INVASIVE EUROPEAN GREEN CRAB EARLY DETECTION MONITORING PROTOCOLS



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Pacific Salmon Foundation and Coastal Restoration Society

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PRE-PLANNING STAGE

* If you are a non-Indigenous stewardship group participating in European green crab (EGC) early detection work, please ensure that you meet with the First Nations communities of the territory of interest before embarking.

STEP 1: TAKE INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL OF BC ONLINE COURSES

- 1. Getting to Know EGC Invasive Species Council of BC (xactIms.com)
- 2. Trapping and Licencing; EGC Program Invasive Species Council of BC (xactIms.com)

Check out this introductory video by Coastal Restoration Society: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvmS-QUm8Rg

*If you are having trouble with the Invasive Species website, contact your PSF/CRS partner, or reach out to Invasive Species Council of BC directly: Nadine McCosker (nmccosker@bcinvasives.ca) and Megan Blackmore (mblackmore@bcinvasives.ca) (250) 371-7156.

STEP 2: APPLY FOR A SECTION 52 LICENCE

A <u>Section 52 Scientific Collection Licence</u> from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is required to trap EGC in British Columbia. PSF has created this helpful <u>document</u> that provides explanations and examples of how to fill out the application.

- Submit your application over email to: <u>DFO.SCA_SC_Licence_Applications-Applications_de_licence_SC_SCA.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</u> and please also CC <u>Christine.Spice@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</u>
- At least one individual who is listed on the Section 52 Licence must be present when trapping. Participants are encouraged to include as many names as possible on the licence. Two people are required for sampling by foot, however, a team of three is preferable.
- Plan accordingly, it can take at least 30 days for DFO to review, process and administer a Section 52 Licence.

STEP 3: GREEN CRAB SIGNAGE

If your community is interested in posting educational European Green Crab Signage, please send in a request to DFO by filling out this <u>form</u>.

Please follow up with the Early Detection Monitoring Team with GPS coordinates of where you posted the signage.

STEP 4: SITE SELECTION

When performing early detection monitoring, it is integral that efforts are focused within microhabitats where EGC are most likely to be found during the early stages of invasion. EGC utilize intertidal sites, bottlenecks in streams/channels or coves, muddy/soft sediments, extensive tidal flats, pooling water that doesn't dry up at the lowest tides, lagoons, sloughs and meandering channels. EGC often prefer habitats with high availability of cover habitat (such as undercut mud banks, logs/root wads including areas with an accumulation of large woody debris, aquatic vegetation, and saltmarsh vegetation), absence of predators (including mammals such as: otters, raccoons, dogs), presence of prey (bivalves, small shore crabs), and derelict structures that can provide microhabitats (docks and pilings).

Additional Site Attributes to Consider

- Is there safe access?
- Do you require a boat or is the site accessible by foot?
- Is there public access (if Stewardship group)?
- Do you need permits for the region (e.g. Boundary Bay Wildlife Management Area)?
- Is it feasible to conduct repeat sampling at least once a month from April- September?
- What are some logistical constraints for these areas?
- How long does it take to reach each site?

Feel free to utilize this EGC <u>Site Selection Tool</u> created by the Strait of Georgia Data Centre. <u>Google Earth</u> may also be helpful. DFO has found EGC in 2022 in <u>several areas</u> but would like to expand the monitoring network to <u>new areas</u> (areas 4–28 and subareas 29–1, 29–4, 29–5). This <u>map</u> shows confirmed sightings of EGC.

STEP 5: ACQUIRE APPROPRIATE GEAR AND CLOTHING

Crews participating in early detection monitoring will be required to walk into intertidal muddy habitats and should have appropriate gear to work safely in these areas. Participants may arrive to the trapping sites by vessel, vehicle or by hiking in. The following list identifies gear and equipment that each participant should have to participate in trapping.

- chest/hip waders, or hip high boots* (worn by at least one crew member, but helpful if everyone wears them)
- hunting backpacks (when hiking in) or a sled for carrying traps
- warm breathable layers and waterproof jacket
- hats/sunglasses
- sunscreen
- protective gloves for handling crabs and bycatch
- extra set of dry clothes

*If you are using rubber boots or hip boots, you will want to ensure that your boots are narrow fitting, otherwise it can be problematic when walking in the mud.

