



Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE

Puget Sound Commercial Crab Advisory Group Meeting

September 11, 2023

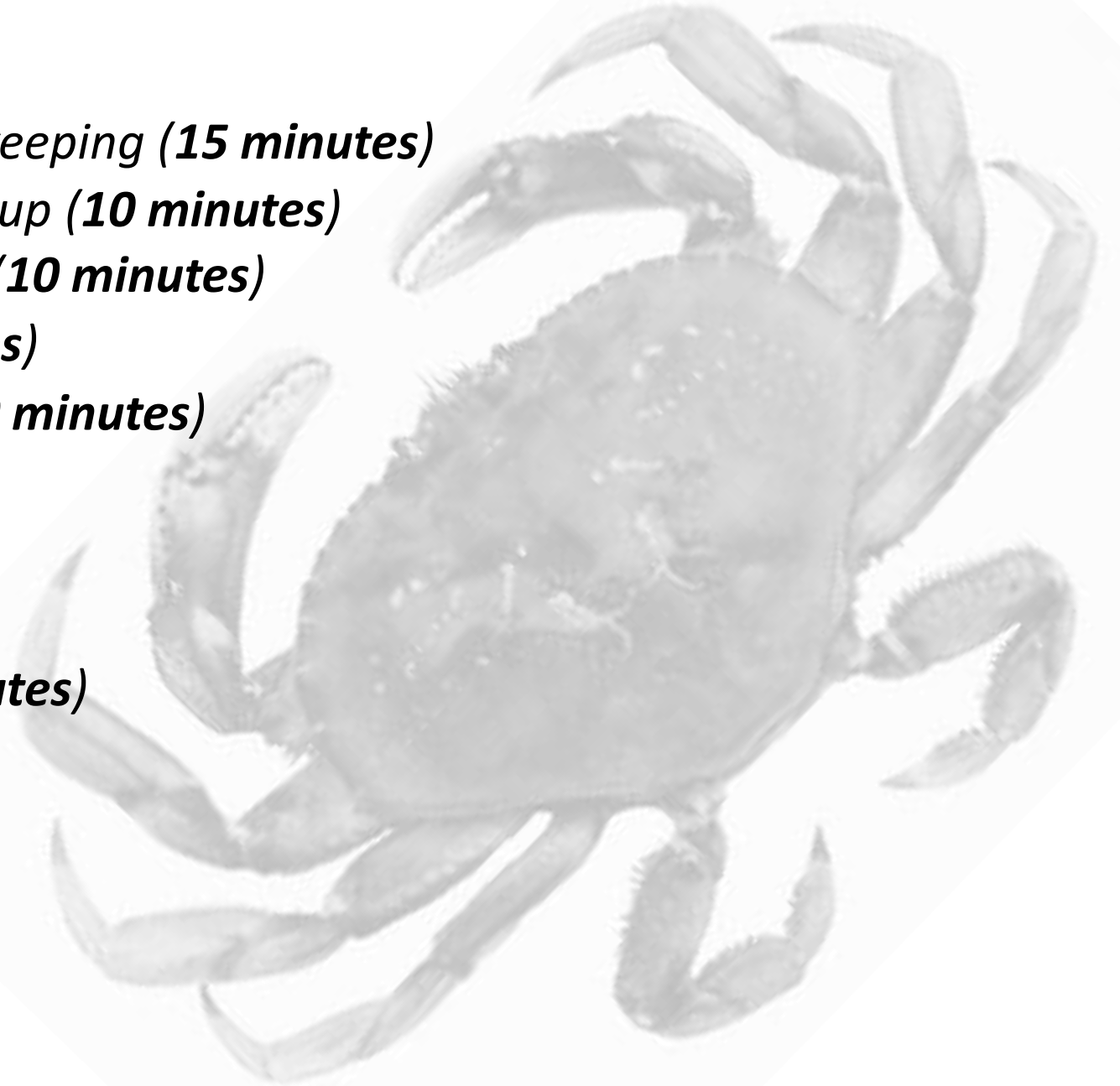
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Meeting Agenda

- 1. Welcome, introductions, and housekeeping (15 minutes)*
- 2. Roles and Responsibilities of the Group (10 minutes)*
- 3. Co-Management and WDFW Policy (10 minutes)*
- 4. 2022-2023 Crab Seasons (10 Minutes)*
- 5. Management Updates into 2023 (20 minutes)*

