Oregon Entanglement Advisory Committee

October 30, 2026

9:30am-2pm

Ground rules


Photo: Pat Kight

- Listen to understand and ask questions.
- Focus on interests and ideas, not positions or single solutions. Share your expertise.
- Respect different viewpoints. Speak honestly and disagree without being disagreeable.
- Share the airtime. Everyone participate, no one dominate. One speaker at a time.

Agenda

Welcome and agenda overview

ODFW updates

- Recent entanglement record
- Conservation Plan development
- Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission August rulemaking
- Research updates

Pop-up and crab longline Experimental Fishing Gear Permits (EFGPs) discussion

- Areas for testing
- Performance criteria

---LUNCH BREAK---

Pop-up and crab longline EFGPs discussion *(continued)*

- Gear lending library

Public comment



2026 West Coast whale entanglements (to date, preliminary)

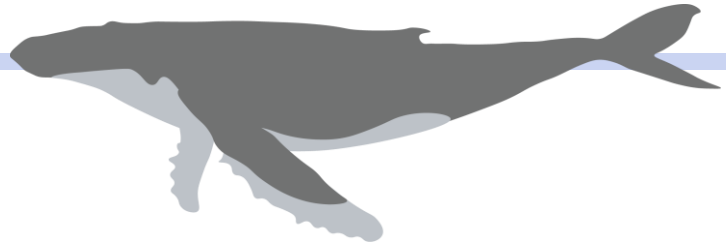
NMFS attribution	Humpback whales	Transient killer whales	Unidentified whales
OR commercial Dungeness crab	**3***	-	-
CA commercial Dungeness crab	**3**	-	**1**
WA commercial Dungeness crab	**3***	-	-
Gillnet	**5**	-	-
Sablefish pot	**3***	-	-
CA recreational Dungeness crab	**2**	-	-
Monofilament	**2**	-	-
Whiting midwater trawl	**2**	-	-
CA commercial spot prawn	**1**	-	-
CA commercial spiny lobster	**1**	-	-
Hook and line	**1**	-	-
WA tribal trawl	**1**	-	-
Canadian recreational prawn	**1**	-	-
Scientific buoy, unknown	**1**	-	-
Unidentified	**20**	**1**	**1**
TOTAL	**47**	**1**	**2**

*One humpback whale entanglement involved multiple gear types (sablefish pot, OR commercial Dungeness crab, WA commercial Dungeness crab). It is included in each fishery category but counted only once in the total.

2026 entanglements attributed by NMFS to OR crab gear

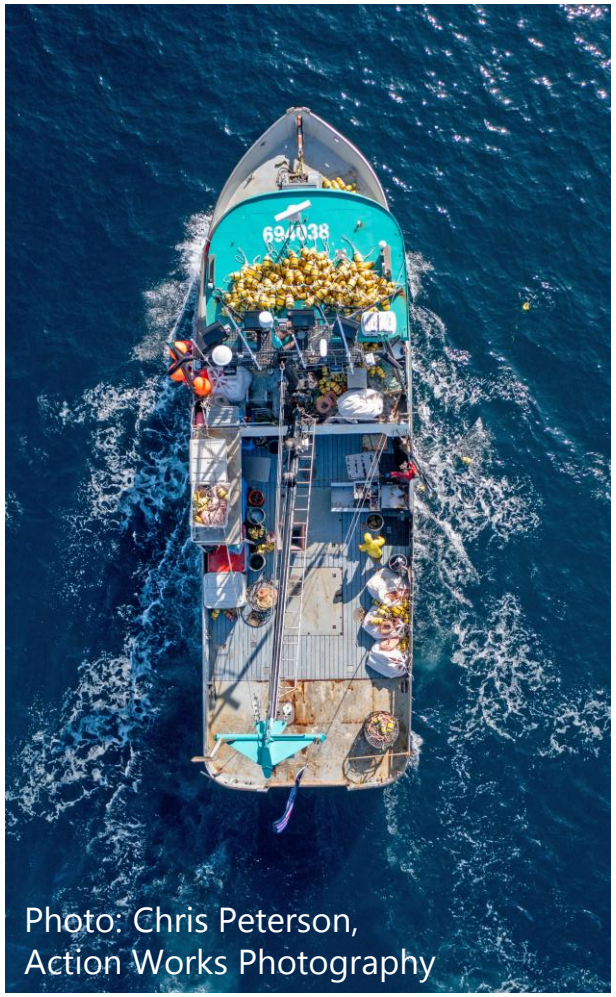
- Jan 6 – Humpback whale
  - Reported off Los Cabos, MX
  - Partial disentanglement
  - Identified as OR commercial crab gear based on buoy brand and markings (no tags visible)
  - Season could not be determined
- May 8 – Humpback whale
  - Reported off Winchester Bay, OR
  - Main season 2025-26 tag only
  - Gear owner could not be identified
- July 23 – Humpback whale
  - Reported off Newport, OR
  - Multiple gear sets including sablefish pot, OR commercial crab, and WA commercial crab
  - Full disentanglement, but critical injuries
  - Identified based on pot tag (no buoy present)
  - Season could not be determined, but suspected derelict gear

Conservation Plan status



- **Submitted to NMFS for "full team" final review on June 4, 2026**
- Anticipating comments from NMFS in the next few weeks
- Aiming to formally submit CP/ITP application by end of year, pending review of comments
- Key remaining steps:
  - NMFS reviews for sufficiency and, if necessary, works with ODFW to resolve any issues to deem the application 'Adequate and Complete'
  - NMFS carries out NEPA evaluation, Section 7 consultation, MMPA permit authorization*, public comment periods
  - NMFS makes ITP issuance determination

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission August rulemaking



- Presented five-year evaluation of risk reduction measures
- Commission adopted staff recommendations, related to:
  - Electronic monitoring (EM)
  - Experimental fishing gear permits (EFGPs)
  - Surface gear housekeeping

<u>Next steps</u>

- EM implementation underway, required starting Feb 1, 2027
- EFGP pre-implementation work, issue permits spring 2027

