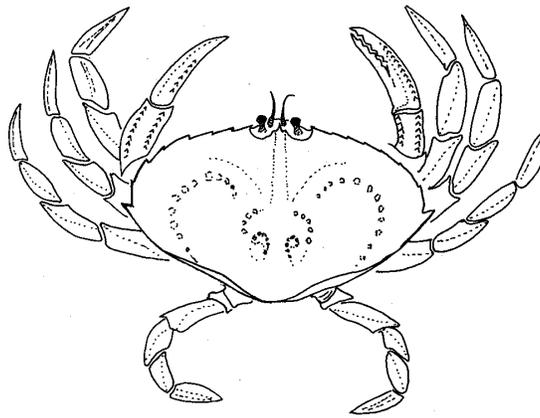




## Integrated Fisheries Management Plan Summary

### Crab by Trap Pacific Region

April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022



The purpose of this Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) summary is to provide a brief overview of the information found in the full IFMP. This document also serves to communicate the basic information on the fishery and its management to DFO staff, legislated co-management boards and other stakeholders. This IFMP provides a common understanding of the basic “rules” for the sustainable management of the fisheries resource. The full IFMP is available on request.

This IFMP summary is not a legally binding instrument which can form the basis of a legal challenge. The IFMP can be modified at any time and does not fetter the Minister's discretionary powers set out in the *Fisheries Act*. The Minister can, for reasons of conservation or for any other valid reasons, modify any provision of the IFMP in accordance with the powers granted pursuant to the *Fisheries Act*.

Where DFO is responsible for implementing obligations under land claims agreements, the IFMP will be implemented in a manner consistent with these obligations. In the event that an IFMP is inconsistent with obligations under land claims agreements, the provisions of the land claims agreements will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

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*Signature and title of DFO approval authority*

## **General Overview/Introduction**

## **IFMP Section 1**

The Pacific Region crab-by-trap fishery includes the harvest of Dungeness crab (*Cancer magister*), Red Rock crab (*Cancer productus*), Red King crab (*Paralithodes camtschatic*) and Golden King crab (*Lithodes aequispinus*).

First Nations' harvest for food, social and ceremonial (FSC) purposes may occur where authorized by an Aboriginal communal licence, harvest document, or under fishery treaty agreements. FSC harvest has not been limited by catch quantity, except in those Nations where the Council or fisheries Program has established their own catch limits for band members, or where allocated under treaty. First Nations are subject to the same size limit as the recreational and commercial fisheries and are requested to release all female crab.

The recreational fishery is an open entry fishery open all year round in most areas. Management measures include female non retention and size limits for Red Rock and Dungeness Crab, specific buoy and trap regulations, and area specific daily and possession limits. There are also additional regulations within select areas.

The commercial crab fishery is a limited entry fishery with 220 licence eligibilities divided into seven management areas having distinct management regulations. Some of the management measures within these areas include size, sex, and hardness restrictions, seasonal closures, gear limits, gear marking and size requirements, daily fishing time restrictions and weekly haul limits. Catch is close to 100% Dungeness Crab and this fishery has fishery monitoring and catch reporting requirements to address conservation, harvest allocation, and theft issues.

## **Stock Assessment and Science**

## **IFMP Section 2**

Dungeness Crab stock assessment is done by DFO, Service Providers hired by Industry, the Area A Crab Association, and several First Nation groups. Biological data collected from crabs caught in traps include: sex, shell condition, injuries, mating marks, and size.

Service providers collect fishery dependent biological sampling data from all commercial areas of the coast. Fishery independent data is also collected by service providers in areas B through H and by DFO in Areas I and J. The Area A Crab Association also conducts sampling in Hecate Strait during the spring and summer months. Several First Nation groups, in their claimed traditional territories, will conduct their own crab stock assessment surveys in conjunction with FSC fishing to better understand soft-shell periods, the impacts of commercial and recreational fishing on crab stocks, and changes due to commercially closed areas. Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge has not generally been available but could be utilised to gain historical FSC insight.

Scientific research and stock assessment surveys are of vital importance to ensure all crab populations and the species within its community remain healthy and sustainable. The Department remains interested in co-developing research priorities and interests with First Nations, Recreational, and Commercial representatives.

## **Indigenous Knowledge**

## **IFMP Section 3**

In 2019, the *Fisheries Act* was amended to include provisions for where the Minister may, or shall consider Indigenous knowledge in making decisions pertaining to fisheries, fish and fish habitat, as well as provisions for the additional protection of that knowledge when shared in confidence. Work is underway at a National level to develop processes for how DFO receives Indigenous knowledge and applies it to inform decision making.

