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.
General Overview/Introduction

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 required 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

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.

In 2022, the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat (CSAS) is peer-reviewing a working paper to develop provisional biological reference points and precautionary approach framework in Crab Management Areas (CMAs) I and J, and the applicability of the methodology to other CMAs and/or the coast. This fulfillment of a previous request for scientific advice has realigned to focus on amendments to the *Fisheries Act* (Bill C-68) passed into legislation in 2019, and requirements to maintain major fish stocks at sustainable levels, and develop and implement rebuilding plans for stocks that have declined to the critical zone.

Indigenous Knowledge

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 2019, British Columbia’s commercial crab fishery accounted for over 18% of the wholesale value of the province’s wild shellfish products. The 2020 coast-wide commercial landed value is estimated to be $64.2M (in 2019$) which is a slight 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 2022, 34 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 $443M (2020$), with an additional $159M 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 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 required to release females. To date, no species retention or trap limits have been implemented outside of Treaty related agreements. 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 2022/23 commercial crab service providers are Pacific Coast Fishery Services Inc. for areas B through J and Ecotrust Canada for Area A.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Management Issue</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Management Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Illegal Harvesting and incidental mortality.</td>
<td>To meet conservation objectives and ensure healthy and productive fisheries and ecosystems. Manage fisheries to provide opportunities for economic prosperity.</td>
<td>All recreation crab traps have been required to have at least two unobstructed escape holes or rings, a minimum of 105 mm in diameter since 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 14, 16 to 19, 28 and 29. Soaking traps overnight is still permitted. Recreational crab traps will have standardization of float size and shapes voluntarily implemented for the 2022-23 season, with mandatory implementation as of April 2023, with details being communicated via fishery notices. Hanging bait bans implemented in Areas E Tofino, H, I, and J in 2008 and in Area B in 2014. Commercial escape ring size and number per trap increased by 2011. 2013 Area B winter closure to improve gear compliance and reduce over-soak violations. 2013 expanded commercial trap allocation and trap tagging requirements with continued annual refinements being made. 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. For 2017, haul restriction timing in Area E was adjusted to reflect the CSAS publication on E, G, H soft-shell timing. In 2022/23, there will be continued C&amp;P compliance monitoring of gear and harvest regulations. Standardisation of conservation management measures across all fisheries will be partially implemented upon in 2022. Management measures being implemented include escape rings and mandatory release of females, while further consultation is taking place around holding cage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Management Issue</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Management Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Illegal harvesting and selling of crab from closed areas.</td>
<td>To meet conservation objectives and ensure healthy and productive fisheries and ecosystems.</td>
<td>2013 Commercial electronic monitoring programs expanded to include cellular vessel tracking in all areas, (except Area “A” where cameras are employed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crab from FSC fishing only under a consumption advisory warning are being sold commercially.</td>
<td>To consider health and safety in the development and implementation of management plans, fishery openings and closures.</td>
<td>Commercial camera electronic monitoring implemented in Area B in 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some commercial vessels continue to fish in closed areas or during closure periods.</td>
<td>To provide access to crab for First Nation FSC, Recreational, and Commercial opportunities</td>
<td>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 2022, DFO will be implementing mandatory video camera monitoring in Area J.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Poor or absent catch accounting.</td>
<td>To obtain accurate catch records from all harvesters.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many commercial harvesters are late with providing fishslip and harvest log records.</td>
<td></td>
<td>In 2022/23, 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A lack of First Nation FSC and Recreational catch and effort information is provided to the Department.</td>
<td></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Management Issue</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Management Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4  | Commercial Crab Closure Requests from First Nations and Recreational representatives. | To provide access to crab to all harvesters.  
To meet the federal Crown’s obligations regarding aboriginal fisheries for food, social and ceremonial purposes.  
To provide stability, transparency, and predictability in fisheries management and improved governance. | Commercial harvesters able to renew their annual fishing licence only after submitting their previous year’s harvest logs.  
Continuation of iREC requirements for all recreational anglers, (a monthly on-line recreational survey).  
The Department will continue to work with harvesters to gather information and process harvest access requests.  
First Nations interested in bilateral discussion with DFO regarding FSC access issues should contact the resource manager for their area.  
Requests for improved recreational access are directed to DFO through the SFAB process and the representatives of the Crab Sectoral Committee.  
2015 Seasonal commercial voluntary exclusion zones and best practices were developed in some locations to minimise harvesting conflicts and improve FSC and Recreational access.  
In 2017 and 2018, three commercial closures on the Central Coast were implemented to facilitate First Nations FSC access. In 2021, six seasonally open areas were closed to commercial access year-round, and 11 new area closures have been implemented. Fifteen of these areas were closed to recreational crab harvest year-round, while two areas are new seasonal closures. Engagement with commercial and recreational stakeholders will continue in 2022. |
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 2022, 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 2022. 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 Rachel McGuinness at (250) 756-7277 or Rachel.Mcguinness@dfo-mpo.gc.ca