

## **Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee Derelict Crab Pot Removal, Research, and Education**

The Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) focuses on preventing and removing derelict crab pots in Snohomish County waters. The MRC has supported derelict gear removals in Port Gardner and Hat Island and works to prevent crab pot loss through the Recreational Crabber Education Program. This program conducts outreach aimed at reducing the number of recreational crab pots lost in Port Susan, Possession Sound, and Port Gardner.

### **Removal and Research**

The Snohomish MRC has supported the removal of derelict crab pots from a specific study area in the commonly fished commercial, Tribal and recreational crab fishing area of Port Gardner. The removal of derelict crab pots occurred in 2004, 2005, 2008, 2009, and 2011 – 2015. Documentation and analysis on the accumulation of newly lost gear, causes for pot loss, and escape cord compliance rates help to identify trends and anomalies for lost gear in the area. This data assists in developing and evaluating effective recreational crabber outreach.



*Dungeness crab are pulled from a derelict crab pot in Port Gardner*

### **Key Findings and Accomplishments**

- Removal of 864 derelict crab pots from Port Gardner in 2004, 2005, 2008, 2009, and 2011 – 2015
- Crab pot loss reduced from 130 newly lost pots in 2009 to 44 newly lost pots in 2015
- Recreational crab pots represented 65% of pots removed and 72% of newly lost pots in 2015
- Escape cord compliance for commercial crab pots increased from 68% compliance in 2004/2005 to 79% in 2015
- Escape cord compliance for recreational crab pots increased from 79% compliance in 2004/2005 to 89% in 2015

- 2013 – 2015 removal surveys showed vessel strike and user error to be the leading causes for pot loss

## Recreational Crabber Education

The Snohomish MRC conducts education and outreach to local recreational crabbers. Efforts have included the following:

- “Keep Your Crab Pot, Eat More Crab” messaging developed and distributed on laminated nautical charts featuring best management practices and potential hazards such as log boom routes and marine transit routes
- Produced “Ghost Pots of Puget Sound” video highlighting derelict crab pot removal in Port Gardner
- Provided educational materials to recreational crabbers at the Puget Sound Speed Crabbing Derby, an annual crabbing contest hosted at the Port of Everett
- Launched #CatchMoreCrabSnoCo Instagram contest in 2015 encouraging recreational crabbers to post photographs of best crabbing practices on Instagram with random participants selected for prizes throughout the season

### **For more information contact:**

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