



## Crabber-Towboat Lane Agreement Biannual Meeting Minutes

November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022,

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

In-person at Englund Marine in Astoria and virtual

[wsg.washington.edu/crabber-towboat](http://wsg.washington.edu/crabber-towboat)

### In Attendance:

Steve Ackerman  
Travis Anderson  
Dan Ayres  
Dale Beasley  
Paul Bottomley  
Kyle Burleson  
Matthew Cullen  
Kelsey Cutting  
Kelly Corbett  
Jim Dunlap  
Bob Eder  
Jeffrey Ferguson  
Jamie Fuller  
Chris German  
Lisa Gentry  
Jennifer Hagen  
Brendan Harris

Jeff Hill  
Treena Jensen  
Dan Jordan  
Christy Juhasz  
Jenna Keeton  
Scott McMullen  
Briana Muhlstein  
Pete Nelson  
Tim N ODCC  
Nick Preston  
Rex Rhoades  
Mike Rudolph  
Ann Skelton  
Jill Smith  
Larry Thevik  
Brad Trammel  
John Veentjer

### Attached Documents:

- National Weather Service - Marine Weather Presentation
- US Coast Guard – Pacific Port Access Route Study Presentation
- Columbia River Bar Pilots - Suggested revision to USCG Proposed Fairways
- BOEM – Status of West Coast Offshore Wind Energy Development Presentation

**Action Items are in red, below.**

**Next Biannual Meeting: Friday, March 10, 2023, 10:00am – 1:00pm**



## Meeting Summary:

### Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Update, Jamie Fuller and Dan Ayres

[Daniel.Ayres@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Daniel.Ayres@dfw.wa.gov)

[Jamie.Fuller@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Jamie.Fuller@dfw.wa.gov)

The 2021-2022 Dungeness crab season produced 15.3 million pounds and including tribal catch Washington reached 18 million pounds harvested. The state ex-vessel value was \$88 million which is a new record...the previous high was \$56 M during the high volume 2016-17 season, likely because of the lack of crab harvested in Alaska. WDFW is currently testing meat recovery in Westport and Chinook. There is a good chance the state crab season will not open on December 1<sup>st</sup>. WDFW is working on implementing an incidental take permit to address issues with entangled whales including a reduction in pot limit, down to 33% in the summer season. They are also implementing a modified gear recovery program: fishers are allowed to recover lost/derelict gear following May 1 with a permit. In 2022, 660 pots were recovered. Pot removal is intended to reduce interactions with towboats but primarily to avoid whale entanglement.

### Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Update, Jill Smith

[jill.m.smith@state.or.us](mailto:jill.m.smith@state.or.us)

The 2021-2022 Dungeness Crab season produced 17.2 million pounds resulting in \$91.5 million ex-vessel value (highest ever). The derelict gear program is working, and fishers are asked to pull pots outside of 40 fathoms and need a summer tag for gear removal inside 40 fathoms. Last year, 122 pots were recovered gear in-season and 836 pots were recovered post-season. After May 1, summer tags must be on and ODFW implements a 20% gear reduction at that time to limit interactions with whale entanglement. ODFW is concerned about domoic acid, and the first testing activity is happening next week. The best time a year to communicate with fishermen is during crab hold inspection. If we (Crabber-Towboat group) do want to do some outreach before season opens, the Oregon crab hold inspections happen the day before fishermen are allowed to go out and pull pots. ODFW has not gotten calls regarding issues with the towlanes. ODCC has gotten calls about tugs not staying in the towlanes and gear did get trampled in the Coos Bay area.

Q1: Do pot limit reductions result in a reduction of whale entanglement? Can each state summarize what entanglements they have that are confirmed from last year's season?

A1: WDFW: no whales have been entangled off the WA coast. There might have been WA gear entangled in California and there was an odd case in Alaska with WA gear entangled with a grey whale.

Q2: Are entanglement processes helping? Could be a change in whale migration.

