

WDFW – European Green Crab Update

Public Update on European Green Crab Management – Aug. 22, 2022



Two invasive European green crabs removed from Grays Harbor near Westport by WDFW staff and partners in August 2022.

Report Purpose: *These regular updates are intended to inform the public, local stakeholders, news media, and others regarding the status of European green crab (EGC) management and emergency measures deployment in Washington state, supporting the public information responsibilities of the Incident Command System (ICS) and Public Information Officer (PIO).*

For additional information, please see: wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/invasive/carcinus-maenas European green crab news, communications and outreach materials are available under the Resources tab.

To report European green crab sightings or obtain identification resources, visit: wdfw.wa.gov/greencrab

August 22, 2022 Update

European Green Crab Incident Command objectives continue to include reduction of EGC populations to below levels harmful to environmental, economic, or cultural resources.

2022 European Green Crab Capture/Removal Totals:

Latest Operational Period	13,000 (July 25 to August 7, 2022)
Total	138,000 as of August 7*

**WDFW is no longer including EGC removal data for specific areas in public reports in the interest of consistency. The high number of European green crab removed in 2022 reflects the coordinated deployment of significantly increased personnel, equipment, and other capture effort by WDFW, Native American tribes, shellfish growers, federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Read on for additional updates.*

Governor's 10-Day Emergency Measures Status Update (August 18, 2022): Per RCW 77.135.090, the WDFW Director continues to evaluate the effects of the European Green Crab emergency measures as provided under Proclamation 22-02, finds that the emergency continues to persist, and advises that all emergency measures should be continued. Details of the evaluation will be provided directly to you in Situation Reports (SitReps) issued every two weeks reflecting each Incident Command System operational period.

News and Media Coverage Highlights

- PBS affiliate KBTC Tacoma featured staff from WDFW and Taylor Shellfish in a Northwest Now segment:
European Green Crab Invasion | This invasive species could threaten the future of Washington's fragile ecosystem.
<https://www.pbs.org/video/european-green-crab-invasion-i3ktrm/>
- Fox 13 News featured Washington Sea Grant's Crab Team and WDFW's rapid response work:
Volunteers prove critical in the fight against invasive green crabs
<https://www.q13fox.com/news/volunteers-prove-critical-in-the-fight-against-invasive-green-crabs>
- Various Western Washington papers including the Federal Way Mirror and Seattle Weekly ran an article on EGC emergency measures, quoting PIO and Washington Invasive Species Council:
Washington cracks down on invasive European Green Crabs
<https://www.issaquahreporter.com/northwest/washington-cracks-down-on-invasive-european-green-crabs/>
- Alaska Public Media and other outlets reported the detection of EGC in southeast Alaska, with brief mentions of control efforts in Washington:
Evidence of invasive crab that could wreak havoc on Alaska fisheries found near Metlakatla
<https://alaskapublic.org/2022/07/25/evidence-of-invasive-crab-that-could-wreak-havoc-on-alaska-fisheries-found-near-metlakatla/>

Field Highlight: EGC Removal Efforts in Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay

European green crab monitoring and removal work continues to ramp-up in Washington's coastal bays and estuaries thanks to the dedicated work and collaboration of groups including the Shoalwater Bay Tribe, Willapa-Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association, Pacific Coast Vegetation Management, other local shellfish growers and tidelands owners, Washington Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Sea Grant, and WDFW Aquatic Invasive Species unit staff.

WDFW staff and partners have increasingly deployed resources to assess and remove EGC from Grays Harbor, including the North Bay area east of Ocean Shores where nearly 600 EGC were removed in late July. Similar assessments of EGC presence were conducted in the Grays Harbor South Bay and Elk River areas in early August, with more than 600 EGC removed by WDFW and nearly 2,000 removed by Pacific Shellfish. Cooperative work continues to allocate additional personnel, traps, and other resources to increase EGC removal in Grays Harbor.

In Willapa Bay, the Shoalwater Bay Tribe reports removing more than 20,000 EGC in areas near Tokeland so far in 2022. The Willapa-Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association reports capturing



and removing more than 25,000 EGC from tidelands on the Long Beach Peninsula so far in 2022. WDFW has been supporting their efforts with traps, bait, and other equipment. More information and updates are being posted to a [Facebook page](#) updated by one of their members. Pacific Coast Vegetation Management reports removing more than 7,000 EGC from Willapa Bay in 2022. THANK YOU!

Partner Highlight: Washington Sea Grant Crab Team volunteers detect EGC in Chuckanut Bay, WDFW follows up with rapid response trapping

For years, Washington Sea Grant (WSG) and their “[Crab Team](#)” volunteers have been leaders in community science support for European green crab research and early-detection monitoring across Washington’s marine waters. In recognition of that leadership, WSG’s Crab Team received the “Organization of the Year” award from WDFW for their EGC early detection program. More information is available [in this news release](#).

In late July, Crab Team volunteers detected a single live European green crab in Chuckanut Bay south of Bellingham; an older female crab 77mm in size. More information is available in their recent blog post: <https://wsg.washington.edu/first-crab-team-chuckanut-capture/>.