## **Economic Profile of the Fishery**

## **IFMP Section 4**

In 2018, British Columbia's commercial crab fishery accounted for 39% of the wholesale value of the province's wild shellfish products. The 2019 coast-wide commercial landed value is estimated to be \$91.68M (in 2019\$) which is a 75% increase from the previous five year average.

Crabs are important to coastal First Nations, who harvest them for FSC purposes. First Nations are also interested in economic opportunities through participation in BC's commercial fisheries. For 2021, 33 licences have been designated as communal commercial licences for First Nations participation in the commercial fishery.

Recreational interest in harvesting shellfish species is directed mainly at crab, prawn and shrimp. The National Survey of Recreational Fishing in Canada (2015) reports the direct expenditures made by all anglers in BC tidal waters (including: package deals, food & lodging, transportation costs, fishing services, fishing supplies, and other expenditures) totalled \$407.78M (2019\$), with an additional \$190.13M expended (on major purchases and investments attributed to recreational fishing by all anglers including: fishing equipment, camping equipment, boating equipment, special vehicles, land and/or buildings, and other).

## **Access and Allocation**

## **IFMP Section 7**

The Minister can, for reasons of conservation or for any other any other valid reasons, modify access, allocations and sharing arrangements outlined in this IFMP in accordance with the powers granted pursuant to the *Fisheries Act*.

First Nations FSC fisheries have a minimum harvestable size limit, gear restrictions, and participants are requested to release females with the least possible harm. To date, no species retention or trap limits have been implemented. The Department will continue to provide FSC opportunities for First Nations to harvest crab.

The recreational fishery has possession limits, gear restrictions, a minimum harvestable size limit, and non-possession of females.

The commercial fishery has a minimum harvestable size limit, limited commercial licensing, area licensing, area and vessel trap limits, soak limits, sex restrictions, soft-shell restrictions, gear restrictions, and permanent and seasonal closure areas.

## **Shared Stewardship Arrangements**

## **IFMP Section 9**

Vessel owners/licence eligibility holders are required to make arrangements with an industry-funded service provider for the delivery of in-season information to DFO as required by conditions of licence regarding electronic monitoring, biosampling, and catch reporting. The 2021/22 commercial crab service providers are Pacific Coast Fishery Services Inc. for areas B through J and Ecotrust Canada for Area A.

**Management Issues**

**IFMP Sections 4, 5 and 7**

#	Management Issue	Objectives	Management Measure
1	<p>Illegal Harvesting and incidental mortality.</p> <p>There is a concern that undersized, female and soft-shell crab are being removed through either unauthorized harvests, illegal/lost gear or incidental mortality due to intensive fishing.</p>	<p>To meet conservation objectives and ensure healthy and productive fisheries and ecosystems.</p> <p>Manage fisheries to provide opportunities for economic prosperity.</p>	<p>All recreation crab traps will be required to have at least two unobstructed escape holes or rings, a minimum of 105 mm in diameter for the 2021 fishing season starting April 1st, 2021.</p> <p>For the 2021 fishing season starting April 1st, 2021, recreational harvesters will only be permitted to set or haul crab gear from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset in PFMA's 14, 16 to 19, 28 and 29. Soaking traps overnight is still permitted.</p> <p>Hanging bait bans implemented in Areas E Tofino, H, I, and J in 2008 and in Area B in 2014.</p> <p>Commercial escape ring size and number per trap increased by 2011.</p> <p>2013 Area B winter closure to improve gear compliance and reduce over-soak violations.</p> <p>2013 expanded commercial trap allocation and trap tagging requirements with continued annual refinements being made.</p> <p>Biological sampling programs modified in 2014 to track changes in crab abundance, especially females and sublegal males, over time at particular locations throughout the coast.</p> <p>For 2017, haul restriction timing in Area E was adjusted to reflect the CSAS publication on E, G, H soft-shell timing.</p> <p>In 2021/22, there will be continued C&amp;P compliance monitoring of gear and harvest regulations.</p> <p>Standardisation of conservation management measures across all fisheries will continue to be consulted upon in 2021. This includes rot cord/rot panels, escape rings, release of females, holding cage marking and use requirements, and restrictions on night setting and hauling in the Southern Strait of Georgia and Fraser River Area.</p>