A2. ODFW: OR crabbers / ODFW meeting had meeting with info. **Larry and Jill to communicate.**



### California Department of Fish and Game Update, Christy Juhasz

[Christy.Juhasz@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Christy.Juhasz@wildlife.ca.gov)

The 2021-2022 season was not as high of a crab season than what was seen in OR/WA. California Dungeness crab populations seem to be coming out of a downturn. In 2020-2021, 3.75 million pounds were landed. In 2021-2022, 10.2 million pounds were landed (average of 17 million pounds). Most of the harvest came from northern ports. The statewide ex-vessel value of the Dungeness Crab fishery in 2021-2022 was \$53.5 million, which is due to a higher-than-average price per pound of \$6.10/pound. The opener last season was delayed mid-season due to RAMP entanglement risk. The northern season opened on time due to good quality testing and good meat pick out. The entire California state fishery was closed in spring because the fishery hit entanglement triggers. The causes of the entanglements were related to fishing and unknown origin (which can't rule out entanglement due to fishing). Domoic acid testing is currently underway and the levels of domoic acid are coming in very low and currently passing healthy levels. The state opened the razor clam fishery in the northern part of the state last year after a 5-year closure. CDFG is scheduling quality test to occur next week, weather permitting. CDFG concluded their entanglement risk assessment and will be published by Thanksgiving. CDFG has gear retrieval program within 2 weeks of fishery closure (w/ permits). Humpback whales.

Q1: Are there documented fisheries entanglements in CA? How does this compare to 10–15-year average? Do we have declining entanglements?

A1: 3 entanglements with Dungeness crab gear impact last year. There have been no entanglements since the fishing season closed.

### National Weather Service Marine Weather Update, Briana Muhlstein

[briana.muhlestein@noaa.gov](mailto:briana.muhlestein@noaa.gov)

There have been minimal buoy outages along the West Coast. **This group's request for 30-minute frequency in West Coast buoys has been granted. This will create more accurate data that was desired from the Crabber-Towboat group.** La Nina season will result in increased storm frequency around OR/WA border, leading to significant wave heights and increased erosion. Portland weather forecast group is collaborating with USCG on a change to small craft advisory criteria. **The Portland Weather Marine webpage is now updated and there is a Portland and Medford Marine Weather email lists – if you want to be added, request to be on the list through Briana.** NWS continues to work on their forecasting techniques: recently, the wave height forecasted was very well suited for the observed data. **See attached presentation for more details.**



Q1: When will buoy 41 be up and running? This is an important buoy for fishermen and is needed ASAP.

A1: Will bring this up to leadership.

Comment 1: Get weather buoys back in action ASAP.

Q2: Regarding the changing coastal water weather forecast: will this change weather pages?

A2: Yes, changes would all read the same way. **Treena to connect with Paul.**

### **U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Port Access Route Study Update, Cdr. Brendan Harris**

[Brendan.J.Harris@uscg.mil](mailto:Brendan.J.Harris@uscg.mil)

[John.F.Moriarty@uscg.mil](mailto:John.F.Moriarty@uscg.mil)

The USCG completed a draft Pacific Port Access Route Study in August 2022 which includes recommendations from vessel routing measures for fairways, coastal and offshore traffic. **Data was made available by the Crabber-Towboat group to help expedite PACPARS study. The Public Comment period was August 26- Oct 25, however an extension was granted through November 8th. Federal register notice:**

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/08/26/2022-18453/port-access-route-study-the-pacific-coast-from-washington-to-california>

Offshore Wind Energy development and other ocean uses prompted this study, especially since marine use is projected to increase in future. For awareness, listening sessions are not considered a formal public comment. Follow up with John Moriarty if you want to know whether public comment is submitted. After November 8<sup>th</sup>, USCG will decide if there is a need for more outreach. If not, by November 23<sup>rd</sup> the report will be forwarded to USCG headquarters which will initiate an environmental review, either NEPA/Environmental Impact Statement. **See attached presentation for more information.**

Q1. Will BOEM snip the OR call area that overlaps with fairway?