Research updates: Unobserved mortality

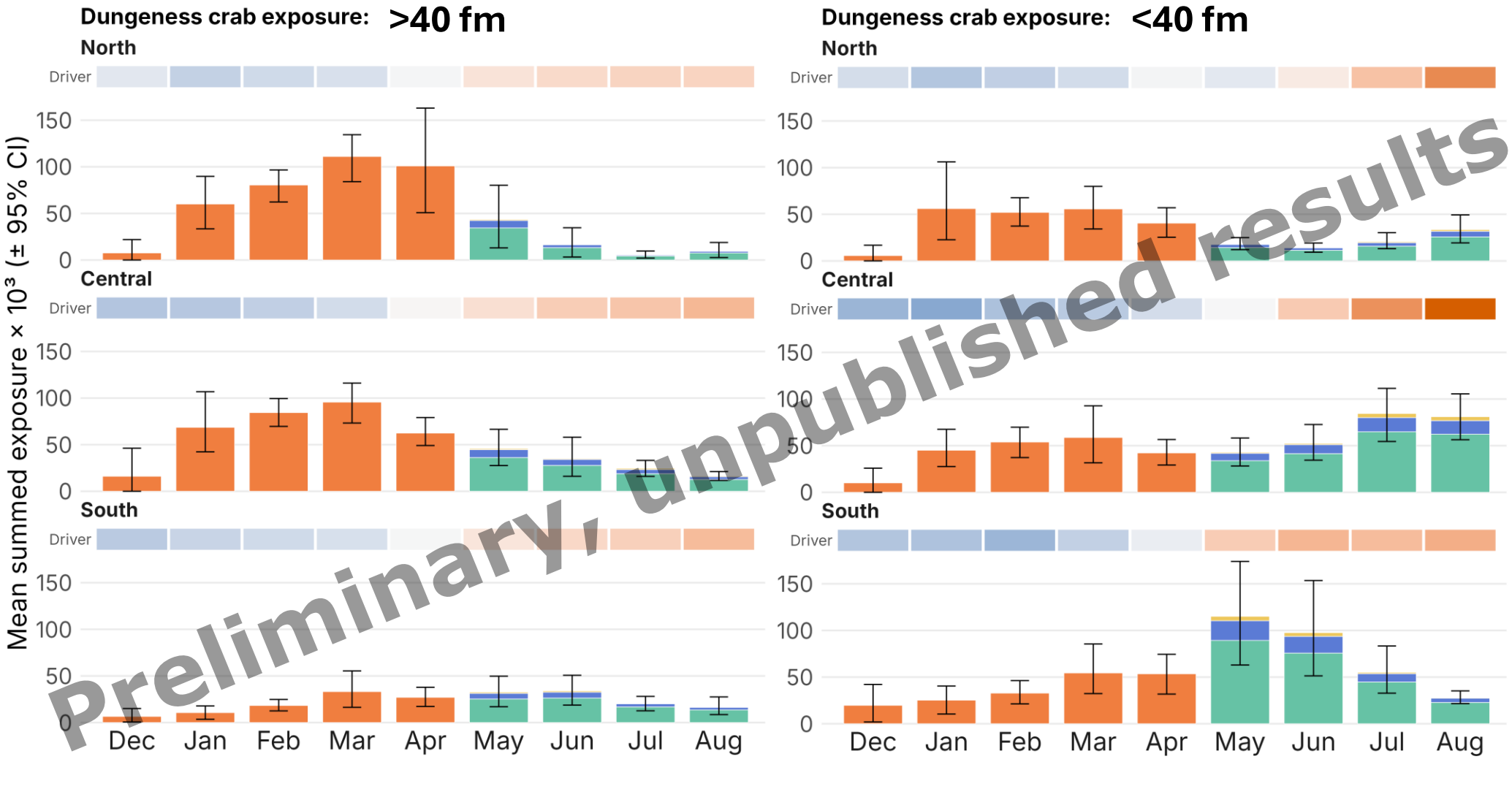
- **Unobserved mortality** refers to whales that get entangled in gear and succumb to mortality or serious injury without being observed.
- NOAA Fisheries draft preliminary model results suggest that true entanglement numbers are up to 5x higher than observed reports.
- NOAA Fisheries prioritized agency actions is to

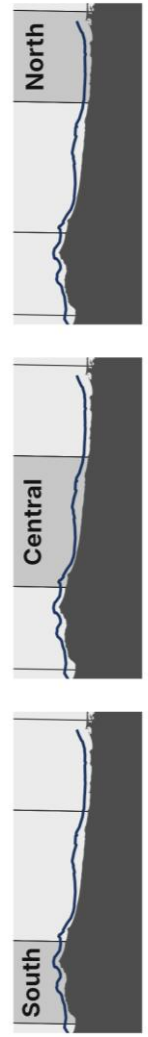
  "...launch a "Gold Standard" science review of entanglement risk models for the Dungeness crab fishery...."

- Tri-State coordination on review and response



Humpback whale (by DPS) exposure to Dungeness crab





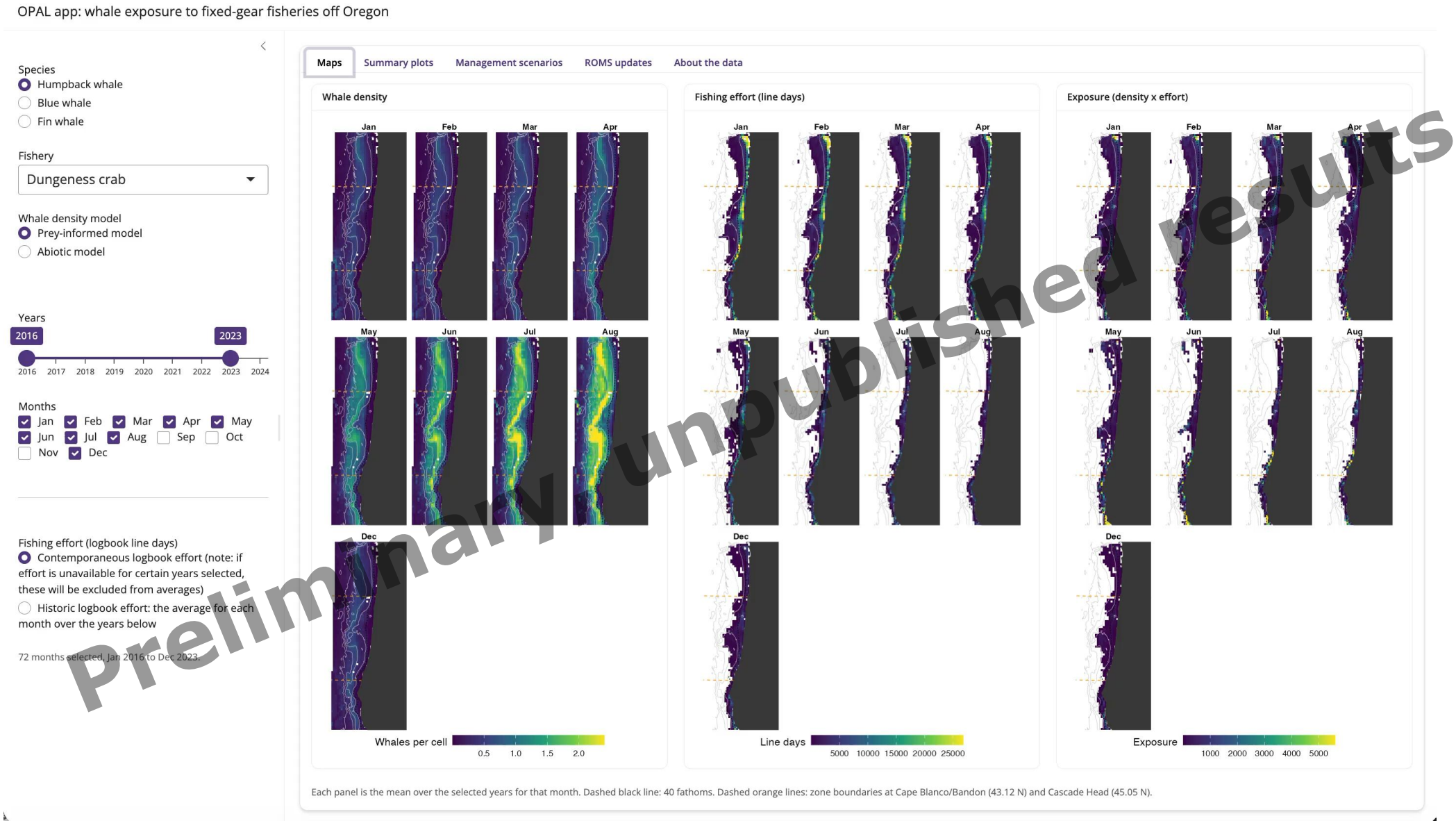
All humpbacks (DPS unknown) | Mexico | Central America | Hawaii

