

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote:	8 - 0 - 1
Yeas:	Clem, Esquivel, Krieger, Reardon, Thompson, Unger, Whitsett, Witt
Nays:	0
Exc.:	McKeown
Prepared By:	Beth Patrino, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	3/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Prohibits person leaving crab pot used in ocean Dungeness crab fishery in waters of state more than 15 days after season closure. Authorizes State Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) to issue permits for removal of crab pots left in violation of removal requirement regardless of whether person removing crab pot originally set crab pot and if permit holder also holds boat license. Directs Commission to establish by rule provisions on disposition of crab pots removed by permit holder. Authorizes Commission to restrict removal of crab pots to specific geographic areas. Authorizes Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to exempt certain crab pot owners and requires ODFW to notify permit holders. Stipulates provisions of lost, unclaimed or abandoned property statutes not applicable to pots removed under Act. Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Crab pots that are not removed after crabbing season may tangle with other fishing gear
- More than 120,000 crab pots placed at start of season
- Success of similar program in Washington

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Changes requirement that permit holder also hold vessel permit for crab fishery to requirement that permit holder also hold boat license.

BACKGROUND: Dungeness crab have been commercially harvested along the Pacific coast since the late 1800's. The crabs are caught in circular steel traps commonly called "crab pots." A crab pot weighs from 60 to 125 pounds and measures 36 to 48 inches in diameter with a length of line and buoy attached to mark its position for retrieval. The ocean crab season along the Oregon coast begins on December 1 and runs through August 14.

Each year, the commercial Dungeness crab fishery has an estimated gear loss of 10,000 crab pots. Some of these pots are recovered by the owner, but some remain lost at sea until they are encountered by chance or targeted for removal. Lost gear can have a negative effect on the crab resource, marine habitat and the fishery itself. Currently, the state's personal property laws apply to these crab pots; the process for individuals who find items to return those items to their owner serves as a disincentive for removal of derelict or abandoned crab pots. House Bill 3362 A would exempt the retrieval of crab pots under an ODFW permit program from the personal property laws.