

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**  
**Marine Resources Program**  
**Semi-annual update on Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission Fishery Improvement (FIP) work plan**  
**Assessment Period: September 2023 – February 2024**  
**Report Date: February 2024**

<b>Goal/Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Progress</b>
2. Identify the main non-target species and provide information on the status of these species.  PI 2.1.3, 2.2.3	A. Assess the amount (weight) of bait used by species in the fishery each year and identify which species are actively managed (i.e. for management targets such as an LRP).	Feb 2024	Troy Buell (ODFW)	A and B – ODFW assessed bait used in the ocean commercial by developing a bait dealer survey to learn more about specific species used in the Oregon fishery and using logbook and fish ticket information to estimate the amount of bait used by species. No bait species exceeded the 5% of total catch threshold. A full report is included as attachment A.  C – ODFW assessed non-target species discarded and landed in the ocean commercial crab fishery. No non-target species exceeded the 5% of total catch threshold. A full report is included as attachment B.
	B. Provide available stock status information on bait species that account for 5% or more of the total catch (by weight) in the fishery.	Feb 2024	Troy Buell (ODFW)	
	C. Provide encounter rates and/or catch data (numbers) for out of scope species (non-ETP amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, e.g. orange sea pen, pelagic cormorant).	Aug 2024	Troy Buell (ODFW)	
3. Demonstrate that the main non-target species are above biological based limits  PI 2.1.1, 2.2.1	A. For species that account for 5% or more of the total catch (if any) and have management targets (such as an LRP), provide annual stock status information over the past 10-15 years relative to the target.	Feb 2024	Troy Buell (ODFW)	A and B - ODFW assessed non-target species discarded and landed in the ocean commercial crab fishery. No non-target species exceeded the 5% of total catch threshold. A full report is included as attachment B.

	B. For species that account for 5% or more of the total catch (if any) and do not have management targets and all out of scope species, provide available abundance trend information (catch or CPUE data, observer data, abundance surveys, etc).	Aug 2024	Troy Buell (ODFW)	
4. Demonstrate that there is a strategy in place that is designed to maintain the main non-target species at sustainable levels.  PI 2.1.2 and 2.2.2	A. For species that account for 5% or more of the total catch (if any) describe the strategy used to maintain these species at or above biological based limits or if none, develop and implement such a strategy. B. For species that account for 5% or more of the total catch (if any) provide an objective rationale and evidence for why the above strategy will work based on some direct information the UoA and/or species involved.	Aug 2025          Aug 2025	Troy Buell (ODFW)          Troy Buell (ODFW)	A and B - ODFW assessed non-target species discarded and landed in the ocean commercial crab fishery. No non-target species exceeded the 5% of total catch threshold. A full report is included as attachment B.
5. Provide evidence that the fishery does not hinder recovery of ETP species.  PI 2.3.1	A. Continue to participate in and support the Oregon Entanglement Advisory Committee (OEAC) to develop short- and long-term options for reducing whale entanglements in Dungeness crab fishing gear.	Ongoing (through Aug 2025)	Crystal Adams (ODCC)	A – ODFW completed the recruitment process for a limited duration Marine Life Entanglement Project Leader position. This position will lead the on-going development of ODFW’s conservation plan (CP) to minimize the risk of marine life entanglement in commercial Dungeness crab gear. The CP will be the main supporting document in the application for an incidental take permit application to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). This position will also spearhead regular communications and facilitate meetings with OEAC.

	<p>B. Continue research to monitor whale distribution off the Oregon coast to identify whale hotspots.</p>	<p>Ongoing (through at least June 2025)</p>	<p>Leigh Torres (OSU)</p>	<p>B – ODFW and OSU completed and submitted a draft final progress report to NMFS that summarizes all the work done throughout the first phase of the Section 6 project titled 'Identifying Co-occurrence Between Whales and Fishing Effort in Oregon to Reduce Entanglement Risk'. The draft final report is included as attachment C.</p> <p>Also in this reporting period, ODFW and OSU continued work on a second Section 6 grant funded project titled 'Enhancing Co-occurrence Assessment of Whales and Fishing Gear in Oregon Waters through Incorporation of Prey Data and Residency Analysis.' This project is continuing aerial whale surveys and expanding the initial modeling efforts for investigation of co-occurrence of whales and the crab fishery off Oregon. The most recent progress report is included as attachment D.</p>
	<p>C. Continue to develop the Conservation Plan for endangered and threatened whales.</p>	<p>Aug 2025</p>	<p>Crystal Adams (ODCC) and Troy Buell (ODFW)</p>	<p>C – ODFW completed the recruitment process for a limited duration Marine Life Entanglement Project Leader position. This position will lead the on-going development of ODFW's conservation plan (CP) to minimize the risk of marine life entanglement in commercial Dungeness crab gear. The CP will be the main supporting document in the application for an incidental take permit application to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).</p>

