

Oregon Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishing

Directive to Minimize Whale Entanglement Risk

Last Updated Fall 2018



Recommended by the Oregon Whale Entanglement Working Group



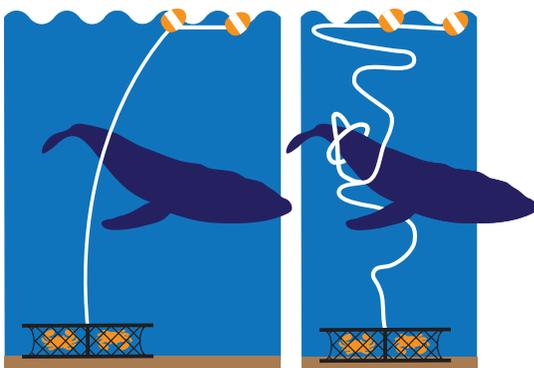
Reasons for Directives

National Marine Fisheries Service has confirmed significant increases in large whale entanglements starting in 2014, and specifically in Dungeness crab fishing gear. This situation threatens the stability of the fishery and coastal fishing communities. By using these voluntary best practices, the Oregon Dungeness crab fleet can take an important step towards reducing the risk of whale entanglements.

The best known way to reduce risk of whale entanglement is to reduce the amount of gear and line in the water during the spring and summer months, when threatened whales are in the area.

Best Practices During Crab Season

- Use the minimum amount of scope required to compensate for tides, currents and weather. Whales are more likely to become entangled with slack lines, which can potentially create a "floating snare".
- When changing set location across depths, adjust the length of pot lines by adjusting shots (i.e., measured length of line) to maintain taut vertical lines.
- No excess lines should be floating at the surface. Floating line should only be between the main buoy and trailer buoy(s).
- Remove any fishing gear you are not actively tending during the season.
- Avoid setting gear in the vicinity of large feeding aggregations of whales, especially humpback whales, whenever possible.
- Communicate the locations of unusually high whale activity to other fishermen.



Keep line between pot and main buoy running taut and as vertical as possible.

Why Report?

Understanding where, when, and how entanglements occur is essential to prevent future entanglements. Timely reporting is critical to facilitate response efforts, when appropriate.

Report Entangled Whales 1-877-SOS-WHALE



Report entangled whales **IMMEDIATELY** to the NMFS whale entanglement response hotline at 1-877-SOS-WHALE (1-877-767-9425) or hail the U.S. Coast Guard on Channel 16. If possible, stand by.

Photograph Entangled Whales

WHALE: side view of dorsal fin (or hump); tail flukes (especially if underside is raised); head; any part of the body where gear may be present.

ENTANGLEMENT: buoy(s); tags; lines on the body; trailing lines (including distance from whale); netting (if present); any other gear if present. *Do not approach within 100 yards.*

Respond Promptly if Contacted

If you are contacted about a whale entangled in your gear, please respond. You can help prevent future entanglements by providing as much information as possible about your fishing gear and practices.



Crab fishing aboard the commercial crab boat Delma Ann



Recovered derelict gear

Best Practices To Reduce And Recover Derelict Gear

- Maintain gear to ensure lines and buoys are in good working condition and clearly marked, consistent with applicable regulation.
- Remove any derelict gear you encounter during the season, consistent with applicable regulations. For more information on Oregon's in-season derelict gear retrieval regulations, contact ODFW at (541) 867-4741.
- All gear markings should be clearly legible to facilitate correct identification of the origins of the gear. This is important for identifying the origins of lost gear and gear involved in entanglements.
- Remove all fishing gear by the end of the season when gear is no longer allowed in the water.
- Consider participating in the permitted post-season derelict gear program after the season ends.

Taking these important, proactive steps will support consumer perceptions of the fleet's sustainability, help to provide continued opportunities to harvest crab and maintain the fleet's access to the resource.



The Best Practices Directive was developed by the Oregon Whale Entanglement Working Group, and updated with feedback from the fleet.

For more information:
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