



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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Report # B-7: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Report to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, October 2022.

The following information is a summary of the major updates from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) that the Service is involved in related to the affairs of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (Council).

I. Invasive Species

Invasive European Green Crabs were found near Metlakatla for the first time in Alaska this July. These crabs are considered one of the worst marine invasive species globally. Despite their smaller size, ranging approximately 2.5 to 4 inches in length, European Green Crabs have outsized impacts to near-shore ecosystems. They are aggressive feeders, consuming a variety of prey including native mussels, clams, juvenile oysters, crabs, and juvenile salmon. European Green Crabs are also destructive to eelgrass beds which provide important habitat for marine and anadromous fish, mammals, and avian species (e.g., shorebirds and sea ducks). European Green Crabs feed on eelgrass and tunnel into the sediment searching for food and shelter, damaging plant shoots and rhizomes, which can alter estuarine and nearshore marine processes. Once European Green Crabs become established in an area it is incredibly difficult to eradicate them and maximum control through intensive trapping is generally the only way to manage the population.

Early detection surveys have been occurring throughout Alaska for many years through community-based efforts. The Service will continue to partner with the Metlakatla Indian Community, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-Fisheries, and others to increase early detection efforts, collate data that can be used to help model potential distribution, and to raise awareness. While we know of only the current infestation in Alaska, these crabs move with ocean currents and ballast water discharge, so their full distribution is unknown. Please help look for live and dead specimens, and molts which can be washed up on the beach. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has a helpful guide for determining the difference between invasive and native crabs (https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=invasiveprofiles.europeangreencrab_characteristics).

If you're on Annette Islands Reserve and encounter a suspected European Green Crab, call 907-886-FISH. If you're anywhere else in Alaska, report it to Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Invasive Species Hotline at 877-INVASIV. Don't keep the crab, but rather take plenty of photos with a standard reference size, such as a coin or key. You can also report online using the [Alaska Invasive Species Reporter](#).

A rapid response drill will be occurring in 2023 to help organizations coalesce around a standardized response protocol. This rapid response drill will inform the revision of the State's rapid response plan to better reflect procedures and points-of-contact after an initial invasion. The Service is coordinating with several other entities to host this event and has secured a project facilitation team. The interagency planning team is seeking additional funding to cover travel for essential project partners, and materials for the rapid response drill.

For more information, please contact Aaron Martin, Regional Invasive Species Program Coordinator, at aaron_e_martin@fws.gov.