Driver index

0 fishing-driven | 0.5 | 1 whale-driven

Other fisheries with relatively high exposure in Sep, Oct, Nov: Sablefish pot fishery north and central, Spotprawn pot fishery south

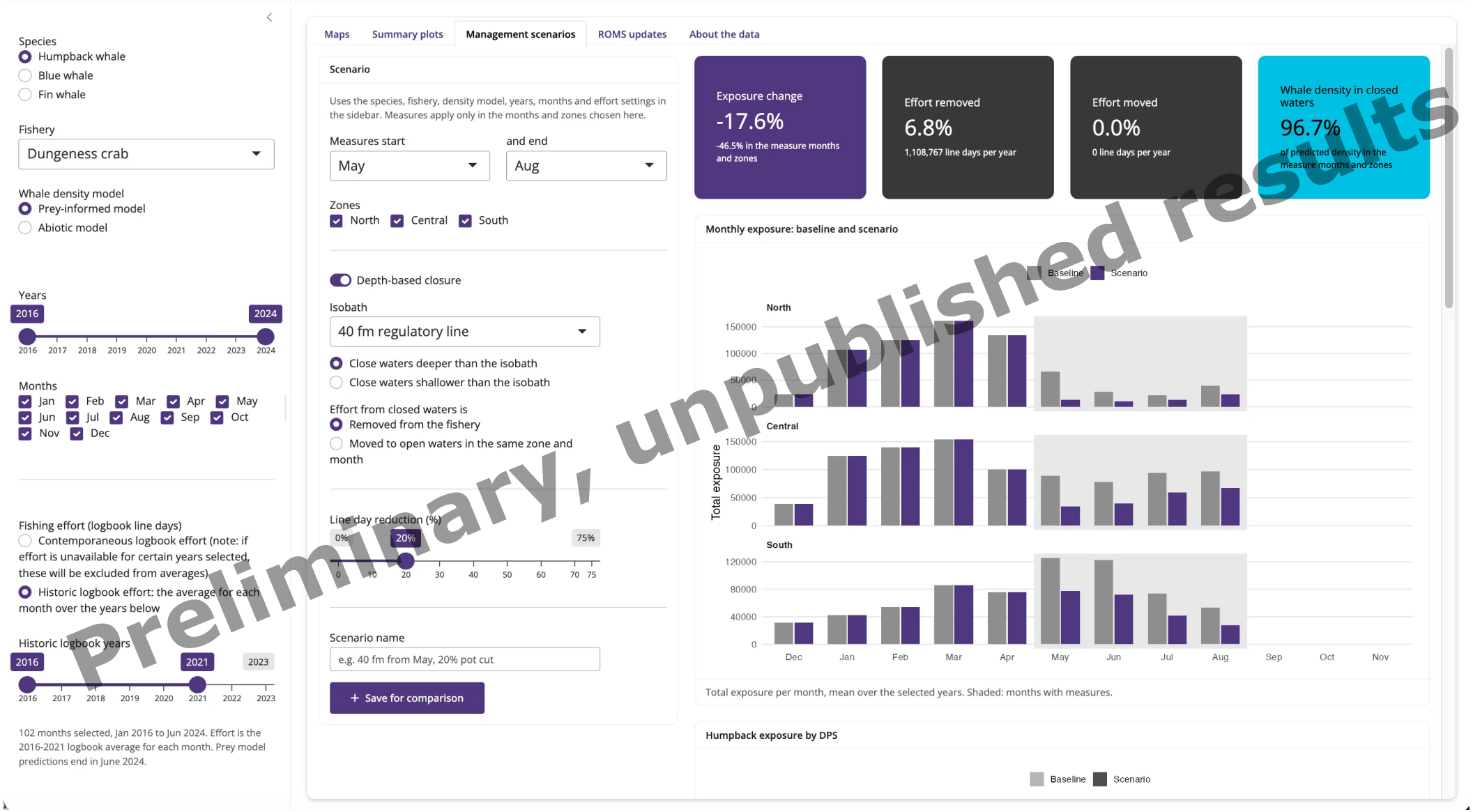
App: Interactive maps/summaries of whale density and fishing effort overlap



Preliminary, unpublished results

Sensitivity analysis of management measures

OPAL app: whale exposure to fixed-gear fisheries off Oregon



Preliminary, unpublished results

Experimental Fishing Gear Permits (EFGPs)

Controlled test of pop-up and longline gear in Oregon

- Alone or in combination
- Evaluate future use in designated times and areas
- Consider enforcement issues, gear conflicts, safety

OEAC feedback request

- Areas for testing
- Performance criteria
- Gear lending library





EFGP Testing Areas

First year EFGP program we are focusing on testing gear outside of 40 fathom starting in the late season (May- August)

- Avoid gear conflicts
- Test in realistic conditions

How should testing areas be defined?

- Depth
- Latitudinal
- Specific Geographic Areas
- Exclusion Areas

Testing Areas

Crab:

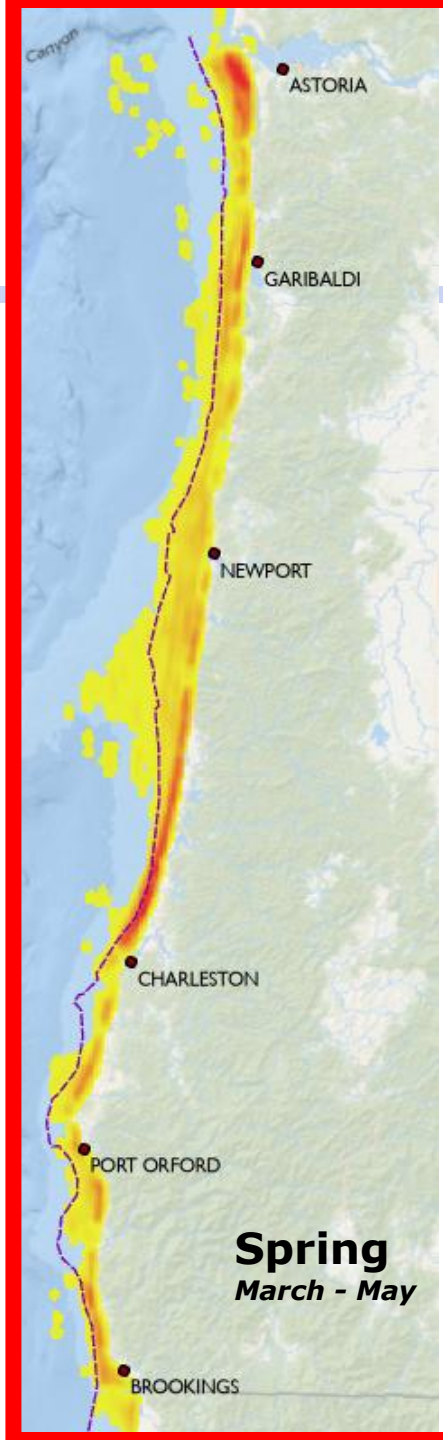
Pot Pulls

High

Low









40 fathom contour

N

0 15 30 60

Nautical Miles

Testing Areas

Crab:
Pot Pulls

High
Low

Pink Shrimp:
Trawl Tows

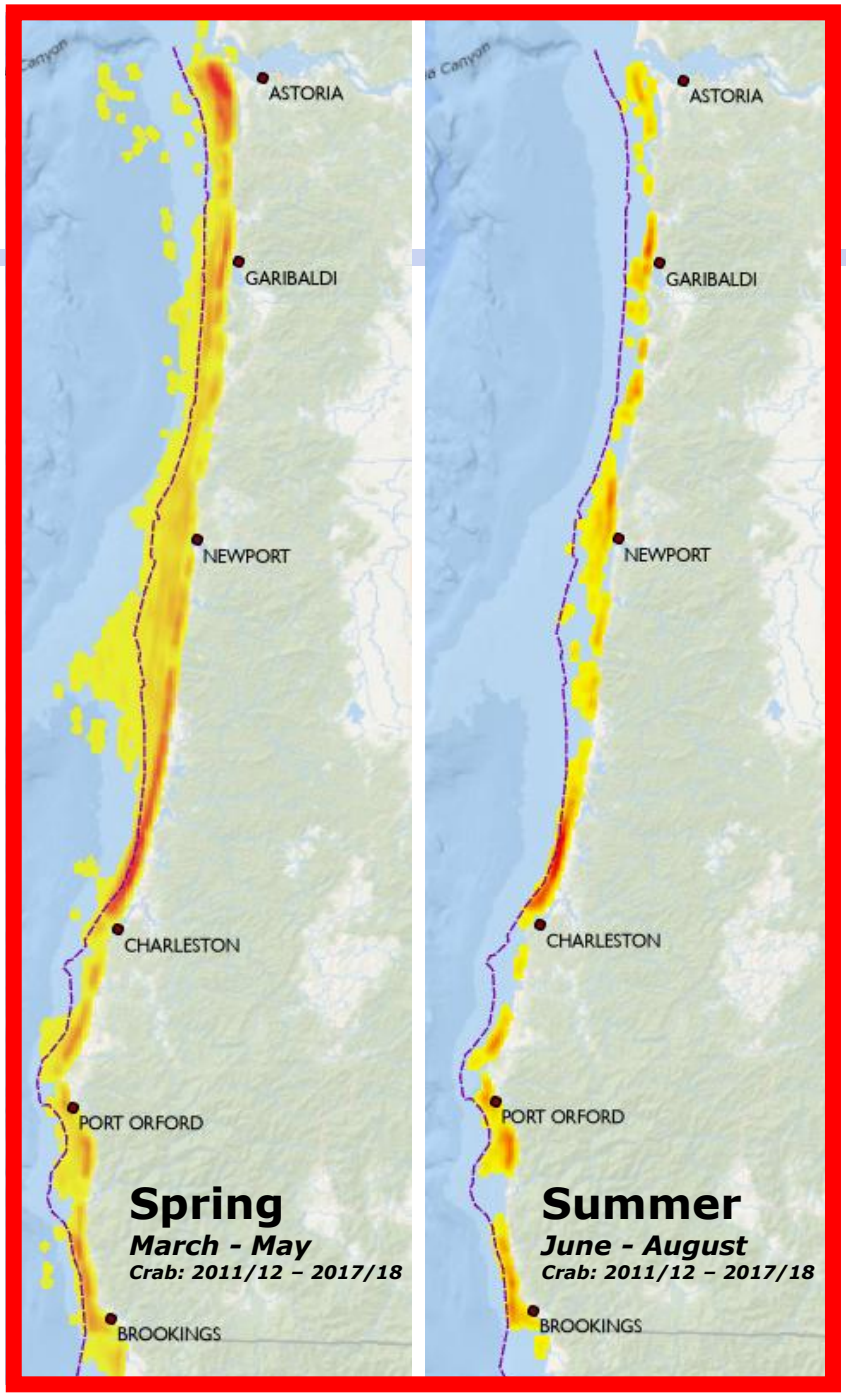
Bottom Trawl:
Tow Hours