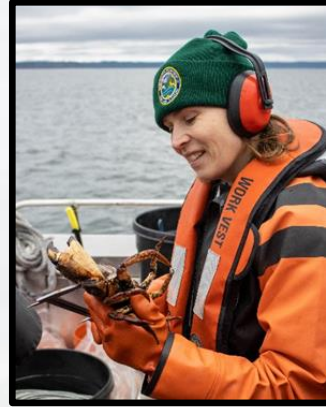
Break (5 mins)

- 6. 2023 – 2024 Crab Season (20 minutes)*
- 7. Discussion (25 minutes)*
- 8. Next Steps (5 minutes)*



Staff Introductions

Katelyn Bosley
Puget Sound Crustacean Lead
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Puget Sound Shellfish Manager
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Daniel Sund
Commercial Crustacean Biologist
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Don Velasquez
Recreational Crustacean Biologist
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Blair Winnacott
Recreational Crustacean Biologist
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Blair.Winnacott@dfw.wa.gov



Committee Member Introductions

Advisory Position	Advisor	Email
<i>Bellingham / Blaine #1</i>	Brian Haling (Harvester)	bhaling1970@yahoo.com
<i>Bellingham / Blaine #2 / Independent Seat</i>	Ficus Chan (Harvester)	figus@live.com
<i>Anacortes / La Conner / Oak Harbor #1</i>	Brett Senff (Harvester)	brettsenff@hotmail.com
<i>Anacortes / La Conner / Oak Harbor #2</i>	Woody Atterberry (Harvester)	atterberry@gmail.com
<i>S Whidbey / Everett / Seattle Metro #1</i>	John Evich (Harvester)	johncevich@gmail.com
<i>S Whidbey / Everett / Seattle Metro #2</i>	Ryan McCartney (Harvester)	ryanjmac24@gmail.com
<i>Olympic Peninsula #1</i>	Andy Fisk (Harvester)	fiskbobbianti@gmail.com
<i>Olympic Peninsula #2</i>	Sam Bain (Harvester)	sambain2019@gmail.com
<i>At Large (Harvester)</i>	Greg Dickison (Harvester)	fish2livemobile@gmail.com
<i>At Large (Harvester)</i>	Mark Hammer (Harvester)	fishhead2u@comcast.net
<i>Dealer #1</i>	Nick Mareno (Fathom Seafood)	nickm@fathomseafood.com
<i>Dealer #2</i>	Chris Sparks (Wildcatch Seafood Products)	chris@wildcatchsea.com
<i>Dealer #3</i>	Greg Moe (M&M Crab)	mandmcrab@yahoo.com
<i>At Large (Dealer)</i>	Scott Kimmel (New Day Fisheries)	ndfish@cablespeed.com
<i>PS Crab Association President</i>	Brian Allison (Puget Sound Crab Association President)	brianeallison@comcast.net

- 1) Where are you from?
- 2) What seat do you hold?
(Fisher / Dealer)
- 3) Briefly 1 reason describe why you want to engage in this advisory group?



Puget Sound Commercial Crab Advisory Group

'The PSCCAG is a volunteer group that provides both a forum for discussion of issues relevant to the commercial crab fishery within Puget Sound and vehicle for bringing industry perspectives to the department as well as sharing department perspectives and decisions with the industry at large. The purpose of the PSCCAG is to develop recommendations to help WDFW achieve the overall mission and management objectives for the Puget Sound commercial crab fishery.'



Puget Sound Commercial Crab Advisory Group

Charter

- Guides behavior and expectations during meetings.
- Sets out the advisory board structure, term length, etc.
- Please provide feedback on this document.
- We will request advisers acknowledge that they have read the charter.

August 23, 2023



**PUGET SOUND COMMERCIAL CRAB
ADVISORY GROUP CHARTER**
DRAFT

Group Purpose and Authority

The current [Puget Sound Crab Fishery Policy \(C-3609\)](#) went into effect on September 30, 2010. This policy contains explicit guidelines for meeting the objective of promoting healthy and sustainable populations of crab in Puget Sound and working cooperatively with the Tribal Co-Managers in structuring management measures to ensure a healthy and sustainable resource and achieves a fair sharing of the harvestable resource. Historically, advisory groups for Puget Sound commercial crustacean fisheries were in place however they were allowed to lapse in favor of engaging directly with industry associations to inform industry needs and to solicit input on management decisions. Following a series of regulatory changes, market challenges, and emerging management issues it was decided that



Roles and Responsibilities

General

- Provide advice and information to WDFW staff on relevant management issues including:
 - *Seasons for crab*
 - *Ideas to maintain and improve commercial crab fisheries in Puget Sound*
 - *Condition of the resource*
 - *Proposed or needed legislation or regulation changes*
- Work with department staff and advisors to resolve management issues and problems in a timely manner.
- Communicate to the department staff special issues or resource concerns that occur between meetings.
- Attend advisory committee meetings and appropriate Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings.

