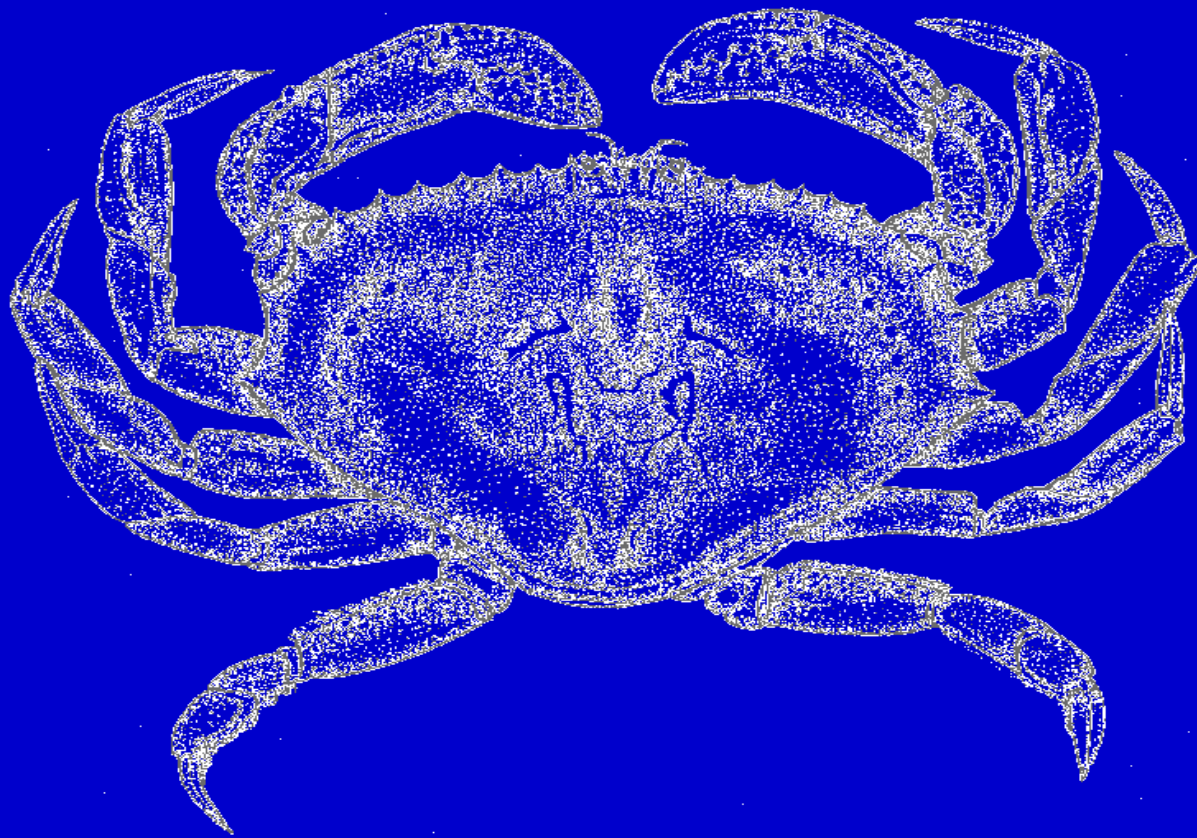


2012-13 Puget Sound Dungeness Crab Fishery



Rich Childers; Puget Sound Shellfish Manager, Fish Program

Mike Cenci; Deputy Chief of Enforcement, Enforcement Program

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

April 12, 2013

Presentation Outline

- Key elements of the Puget Sound crab fishery policy (C-3609)
- Performance and harvest of the 2012 Puget Sound commercial and recreational crab fisheries
- 2012 recreational crab fishery education and outreach program
- Crab fishery regulation compliance data collected by enforcement and fishery management staff

Puget Sound Crab Fishery Policy C-3609

- A revised policy was adopted by the Commission on October 1, 2010
- Protect and conserve the Puget Sound Dungeness crab resource
- Provides for recreational and commercial fisheries
- Maintains a base recreational season from year to year
 - July – Labor Day 5 days per week, including weekends
 - October – December Winter Season 7 days/week (dependent on state share remaining after summer season)
 - 5 crab daily bag limit
- Develop and implement cooperative education and outreach program

2012-13 Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

2007 – 2012 Recreational Dungeness Crab Catch Card Statistics

	Season	CRC Issued	CRC Returned	CRC Reported Internet	Percent Returns Internet + Returned
Summer	2007	210,327	34,400	32,373	32%
	2008	210,893	26,037	43,919	33%
	2009	236,665	37,128	72,172	45%
	2010	208,462	29,406	77,472	52%
	2011	230,355	31,222	89,095	52%
	2012	200,711	26,504	79,895	53%
Winter	2007	157,905	10,281	6,388	11%
	2008	207,143	10,993	10,871	11%
	2009	89,259	11,909	27,382	44%
	2010	70,763	9,633	27,346	52%
	2011	28,514	4,675	13,899	65%
	2012	27,711	4,508	13,357	65%