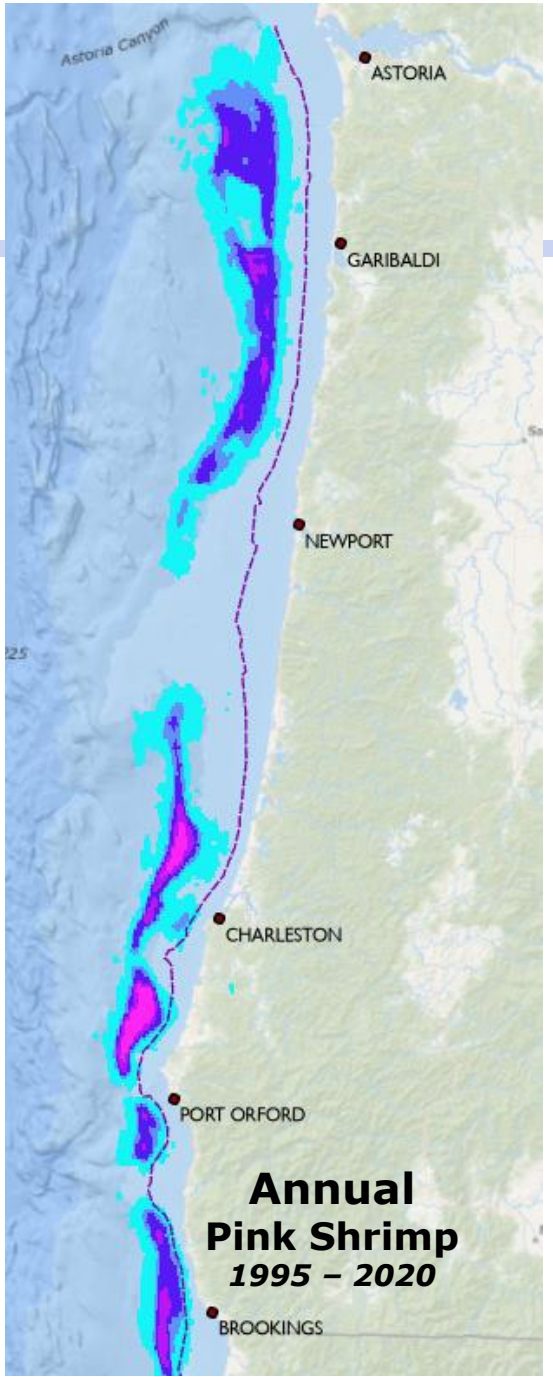
High
Low

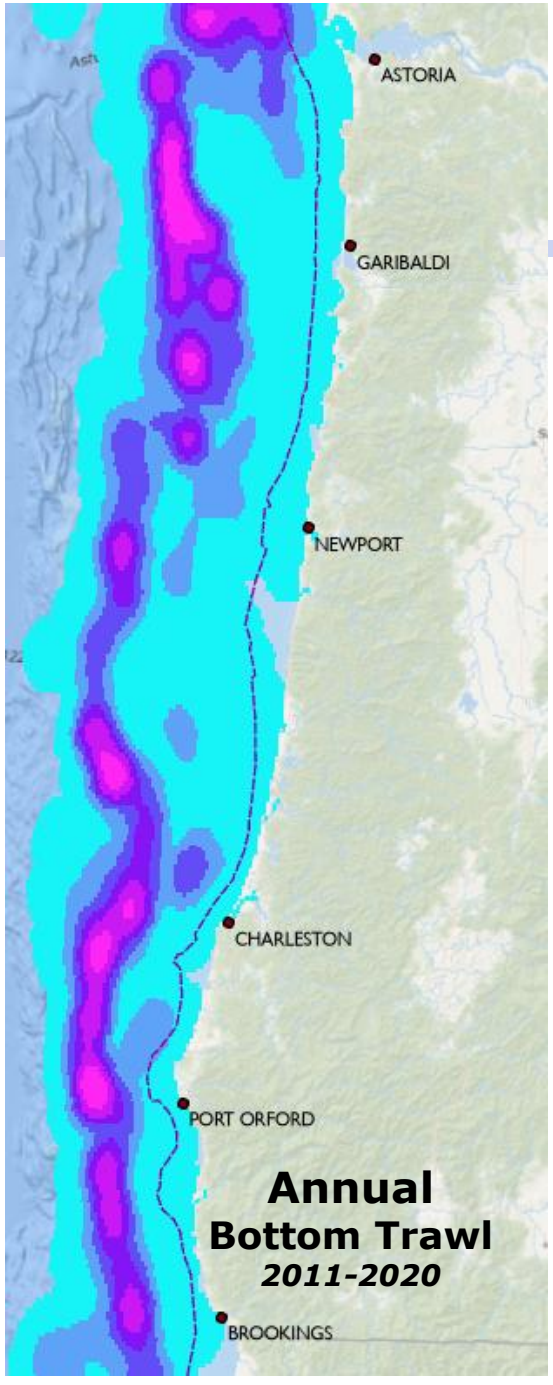
40 fathom contour

N

0 15 30 60
Nautical Miles







Testing Areas: Spring

Crab (March to May):

Pot Pulls

High

Low

Pink Shrimp (Annual):

Trawl Tows

Bottom Trawl (Annual):

