

WAC 220-330-020 Crab, shrimp, crawfish—Gear and gear-related unlawful acts.

General gear requirements:

(1) It is unlawful to take, fish for, or possess crab, shrimp, and crawfish except by hand or with hand dip nets, ring nets, shellfish pots, or any hand-operated, nonmechanized instrument. It is unlawful to harvest shellfish in any manner that penetrates the shell.

(2) It is unlawful to set, fish, or pull more than 2 units of gear per person per day, unless otherwise provided in this subsection. A unit of gear is defined as a hand dip net, shellfish pot, ring net or any other instrument used to capture crab, shrimp, or crawfish. A violation of this subsection is punishable under RCW 77.15.160, 77.15.380, or 77.15.370, depending on the circumstances of the violation.

(a) In Marine Area 4 east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line and Marine Areas 5, 6, 7, 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 (Puget Sound), it is unlawful to set, fish, or pull more than 2 units of crab gear and 2 additional units of shrimp gear per person per day.

(b) In Marine Areas 4, 5, 6, 7, 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, it is unlawful for the operator of any boat from which shrimp pots are set, fished, or pulled to have on board or to fish more than 4 shrimp pots.

(c) In the Columbia River, it is unlawful to set, fish, or pull more than 3 units of crab gear per person.

(d) In fresh water, it is permissible to use up to 5 units of gear per person to fish for crawfish.

(3) It is unlawful to violate the following provisions regarding unattended shellfish gear:

(a)(i) Unattended shellfish gear must be marked with a buoy that permanently, visibly, and legibly lists the first and last name and permanent mailing address of the owner.

(ii) Only one person's name and address may appear on a marker buoy.

(b) All buoys must consist of durable material. It is unlawful to use bleach, antifreeze or detergent bottles, paint cans, or any other container as a buoy.

(c) Buoys must remain visible on the surface at all times, except during extreme tidal conditions.

(d) The line attaching a buoy to shellfish gear must be weighted sufficiently to prevent the line from floating on the water's surface.

(e) Violation of this subsection is an infraction, punishable under RCW 77.15.160.

(4) It is unlawful to have more than one unit of unattended gear attached to a buoy line and buoy, or to fail to have a separate buoy for each unit of gear. A violation of this subsection is a misdemeanor, punishable under RCW 77.15.382 Unlawful use of shellfish gear for personal-use purposes—Penalty.

(5) It is unlawful for any person to operate a shellfish pot not attached to a buoy bearing that person's name, except that a second person may assist the pot owner in operation of the gear. A violation of this subsection is a misdemeanor, punishable under RCW 77.15.180 Unlawful interference with fishing or hunting gear—Penalty.

(6) It is unlawful to fish for or possess shellfish taken for personal use with shellfish pot gear unless the gear allows for escapement using at least one of the following methods:

(a) Attachment of pot lid hooks or tiedown straps with a single strand or loop of untreated, 100 percent cotton twine, hemp, jute, or sisal no larger than thread size 120 so that the pot lid will open freely if the twine or fiber is broken.

(b) An opening in the pot mesh no less than 3 inches by 5 inches which is laced or sewn closed with untreated, 100 percent cotton twine, hemp, jute, or sisal no larger than thread size 120. The opening must be located within the top half of the pot and be unimpeded by the entry tunnels, bait boxes, or any other structures or materials.

(c) Attachment of pot lid or one pot side serving as a pot lid with no more than 3 single loops of untreated 100 percent cotton, hemp, jute, or sisal no larger than thread size 120 so that the pot lid or side will open freely if the twine or fiber is broken.

(d) Use of gear in violation of this subsection is an infraction, punishable under RCW 77.15.160.

(7) It is unlawful to set shellfish pots in a manner that they are not covered by water at all times. Use of gear in violation of this subsection is an infraction, punishable under RCW 77.15.160.

(8) Gear setting and retrieval:

(a) It is unlawful to fish, or place or retrieve gear outside of open days and hours.

(b) It is unlawful to fail to remove gear prior to the closure of a fishery.

(c) It is unlawful to fail to remove gear from the water within one hour after sunset if fishing is not allowed on the next calendar day.

(d) In waters that are open continuously, shellfish gear may be left in the water overnight, but may not be set or pulled from a vessel from one hour after official sunset to one hour before official sunrise in Marine Area 4 east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line and Marine Areas 5, 6, 7, 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13.

(9) Crab pot gear requirements:

(a) All buoys attached to crab gear must be half red or half fluorescent red in color and half white in color. Flags and staff, if attached, may be any color. Violation of this subsection is an infraction, punishable under RCW 77.15.160.

(b) It is unlawful to fish for crab using shellfish pot gear greater than 13 cubic feet in volume.

(c) It is unlawful to fish for or possess crab taken with shellfish pot gear that are equipped with tunnel triggers or other devices which prevent free exit of crabs under the legal limit unless the gear is equipped with 2 or more escape rings located in the upper half of the pot and escape rings are 4 1/4 inches inside diameter or larger, except in the Columbia River where escape ring minimum size is 4 inches inside diameter.

(d) It is unlawful to use mesh size smaller than 1 1/2 inches for crab pots.

(e) Unless otherwise designated, a violation of this subsection is a violation of RCW 77.15.382. Possession of crab while using gear in violation of the provisions of this section is a rebuttable presumption that the crab were taken with such gear.