Number of “New” Recreational Crab Fishers 2010-2012

Season	Total Crab Endorsements Issued	New Recreational Crab Fishers	Percentage New Recreational Crab Fishers
2010	213,013	73,845	34%
2011	237,129	82,944	35%
2012	209,957	57,548	27%

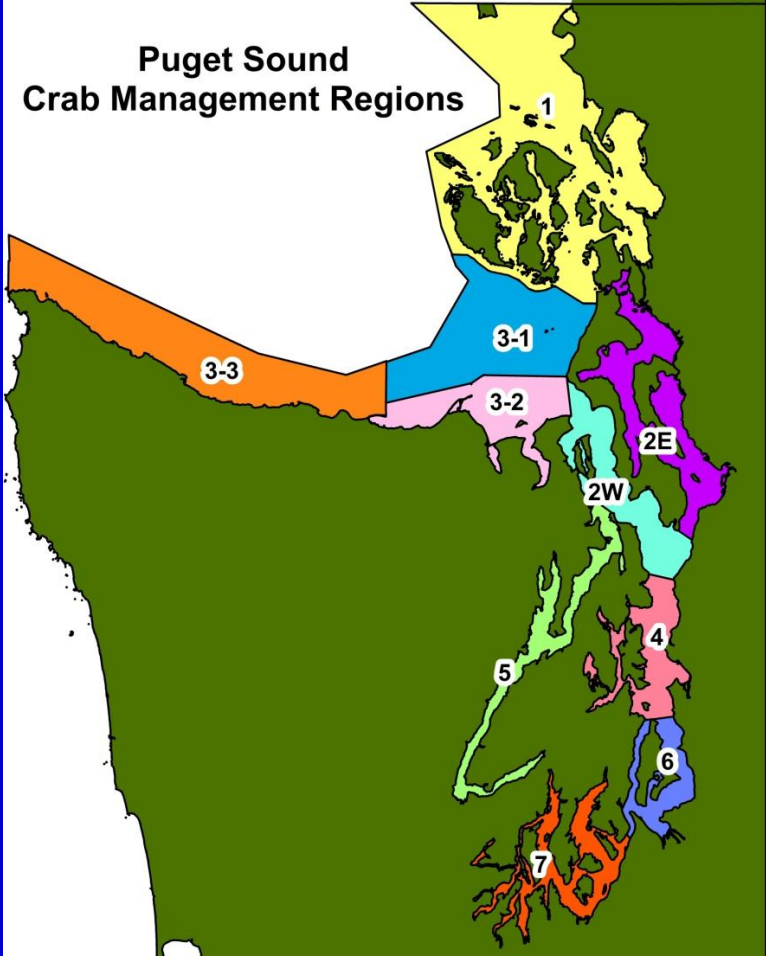
Number of Puget Sound Commercial Dungeness Crab Licenses Owned by Individual Fishers or Companies

- Limited entry fishery since 1981
- Limited to 250 transferable permits

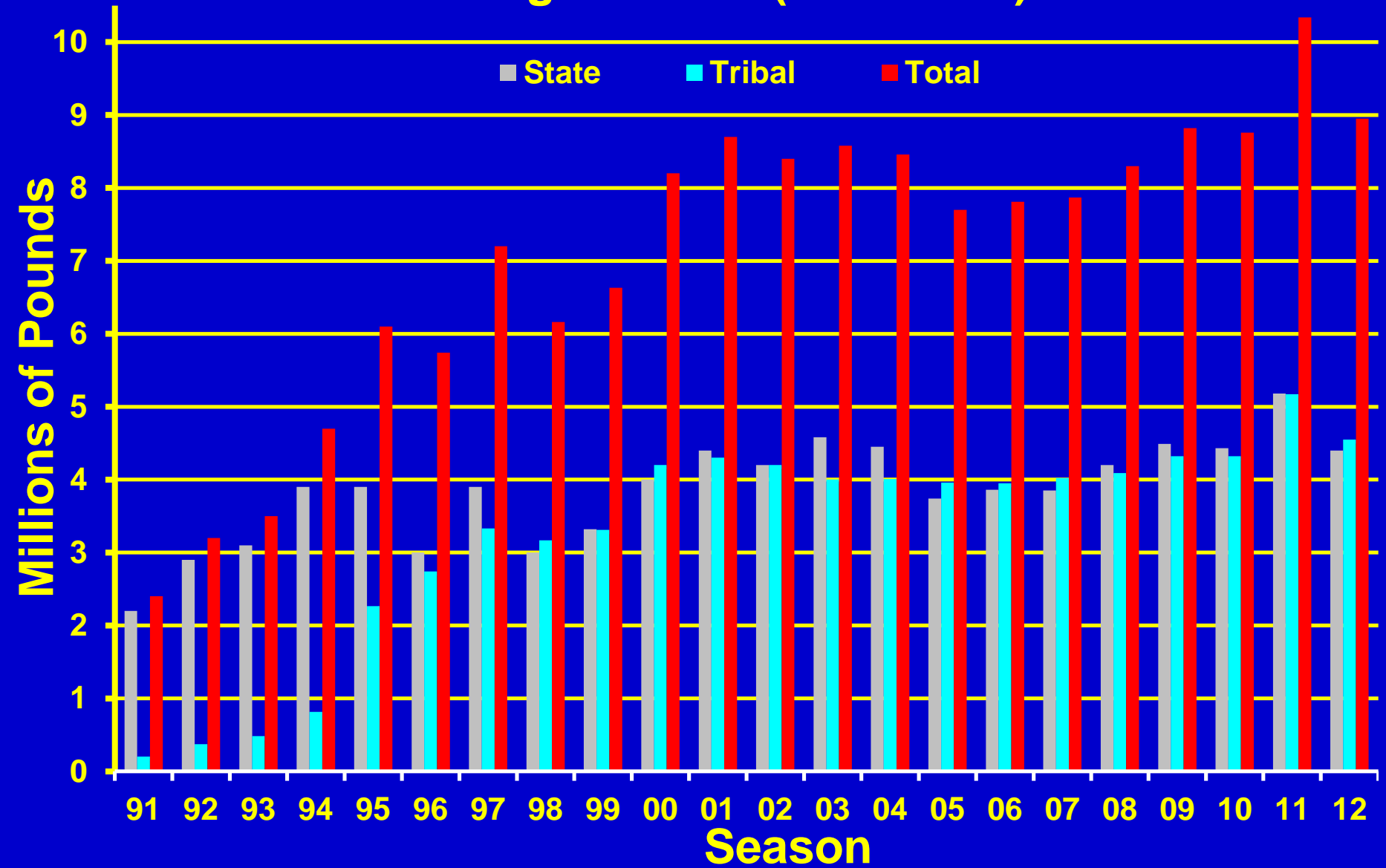
Number of Licenses Owned	2012-13 Season	
	Number of Owners (%)	Number of Licenses
1	86 (60%)	86
2	45 (31%)	90
3	4 (3%)	12
≥4	8 (6%)	461
Totals	143	249

