

Puget Sound Commercial Shellfish Rules Proposals

Public Hearing and Commission Briefing

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

Process

Timeline and public involvement

Proposals

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Public testimony

Introduction

Proposed updates to Chapters 220-320, 220-340, and 220-352

Proposals affect dive fisheries (sea urchin, sea cucumber, scallop); crab; shrimp; crawfish; squid; octopus; razor clams.

Proposals seek improved efficiency and utility for managers and enforcement, flexibility for commercial fishing, alignment with co-management agreements and conservation objectives, tools for emerging issues, and to address housekeeping needs.

Seeking to promulgate many provisions already effected with emergency rules to permanent WAC



Timeline and Public Involvement

2019-21 Staff develop proposals, discussions with fishers

January 5, 2022
-CR 102 (Proposal Rulemaking) filed
-Public Input web page launched

January
Stakeholder outreach
-Targeted email, Harvesters' meeting

February 17-19 Commission briefing and Public Hearing

March 17-19 Commission decision meeting

After April 10 Rules take effect, if adopted



1. Clarify, standardize harvester number display on dive harvest vessels

This proposal seeks to aid enforcement and simplify rules by standardizing vessel harvester number display requirements across all dive fisheries.

- Proposed language in 220-340-020 refers to all dive fisheries (not just geoduck), cross-references in relevant fisheries' WACs (scallops, sea cucumber, sea urchin)
- Clarifies font sizing requirements, adds clarifying language

Comments: 0



2. Update scallop rules

Proposals seek to support possession for health testing, diver safety, and efficient catch accounting, and to align with conservation objectives.

- a. Permit possession for evaluating biotoxin risk
- b. Refer to cucumber/urchin closed areas as also closed to scallop harvest to support conservation objectives
- c. Permit two divers in the water concurrently for enhanced safety, harvest vessel must be designated on both licenses
- d. Define fishery week for trip limits
- e. New section describing Quick Reporting requirements

Comments: 0



3. Update sea cucumber rules

Proposals align with fishery co-management and conservation objectives, support catch accounting.

- a. Add new closure areas (unlawful to fish) to existing designations
 - Low Point, Tatoosh Island, Hale Passage/Wollochet Bay
 - Closure areas serve as reference areas for monitoring of population status and to conserve spawning stock distributed throughout Puget Sound; aligns with co-management of urchins and sea cucumbers in Puget Sound.
- b. Update district boundaries
 - District 2 split—accounts for resource and effort distribution
- c. Define fishery week for trip limits

Comments: 1 (neutral)—Request to allow more than one diver in water harvesting on a single license



4. Update sea urchin rules

Proposals align with fishery co-management and conservation objectives, support catch accounting.

- a. Add new closure areas (unlawful to fish) to existing designations
 - Low Point, Tatoosh Island, Hale Passage/Wollochet Bay
 - Closure areas as reference areas and spawning stock conservation
- b. Define minimum, maximum size limits
 - minimum 2 ¼ inches (green urchins),
 - minimum 3 ¼ inches, maximum 5 inches (red urchins).
- c. Update district boundaries
 - District 2 split—accounts for resource and effort distribution
- d. Define fishery week for trip limits

Comments: 0



5. Create provisions for crab pot “barging”

This proposal defines a provision to use vessels not designated on licenses to transport and deploy crab pots. It provides fishers some flexibility for efficiency and safety.

- a. Allow some limited transportation and deployment of crab pots by undesignated vessels
 - Restricts to 48-hour period following initial season opening
 - Advanced reporting requirement

Comments: 0



6. Define provisions for short-term storage of crab

This proposal seeks to support precise catch accounting and clarity for enforcement, also providing some flexibility to fleet.

- a. Allow limited short-term storage of live crab prior to official landing
 - 10 days maximum, container labelling
 - Reporting requirements:
 - Clarifies that Transportation Ticket is required, separate tickets for each day's harvest
 - Quick reports
 - Reporting of eventual delivery to original receiver

Comments: 0



7. Update crab buoy requirements

These proposals support compliance and enforcement, and provide managers with tools for emerging challenges.

- a. Require undeployed buoy tags to be retained on the vessel, available for inspection
- b. Clarify that the use of bleach, antifreeze, and other containers as buoys is unlawful
- c. Extend buoy color registration requirement to Puget Sound fishery*

Comments: 0



8. Update crab reporting requirements

These proposals support improved catch accounting in the crab fishery.

- a. Registration: Require fishers/alternate operators to report intended area of harvest prior to gear deployment; report updates when gear moves between areas and when gear will not be deployed for 72 hours
- b. Require reporting of license number of original receiver in quick reports
- c. Add language accommodating electronic reporting

Comments: 0



9. Updates to crab seasons and areas

These proposals provide managers needed flexibility in planning fisheries, support enforcement, and update obsolete provisions.

- a. Remove specifically-defined opening/closing dates for the commercial fishery
 - Managers require more flexibility according to variables such as crab shell condition, weather, and co-management needs.
 - Currently-described dates not always utilized, resulting in use of emergency regulations

- b. Redefine fishing times as 1 hour (from 30 minutes) before/after sunrise

Comments: 0



9. Updates to crab seasons and areas (continued)

- c. Remove obsolete closed and restricted areas descriptions
 - Some provisions no longer applicable (old co-manager agreements, changes in management of fishery)

- d. Update crab management unit descriptions, including Area, Sub-area, and Crustacean Special Management Areas (CSMA)
 - Adjusted over time to support geography-specific management, catch accounting and sharing

Comments: 0



10. Update crab pot rules

These proposals update obsolete provisions and clarify definitions.

