

WDFW – European Green Crab Update

Public Update on European Green Crab Management – September 2022



U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer and staff from Washington Sea Grant and WDFW check traps for green crab in early September.

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

September 20, 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.

European Green Crab Capture/Removal Totals:

Latest Operational Period (Aug. 22 to Sept. 4, 2022)	23,000
2022 Total	176,600 as of September 4*
Salish Sea Branch	73,300
Coastal Branch	103,300

**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. WDFW is no longer including EGC removal data for specific areas in public reports in the interest of consistency. Read on for additional updates.*

Governor’s 10-Day Emergency Measures Status Update (September 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

Following the August EGC Public Update, the Public Information Officer contacted media outlets and responded to numerous inquiries. Coverage from state, local, and national outlets included:

- KING 5 News ran a segment on European green crab emergency management and recent trapping totals: **More than 100,000 invasive crabs removed from WA waters this year**
<https://www.king5.com/article/tech/science/environment/wdfw-tribes-invasive-crabs/281-ec71a9fe-381c-4f3b-a9f8-70536b39b902>
- The Associated Press picked up the KING5 story and ran a version of it, which was published in numerous state and local outlets: **Agencies, Tribes Work to Stop Growth of Invasive Crab**
<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/washington/articles/2022-08-24/agencies-tribes-work-to-stop-growth-of-invasive-crab>
- Fox News ran a variation of the Associated Press story nationally: **Washingtonians hatch plan to push back against invasive green crabs**
<https://www.foxnews.com/us/washingtonians-hatch-plan-push-back-against-invasive-green-crabs>
- The Cascadia Daily News covered EGC monitoring and control work in Whatcom County: **Invasive green crab detected in Chuckanut Bay**
<https://www.cascadiadaily.com/news/2022/aug/24/invasive-green-crab-detected-in-chuckanut-bay/>
- KXRO Radio (covering southwest Washington) ran an article on ongoing removal work in Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay: **Local European Green Crab eradication continues**
<https://www.kxro.com/local-european-green-crab-eradication-continues/>
- The Kitsap Sun ran a Sept. 2 article on the visit to Seabeck on Hood Canal by U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer with Washington Sea Grant, WDFW and staff from area tribes: **Seabeck green crab find helps launch funding push to fight invasion in Hood Canal and beyond**
<https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/news/2022/09/02/state-battles-green-crab-invasion-hood-canal-puget-sound/7965822001/>

Field Highlight: Makah Tribe leads “Trapping Blitzes”, ongoing research at Makah Bay

As detailed in recent coverage by [the Sequim Gazette](#), the Makah Tribe continues to be a leader in European green crab management, monitoring, and scientific research through their efforts in Makah Bay—including in the Wa’atch and Tsoo-Yess river estuaries—as well as a prospecting trap site in Neah Bay.



Utilizing emergency measures funding appropriated by the state, Makah Tribe's Fisheries Management department have hired additional staff, including a green crab biologist and technicians, while continuing to work with volunteers.

In early August, a team from Makah Fisheries Management undertook a “trapping blitz” with support from WDFW and Washington Sea Grant, deploying a total of 786 traps and capturing more than 5,300 green crabs. An additional 9,600 EGC were removed by mid-September by Makah staff and a few dedicated volunteers.

So far in 2022, Makah staff, volunteers, and supporting groups have removed more than 19,100 EGC from Makah Bay. No European green crab have been detected at the Neah Bay prospecting site this year.

Makah staff have also been conducting mark recapture studies and taking underwater video footage to assess European green crab presence and study interactions with juvenile Dungeness crab, as well as seeking to better understand the depths and habitat where this invasive species may be found at on the Washington Coast.

The Makah Tribe’s research will help inform work to control EGC on the Makah Reservation and in other waters around the state. More information is available in this June 2022 blog post from the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC): nwtreatytribes.org/makah-tribe-gets-early-hit-of-invasive-european-green-crab/.

Makah Fisheries Management have also put out more signage and articles in the local newsletter to support EGC identification and reporting by tribal members, commercial fishers, and visitors.

“I feel positive about the amount of effort we’ve had,” Adrienne Akmajian, the Makah Tribe’s Marine Ecologist told the Sequim Gazette. “The additional funding has been important to do this much effort. It appears the population is exploding. Our obvious goal is to control the population to manageable levels. I’m not sure what that is right now ... but I’d like to keep up the heavy effort and see numbers decline.”

Akmajian anticipates heavy trapping through October — and possibly over the winter months, depending on weather. Additional perspectives on the Makah Tribe’s work to control EGC can be found [in this June Being Frank column](#) from NWIFC Chairman Ed Johnstone.