<p>6. Demonstrate that there is a strategy in place that is designed to ensure the fishery does not pose a risk of serious or irreversible harm to the habitats.</p> <p>PI 2.4.2</p>	<p>A. Develop and implement new technologies to monitor crab vessel locations and compliance with closed areas.</p>	<p>Aug 2025</p>	<p>Crystal Adams (ODCC)</p>	<p>A - ODFW has been under contract with a software developer to enhance the integrated vessel tracking electronic logbook system based on ODFW and user feedback from the initial pilot of the product during the 2022-23 crab season. Sixteen volunteer captains started their 2023-24 crab season testing the enhanced application. In this reporting period ODFW worked with the software developers to incorporate users feedback from phase 1, with the volunteer captains to train them to use the enhanced systems and provide new input, and with Pacific States Marine Fish Commission on development of the new electronic data streams. ODFW has also been working to integrate the new data stream into internal databases.</p> <p>ODFW remains committed to working with industry to test electronic monitoring (EM) systems for vessel tracking and developing procedures for how systems can be used to provide near real-time fishery data by the 2026-27 crab season (<a href="#">see Section 5.3.3.3 starting on page 94 of the draft CP titled "Electronic Monitoring"</a>).</p>
<p>7. Demonstrate that Information is adequate to determine the risk posed to the habitat by the fishery.</p> <p>PI 2.4.3</p>	<p>A. Continue research and monitoring of coastal habitats identified in the Oregon Nearshore Strategy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey of seafloor structures and habitat composition</li> <li>• Examination of species, communities, and habitat relationships to habitat monitoring priorities.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing (through Aug 2025)</p>	<p>Scott Marion (ODFW)</p>	<p>A - ODFW conducted a fishery-independent survey of habitat condition and fish and invertebrate communities in an important commercial fishing region. Transects were conducted using a stereo video sled in the recently re-opened bottom trawl RCA (Rockfish Conservation Area) in the vicinity of Heceta Bank. During the current reporting period, ODFW completed the field portion of the survey and began analyzing the data. This baseline information will inform future studies on benthic habitats.</p>

				<p>Additionally, nearshore shallow rocky reef habitats in previously un-mapped regions near Seal Rock were surveyed using a multibeam sonar system. Finally, video transect surveys assessing fish and invertebrate habitat utilization were conducted in the Cascade Head Marine Reserve and associated comparison areas using a small ROV. Data processing began during the current reporting period.</p> <p>During the current reporting period, ODFW conducted video transect surveys of fish and invertebrate habitat at Cape Arago, Orford Reef, Redfish Rocks, Humbug, Mack Arch Reef and Brookings.</p> <p>During the current reporting period, ODFW analyzed multispectral aerial imagery of kelp canopy along the central and southern coast, acquired in October 2022, to monitor changes in kelp canopy over time. This survey supports concurrent monitoring work of other nearshore species in decline (red sea urchin, red abalone, sunflower sea star).</p>
<p>10. Demonstrate that monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms ensure the management measures in the fishery are enforced and complied with.</p> <p>PI 3.2.3</p>	<p>A. Develop and implement new technologies to streamline logbook submittals and to monitor compliance with closed or restricted fishing areas (marine reserves).</p>	<p>Aug 2025</p>	<p>Crystal Adams (ODCC) Troy Buell (ODFW)</p>	<p>A - ODFW has been under contract with a software developer to enhance the integrated vessel tracking electronic logbook system based on ODFW and user feedback from the initial pilot of the product during the 2022-23 crab season. Sixteen volunteer captains started their 2023-24 crab season testing the enhanced application. In this reporting period ODFW worked with the software developers to incorporate users feedback, with the volunteer captains to train them to use the enhanced systems and provide new input, and with Pacific States Marine Fish Commission on development of the new electronic data streams.</p>

	<p>B. Work with fishermen to educate them on the importance of reporting whale entanglements.</p>			<p>ODFW remains committed to working with industry to test electronic monitoring (EM) systems for vessel tracking and developing procedures for how systems can be used to provide near real-time fishery data by the 2026-27 crab season (<a href="#">see Section 5.3.3.3 starting on page 94 of the draft CP titled “Electronic Monitoring”</a>).</p> <p>B. ODFW developed and widely distributed a marine life fleet advisory in September 2023 due to large aggregations of humpback and blue whales. Since the aggregation report was after the ocean commercial season closed for the season ODFW broadened the distribution to include recreational license holders and other active non-crab fixed gear fisheries. This notice is posted on the ODFW website <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
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