Harvesters

- Represent the interests of the majority of fishers in your area.
- Communicate to fishers in your area information from the department and from advisory group meetings, regulatory or legislative proposals, special agency needs, etc.
- Serve as the department's primary contact person in your area.

Dealers

- Communicate with the department regarding industry issues and challenges that effect the buyer's side of the fishery.
- Communicate out to harvesters that you engage in business dealings with information from department, advisory group meetings, regulatory or legislative proposals, special agency needs, etc.

Co-Management Policy

- Rafeedie Decision (1994)
 - Treaty Tribes reserve right to 50% of harvestable surplus of all shellfish
 - Shellfish Implementation Plan (SIP)
 - Regional Management Plans

cc: 9213 enab, ER

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al., Plaintiffs, vs. STATE OF WASHINGTON, et al., Defendants	Case No.: C70-9213 Subproceeding No 89-3 (Shellfish) STIPULATION AND ORDER AMENDING SHELLFISH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
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In an amended opinion filed September 25, 1998, at 157 F.3d 630, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals remanded three issues to the District Court for further proceedings: (1) determination of the minimum density of shellfish necessary to establish the existence of a natural bed, (2) the manner of implementing the Tribes' allocation of shellfish from Growers' beds, and (3) the manner of resolving disputes to be included in the Shellfish Implementation Plan, (the "Plan"), 898 F Supp. 1453, 1463 *et seq.*

To address issues (1) and (2), the Tribes, the Growers, and the State of Washington have stipulated to revisions of sections six and eight of the Plan. The Tribes and the Growers therefore

STIPULATION AND ORDER AMENDING
SHELLFISH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - 1

Kanji & Katzen, PLLC
720 Third Avenue, Suite 1500
Seattle, WA 98104
206-344-8100
WSBA # 7835

17340
14331

Commission Policy

- [Puget Sound Crab Policy](#) (revised Sept. 2010)
 - Recreational fishery priority
 - State commercial in North Puget Sound only (Region 1, 2E, 2W, 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4)
 - State commercial fishery only occurs after the summer recreational fishery and the winter recreational season is accommodated
 - State commercial access to recreational exclusive areas is not permitted at all
 - “mop up” commercial fisheries in recreational areas are not allowed.

Crab Fishery Management in Puget Sound

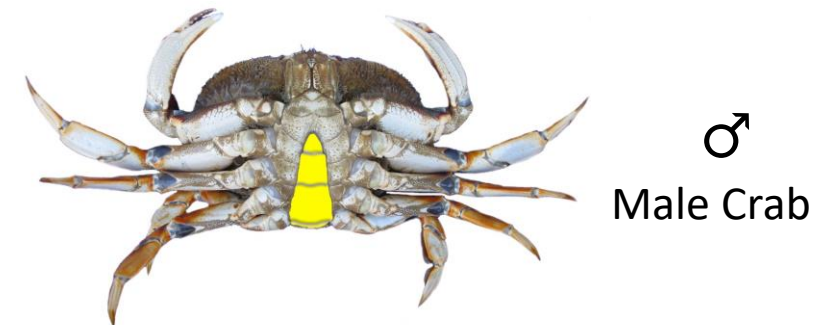
Overall Goals:

- Sustainably manage the resource.
- Meet the needs of the consumer, recreational harvesters, and commercial harvesters of Washington.
- Provide meaningful and stable recreational and commercial fisheries.
- Reduce/eliminate unregulated harvest (illegal activity)
- Manage the fishery respecting co-manager rights and agreements

Crab Fishery Management in Puget Sound

3-S Management Framework

- **Size:** the minimum legal size of harvested crab is 6 ¼ inches
 - Provides ~ 2 years for males to reproduce before entering the fishery
- **Sex:** only male crab can be legally retained by the fishery
 - Allows females the opportunity to reproduce without harvest pressure
- **Season:** harvest is limited to minimize interaction with 'soft' crab
 - Reduces bycatch mortality
 - Maximizes the quality / value of the resource
 - All seasons are set around crab molt periods (*to avoid soft crab*)



