

# Statewide Gear Rules - Crab, Shrimp and Crawfish

## Caution

Sportfishing rules for crab, shrimp and crawfish are subject to change based on allocation and/or soft shell conditions. Check the Shellfish Rule Change Hotline (866) 880-5431, the WDFW website <http://wdfw.wa.gov/> or watch your local media for potential changes. See individual species listings for seasons and other harvest rules.

One star trap, one ring net, or one pot is considered one unit of gear. The maximum number of units of gear that may be fished per person is;

**Puget Sound:** (Marine Area 4, east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line, and in Marine Areas 5-13).

**Shrimp:** Two pots per person, and no more than 4 shrimp pots may be on board or fished by any one boat at a time.

**Crab:** Two units of crab gear per person, and no limit on the number of units of crab gear per boat.

**Coastal Waters:** (Marine Areas 1-3 and in Marine Area 4, west of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line). It is unlawful to use more than two units of crab and/or shrimp gear at a time. Exception: Columbia River-Three units of crab gear.

**Freshwater:** Crawfish: Two units of gear may be used at a time.

## GENERAL GEAR RULES:

Every shellfish pot, ring net, or star trap left unattended in Washington waters must have its own buoy line and a separate buoy that is permanently and legibly marked with the operator's first name, last name, and permanent address (telephone number is voluntary). It is illegal to pull unattended shellfish gear with a buoy that does not have your name on it and only one name and address may appear on each buoy. Any angler may assist the person whose name is on the buoy while he or she is pulling the pot. No fisher may set or pull shellfish gear from a vessel from one hour after official sunset to one hour before official sunrise.

Buoys must be constructed of durable material (no bleach, antifreeze, detergent bottles, paint cans, etc.) and must be visible on the surface at all times except during extreme tidal conditions. Personal flags and staff if attached to buoys can be of any color. Buoy lines must be weighted sufficiently to prevent them from floating on the surface.

All crab, shrimp, and crawfish pots must be equipped with a biodegradable device consisting of either:

- (1) securing the pot lid hook or tie down strap with a single loop of cord; or
- (2) sewing a 3" by 5" escape panel in the upper half of pot closed with cord; or
- (3) attaching the pot lid or one pot side (serving as a pot lid) with no more than three single loops of cord.

Cord used must be untreated 100% cotton or other natural fiber no larger than thread size 120 or  $\frac{1}{8}$ ". This cord, when attached as described above, must be able to rot away and allow crab, shrimp, crawfish and fish to escape freely if the pot is lost.

## CRAB GEAR:

The minimum mesh size for crab pots is  $\frac{1}{2}$ " and all pots must have two  $\frac{1}{4}$ " minimum inside diameter escape rings in the upper half of the pot, except in the Columbia River, where the minimum is 4" inside diameter.

All parts of ring nets and star traps must lie flat on the sea bottom and may not restrict free movement of crab until lifted. Shellfish pots must be covered by water at all times while being fished.

All crab gear buoys must be half red and half white in color and both colors need to be visible when fishing.

## SHRIMP GEAR:

Pots must be constructed of either flexible or rigid mesh material (no liners allowed).

Entrance tunnels can be made of any size mesh material but must be located on the sides of the pot. The sum of the maximum tunnel widths must not exceed one-half the perimeter of the bottom of the pot.

Shrimp pots must not exceed 10 ft. in perimeter and 18" in height.

All shrimp pot buoys must be yellow in color.

## SHRIMP POT MESH SIZE:

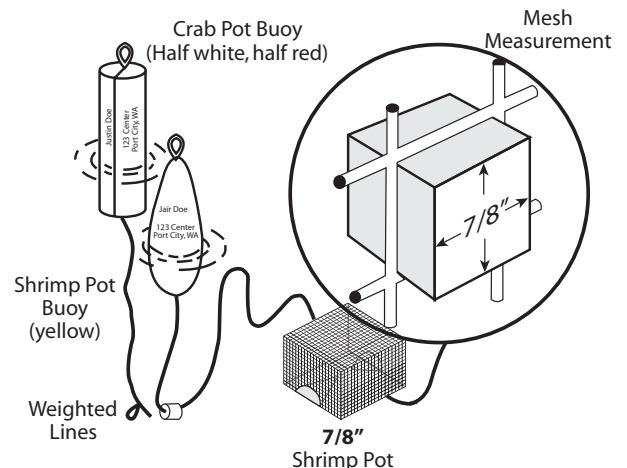
### Puget Sound

During the month of May, there is a  $\frac{7}{8}$ " minimum mesh size for all shrimp pots (a  $\frac{7}{8}$ " square peg must be able to pass through each mesh opening). See Diagram.

Starting June 1st, there is a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " minimum mesh size for all shrimp pots (a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " square peg must be able to pass through each mesh opening).

### Pacific Ocean

There is a  $\frac{7}{8}$ " minimum mesh size for all shrimp pots (a  $\frac{7}{8}$ " square peg must be able to pass through each mesh opening). See Diagram.



## LOST GEAR:

Do not attempt to salvage lost shellfish gear without first obtaining a permit from the Department of Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Program. Call (360) 902-2936