A1. Likely; USCG has not received much pushback from BOEM on fairway designation.

Q2. NOAA is doing something very similar to the PACPARS study. Are you in contact?

A2. No, but would like to be. **Treena/Briana: connect Cdr. Harris and NOAA Fisheries.**

Comment 1: Huge thank you to Cdr. Harris and Sea Grant for successful, efficient, and meaningful engagement (multiple dittos).

Q3. Is there potential legislation for infrastructure in marine sanctuary? Is there any ambiguity or place for legal interpretation to allow floating OWE to be not considered fixed structure?

A3: Have not heard of any proposed leg and USCG doesn't regulate National Marine Sanctuaries. No, fairways will not allow construction for floatable infrastructure, preclude anchors extending into fairways. Buried transmission lines through the fairway is OK.



Comment 1: **Minor modifications to fairways from Columbia River Bar Pilots.** Increase the angle of approach. Increased angle would protect weather buoys. **See attached slide for more information.**

**Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management Offshore Wind Development Update, Lisa Gentry**  
[lisa.gentry@boem.gov](mailto:lisa.gentry@boem.gov)

BOEM provided an overview of the status of Offshore Wind Development in WA, OR and CA. **Please see attached presentation for more information. WSG will share correct shapefiles of the towlanes with Lisa.** No towlanes are shown in water deeper than 100 fathoms on BOEM's charts and this should be remedied. BOEM considered the PAC PARS study in NCOOS (National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science) as "preliminary". As part of operation plan, wind developer must submit to CZM consistency certification, reviewed by coastal commission, then open to public comment.

- The link to the BOEM research relating to renewable energy can be found here: <https://www.boem.gov/environment/environmental-studies/renewable-energy-research>
- The link to the BSEE research relating to renewable energy can be found here: <https://www.bsee.gov/research-categories/renewable-energy>
- TAP-671 relating to cables can be found here: <https://www.bsee.gov/research-record/tap-671-offshore-electrical-cable-burial-wind-farms-state-art-standards-and-guidance>
- TAP-669 relating to floating wind turbines can be found here: <https://www.bsee.gov/research-record/tap-669-floating-wind-turbines>

Q1: The burial of cables will be closer to shore: what does that mean? Telecommunication cables are also buried. Issue with bottom contact fishing gears and there is a desire for government to tell companies where they can bury cables.

A1: Please review TAP 671.

Q2: When fairway rules are in law, will BOEM consider that in WEA and Call Areas.

A2: NCOOS modelling effort includes PACPARS as it stands now and as it changes over time.

Q3: What will be the spacing between each floating wind turbine?

A3: Don't know.

Q4: Offshore substations will have considerable amount of oil. Any regulation on double hulls? Or ensuring any deterioration of hulls over time?

A4: No answer. Please submit that question to general mailbox (email address in presentation).



**Additional Comments:**

- BOEM has requested that the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) establish a new standing committee on offshore wind energy and fisheries. The committee will serve as an independent, credible forum to discuss the state of science and pressing concerns related to the intersection of offshore wind with fisheries: <https://www.boem.gov/newsroom/notes-stakeholders/boem-encourages-nominations-new-national-academies-committee-offshore>
- Jennifer Hagen – Quileute Nation: The NANOOS Quileute lander moorings buoy information will be disseminated to this group when it is up to date and ready. It is located underwater, so please don't run it over.
- Please review this [Interactive Towlane Compliance Map](#), which was created by Leslie Nguyen, a graduate student at the University of Washington. The map includes data from 2020 Tug/Tow AIS Vessel Traffic in and around the towlanes by month.

\*\*\* Regretfully, there was no time during this meeting for Partner Updates. Partners are asked to email updates to Jenna Keeton, [keetonj@uw.edu](mailto:keetonj@uw.edu) for incorporation into meeting minutes. There will be plenty of time for partner updates at the next meeting on March 10, 2023, at 10am.