Recreational and Commercial Fishery Openings in 2012-13

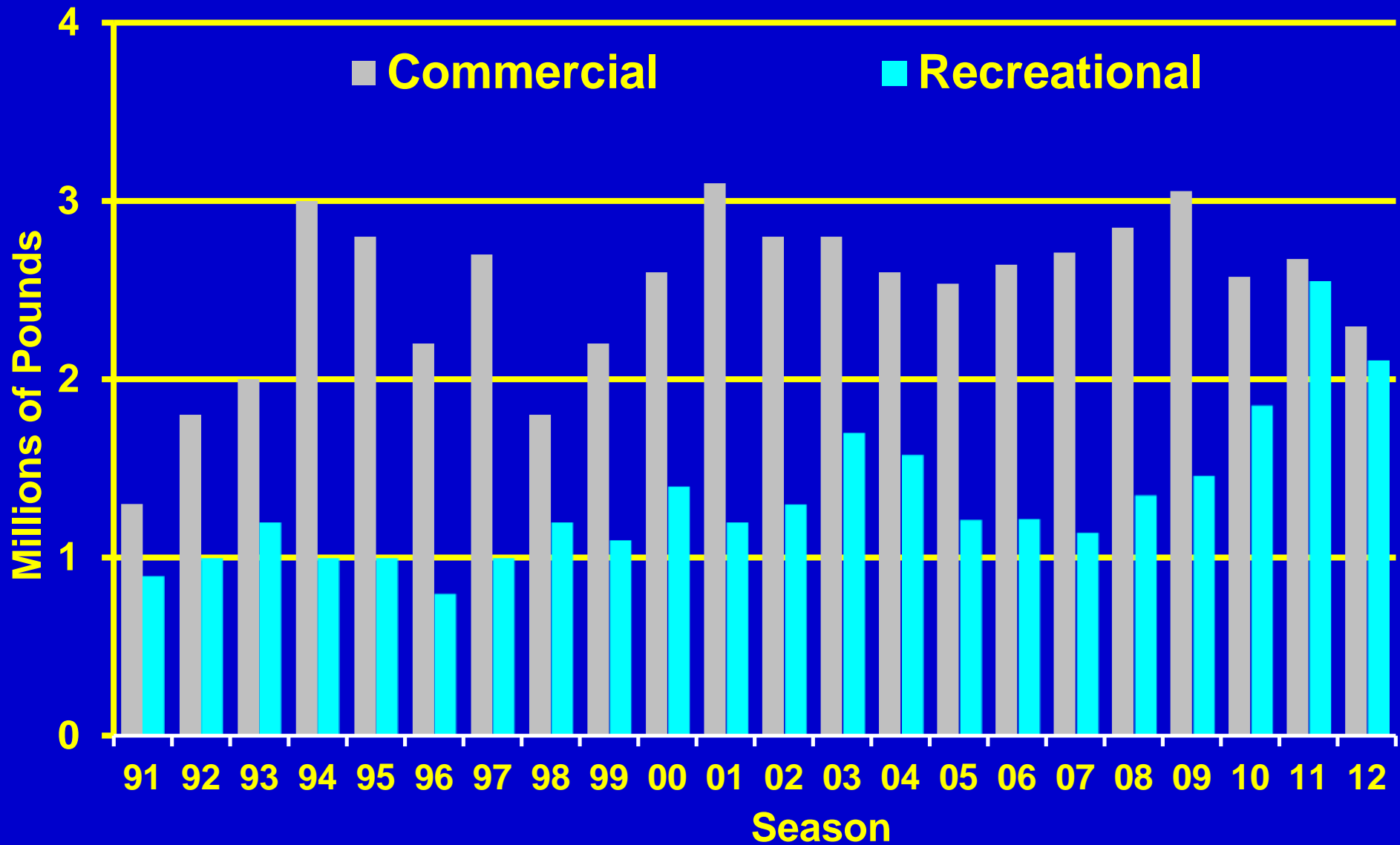
Region	Summer Recreational Season	Winter Recreational Season	Commercial Fishery
1	Yes	Yes	Yes
2E	Yes	Yes	Yes
2W	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Yes	No	
5	Yes	Yes	
6	Yes	No	
7	Yes	Yes	