Crab Fishery Management in Puget Sound

Quota Setting:

- Primarily a sharing mechanism with co-managers, not quantitatively assessed in most areas.
- Typically based on historic or recent harvest
 - (3- or 5-year average)
- Test Fisheries – pre and post season – inform quotas in some areas
- Often in-season adjustments for crab
 - Based on current fishery performance
 - Indicators suggest enough resource available

Harvest Updates – 2022/2023 State Harvest



Management Region	Marine Area	Regional State Share	State Summer Recreational Catch	State Summer EUC	State Winter Recreational Catch	State Winter EUC	State Commercial Harvest	State Commercial EUC	Total State Harvest To-Date	State Balance To-Date
1	7	2,379,630	471,407	46,999	66,725	6,652	1,807,683	18,077	2,417,544	-37,914
2E	8-1,8-2	1,040,000	480,777	47,933	53,413	5,325	478,268	4,783	1,070,499	-30,499
2W	9	225,000	73,119	7,290	19,196	1,914	139,076	1,391	241,985	-16,985
3-1	6, N	44,415	2,064	206	377	38	27,582	276	30,542	13,873
3-2	6, SE	401,490	124,354	12,398	22,711	2,264	230,669	2,307	394,703	6,787
3-3	6, W	15,500	2,580	257	471	47	5,653	57	9,065	6,435
3-4	4, 5	9,500	6,016	600	811	81	883	9	8,399	1,101
4	10	40,000	35,377	3,527	10,619	1,059	0	0	50,582	-10,582
5	12	240,200	73,572	7,335	22,078	2,201	0	0	105,186	135,014
6	11	42,000	27,794	2,771	8,869	884	0	0	40,318	1,682
7	13	0	2,644	264	957	95	0	0	3,960	-3,960
STATE HARVEST TOTALS		4,437,735	1,299,705	129,581	206,226	20,561	2,689,814	26,898	4,372,784	

RED indicates areas without a signed plan and agreed-to quota

Crab - Recreational CRC Reporting Rates Summer



Summer	CRCs Issued	CRCs Reported Mail	CRCs Reported Online	CRCs Reported	CRCs Unreported	Endorsements Entire Year
2007	210,327	34,400 (16%)	32,373 (15%)	66,773 (32%)	143,554 (58%)	226,063
2008	210,893	26,037 (12%)	43,919 (21%)	69,956 (33%)	140,937 (67%)	215,643
2009	236,665	37,128 (16%)	72,172 (30%)	107,300 (45%)	129,365 (55%)	241,226
2010	208,462	29,406 (14%)	77,472 (37%)	107,418 (52%)	101,044 (48%)	213,013
2011	230,355	31,222 (14%)	89,095 (39%)	120,317 (52%)	110,038 (48%)	237,129
2012	200,711	26,504 (13%)	79,895 (40%)	106,399 (53%)	94,312 (47%)	209,957
2013	214,692	26,236 (12%)	90,379 (42%)	116,615 (54%)	98,077 (46%)	222,050
2014	213,741	25,296 (12%)	91,270 (43%)	116,566 (55%)	97,175 (45%)	223,184
2015	232,621	25,685 (11%)	94,336 (41%)	120,021 (52%)	112,600 (48%)	243,934
2016	216,977	23,734 (11%)	90,262 (42%)	113,996 (53%)	102,981 (47%)	223,443
2017	215,929	33,252 (15%)	72,601 (34%)	105,853 (49%)	110,076 (51%)	222,222
2018	200,962	31,316 (16%)	72,790 (36%)	104,106 (52%)	96,856 (48%)	207,557
2019	192,798	29,006 (15%)	69,087 (36%)	97,571 (51%)	95,227 (49%)	200,113
2020	213,831	23,716 (11%)	53,029 (25%)	76,745 (36%)	137,086 (64%)	222,181
2021	225,282	27,534 (12%)	75,254 (33%)	102,788 (46%)	122,494 (54%)	233,108
2022	210,725	20,440 (10%)	68,275 (32%)	88,715 (42%)	122,010 (58%)	221,150