- a. Increase defined pot limit from 10 to 20 in Sequim, Discovery, and Port Townsend Bays (and Port Angeles Harbor) Crustacean Special Management Areas (CSMAs)
 - Helps state to achieve share and has been managed with emergency regulation
- b. Define “other natural fiber” for lawful pot escapement component fibers
 - Hemp, jute, or sisal (in addition to 100% cotton) twine all have similar degradation/deactivation times.
- c. Remove ring nets as listed gear type
- d. Allow three license to be stacked on a single vessel (from two)

Comments: 0



11. Update buoy & pot requirements for shrimp

These proposals support enforcement and management of emerging issues, update obsolete provisions, simplify regulations, and offer flexibility for fishers.

Buoys

- a. Buoys must be marked with clear license holder and vessel identification
- b. Indicate number of pots on common groundline

Pots

- c. Define minimum mesh size for spot shrimp pots (1") and nonspot shrimp pots (1/2"); define maximum pot dimensions
- d. Remove spot shrimp minimum size requirement

Comments: 1 (opposed to proposal b): Concerned maintaining accurate pot count on buoy markings is challenging, suggests considering alternatives.



11. Update buoy & pot requirements for shrimp (continued)

Pots

- e. Allow limited deployment of spot and nonspot shrimp pots within same catch area concurrently (some areas)
 - Excluding within smaller management units, such as same sub-area
 - No harvest of spot and non-spot shrimp in same day; no harvesting multiple catch areas per day
 - Pre-fishing reporting requirements
 - Provide some flexibility to fleet
- f. Non-spot shrimp pot harvest depth restrictions:
 - Max 150' (Region 2E), 175' (Region 2W)
 - Segregate spot and non-spot fishing

Comments: 0



12. Updates to shrimp areas

This proposal supports catch accounting, area regulations, conservation, and alignment with co-management plans.

- a. Update management unit descriptions, including Area, Sub-area, Crustacean Special Management Areas (CSMAs), and Catch Area modifications
 - a. Changes include new definitions, updates to boundaries
 - b. Expands Shrimp District unit concept to include some smaller areas of shrimp and crab management interest into Crustacean Special Management Areas (CSMA)
 - c. Adjusted over time to support geography-specific management, catch accounting and sharing
- b. Define time-area restrictions for trawl fisheries.

Comments: 1 Supportive of creating new WAC section for trawl fishery, describes concerns with habitat/bycatch impacts of trawl fishery and suggests excluding trawl from SJI and Bellingham Bay.



13. Update shrimp reporting requirements

This proposal supports improved catch accounting and enforcement.

- a. Require fishers/alternate operators to report intended area of harvest, targeted species and quantity prior to gear deployment
- b. Additional quick reporting fields (Shrimp Region and Catch Reporting Areas)
- c. Add language accommodating electronic reporting

Comments: 0



14. Update razor clam gear rules

This proposal updates obsolete gear regulations and aligns with regulations in the recreational fishery.

- a. Remove pick, mattock, and fork as legal implements; add clam tube
 - Removes impractical/unutilized gear types, supported by industry

Comments: 0



15. Crawfish

This proposal aligns with other pot fisheries and supports enforcement.

- a. Clarify that the use of bleach, antifreeze, and other containers as buoys is unlawful
 - Designed to ensure use of proper buoys, which will remain floating and visible
- b. Indicate number of pots on common groundline

Comments: 0



16. Squid

This proposal updates obsolete provisions, simplifies regulation, and aligns with co-management agreements.

- a. Remove drag seine as lawful gear type
 - Aligns with co-manager agreement, concerns regarding bycatch and habitat
- b. Update maximum lighting power requirements definitions to accommodate use of LED technology
- c. Streamline shoreline proximity restriction to simply “unlawful to fish within ¼ mile of shoreline”

Comments: 0



17. Update harvest logbook requirements

This proposal supports harvest management by updating obsolete provisions, adding clarifying language, and making clerical changes.

- a. Update logbook requirements for some fisheries:
 - a. Puget Sound shrimp: Add operator name, license number, buoy brand, contact, gear descriptions, fishing area, catch information, and date requirements;
 - b. Sea urchins: Add “species” data field;
 - c. Squid: Add location description and lighting information requirements
- b. “Housekeeping” or clerical changes (e.g. updating addresses, clarifying language)

Comments: 1 (neutral): Requests shrimp logbooks be available in carbon-copy booklet



18. Technical/Clerical “Housekeeping” Changes

This proposal provides minor updates throughout the chapter to format, streamline, and update language; reorganize chapters to improve structure; removes obsolete sections; and improves geographical descriptions.

- a. Fifteen technical changes submitted by staff
 - Changes do not affect, nor alter current fishing regulations
 - Includes updates to shellfish classifications according to latest taxonomy and convention.
 - Updates geographical descriptions to include coordinates in Decimal Degree format.

Comments: 0



Questions



Public Testimony