(10) Shrimp pot gear requirements:

(a) All buoys attached to shrimp gear must be yellow or fluorescent yellow in color. Flags and staff, if attached, may be any color. Violation of this subsection is an infraction, punishable under RCW 77.15.160.

(b) It is unlawful to take, fish for, or possess shrimp taken with shellfish pot gear unless the gear meets the following requirements:

(i) A shrimp pot may not exceed 10 feet in perimeter and 1 1/2 feet in height.

(ii) The entire top, bottom, and sides of the shrimp pot must be constructed of mesh material. Use of liners is prohibited.

(iii) Shrimp pot minimum mesh size:

(A) Year-round, Marine Areas 1, 2, 3, and 4 west of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line and shoreward of 20 fathoms, the minimum mesh size for shrimp pots is 1/2 inch. Seaward of 20 fathoms, the minimum mesh size for shrimp pots is 1 inch.

(B) May 1 through October 15, Marine Area 4 east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line, and Marine Areas 5, 6, 7, 8-1, 8-2, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, the minimum mesh size for shrimp pots is 1 inch, with the following exception: June 1 through October 15, in any Marine Area or portion thereof that is closed for spot shrimp but open for coonstripe and pink shrimp, the minimum mesh size for shrimp pots is 1/2 inch.

(C) Half-inch mesh is defined as mesh that a 3/8 inch square peg will pass through each mesh opening; flexible (web) mesh pots must have mesh size openings that are a minimum of 1 1/8 inch stretch measure.

(D) One inch mesh is defined as a mesh that a 7/8 inch square peg will pass through each mesh opening; flexible (web) mesh pots must have mesh size openings that are a minimum of 1 3/4 inch stretch measure.

(iv) Entrance tunnels to shrimp pots may be constructed of any size mesh material. All entrance tunnels must open into the pot from the side. The sum of the maximum widths of all entrance tunnel openings must not exceed half of the perimeter of the bottom of the pot.

(v) Unless otherwise designated, a violation of this subsection is a violation of RCW 77.15.382. Possession of shrimp while using gear in violation of the provisions of this section is a rebuttable presumption that the shrimp were taken with such gear.

(c) In the field, it is unlawful for each person harvesting shrimp to fail to use a separate container to hold their catch and the container must be in the harvester's presence or identified with the harvester's name. Violation of this subsection is an infraction, punishable under RCW 77.15.160.

(d) It is unlawful to dig for or possess ghost or mud shrimp taken by any method except hand operated, nonmechanized suction devices or dug by hand.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.013, 77.04.020, and 77.04.055. WSR 20-04-058 (Order 20-19), § 220-330-020, filed 1/30/20, effective 7/1/20. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.013, 77.04.020, 77.04.055, and 77.12.047. WSR 17-05-112 (Order 17-04), recodified as § 220-330-020, filed 2/15/17, effective 3/18/17. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.013, 77.04.055, 77.12.045, and 77.12.047. WSR 12-23-016 (Order 12-267), § 220-56-320, filed 11/9/12, effective 12/10/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.12.047. WSR 08-07-003, § 220-56-320, filed 3/5/08, effective 4/5/08; WSR 06-09-021 (Order 06-67), § 220-56-320, filed 4/11/06, effective 5/12/06; WSR 06-05-085 (Order 06-23), § 220-56-320, filed 2/14/06, effective 5/1/06; WSR 05-05-035 (Order 05-15), § 220-56-320, filed 2/10/05, effective 5/1/05; WSR 03-05-057 (Order 03-24), § 220-56-320, filed 2/14/03, effective 5/1/03; WSR 01-06-036 (Order 01-24), § 220-56-320, filed

3/5/01, effective 5/1/01. Statutory Authority: RCW 75.08.080 and 77.12.040. WSR 99-08-029 (Order 99-13), § 220-56-320, filed 3/30/99, effective 5/1/99; WSR 98-06-031, § 220-56-320, filed 2/26/98, effective 5/1/98. Statutory Authority: RCW 75.08.080. WSR 97-07-078 (Order 97-53), § 220-56-320, filed 3/19/97, effective 5/1/97; WSR 94-14-069, § 220-56-320, filed 7/1/94, effective 8/1/94; WSR 93-08-034 (Order 93-20), § 220-56-320, filed 3/31/93, effective 5/1/93; WSR 92-11-012 (Order 92-19), § 220-56-320, filed 5/12/92, effective 6/12/92; WSR 90-06-026, § 220-56-320, filed 2/28/90, effective 3/31/90; WSR 89-07-060 (Order 89-12), § 220-56-320, filed 3/16/89; WSR 88-12-025 (Order 88-28), § 220-56-320, filed 5/25/88, effective 8/22/88; WSR 87-09-066 (Order 87-16), § 220-56-320, filed 4/21/87; WSR 85-09-017 (Order 85-20), § 220-56-320, filed 4/9/85; WSR 84-09-026 (Order 84-22), § 220-56-320, filed 4/11/84; WSR 82-07-047 (Order 82-19), § 220-56-320, filed 3/18/82; WSR 81-05-027 (Order 81-13), § 220-56-320, filed 2/17/81, effective 4/1/81; WSR 80-03-064 (Order 80-12), § 220-56-320, filed 2/27/80, effective 4/1/80. Formerly WAC 220-56-088.]