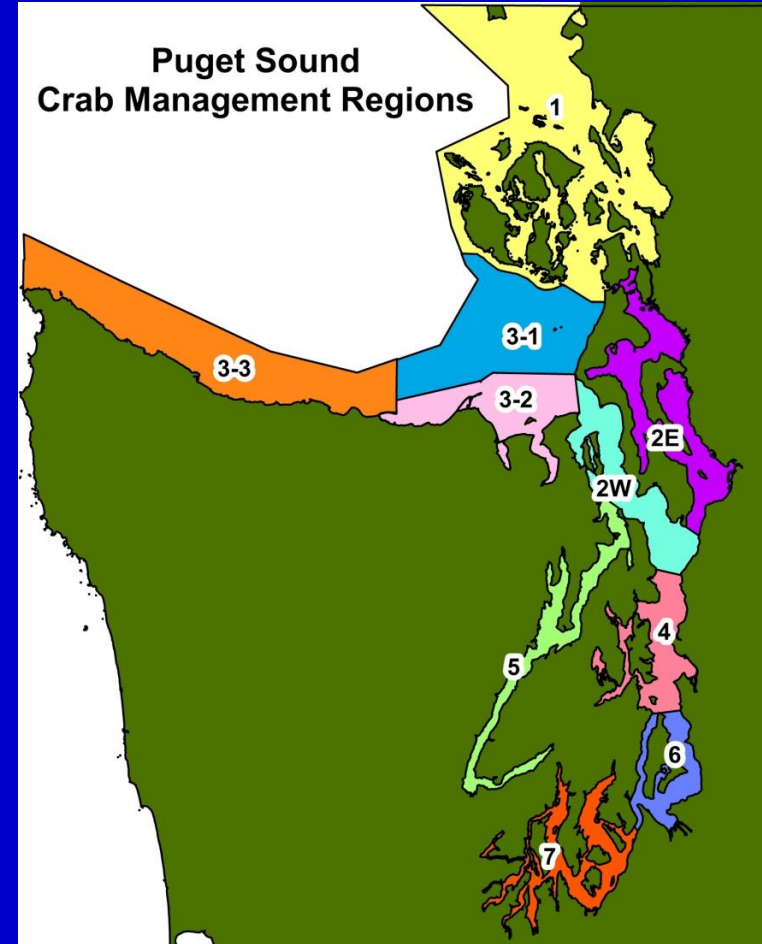
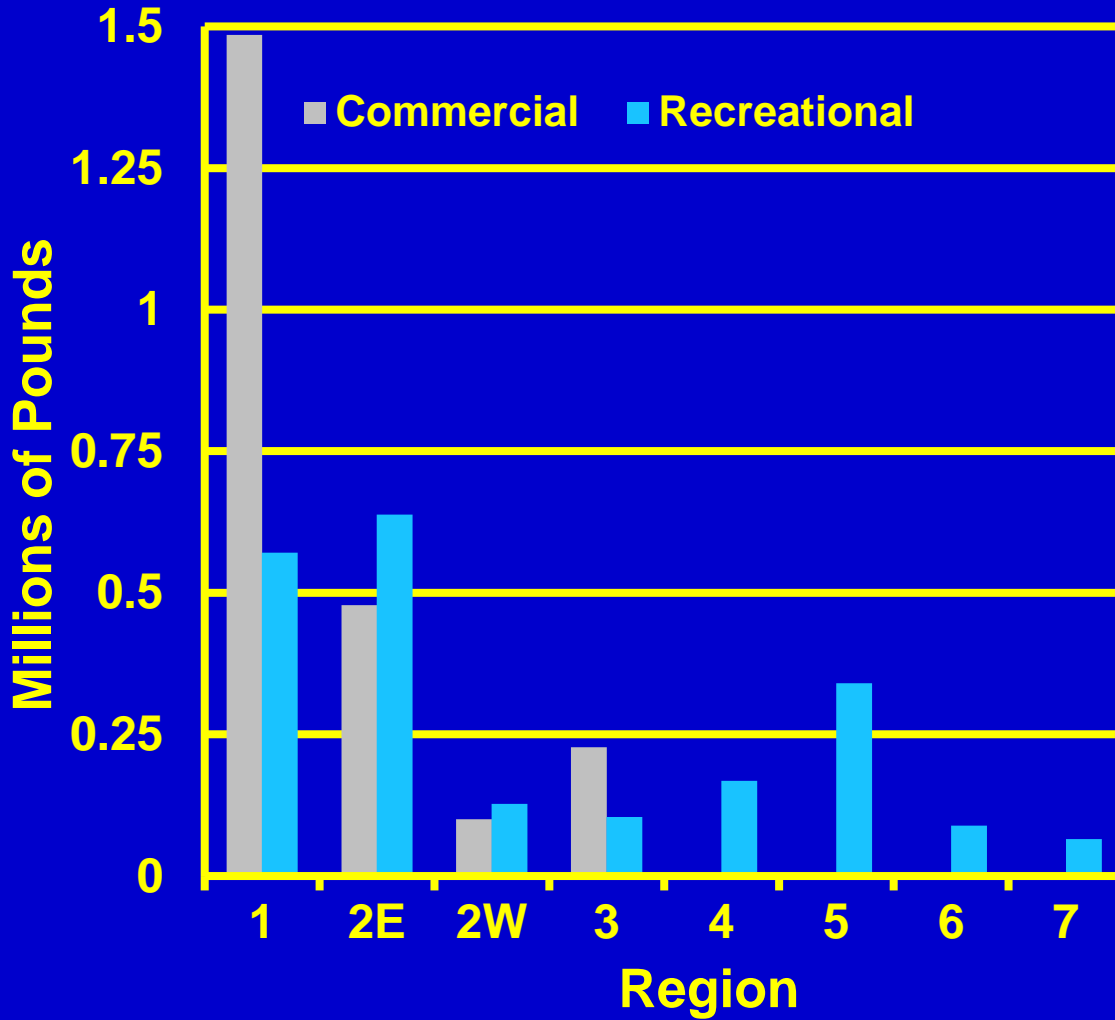
State and Tribal Dungeness Crab Harvest in Puget Sound (1991-2012)