Crab - Recreational CRC Reporting Rates Winter

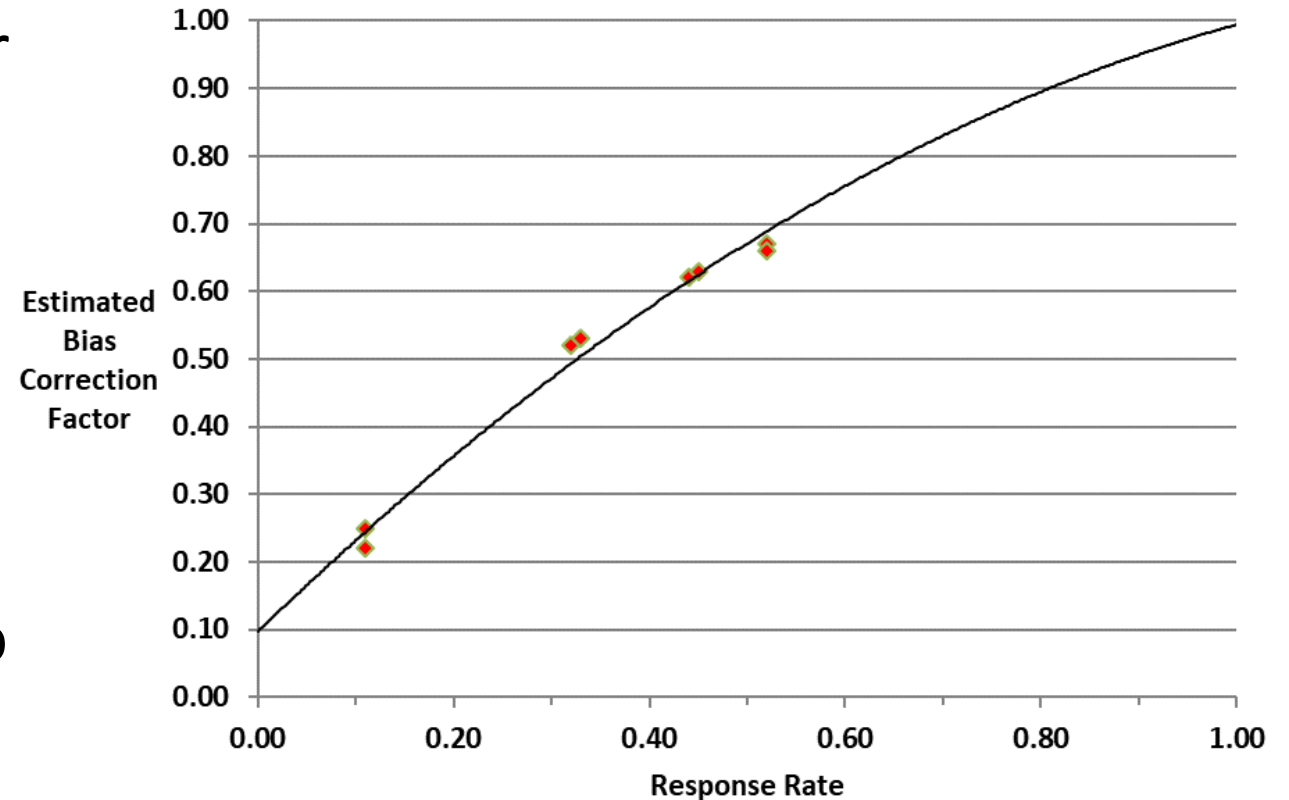


Winter	CRCs Issued	CRCs Reported Mail	CRCs Reported Online	CRCs Reported	CRCs Unreported	Endorsements Entire Year
2007	157,905	10,281 (7%)	6,388 (4%)	16,669 (11%)	141,236 (89%)	226,063
2008	207,143	10,993 (5%)	10,871 (5%)	21,864 (11%)	185,279 (89%)	215,643
2009	89,259	11,909 (13%)	27,382 (31%)	39,291 (44%)	49,968 (56%)	241,226
2010	70,763	9,633 (14%)	27,346 (39%)	36,979 (52%)	33,784 (48%)	213,013
2011	28,514	4,675 (16%)	13,899 (49%)	18,574 (65%)	9,940 (35%)	237,129
2012	27,711	4,508 (16%)	13,357 (48%)	17,865 (65%)	9,846 (35%)	209,957
2013	29,638	4,419 (15%)	15,223 (51%)	19,642 (66%)	9,996 (34%)	222,050
2014	35,371	5,040 (14%)	17,401 (49%)	22,441 (63%)	12,930 (37%)	223,184
2015	36,398	5,039 (14%)	18,284 (50%)	23,323 (64%)	13,075 (36%)	243,934
2016	26,591	5,777 (22%)	10,577 (40%)	16,534 (62%)	10,057 (38%)	223,443
2017	23,277	4,431 (19%)	9,746 (42%)	14,177 (61%)	9,100 (39%)	222,222
2018	24,620	3,906 (16%)	9,896 (40%)	13,802 (56%)	10,818 (44%)	207,557
2019	23,578	4,178 (18%)	8,520(36%)	12,698 (54%)	10,880 (46%)	200,113
2020	36,459	5,015 (14%)	13,178 (36%)	18,193 (50%)	18,266 (50%)	222,181
2021	26,843	3,894 (15%)	9,591 (36%)	13,485 (51%)	13,358 (49%)	233,108
2022	37,900	5,173 (14%)	13,226 (35%)	18,399 (49%)	19,501 (51%)	221,150

Bias Correction Factor Update Responsive Management, LLC



- **Bias correction** is a fundamental component of our recreational catch estimation methods
- The bias correction factor is applied to the expanded recreational catch estimate to account for **lower catch rates by crabbers that do not submit catch record cards.**