Tow Hours

High

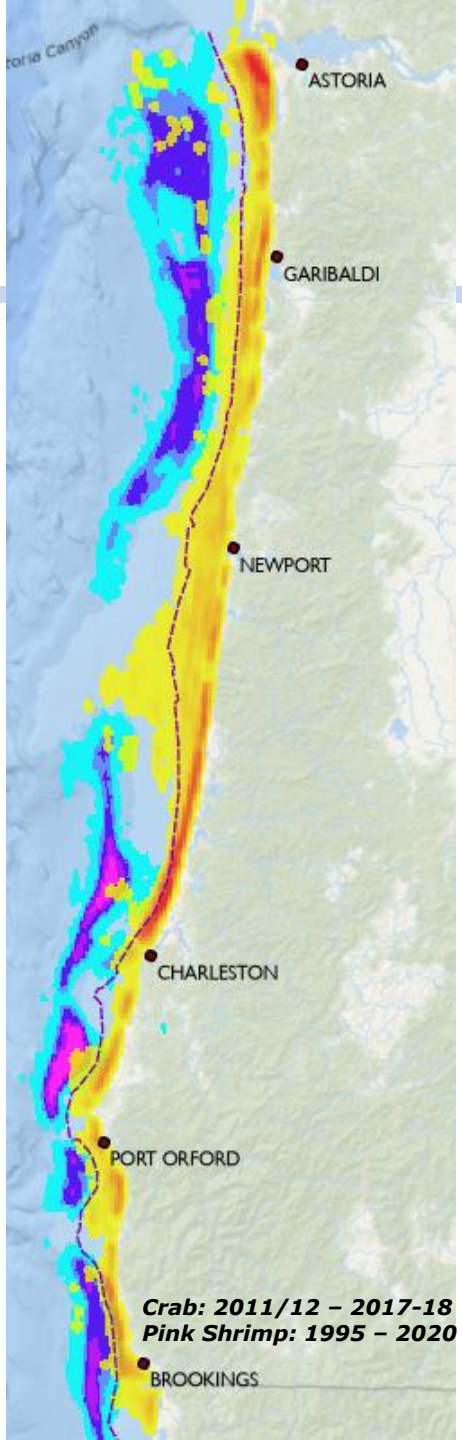
Low

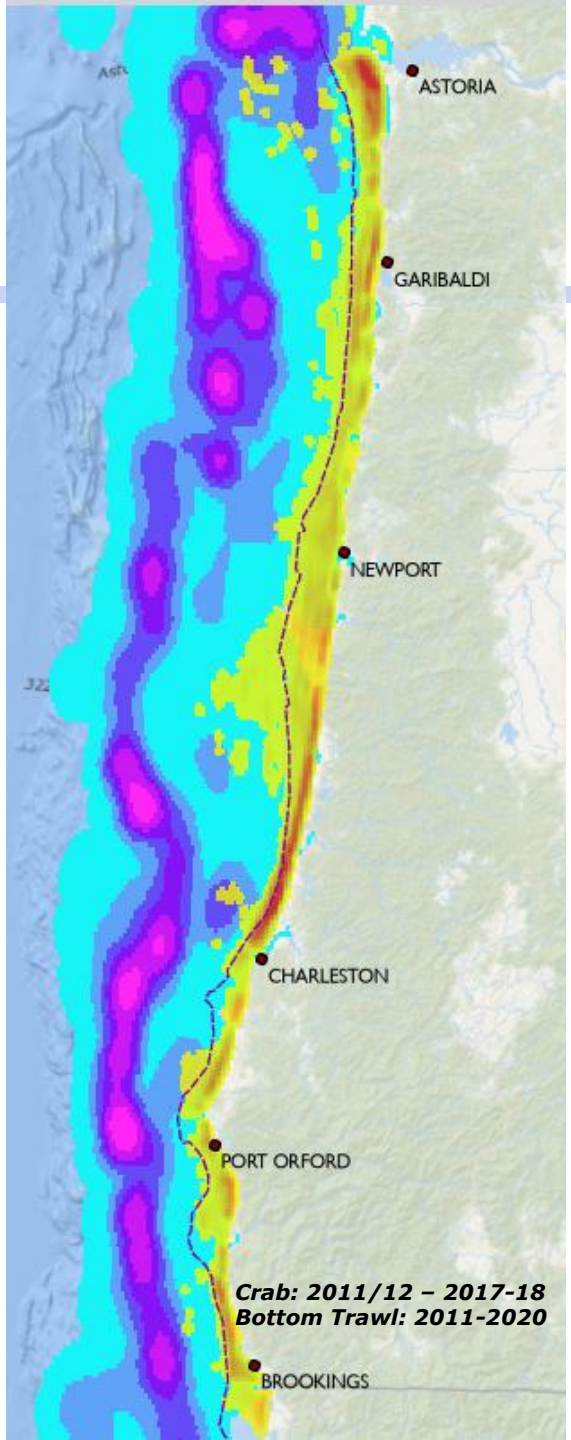
40 fathom contour

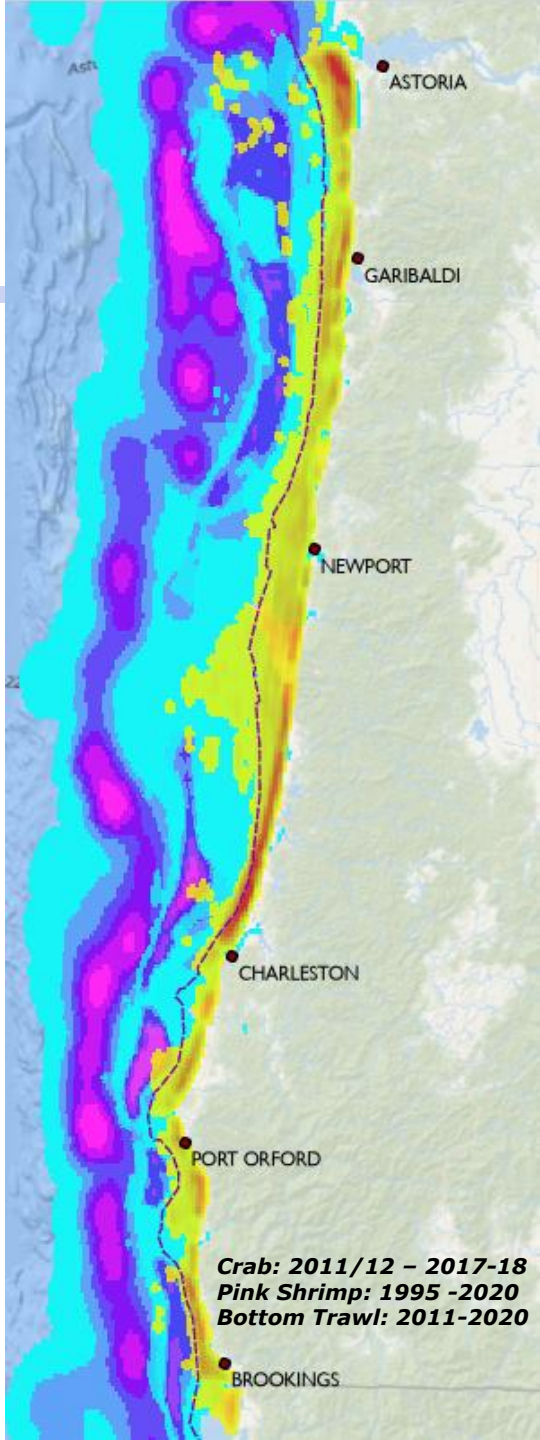
N

0 15 30 60

Nautical Miles







Testing Areas: Summer

Crab (June – August):

Pot Pulls

High

Low

Pink Shrimp (Annual):

Trawl Tows

Bottom Trawl (Annual):