Dungeness Crab Harvest for State Fisheries in Puget Sound (1991-2012)

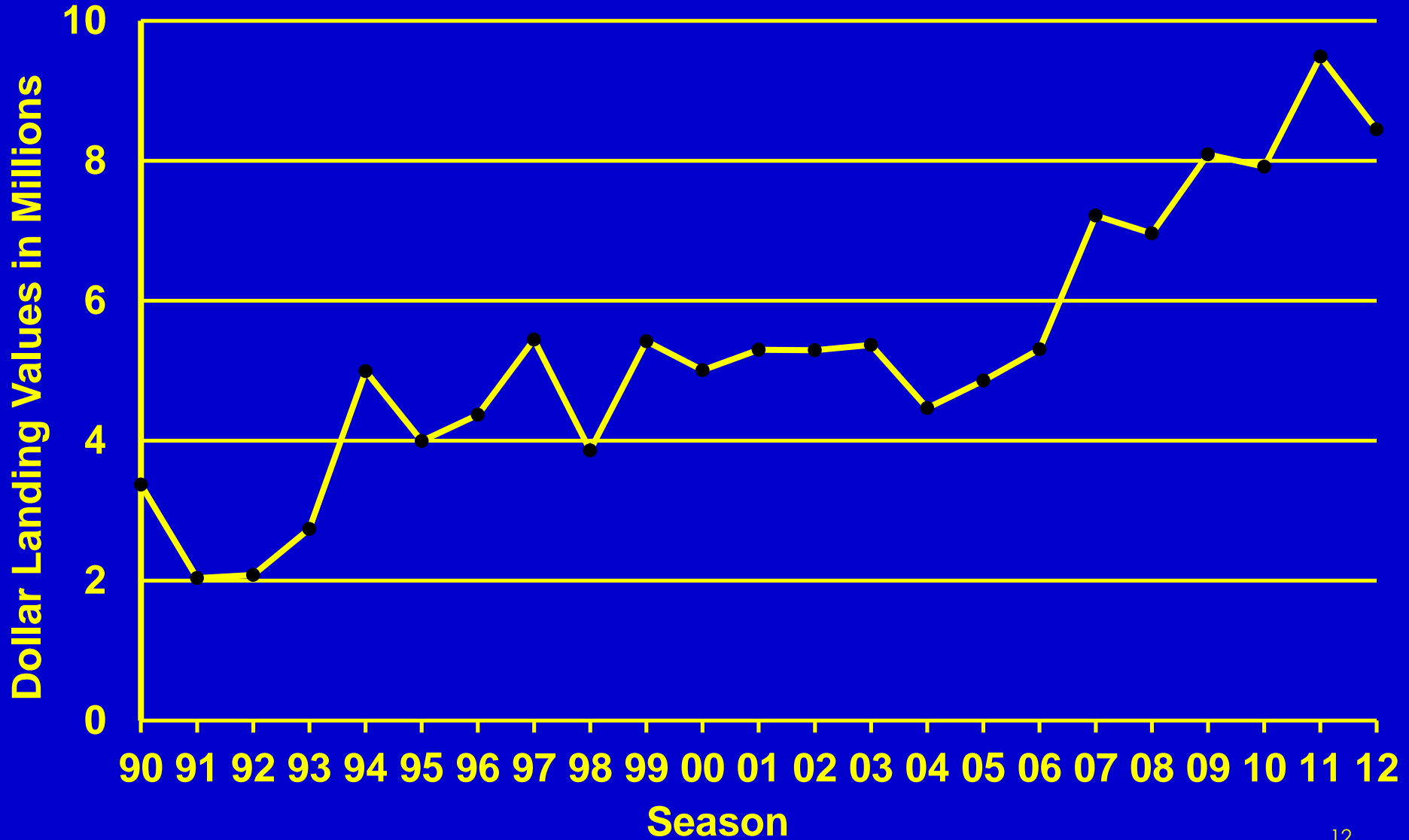


2012 Dungeness Crab Harvest for State Fisheries by Region



Total Adjusted Ex-Vessel Landing Values for the Puget Sound Commercial Crab Fishery (1990-2011 actual) (2012 projected)

Ex-vessel values were adjusted to 2012 dollars using a Consumer Price Index (CPI) conversion maintained by the United States Department of Labor Statistic



Enforcement - Education - Outreach



Education and Outreach Program

Long Term Goal Improve Regulation Compliance in the Recreational Dungeness Crab Fishery

- Key Program Message: **Know Before You Go**
- Education and Outreach partnership and steering committee
 - WDFW fishery managers and enforcement officers
 - Puget Sound Anglers
 - Coastal Conservation on Association
 - Northwest Marine Trade Association
 - Recreational crab fishery advisors
 - WSU Beach Watchers
 - County Marine Resource Committees (MRC)

Education and Outreach Program Focus

- Resource conservation violations
 - Possession of undersized or female crab
 - Rot cord/Escape cord
- Resource allocation violations
 - Exceeding daily limit
 - Failure to record and report catch
- Closed Season crabbing

2012 Education and Outreach Program

- Crabbing in Puget Sound brochures
 - Mailed to households that purchased crab endorsements
 - Distributed by license dealers and at education-outreach programs
- 25,000 additional waterproof regulation reference cards and calipers
- \$ 46,000 contract with WSU Beach Watchers to assist with crabber education program
- Boat shows and sportsman events
- Pre season newspaper and radio coverage
- WDFW offload site crab fisher interviews
- WDFW enforcement crab fishery emphasis patrols
- WDFW website link specific to Puget Sound crab
- “Report your catch” reminder post cards mailed to all fishers