Responsive Management, LLC

2022 Telephone Survey Results



- WDFW contracted with Responsive Management, LLC to survey Puget Sound CRC holders to collect information to update the bias correction factor function
 - Prior to this season, the data that informs this relationship is from 2007-2010
- 2022 Summer season survey results indicate catch is **higher** than our historical bias correction expansion.
 - ***Bias correction was 0.61 vs 0.59 prediction of the model***
- 2022 Winter season survey results indicate catch is **lower** than our historical bias correction expansion.
 - ***Bias correction was 0.63 vs 0.67 prediction of the model***
- Surveys will be conducted again for the 2023 recreational crab seasons (summer, winter).

2023/2024 – Management Updates

Management Challenges

- Recreational catch accounting.
- Derelict gear.
- Soft-shell crab, fishery openings, season timing.
- Handling mortality.
- WDFW recreational crab creels for biology and CRC compliance.
- Electronic fish tickets (WaTix).



2023/2024 – Management Challenge - Recreational Catch Accounting



- Poor compliance with immediate recording
 - Technical Review Panel reviewed existing data in 2021
 - Increases current recreational estimates by 9.97%
- Poor compliance with reporting CRCs
 - Summer % peaked in 2014 at **55%** and decreased since
 - Most recent summer % was **42%**
- Re-calculating non-response bias for non-reported CRCs
 - Model used through 2021 used 2007-2010 data
 - Collected data in 2022 to update the model