#	Management Issue	Objectives	Management Measure
2	<p>Illegal harvesting and selling of crab from closed areas.</p> <p>Crab from FSC fishing only under a consumption advisory warning are being sold commercially.</p> <p>Some commercial vessels continue to fish in closed areas or during closure periods.</p>	<p>To meet conservation objectives and ensure healthy and productive fisheries and ecosystems.</p> <p>To consider health and safety in the development and implementation of management plans, fishery openings and closures.</p> <p>To provide access to crab for First Nation FSC, Recreational, and Commercial opportunities</p>	<p>2013 Commercial electronic monitoring programs expanded to include cellular vessel tracking in all areas, (except Area “A” where cameras are employed).</p> <p>Commercial camera electronic monitoring implemented in Area B in 2016.</p> <p>There will be a continued C&amp;P focus on Area I &amp; J regarding FN unauthorized fishing and sales in the First Nations, recreational, and commercial fisheries. In 2021, DFO will be consulting with commercial harvesters and local First Nations around implementation of video camera monitoring in Area J.</p>
3	<p>Poor or absent catch accounting.</p> <p>Many commercial harvesters are late with providing fishslip and harvest log records.</p> <p>A lack of First Nation FSC and Recreational catch and effort information is provided to the Department.</p>	<p>To obtain accurate catch records from all harvesters.</p>	<p>DFO finalized the “Strategic Framework for Fisheries Monitoring and Catch Reporting in the Pacific Fisheries” in 2012. The framework directs that an ecological risk assessment be undertaken for all fisheries to determine the level of monitoring required. DFO has completed initial draft assessments, and presented to harvesters within the IFMP for review and revision.</p> <p>In 2021/22, there will be continued C&amp;P focus given to commercial harvesters that fail to provide fishslips and harvest logs in a timely manner to the Department as a condition of licence. Fines are commonly issued by the court to those failing to submit harvest logs within 28 days following the end of the month in which fishing occurred.</p> <p>Catch monitoring programs are being developed in collaboration with some First Nations organizations and standards for all fishery monitoring and catch reporting programs are being developed.</p> <p>Commercial harvesters able to renew their annual fishing licence only after submitting their previous year’s harvest logs.</p> <p>Continuation of iREC requirements for all recreational anglers, (a monthly on-line recreational survey).</p>

#	Management Issue	Objectives	Management Measure
4	<p>Commercial Crab Closure Requests from First Nations and Recreational representatives.</p> <p>A lack of catch and effort information results in a limited amount of information upon which to assess closure requests</p>	<p>To provide access to crab to all harvesters.</p> <p>To meet the federal Crown’s obligations regarding aboriginal fisheries for food, social and ceremonial purposes.</p> <p>To provide stability, transparency, and predictability in fisheries management and improved governance.</p>	<p>The Department will continue to work with harvesters to gather information and process harvest access requests.</p> <p>First Nations interested in bilateral discussion with DFO regarding FSC access issues should contact the resource manager for their area.</p> <p>Requests for improved recreational access are directed to DFO through the SFAB process and the representatives of the Crab Sectoral Committee.</p> <p>In 2015, seasonal commercial voluntary exclusion zones and best practices were developed in some locations to minimise harvesting conflicts and improve FSC and Recreational access.</p> <p>Since 2017 and 2018, three new commercial closures on the Central Coast have been implemented to facilitate First Nations FSC access. In 2021, six seasonally open areas have become closed to commercial access year-round, and 11 new area closures have been implemented.</p>

## **Governance Process**

The Crab by Trap fisheries are governed by the *Fisheries Act* (R. S., 1985, c. F-14) and regulations made thereunder.

Scientific advice for this fishery is peer-reviewed primarily through a committee called the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS).

The primary consultative body for crab is the Crab Sectoral Committee. This committee includes representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, commercial licence eligibility holders, processors, First Nations, recreational harvesters, the Province of BC, and others with an interest in the resource. The Sectoral Committee meets annually (or more frequently as required) to review and provide advice to the Department regarding management issues pertaining to the fishery and on the proposed management plan. Beginning in 2010, the industry sub-committee of the Crab Sectoral Committee also meets annually (or more frequently as required) to address commercial harvester concerns.

In 2021, a subcommittee of Crab Sectoral members may meet to develop recommendations for DFO on how the process can be amended to better represent the interests of the members.

## **Compliance Plan**

### **IFMP Section 10**

Conservation and Protection (C&P) staff will pursue opportunities to monitor and enforce this fishery, in conjunction with the monitoring and enforcement priorities directed by senior management in the Pacific Region.

## **Performance Review**

### **IFMP Section 11**

In efforts to support conservation and compliance within the commercial crab fishery, in-season and post-season reviews will be conducted for 2021. These reviews will include fleet and service provider compliance evaluations.

## **Fisheries and Oceans Canada Contact**

For additional information on this IFMP Summary or to request an electronic version of the full IFMP, please contact Dillon Buerk at 250-627-3477 or [Dillon.Buerk@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Dillon.Buerk@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)