

WDFW – European Green Crab Update

Public Update on European Green Crab Management – Oct. 2022



Two invasive European green crabs removed from Grays Harbor near Westport by WDFW staff and partners in August 2022.

Report Purpose: *These regular updates are intended to inform the public, local stakeholders, news media, and others regarding the status of European green crab (EGC) management and emergency measures deployment in Washington state, supporting the public information responsibilities of the Incident Command System (ICS) and Public Information Officer (PIO).*

For additional information, please see: wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/invasive/carcinus-maenas European green crab news, communications and outreach materials are available under the Resources tab.

To report European green crab sightings or obtain identification resources, visit: wdfw.wa.gov/greencrab

October 2022 Updates

European Green Crab Incident Command objectives continue to include reduction of EGC populations to below levels harmful to environmental, economic, or cultural resources.

This report summarizes European green crab (EGC) captures, monitoring, and other emergency measures from October 2022, as well as field and partner highlights. We expect to issue additional updates in December to conclude the 2022 field season and share annual capture totals.

Many shore-based EGC trapping efforts are ending for the season or being significantly reduced for safety reasons due to shortened daylight hours, difficulty in tidal timing, and hazardous intertidal and weather conditions. WDFW seasonal technical staff have also finished their seasonal positions, so WDFW is shifting to developing and testing boat-based trapping opportunities to support year-round trapping needs. Read on for additional updates and highlights.

2022 European Green Crab Capture/Removal Totals

Total 247,897 as of October 31*
Latest Operational Period 29,272 (October 17 to 31, 2022)

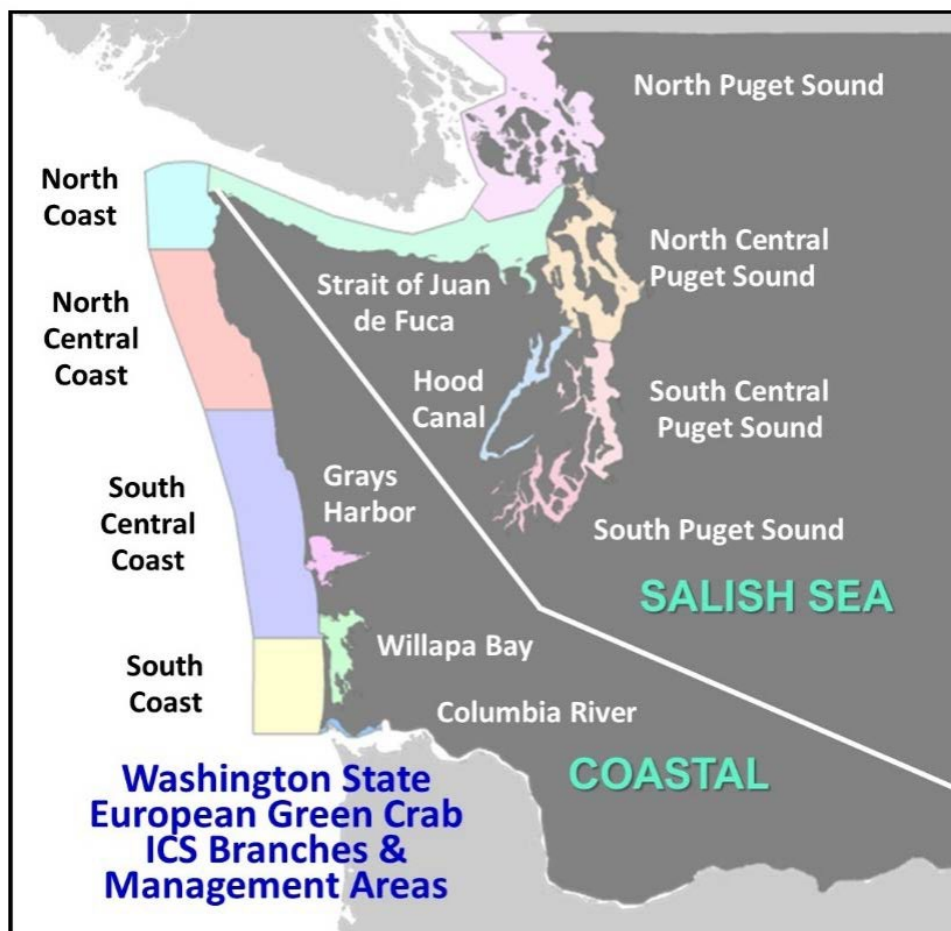
Coastal Management Branch EGC removal totals:

Year to date 169,097
 Latest Operational Period 27,184

Salish Sea Management Branch EGC removal totals:

Year to date 78,800
 Latest Operational Period 2,088

**WDFW is no longer including EGC removal data for specific areas in public reports in the interest of consistency. The high number of European green crab removed in 2022 reflects the coordinated deployment of significantly increased personnel, equipment, and other capture effort by WDFW, Native American tribes, shellfish growers, federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Read on for additional updates.*



10-Day Emergency Measures Status Update to the Governor (November 18, 2022): Per RCW 77.135.090, the WDFW Director continues to evaluate the effects of the European Green Crab emergency measures as provided under Proclamation 22-02, finds that the emergency continues to persist, and advises that all emergency measures should be continued. Details of the evaluation will be provided directly to you in Situation Reports (SitReps) issued every two weeks reflecting each Incident Command System operational period.

October News and Media Coverage Highlights

Coverage from state, local, and national outlets included:

- The Chinook Observer ran an article about new EGC tracking methods:
Willapa Bay green crab war enters new phase
https://www.chinookobserver.com/news/willapa-bay-green-crab-war-enters-new-phase/article_c1dbe004-53cc-11ed-965a-bf9fa9f8082f.html
- KTOO Alaska reported on efforts by the Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC) to trap recently detected EGC:
Metlakatla is now catching dozens of invasive green crabs each day
<https://www.ktoo.org/2022/10/11/metlakatla-is-now-catching-dozens-of-invasive-green-crabs-each-day/>
- KRBD Alaska also reported on the MIC's EGC control efforts:
Months after first sighting, Metlakatla is now catching dozens of invasive green crabs a day
<https://www.krbd.org/2022/10/05/months-after-first-sighting-metlakatla-is-now-catching-dozens-of-invasive-green-crabs-a-day/>
- Indian Country Today Newscast interviewed Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission Chairman Ed Johnstone of the Quinault Indian Nation about the EGC issue:
Northwest battles an invasive species
<https://indiancountrytoday.com/newscasts/10-04-22-northwest-battles-an-invasive-species>
The EGC section starts at 14:50.

General Updates

Coastal EGC Local Management Grant Program

WDFW is soliciting applications for a total of \$500,000 in funding available through the FY2023 Coastal Management Grant Program-European Green Crab for local, non-profit, or private entities that seek to conduct EGC removal on the Washington coast - **\$93,500** remains available as of October 16. More



information is available at: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/Green%20Crab%20RFP-Statement%20of%20Work%20FY23%207-1-22.pdf>

Statewide EGC Emergency Measures Interagency Funds Program

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is soliciting proposals for a total of \$1,100,000 in interagency agreement funding to support response to the European green crab emergency. **\$118,344** remains available as of October 31. More information is available at: <https://rco.wa.gov/about-us/employment-and-contracts/> or https://rco.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Solicitation_EuropeanGreenCrabFunding.pdf.

FY 2023-2025 Biennium Budget (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024)

WDFW EGC funding received from the legislature in this biennium is ongoing for the 2023-2025 biennium. At this time, WDFW is not seeking additional legislative EGC funding, and the assumption is status quo distribution of funds as issued for FY 2023, but WDFW will assess options for adjusting dispersal based on availability of alternative funding sources and any changes to EGC emergency management priority and resource needs. Starting in January 2023, WDFW will solicit budget/funding feedback from tribal co-managers and through entity representatives of the EGC Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group.

European Green Crab (EGC) Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group

The MAC Group held regular meetings. Discussions included recent Incident Command System (ICS) Situation Reports, MAC Group member updates, and applications for RCO EGC Emergency Measures Grant funding, as well as funding for EGC research, removal, and control efforts from WDFW and other funding sources.