2023/2024 – Management Challenge - Recreational Catch Accounting



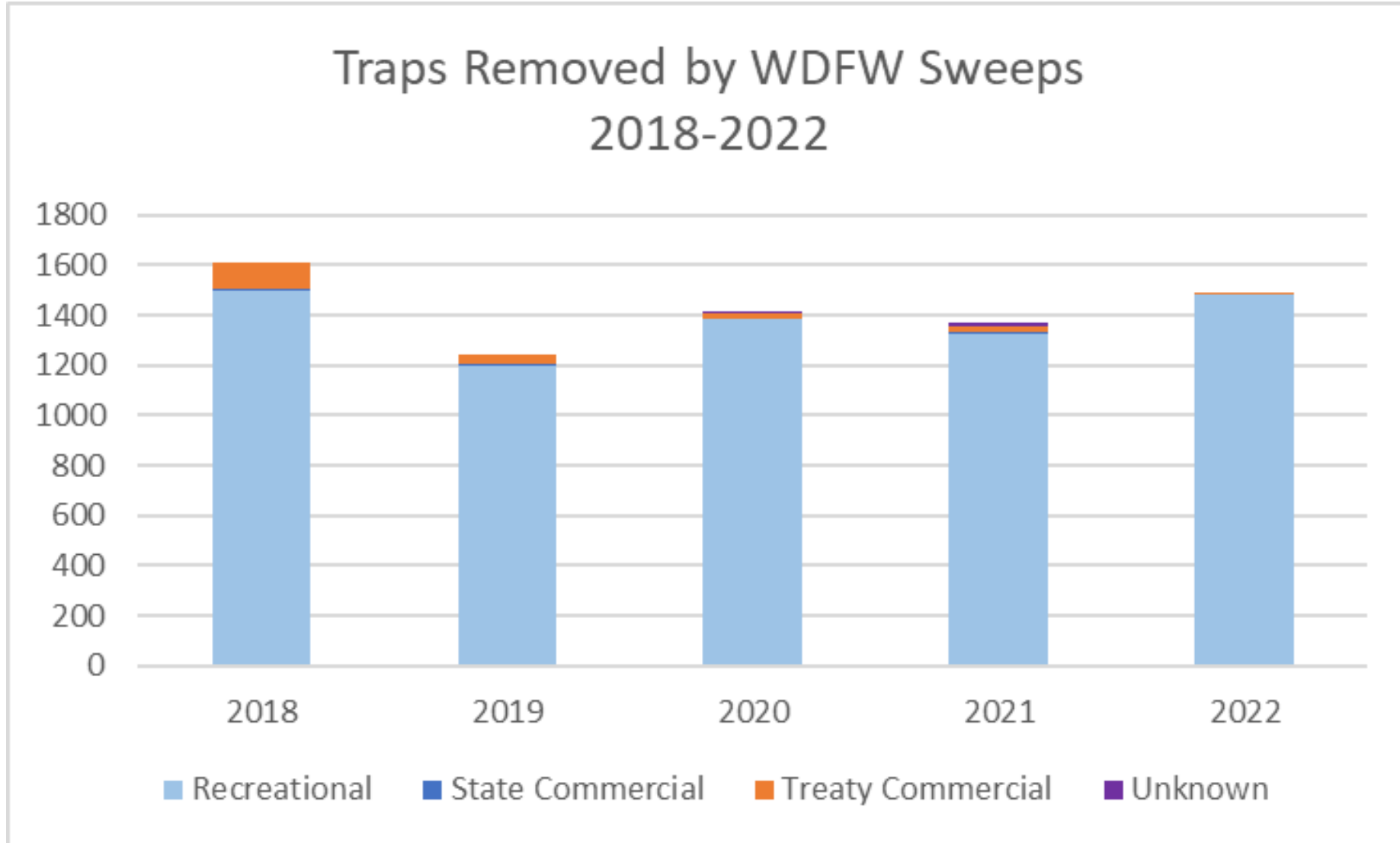
- **Evolving recreational catch estimation methods**

- 2022 summer and winter telephone surveys of non-respondents
- Data showed similar trends for catch for non-respondents
- 2022 recreational estimates are based on CRCs + telephone survey (No bias correction)

- **Revisions to CRC data processing**

- Discrepancies in CRC data summaries from CRC unit and crustacean staff lead to uncovering processing errors.
- Revised estimates produced with updated processing.
- Affected the number of CRC records included and the application of the correction model.

2023/2024 – Management Challenge - Derelict Gear



2023/2024 – Management Updates – Recreational Season Update (through Labor Day)



Creel data collection from recreational crabbers (1,538 boats, 2,304 CRCs, 7,096 Dungeness).

- Dungeness "males only" rule: Almost all people understand/comply
- Immediate recording on CRC: Compliance is poor
- Dungeness 6 ¼ in min size rule: Violations common, particularly in areas heavily fished by Tribes
- Softshell release rule: Violations common, particularly in areas heavily fished by Tribes

Marine Area anecdotal reports from summer.

- **Marine Area 6:** Good catches continue outside the bays with easy access.
- **Marine Area 7:** Good catches since the start with fewer issues regarding undersize & softshell.
- **Marine Areas 8-1/8-2:** *Poor* catches at start with *heavy effort*. Treaty harvest up to the day before opening.
- **Marine Area 9:** Good catches in the Region 2W portion only. Treaty 2W harvest began in mid-August.
- **Marine Area 10:** Only open 2 days per week, catches have been OK and similar to last year.
- **Marine Area 11:** Only open 2 days per week, slow catches to start but they picked up during summer.
- **Marine Area 13:** Closed since 2018. Some Dungeness recovery at Nisqually site only.

