



Jefferson County
**Marine
Resources
Committee**

June 14, 2018: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nicole Jordan
Communications Coordinator
Northwest Straits Foundation
360-733-1725
morgan@nwstraitsfoundation.org

Cheryl Lowe
Jefferson MRC & Water Programs Coordinator
Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee
360-379-5610 ext. 230
Cheryl.lowe@wsu.edu

**Catch More Crab
Local Committee Educating Crabbers with New Program**

The Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is offering a free program on Sunday June 24th in preparation for crabbing season. The program will run from 11 am to 1 pm at West Marine in Port Townsend. RSVP is required.

Learn tips, tricks and rules to help you catch more crab, keep more of the crab you catch, and keep your expensive crabbing gear from disappearing forever. The MRC is partnering with West Marine and the Northwest Straits Foundation to offer this program. Go to <http://www.jeffersonmrc.org> for more info or <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3496813> to register.

The MRC has lined up a team of expert crabbers to answer all your questions. Troy McKelvey, Wade Crouch and WDFW biologist Roy Clark will demonstrate how to rig your crab pot properly with buoys, lines and weights. They'll talk about best baits, WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife regulations, and favorite local crabbing spots.

This is part of a regional effort by the Northwest Straits Foundation and the Jefferson MRC. Each year an estimated 12,000 crab pots are lost in Puget Sound and thanks to the work of the Northwest Straits Initiative, crabbers are learning how to avoid contributing to the problem. Lost crab pots continue to capture crab with no one to harvest them, resulting in nearly 180,000 Dungeness crab lost each year.

Luckily there are several ways crabbers can prevent losing their pots by following this checklist:

- AVOID MARINE TRANSIT AND FERRY LANES
- CHECK TIDES AND CURRENTS. Avoid crabbing during strong tidal changes and currents.
- MAKE BUOYS MORE VISIBLE. Add a second buoy or stick and flag.
- USE A WEIGHTED LINE to sink below the surface and avoid being cut by passing boats.
- WEIGHT YOUR POT so they do not move in high currents or tidal changes.
- USE LONGER LINE. Use 1/3 more line than water depth to allow for tide changes.

- SECURE LID AND ESCAPE PANELS WITH BIODEGRADABLE COTTON ESCAPE CORD. This allows crabs to escape from lost pots after the cord degrades.
- STAY WITH YOUR POT. A watched pot will bring home more crab.

This handy checklist and additional information can also be found at www.derelictgear.org where you can find instructional videos, helpful apps and other resources to help you catch more crab and avoid having your crab pots become one of the 12,000 lost.

Crabbers can also look for volunteers with the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee at your local boat launches during early July. They will be providing educational materials about correctly setting your crab pot so you can catch more crab. The goal is more crab for you and fewer lost pots for Puget Sound.

About the Northwest Straits Foundation

The Northwest Straits Foundation is the nonprofit partner in the Northwest Straits Initiative, authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1998 as an alternative to a National Marine Sanctuary in Puget Sound. The Foundation works in partnership with the Northwest Straits Commission and seven local Marine Resource Committees (MRCs) bringing together scientists and countless community volunteers to protect and restore the health of our marine resources. For more information visit www.nwstraitsfoundation.org.

About Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee

The Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is a citizen-based volunteer committee appointed by the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners. It is one of seven county-based MRCs which conduct marine and nearshore restoration, conservation, and education projects with diverse partners and community members. For more information visit www.jeffersonmrc.org.