

# Puget Sound Commercial Shellfish Rules Proposals

**Commission Briefing and Decision**

March 17-19, 2022

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# 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



# Background

Staff proposing a comprehensive update to all Puget Sound commercial shellfish rules, a need

Since last updates, we have learned more about populations; fisheries, harvest practices, and patterns have evolved; newer technologies have emerged; new challenges and new ideas; and co-management has evolved.

As many proposals initiated by emergency regulation, few surprises to stakeholders; some proposals originated or collaboratively-developed with stakeholders

Direct engagement with fishers in addition to standard process elements



# Dive fisheries

Puget Sound Shellfish Program (Program) manages scallop, sea cucumber, sea urchin, and geoduck (with DNR) fisheries.

## Proposals reflect or support:

- Better understanding of biology and populations (districting, size limits, closed areas);
- Improved catch accounting (fishing week, quick reports)
- Safety considerations (health testing, two divers in the water)
- Enforcement (standardized signage, closed areas)



# Crab fisheries

Program manages crab fisheries, including Dungeness crab.

## Proposals reflect or support:

- Updates to obsolete provisions (remove some closure/restricted areas, update pot limits);
- Improved catch accounting/sharing (update geographical units, new reporting requirements);
- Safety considerations (pot barging);
- Enforcement (clarify buoy and tag regulations, new reporting requirements, standardize fishing times);
- Flexibility, clarity for fishers (short-term storage, pot barging, license stacking);
- New management tools/needs (remove defined season dates, buoy color registration\*)



# Crab fisheries

\*One proposal is new since submission of CR-102: registration of buoy color requirement

- Existing requirement on coast, substantial fisher overlap
- Existing buoy brand number registration requirement
- Not overly burdensome
- Conducting dedicated stakeholder engagement now



# Shrimp fisheries

Program manages spot shrimp (pot) fishery, and non-spot shrimp (pot and trawl) fisheries.

## Proposals reflect or support:

- Updates to obsolete provisions (spot shrimp minimum size);
- Management plan agreement (harvest depth restrictions, time-area restrictions for trawl);
- Improved catch accounting/sharing (update geographical units, new reporting requirements);
- Regulation streamlining and conservation (remove spot shrimp size limit, add minimum pot mesh sizes, define maximum pot dimensions);
- Enforcement (Update buoy marking, reporting requirements);
- Flexibility, clarity for fishers (concurrent [limited] spot/non-spot pot deployment)



# Other fisheries

Program manages squid and crawfish fisheries, Coastal Program manages razor clams.

## Proposals reflect or support:

- Updates to obsolete provisions (accommodate LED technology for squid, update gear types for razor clams);
- Management plan agreement (remove drag seine as squid gear type);
- Improved catch accounting/sharing (new reporting requirements for squid);
- Regulation streamlining (simplify shoreline setback provision for squid);
- Enforcement (Update crawfish buoy construction and marking requirements)





# Housekeeping changes

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

- 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.



# Public input

- No new comments since February 18 Commission meeting
- No public testimony at public hearing



## Recommendations

- Staff recommend Commission adoption of Puget Sound Commercial Shellfish rules proposals as presented by staff, with one exception:
  - Maximum non-spot shrimp pot depth restrictions for Regions 2E and 2W corrected (accidentally transposed in CR-102). Depth restrictions for Region 2E is 175' maximum and for 2W is 150' maximum.
- Note that changes since the CR-102 include the requirement to register crab buoy colors, and a switch from Degree Decimal Minutes coordinate format to Decimal Degrees.



# Questions