2023/2024 – Management Updates

Commercial Rule Updates

- Letter sent to industry via snail mail on 9/2
- Coastal Electronic Monitoring (EM) rule is primary motivation for permanent rule updates (WAC 220-340-420)
 - Proposed rule changes would require the installation and use of an electronic monitoring (EM) system on vessels participating in Washington’s non-tribal coastal commercial Dungeness crab fishery.
- We’ve included several updates to Puget Sound commercial shellfish rules including but not limited to:
 - Clarifying shrimp gear pot limits, gear marking (buoy and line), replacement crab buoy tags, logbook reporting requirements, stored crab reporting and sale, transportation ticket requirements, and general housekeeping updates (nonspot species complex, area boundary designations.)
- Presenting rule proposals to the F&W commission on 9/29. For further details on rules, please see the website here:
<https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/regulations/development/coastal-crab-and-puget-sound-shellfish-updates>



2023/2024 – Management Updates

Commercial Rule Updates – Electronic fish ticket rule changes



- Proposed rule changes would modify when and where electronic fish tickets must be submitted to the department including when cellular broadband is not available.
- Coastal crab fishery compliance with the new electronic fish ticket rules implemented in 2022 in preparation for WaTix, were abused extensively.
- Rule changes are intended to ensure electronic fish tickets are completed immediately at the time and location of transfer to an original receiver.

2023 / 2024 Commercial Season Planning

The 2022-2023 season opened on October 15, 2022 in the following areas:

- **Region 1** with **30 pots** per license (closed January 22, no pounds were reserved)
- **Region 2E** with **30 pots** per license (closed November 20)*
- **Region 2W** with **30 pots** per license (closed January 14)
- **Subregion 3-2** with **30 pots** per license (closed November 19)*
- **Subregion 3-1** with **30 pots** per license (closed March 31, quota not reached)
- **Subregion 3-3** with **30 pots** per license (closed April 15, quota not reached)
- **Subregion 3-4** with **30 pots** (closed April 15, quota not reached)

Additional Openings / Closures:

- **All areas** closed on **October 21, 2022** until **October 28, 2022** for market / conservation concerns.
- **3-2** opened **December 6** through **December 20** following a **52,500lbs per side quota increase**.
- **2E** opened **December 19** through **January 6** following a **40,000lbs per side quota increase**.



2023 / 2024 Commercial Season Planning

Requests:

1. *Can the Puget Sound commercial crab season start earlier than October 1?*
2. *Can the fishery be structured before the season starts to go on and then off the water?*
3. *Could pot limits be modified in season to respond to market concerns?*
 - *Slight Reduction (50 to 25)*
 - *Complete Reduction (50 to 1) i.e. a proxy for closing the fishery.*

Rationale:

- Hit better / different markets
- Fish (or not fish) alongside the tribes
- Maximize *ex-vesse/* value of the fishery

Department Constraints:

- Policy
- Logistical
- Political



2023 / 2024 Commercial Season Planning

Department Policy – Fishery Planning

- WDFW does not have the legal authority to open and close fisheries due to market conditions.
 - Except when market conditions could lead to potential wastage/conservation issues, like we experienced in Fall/Winter 2022.
- Fisheries Planning – we've accommodated industry request to pause our Region 1 commercial fishery when planned preseason.
- We will continue to accommodate those requests but in-season decisions to pause or modify that plan based on price or market conditions, is not something we can do.
- We will continue to support working with the fleet on pot limit modifications pre-season and in-season.

2023 / 2024 Commercial Season Planning

Open Discussion

Starting commercial targets from last season (2022 /2023)

Management Region	2022 / 2023 Initial Commercial Target (including EUC)	Season Opening Pot Limit
1	1,663,171	30
2E	361,629	30
2W	128,355	30
3-1	41,383	30
3-2	187,431	30
3-3	12,174	30
3-4	3,464	30



Special Projects

1. Commercial-based Test Fishery Selection/Qualifying Criteria

- Using commercial vessels and gear to collect information to help management State fisheries.
- Developing how participants are selected.
- Developing qualifying criteria for interested parties.

2. Commercial Clean-up Fishery Mechanism (outside of recreational exclusive areas)

- At times areas have small amounts of quota remaining that is not large enough to accommodate a full opening.
- Develop how we can target these smaller amounts of pounds.
- Develop how participants can be selected and if there are alternative fishery management structures that the fleet is amenable to.



Next Steps

Advisory Group Meeting #2

September 25 or September 26

More flexible on the time for this coming meeting.

Please send your availability to Daniel for these two dates by Friday, September, 15.



Adjourn Thank you!