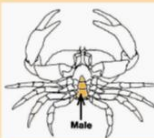
2012 WDFW - WSU Beach Watchers Crab Education Program

- **Goal: Educate crab fishers on conservation oriented crabbing rules and methods**
- **Focus : Reduce gear loss, rot cord use, crab measuring and identification**
- **Implemented and coordinated through eight county Marine Resource Committees**
- **Provided training and coordination for 71 volunteers**
- **Assembled 12,000 crabber information packets**
- **Contacted 19,700 anglers**



Eat More Crabs! Keep Your Crab Pot!

In 2011, over 10 million pounds of Dungeness Crab were harvested from Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. At the same time, 12,000 crab pots are lost each year, killing 178,000 male harvestable crabs that could have been harvested! To sustain a healthy population for our kids to catch AND to be able to go home with crabs and your crab trap, follow these simple steps!



Harvest Only Male Crabs, 6 1/4" or larger!

These are the crabs that don't contribute as much to future populations. Be sure to measure crab just inside the outer most points, and release all females.



Use More Line!
Use a line that is 1/3 longer than the water depth you are crabbing. Currents can pull a pot sideways and boats can drift into deeper water while pots are being set.

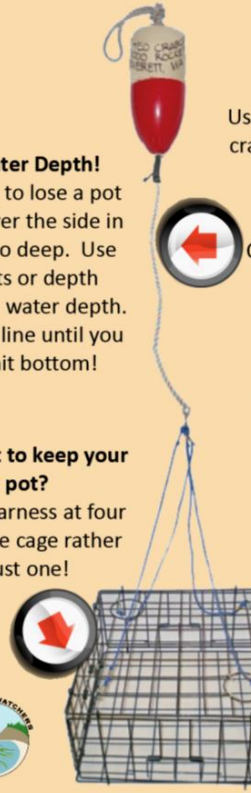
Use Weighted Line!
One way that pots get lost is when a passing boat cuts your floating pot line. To sink your line, use leaded line that you can purchase or add weights.

Know the Water Depth!
The easiest way to lose a pot is to toss one over the side in water that is too deep. Use nautical charts or depth finders to assess water depth. Hold on to your line until you feel the pot hit bottom!

REALLY want to keep your crab pot?
Attach the harness at four points on the cage rather than just one!