Partner Highlight: Northwest Straits Commission continues monitoring and removing European green crab in Whatcom and Skagit counties

The [Northwest Straits Commission](#) (NWSC) has been conducting European green crab trapping with its many partners at sites in Skagit and Whatcom counties for several years, including efforts to remove European green crab (EGC) from Drayton Harbor beginning in 2019, and more recently, monitoring and removal in Samish, Padilla and Semiahmoo Bays and Bellingham’s Squalicum Harbor.

NWSC also works with Washington Conservation Corps and Veterans Conservation Corps to support removing EGC, and to conduct targeted community outreach focused on European green crab awareness, identification, and reporting. This includes the recent Fidalgo Bay Day on August 20, where they interacted with ~150 people over the four-hour event.

In August, NWSC, Northwest Straits Foundation, and Upper Skagit Indian Tribe joined forces to set 30 traps near Larrabee State Park at Clayton Beach and neighboring Upper Skagit land. No European green crab were captured.



From August 22 through 25, NWSC helped coordinate a large European green crab trapping survey at the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve. In total, more than 700 traps were set by 23 trappers from nine organizations (NWSC, Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Puget Sound Corps, Samish Indian Nation, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Veterans Conservation Corps, WDFW, DNR, and Washington Sea Grant). Over 75 public education interactions occurred during trapping, as well as further outreach with signage and social media.

Thankfully, no European green crab were captured despite this heavy trapping effort. These and [other findings](#) are positive signs that European green crab numbers remain relatively low in Bellingham, Samish, Padilla, and Fidalgo bays.

NWSC reports partnerships with Washington Conservation Corps (WCC), Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association's (NSEA) WCC, Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC), volunteers, and WDFW technicians have been especially important for their European green crab trapping efforts.

In Drayton Harbor, Antonio Jones, a Veterans Conservation Corps intern, returned to help NWSC with another season of European green crab trapping. Antonio has been indispensable in supporting intensive trapping effort; working hard and being a leader for volunteers and NSEA's WCC members.

Antonio, NSEA WCC members, volunteers, and WDFW technicians have helped to set over 2,300 traps and capture 113 European green crabs in Drayton Harbor since April. Trapping efforts will continue through mid-October.

In Samish and Padilla Bays, NWSC's trapping efforts were predominately conducted by a WCC crew, who set a couple thousand traps and removed 23 European green crabs since April. The hard working and ever-positive crew finished their last day with NWSC on August 25.

NWSC staff and partners, including WDFW, want to give the WCC and NSEA WCC members, Antonio Jones (VCC), volunteers, and WDFW technicians a big THANK YOU for their hard work!

More information is available in Northwest Straits Commission's [September e-newsletter](#).

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>

Through the ICS, European Green Crab (EGC) Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC Group) meetings continued, including review and discussion of a draft Fiscal Year 2023 EGC Strategic Action Plan that will guide response actions for all organizations until June 30, 2023. Once approved, next actions will include developing a Fiscal Year 2024 Strategic Action Plan and begin development of a multi-year cooperative management plan. EGC Coastal Grant Management Contracts with Pacific and Gray Harbor Conservation Districts were approved and are fully available to those entities and partners.

WDFW Aquatic Invasive Species staff and other EGC partners presented at the American Fisheries Conference in Spokane, updating attendees on EGC emergency measures deployment in Washington.



Washington Sea Grant (WSG) Crab Team and the University of Washington hosted a field trip for Congressional staffers, with a session on EGC in Ocean Shores. Congressional staffers present represented Senator Murray and U.S. Representatives Kilmer, Schrier, and Herrera Beutler. Also in attendance were Incident Commander Allen Pleus of WDFW, David Bingaman and Joe Schumacker of the Quinault Indian Nation, David Beugli of the Willapa Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association, Barbara Hayford and Bruce Ritenhouse of the Coastal Interpretative Center.

