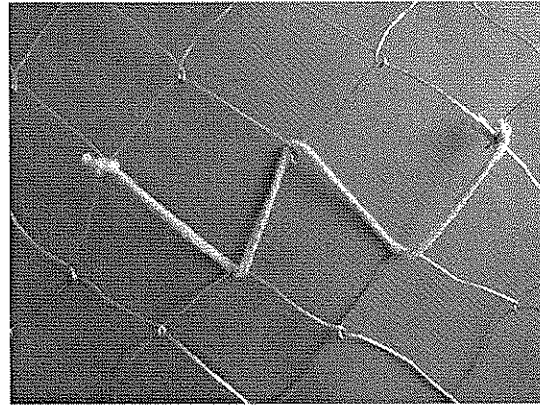


B

Figure 2. Photograph of the 'W' release mechanism both untied (A) and tied (B) closed with cotton. This method would be allowed, as long as all other rule specifications are met, by the new language.

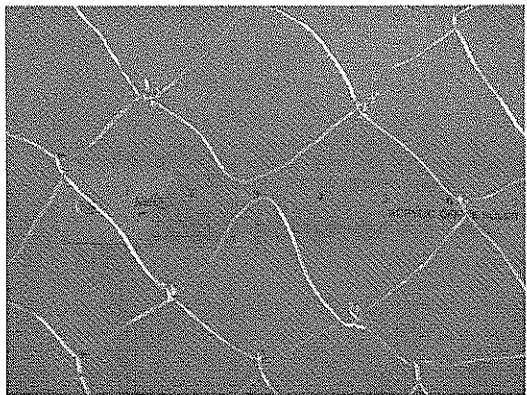


A

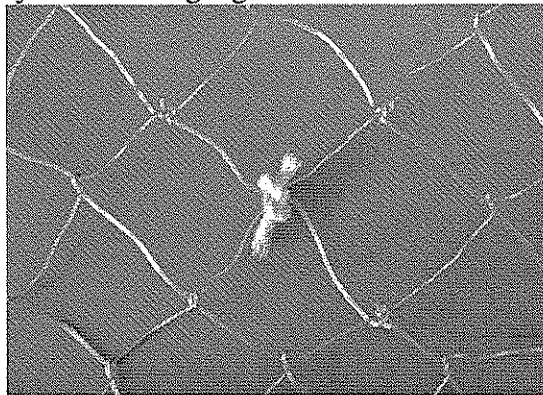


B

Figure 3. Photograph of the 'O' release mechanism both untied (A) and tied (B) closed with cotton. This method would **not** be allowed by the new language.



A



B