Tow Hours

High

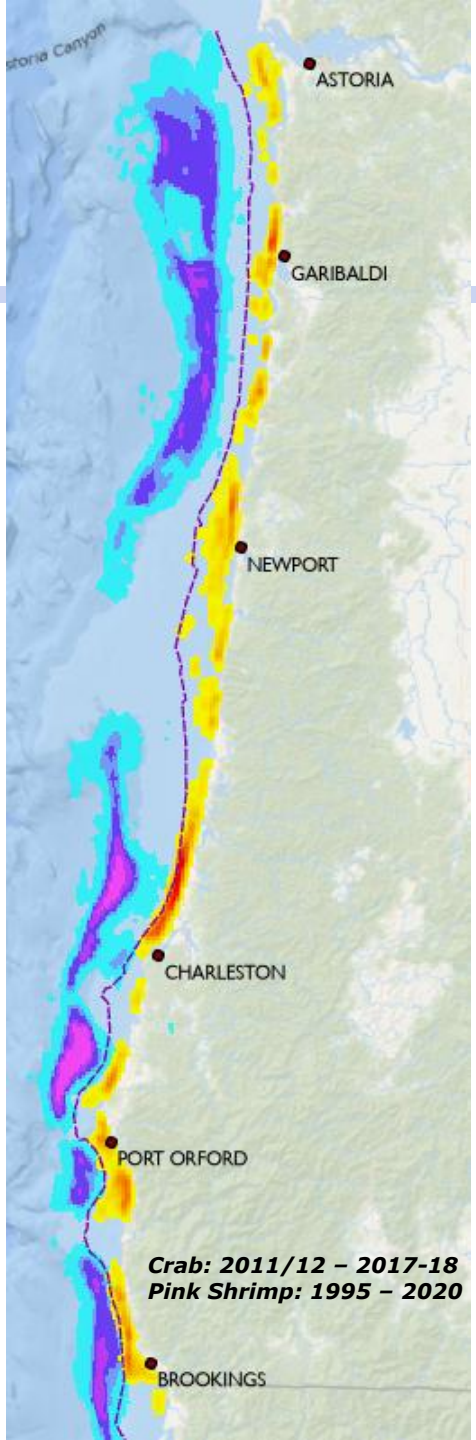
Low

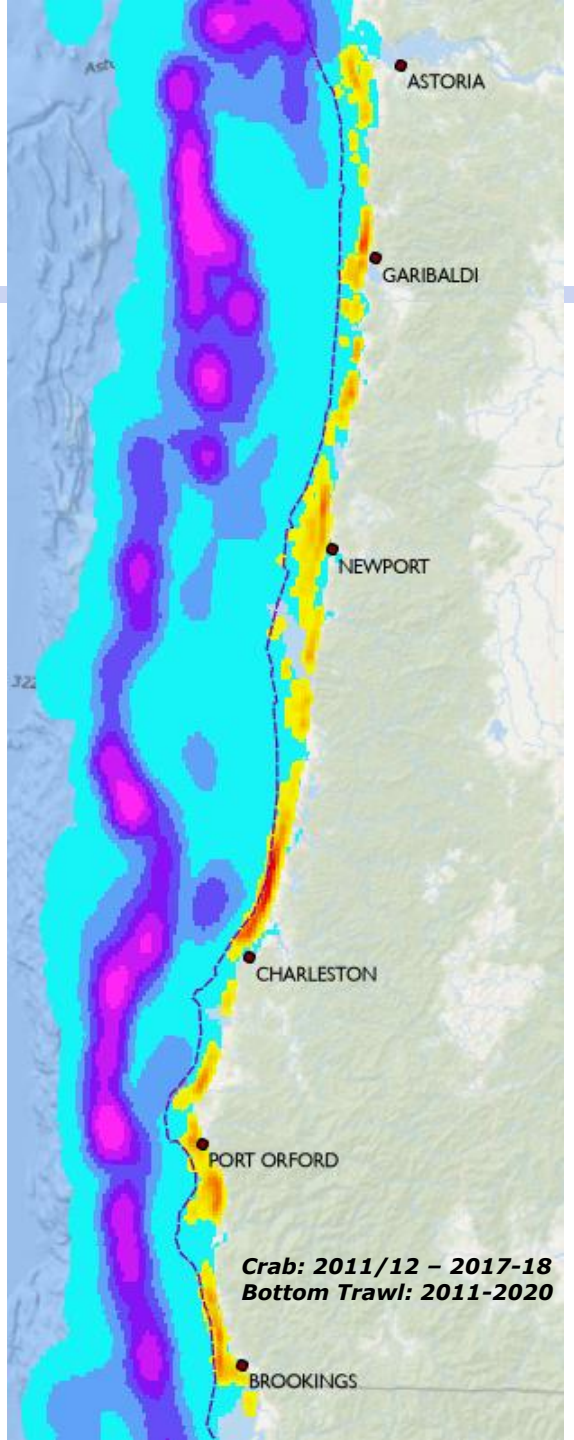
40 fathom contour

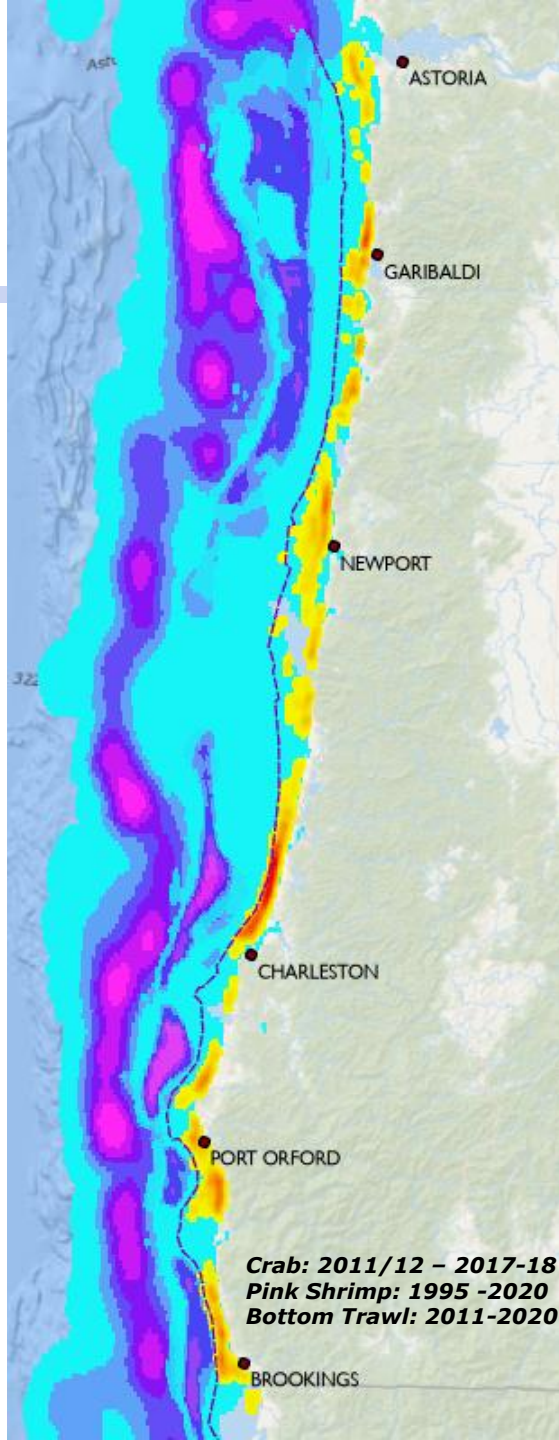
N

0 15 30 60

Nautical Miles







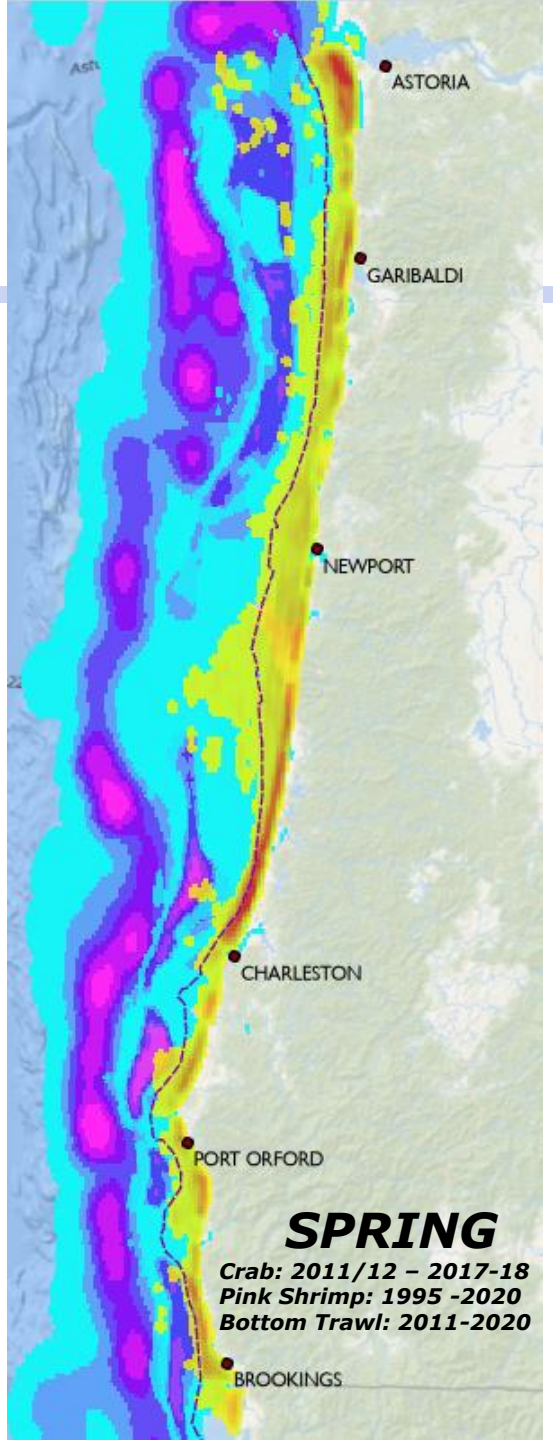
EFGP Testing Areas

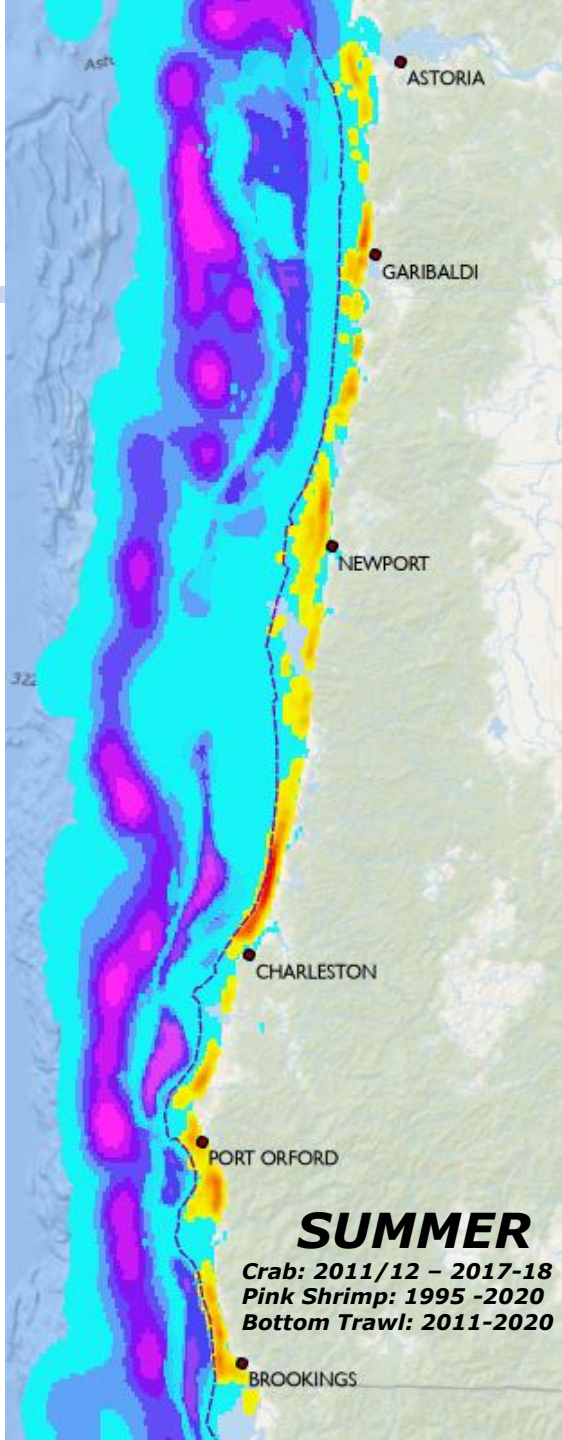
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- Avoid gear conflicts
- Test in realistic conditions

How should testing areas be defined?

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- Latitudinal
- Specific Geographic Areas
- Exclusion Areas





EFGP performance criteria

- **Effectiveness** – Can the gear effectively catch crab? Can the gear effectively reduce entanglement risk/avoid entangling whales?
- **Efficiency** – Can the gear be efficiently fished?
- **Reliability** – Can the gear be reliably retrieved?
- **Manageability** – Can potential gear interactions (within the same fishery, with other fixed or mobile fishers, with other ocean users) be managed?
- **Enforceability** – Can enforcement personnel identify the gear to permit holder at all times when deployed, determine its location, and haul the gear if necessary?
- **Safety** – Can the gear be safely fished by different vessel sizes and configurations in conditions off Oregon?

EFGP performance criteria: Effectiveness

Performance evaluation

Can the gear effectively catch crab?

Can the gear effectively reduce entanglement risk/avoid entangling whales?

Reporting/metrics

- Examples
  - **EFGP holder**: Time of release to surface
  - **ODFW**: Line-hours; catch per unit effort (CPUE); overlap with whales
- What else?

EFGP performance criteria: Efficiency

Performance evaluation

Can the gear be efficiently fished?

Reporting/metrics

- Examples
  - **EFGP holder**: Time required for setup, deployment, and retrieval compared to traditional gear
  - **ODFW**: Number of strings and pots set and hauled
- What else?

EFGP performance criteria: Reliability

Performance evaluation

Can the gear be reliably retrieved?

Reporting/metrics

- Examples