WSG led an EGC field demonstration on September 1 for U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer at Nick's Lagoon near Seabeck on Hood Canal. Also in attendance were Incident Commander Allen Pleus of WDFW, Neil Harrington of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, WSG Crab Team volunteers Brian Gregory and Victoria Poage, and journalists from the Kitsap Sun. (See photos from both congressional tours below)

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. Approximately \$100k remains available. 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>

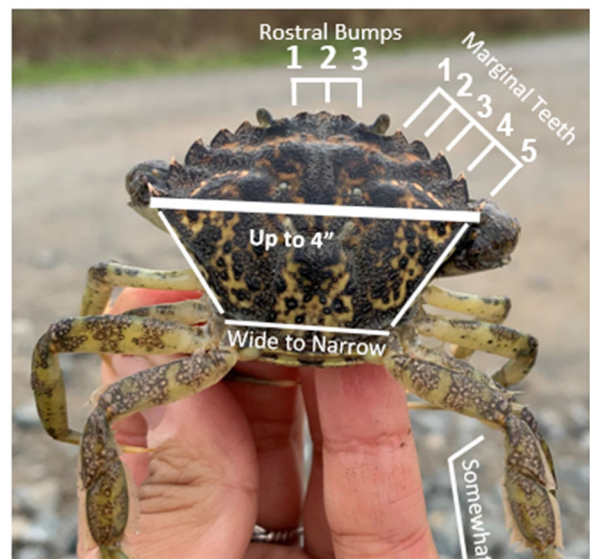
The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is still soliciting proposals for a total of \$1,100,000 in interagency agreement funding to support response to the European green crab emergency. Approximately \$350,000 remains available. More information is available at: <https://rco.wa.gov/about-us/employment-and-contracts/> or https://rco.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Solicitation_EuropeanGreenCrabFunding.pdf.

Public Reporting and Crab Identification

WDFW continues to receive reports from the public of native crab species misidentified for invasive European green crabs. While we appreciate 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**, and then returning the crab in question unharmed to the water where it was found. Most of these native crabs, including Graceful, Kelp, Hairy Helmet and Hairy shore crabs, are regulated as Unclassified Marine Invertebrates and are 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](https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/European%20green%20crab%20reporting%20sign%202022.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. They 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.



A WDFW graphic showing the best way to identify European green crab: by counting the five marginal teeth or "spines" on either side of their shell.



Photos and Multimedia Highlights

Photos 1 & 2: Pacific County Vegetative Management's Ed Darcher and a day's trapped EGC in systematic coverage of Willapa's North Bay between Mailboat Slough to Cedar River and Potter Slough to Bruceport in coordination with the Shoalwater Bay Tribe.



Photos 3 & 4: Alex Stote of Washington Sea Grant (WSG) Crab Team and the University of Washington hosted a field trip for Congressional staffers, with this session on EGC in Ocean Shores on August 28 (WSG Director Russel Callender is far left on photo 4). Congressional staffers present represented Senator Murray and Representatives Kilmer, Schrier, and Herrera Beutler. Also in

attendance were David Bingaman and Joe Schumacker of the Quinault Indian Nation, David Beugli of the Willapa Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association, Barbara Hayford and Bruce Rittenhouse of the Coastal Interpretive Center and WSG Crab Team volunteers.





Photos 5 & 6: Emily Grason (far left in photo 5) of WSG leads an EGC field demonstration on September 1st for Congressional Representative Derek Kilmer (second from left photo 5 and left in photo 6) at Nick's Lagoon near Seabeck on Hood Canal. WSG Director Callender (white shirt) and Hayden Davis (dark blue shirt) join Rep Kilmer in the mud checking traps – 2 EGC were captured that day. Neil Harrington of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe (right in photo 6) and Rep. Kilmer display the WDFW public signage being posted around the marine areas of Washington to help educate the public on EGC identification and reporting.



Photo 7: WDFW worked with the Hood Canal Oyster Company to study ways of reducing the risk of EGC transfer in shellfish product intending to be distributed around the state for recreational and aquaculture purposes. In this picture, several bags of oyster cultch have been lifted on a barge and are being washed with a high-pressure water hose to flush out EGC and any other species. The bags are then separated and washed again. No EGC were found in this situation.





Photos 8-10: Fidalgo Bay trapping action. #8 - L to R: Claire Cook (Swinomish), Chris Jendrey (Puget SoundCorps), Aina Hori (WSG), Emily Grason (WSG), and Andy Nutzhorn (WDFW) (photo Emily Grason). # 9 - L to R: Andy Nutzhorn and Emily Grason (photo Aina Hori). #10 - L to R: Chris Jendrey and Aina Hori (photo Emily Grason).

Photos 11-14: Lummi Nation European green crab trapping. #11 - L to R: James Adams (Lummi Natural Resources) and Guy Redfox (UW intern) working the Lummi Sea Pond by boat with shrimp traps; #12 - first young of the year (YOY) EGC; #13 - Elias Plaster (NW Indian College intern); #14 - Guy Redfox. (photos courtesy of Lummi Nation).

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 distributed via WDFW’s European Green Crab Management Updates [email list](#) and posted at:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/invasive/carcinus-maenas#conservation>

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.

September 20, 2022