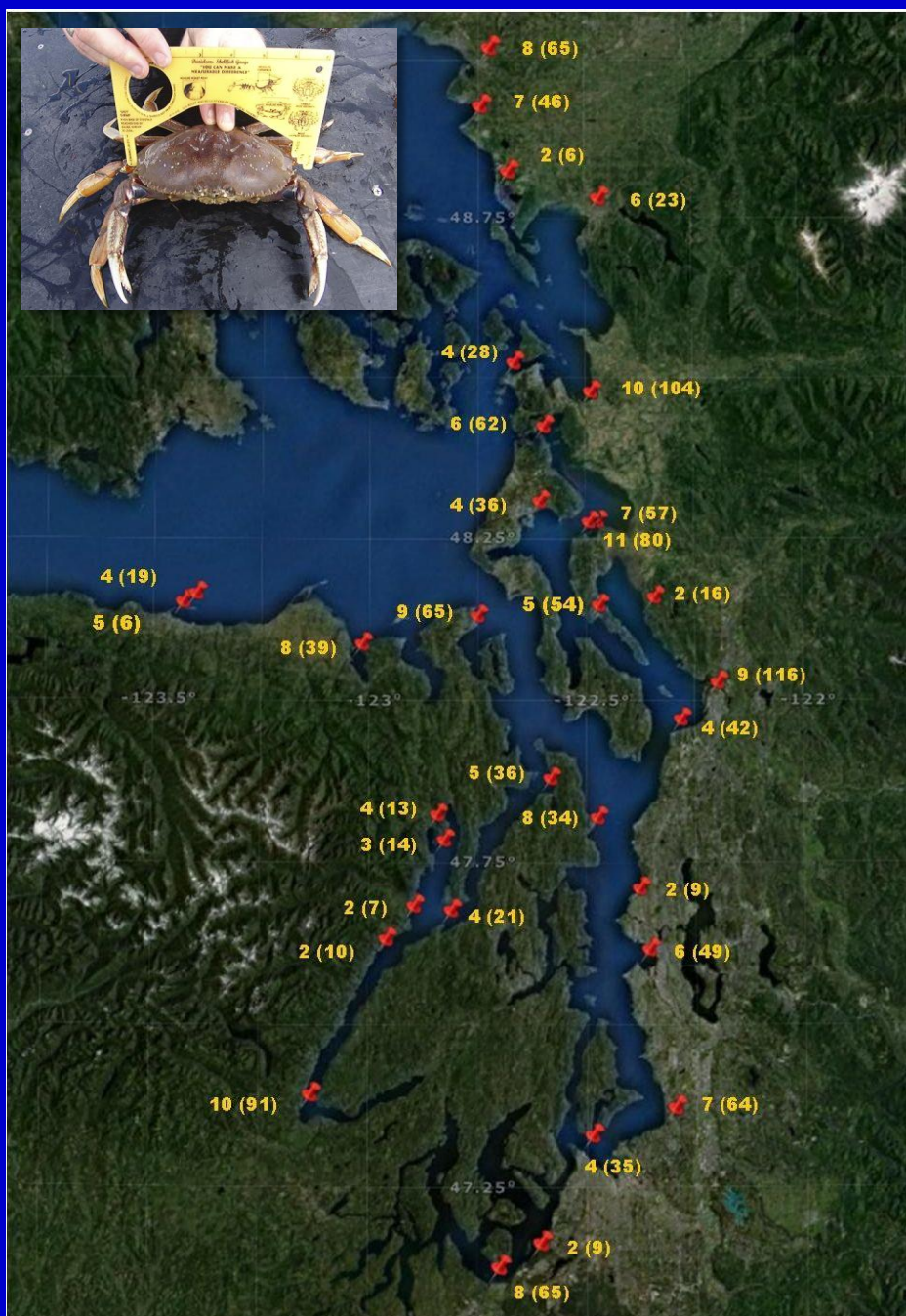
Watched Pots Never Roam!
Stay by your crab pots and you are more likely to come back with them all at the end of the day!

Use Escape Cord! Biodegradable cotton cord will break apart if a pot is lost to allow the crab to escape. Using escape cord can reduce the number of crabs killed by 30 or more annually!



2012 Offload Site Survey

- Survey locations and times were assigned systematically in 2012
- Goal: Collect CRC compliance data after crabbing trips are completed
- Surveys conducted at 32 boat launch sites between July 1 and September 30
- 179 site surveys conducted
- 1,343 crabbers were interviewed (1,203 successful crabbers)
- 4,644 crabs were measured



Results of the Offload Site Crab Fisher Surveys

Category	Offload Site Contacts (Successful Crabbers Only)		
	2010	2011	2012
Possession of undersize crab	10%	4%	6%
Possession of female crab	0.3%	0%	0.3%
Exceeding daily limit	0.7%	0.2 %	0.5 %
CRC in possession	98%	98%	97%
CRC violation (fail to record)	13%	11%	12%

WDFW Enforcement Crab Rule Compliance Emphasis Patrols



- 36 officers involved in summer 2012 emphasis
- Primarily on the water contacts
- 3814 fishers contacted (2,819 in 2011, and 1,790 in 2010)
- 6864 crab checked (4,729 in 2011 and 3,111 in 2010)