Communications and Outreach

WDFW and partners conducted EGC outreach at several in-person events, and shared green crab [ID information](#), [fliers/signs](#), [stickers](#), and other resources with shellfish biologists and partners on the Olympic Peninsula, Washington State Parks, and other organizations.

Please contact WDFW's European Green Crab Outreach Specialist jessica.ostfeld@dfw.wa.gov to request signs, stickers, or materials, or to request attendance at events or outreach opportunities.

Partner Highlight: Interagency efforts expand European green crab control

How many traps does it take to control invasive European green crabs (EGC) in Washington state? Hundreds. Luckily, there are many allies involved to share the load, including state and federal agencies, Native American tribes, shellfish growers, universities and research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and community scientist volunteers. Below are highlights on the efforts of several state and federal government partners.



The **Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)** is helping to coordinate many of these partners through an EGC Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC Group), which facilitates interagency coordination amongst various partners, tribes, and research institutes and directs resources. Following MAC Group recommendations, RCO manages funding agreements for EGC management efforts to public entities including tribes. RCO is taking these actions in support of WDFW's response. In 2022, RCO is providing \$1.1 million in funding to public entities capable of assisting EGC control efforts. Funded entities include the Lummi Nation, Pacific County, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State University.

With additional funding, the **Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)** is working to expand the agency's capacity for responding to the European Green Crab Emergency. In October, DNR hired Alexa

Brown as their Coastal Region European Green Crab Coordinator, and DNR staff have been working with WDFW and USFWS teams to remove EGC on state tidelands in Grays Harbor and other areas. The agency also purchased a landing craft that will be delivered in time for the next trapping season, for which planning is already underway. DNR staff and partners have also started training for the upcoming season.

The **United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)** just finished up this year's trapping season. USFWS trapped 14 EGC at Dungeness Spit National Wildlife Refuge. At southwest Washington's Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS staff and partners, including WDFW and Washington Sea Grant (WSG), trapped 408 EGC at Long Beach on the west side of the refuge and 29 EGC at Greenhead Slough on the east side of the refuge. The USFWS sites are part of the WSG Crab Team, an effort by multiple agencies and entities to monitor and detect EGC with support from partners and volunteers. Traps were set during a rising tide, left to soak in the overnight high tide, and sampled the following morning. USFWS will resume trapping for EGC in April 2023.

Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is also wrapping up their EGC trapping season. The Reserve started early detection trapping for EGC in 2001. EGC were first caught in 2016, and only 23 crabs were caught up until this year. In 2022, 41 crabs were caught in just two weeks of October – almost double the number that had been caught over five years! In addition to trapping, the Reserve has been researching EGC larval development. Existing identification guides lack sufficient detail for identifying EGC larvae. To address this knowledge gap, the Reserve has been raising and observing EGC larvae through all developmental stages in a carefully controlled lab to develop an identification guide specific to the Salish Sea. The Reserve is also expanding its



A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staffer traps for European green crab in Willapa Bay in coordination with Washington Sea Grant and WDFW. Photo by USFWS / A. Hill.



education efforts this year, including engaging a university class from the Rosario Beach Marine Laboratory in four days of trapping.

Washington State Parks is also ramping up their EGC education and outreach efforts. Small numbers of EGC were detected at two locations in Cape Disappointment State Park in August and September. In response, Washington State Parks has supported EGC control efforts by educating the public on the issue through signage and outreach at Cape Disappointment.

Field Highlight: Senator Maria Cantwell visits Lummi Sea Pond

On October 11, 2022, Chairman William Jones Jr. and Lummi Indian Business Council (LIBC) members led Senator Maria Cantwell and her team on a tour of the Lummi Nation. The tour included stops at the construction site for the new Lummi Tribal Health Center, Lummi Counseling Services, Wex'liem Community Building, Lummi Bay Market at Exit 260, the Skookum Creek Fish Hatchery, and Lummi Bay Sea Ponds. See photos in the multimedia section of this report, below.