  - **EFGP holder**: # of failed retrievals, # of pots lost or left, ocean conditions impacting reliability (e.g., swell, current)
  - **ODFW**: Failure rate (e.g., overall, by gear, by depth)
- What else?

EFGP performance criteria: Manageability

Performance evaluation

Can potential gear interactions (within the same fishery, with other fixed or mobile fishers, with other ocean users) be managed?

Reporting/metrics

- Examples
  - **EFGP holder**: Gear conflicts or gear overlays that occurred during testing
  - **ODFW**: Evaluation of areas and times for future testing or use
- What else?

EFGP performance criteria: Enforceability

Performance evaluation

Can enforcement personnel identify the gear to permit holder at all times when deployed, determine its location, and haul the gear if necessary?

Reporting/metrics

- Examples:
  - **ODFW**: Costs of necessary equipment and/or training for enforcement, OSP feedback on enforceability by gear types
- What else?

EFGP performance criteria: Safety

Performance evaluation

Can the gear be safely fished by different vessel sizes and configurations in conditions off Oregon?

Reporting/metrics

- Examples:
  - **EFGP holder**: Description of any safety issues with information on gear type, configuration, and crew size
  - **ODFW**: Evaluation of safety issues
- What else?

OREGON Fish & Wildlife Marine Resources

Lunch break

(12:15 – 12:45pm)

Gear lending library

- **Key goals**
  - Allow fishermen to gain hands-on experience with experimental gear through training and testing
  - Minimize economic risk to fishermen by offsetting initial investment costs
  - Incentivize testing of experimental gear designed to reduce the risk of entanglements through reduction in vertical lines
- **Examples**
  - California fixed gear commercial fisheries – National Marine Sanctuary Foundation Gear Library
  - Greater New England fixed gear commercial fisheries – Northeast Fisheries Science Center Gear Lending Library
- **What's needed for a successful gear lending program?**
  - Effective lending model
  - Funding
  - Group with capacity and connections to the fleet to manage

Public comment