Results of Enforcement Emphasis Patrols

Category	Enforcement Contacts (Successful Crabbers Only)		
	2010	2011	2012
Possession of undersize crab	10%	8%	9%
Possession of female crab	0.6%	0.9%	0.8%
Exceeding daily limit	3%	3%	2%
CRC in possession	98%	98%	98%
CRC violation (fail to record)	24%	19%	20%

Enforcement – Fish Management Closed Season Compliance Emphasis patrols



The Proactive Approach



- **Closed season shellfish pot emphasis patrols initiated in 2011, expanded in 2012 to include all Marine Areas**
- **Recovery efforts focused on removal of unauthorized/lost/illegal gear before it becomes "derelict"**
- **Actual % of derelict pots (i.e. lost or abandoned) is unknown**

Contributing Factors

- **Lost or abandoned**
- **Closed season poaching**
- **Foreign fishing incursions**
- **Non-compliant gear**

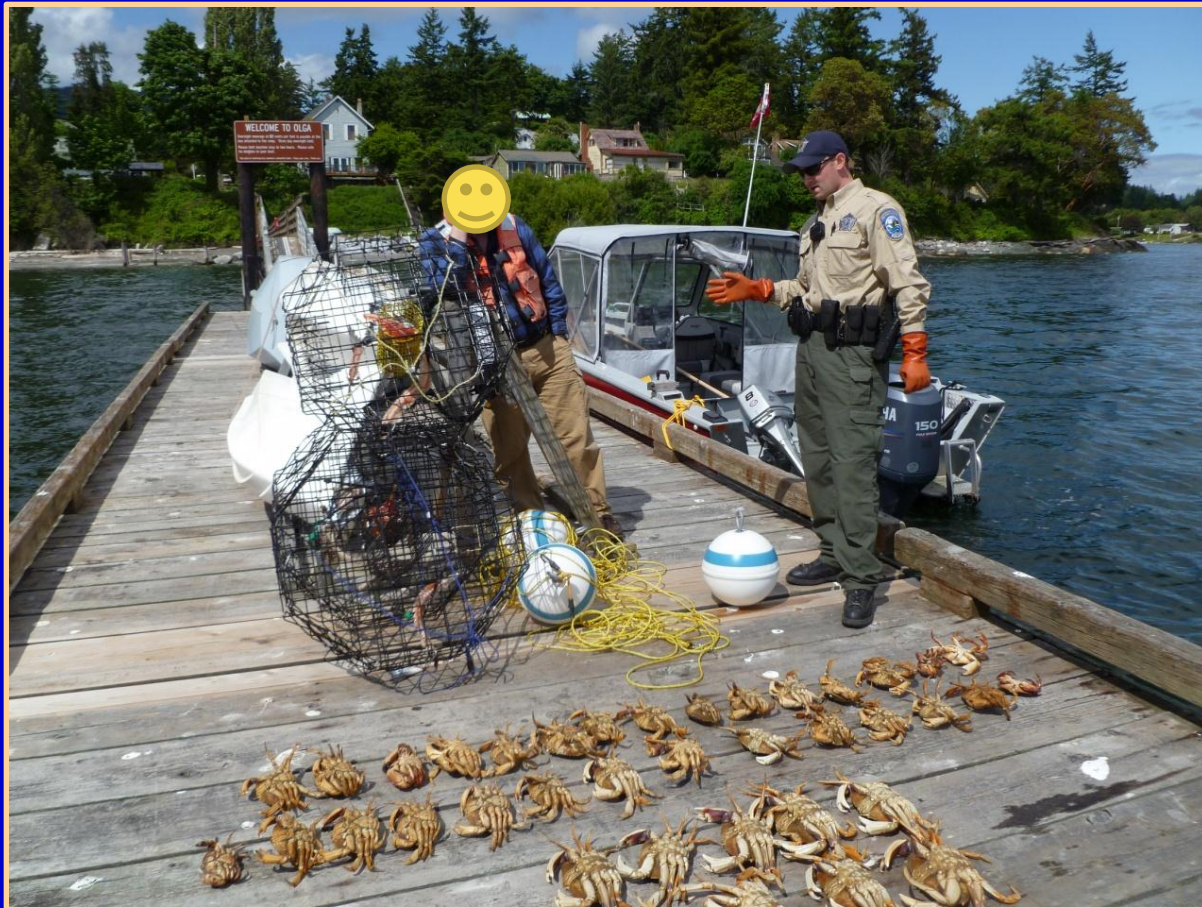
Puget Sound Closed Season Shellfish Pot Recovery Results



	Patrol Days	Pots Recovered
2011	42	1,319
2012	44	1,024
Total	86	2,343

Violator Types

Hardcore - Opportunistic - Confused / Uneducated



Summary

- Recreational fisheries were open 5 days per week in all regions from July 1 through Labor Day (Sept 5)
- Winter recreational openings occurred in all regions except 4 and 6
- Commercial fishery openings occurred in regions 1, 2, and 3 as per policy C-3609
- In partnership with organized angler groups and NGOs an extensive crab fishery education and outreach program was implemented in 2012
- Overall the regulation compliance in the recreational fishery is good except for the “immediate” recording of crab on the catch card
- Closed season gear removal emphasis patrols continue to be successful at removing large numbers of “derelict pots”

Questions