At the Lummi Bay Sea Ponds, Senator Cantwell put on a pair of boots and witnessed the work of the Lummi Natural Resources (LNR) European Green Crab team and their efforts to eradicate the invasive species. Overall, this visit allowed the Senator and her team to witness firsthand some of Lummi's current needs. It was expressed and demonstrated how important these areas of focus are for the community and how much effort goes into ensuring the work continues. Chairman Jones and LIBC would like to thank Senator Cantwell for visiting Lummi and continuously supporting their efforts.

The LNR European Green Crab team continues its work trapping and removing EGC from the Lummi Bay Sea Ponds (LSP), as well as monitoring the outer perimeter of the LSP and nearby areas of Lummi tidelands including the Lummi River estuary. While the EGC population within the LSP remains a significant concern, nearby areas are showing much smaller numbers of EGC. Repairs have recently been made to the north wall of the LSP to reduce potential for EGC spread. Trapping at the Sandy Point Marina on the north end of Lummi Bay continues to come up empty for green crab.

WDFW's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) unit continues supporting the LNR European Green Crab team with field support and trapping equipment at the LSP. Trapping is occurring both along shorelines / sea walls and in the center of the LSP thanks to LNR and WDFW watercraft made available through emergency measures funding provided by the state.

The WDFW team, consisting of up to nine technicians and one biologist, provided support at the LSP during the 2022 field season by conducting intensive daily removal efforts and monitoring of sentinel sites bi-weekly. WDFW Teams supported these efforts through utilization of two dedicated watercraft: an 18' jet outboard and a 20' outboard, and land-based field operations. To date, WDFW has supported LNR with more than 100 modified shrimp pots, buoys, bait, stakes, fukui traps, and other equipment.

Through the collaborative trapping efforts of the Lummi Nation Natural Resources team, WDFW AIS staff, contracted Lummi Fishermen, and support through the emergency measures funding



provided by the state, more than 75,000 European green crabs have been removed from the Lummi Sea Pond in 2022 to date.

Photos and Multimedia Highlight

Photos of Senator Maria Cantwell visiting the Lummi Bay Sea Ponds courtesy of Lummi Nation.



Public Reporting and Crab Identification

WDFW continues to receive reports from the public of native crab species misidentified for invasive European green crabs. While we appreciate the public interest in helping to identify invasive species, **these incidents are examples of why WDFW calls on the public to photograph and report suspected green crabs at: wdfw.wa.gov/greencrab**, returning the crab in question unharmed to the water where it was found. Most of these native crabs, including Graceful, Kelp, and Hairy shore crabs, are regulated as Unclassified Marine Invertebrates and are illegal to kill, harvest, retain, or possess. If verified as European green crabs, WDFW will follow up with trapping and monitoring if found in a new area.

Crab identification guides and resources are also available on that [webpage](#), as well as a flier at: https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/European_green_crab_reporting_sign_2022.jpg

European green crabs are shore crabs and are found in shallow areas—typically less than 25 feet of water—including estuaries, mudflats, intertidal zones, and beaches. They are not likely to be caught by recreational shrimpers or crabbers operating in deeper water, but may be encountered by beachgoers, waders, clam and oyster harvesters, or those crabbing off docks or piers in shallow areas.

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Summary Statement for Background

On January 19, 2022, Washington State Governor Inslee issued Emergency Proclamation 22-02 which ordered the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) “to begin implementation of emergency measures as necessary to effect the eradication of or to prevent the permanent establishment and expansion of European green crab.” This is a statewide proclamation for all marine and estuarine waters of the state that to be effective, will require coordination across state, tribal, and federal jurisdictions. To address this large and complex task, WDFW has implemented an Incident Command System (ICS) structure to facilitate a statewide European green crab (EGC) management strategy. The state Emergency Management Division has assigned this as Mission #22-1085. Since this is a relatively slower-moving emergency (as compared to earthquake or wildfire response), the ICS structure will be used as the overall framework for WDFW communications and coordination.

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Public updates on European Green Crab Management are posted at:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/invasive/carcinus-maenas>

For more information or for media inquiries, please contact the European Green Crab Public Information Officer at chase.gunnell@dfw.wa.gov or contact ais@dfw.wa.gov.

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