



---

## European Green Crab Proclamation

Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor have a significant European green crab challenge. European green crabs (EGC) are invading the intertidal zones of these important estuaries in rapidly increasing numbers and disrupting the unique local ecology of the bays, with potential negative impacts on coastal livelihoods, including the shellfish industry, the Dungeness crab fishery and traditional foods. So far, the Washington Coast has received insufficient funding from the Governor's Emergency Declaration to manage this invasion. The shellfish industry, Pacific County, the Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe, and other local partners in the Twin Harbors area have made a concentrated effort to trap and remove EGC, trapping over 100,000 crabs in a nine month period in 2022 alone. Despite this strong local response, EGC populations remain high and current levels of funding and capacity are simply not enough to handle the situation on the Coast.

On February 16, 2023, the Willapa-Grays Harbor Estuary Collaborative – a multi-constituent working group committed to increasing the resilience of local communities and ecosystems on the southwest coast – convened a panel of local and state organizations involved in EGC research and management. Based on the information shared and the discussions that followed, the Collaborative is issuing the following recommendations:

- **Cross-regional coordination from California to British Columbia.** EGC are transported on currents running up and down the Pacific Coast. We call for coordinated action to protect natural resources along the entire West Coast and limit further invasion of Washington waters. Robust responses in California, Oregon, and British Columbia – including national and international collaboration – are needed to advance EGC policy, management, and research across the entire region.
- **Increased federal response and resources.** Federal support in the form of funding and capacity is needed to enhance Washington's existing efforts and to address large populations of EGC from California and Oregon waters that continue to invade Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor.
- **Increased state response and resources.** State agencies, local governments, tribes, and industry organizations need additional funding and capacity to control the EGC invasion in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor.
- **Improved regulation and permitting.** Research and trapping efforts in the bays are currently limited by regulations and permitting processes that prevent fast and efficient deployment of available resources. Regulations and permitting should be streamlined to facilitate rather than constrain EGC research and management.
- **Management planning at the state and local levels.** Washington needs an EGC management plan to allocate resources efficiently and equitably across the state. A management plan specific to Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor should also be developed to address the high population numbers and significant potential impacts affecting local communities.
- **Research to inform IPM.** Research priorities must be identified and research funding sources must be created to support the development of a functional Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan for EGC.