WDFW previously detected three European green crab in Chuckanut Bay during assessment trapping in 2019, and Crab Team volunteers observed three molted EGC shells in 2020 and 2021.

Following the latest detection by WSG, WDFW Aquatic Invasive Species staff instituted “rapid response” protocols in late July and early August 2022, deploying more than 150 traps across the northern portion of Chuckanut Bay (including the “pocket estuary”) over the course of two nights.

WDFW only captured a single additional green crab at the mouth of Chuckanut Creek (this one a smaller, 59mm, male). This low capture rate despite heavy trapping effort is a positive sign that green crab numbers remain low in this area. It’s also an example of the effectiveness of both the WSG Crab Team’s community science monitoring work, and WDFW’s rapid response capabilities.

WSG Crab Team volunteers also recently detected one European green crab near Shine Tidelands in northern Hood Canal, and WDFW is currently assessing next steps for response in that area. Rapid response trapping was previously deployed in northern Hood Canal in May and June 2022. Early-detection monitoring by WSG and WDFW continues across central and south Puget Sound.

General Updates

Under mission #22-1085 as assigned by the state Emergency Management Division, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) continued the Incident Command System (ICS) for European green crab emergency measures deployment and coordination. Background information is available in this June 17 news release: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/news/emergency-measures-deployed-control-invasive-european-green-crabs-washington-waters>

WDFW continues soliciting applications for a total of \$500,000 in funding available through the FY2023 Coastal Management Grant Program-European Green Crab for local, non-profit, or private entities that seek to conduct EGC removal on the Washington coast. More information is available at: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/Green%20Crab%20RFP-Statement%20of%20Work%20FY23%207-1-22.pdf>

Update: ~\$400k is committed so far, leaving about ~100k available for new proposals to come in.



The European Green Crab (EGC) Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group held regular meetings. Discussions included recent ICS Situation Reports, MAC Group member updates, and applications for RCO EGC Emergency Measures Grant funding, as well as funding for EGC research, removal, and control efforts from WDFW and other funding sources.

Updates on EGC emergency measures were provided at the Coastal Salmon Partnership Board Meeting, as well as in monthly meetings with the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe.

WDFW staff and partners continued implementation of shellfish transfer protocols and inspected shellfish for EGC. Hiring activities for positions related to invasive pest/shellfish transfers risk management

WDFW conducted EGC outreach at several in-person events, and shared green crab [ID information, fliers/signs, stickers](#), and other resources with Washington State Parks and several other local groups. WDFW continued running ads on Facebook supporting EGC identification, awareness, and public reporting.

Public Reporting and Crab Identification

WDFW continues to receive reports from the public of native crab species misidentified for invasive European green crabs. While WDFW appreciates the public interest in helping to identify invasive species, **these incidents are examples of why WDFW calls on the public to photograph and report suspected green crabs at: wdfw.wa.gov/greencrab**, returning the crab in question unharmed to the water where it was found. Most of these native crabs, including Graceful, Kelp, and Hairy shore crabs that are regulated as Unclassified Marine Invertebrates and illegal to kill, harvest, retain, or possess. If verified as European green crabs, WDFW will follow up with trapping and monitoring if found in a new area.

Crab identification guides and resources are also available on that [webpage](#), as well as a flier at: https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/European_green_crab_reporting_sign_2022.jpg

European green crabs are shore crabs and are found in shallow areas—typically less than 25 feet of water—including estuaries, mudflats, intertidal zones, and beaches. That are not likely to be caught by recreational shrimpers or crabbers operating in deeper water, but may be encountered by beachgoers, waders, clam and oyster harvesters, or those crabbing off docks or piers in shallow areas.

Photos and Multimedia Highlights

In mid-August, WDFW Aquatic Invasive Species unit staff were joined in the field—and in the mud—in Grays Harbor by colleagues from the company Esri, whom we are working with to improve geographic information data management and mapping to support Washington's European green crab research, monitoring, and removal. The following photos are courtesy of R. Richardson / Esri and were taken on WDFW lands at the [Johns River Wildlife Area](#) near Westport.

Continued below











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SUMMARY STATEMENT FOR BACKGROUND

On January 19, 2022, Washington State Governor Inslee issued Emergency Proclamation 22-02 which ordered the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) “to begin implementation of emergency measures as necessary to effect the eradication of or to prevent the permanent establishment and expansion of European green crab.” This is a statewide proclamation for all marine and estuarine waters of the state that to be effective, will require coordination across state, tribal, and federal jurisdictions. To address this large and complex task, WDFW has implemented an Incident Command System (ICS) structure to facilitate a statewide European green crab (EGC) management strategy. The state Emergency Management Division has assigned this as Mission #22-1085. Since this is a relatively slower-moving emergency (as compared to earthquake or wildfire response), the ICS structure will be used as the overall framework for WDFW communications and coordination.

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Public updates on European Green Crab Management are posted at:
<https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/invasive/carcinus-maenas>

For more information or for media inquiries, please contact the European Green Crab Public Information Officer at chase.gunnell@dfw.wa.gov or contact ais@dfw.wa.gov.

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