Tip: It helps to walk on your toes when going through muddy areas.



Day 1 of Sampling (DEPLOYING TRAPS) will require the following gear – this will cover gear for 2 monitoring sites:

- Safety equipment:
 - site specific safety plan
 - bear spray
 - high visibility vest
 - first aid kit (Level 1 or Level 3 in remote locations),
 - cell phone
 - emergency contact information
 - PFDs when working in the water
 - If accessing the site by boat, you will also need: a VHF radio, PFDs for each person on board, flares, and a horn.
- Copy of your Scientific Licence
- Extra rot cord and gangen string (for trap repair and general use)
- Small knife and pliers (useful for making trap repairs)
- Datasheets or data collection device (i.e. iPad or iPhone and a cloth to dry the screen)
- Spare trap/buoy clips
- GPS unit if not included in your data collection device
- Permanent marker(s)
- Traps: 6 minnow traps and 6 prawn traps
- Labels for each trap: group name, EGC Research, and a contact phone number (e.g. CRS, EGC Research, (250) XXX-XXXX)
- 12 orange bait jars (one per trap)
- Prepared bait for 12 bait jars (1 herring broken into 2 pieces per trap)
- Bright-coloured flagging tape to identify traps
- Mallet to help with rebar/metal stakes
- Trap stakes- 12 stainless rods (1 m) used to secure traps in soft intertidal substrate or helpful for tying traps to from the shore with rope
 - if the site experiences high flow, attach the line of traps to the rope provided, secured on either end by rebar or stable objects (e.g., tree, log), this will help ensure the traps don't get washed away

Day 2 of Sampling (RETRIEVING TRAPS) will require:

- *All equipment from Day 1* in addition to the following:
- Two Sorting bins (one to empty trap contents and one recovery bucket)
- Camera or phone that can take pictures
- Calipers (plastic or metal)
- Laminated species ID sheet (crabs, fish, etc.)
- o Daily task list
- A cooler and/or Ziploc bags to hold any EGC found
- An extra Ziploc if carrying out old bait
- Optional: Garden rake to provide stability in soft, uneven terrain and to help retrieve traps

STEP 5: INITIAL SITE VISITS - CONFIRMING SUITABLE HABITAT

- Schedule a visit to each site just before the lowest tide (below 1.4m). The number of sites you can visit in a day will depend on ease of access to sites and whether there is enough time to complete the sampling during the low tide window.
 - Ideally, set your traps at the low tide, and retrieve them approximately 24 hours later when the ebbing tide first drops low enough to reach your traps.
 Plan to arrive with ample time to prepare the traps on shore and enough time to walk to the depths you want.
- Be sure to minimize disturbance to habitats (e.g., avoid anchoring in eelgrass, use the same paths for walking along salt marshes). If you're reaching a remote area by a landing craft, ensure to create an approach path prior to visiting the site to avoid disturbing sensitive habitat.
- Fill out the <u>Site Characterization Form</u> for each site. This will help your team identify ideal spots to deploy traps. Fill out any pertinent information regarding site access and safety.
- Keep track of what would be required for each trip to each site (e.g., cost of fuel, time for crew, cost of boat charter, etc.).
- Predetermine areas to set 6 traps in a row within a site.
- Monitor local weather conditions.
- Consider the timing and path of salmon migration and avoid disturbing these areas when applicable.

TRAPPING STAGE: DAY 1 OF EARLY DETECTION MONITORING

STEP 1: SAFETY MEETING

 Field teams meet at a designated parking lot, have a tailboard meeting to discuss any safety concerns prior to heading out to deploy traps. A Site-Specific Safety Plan should be filled out and discussed as a team. Team lead should communicate their daily plan to another team member not in the field. Determine and communicate check in times (arrival on site, arrival home etc.).

STEP 2: PREPARE AND LOAD BAIT

- Frozen whole herring will be used as bait for this monitoring project whenever possible.
- If possible, remove bait from the freezer approximately 24-hours before departure
- Cut/break herring into two chunks and place in a bag.
 - Alternatively, pre-cut and freeze the herring, which will allow teams to remove bait only a couple of hours before trapping.
- Place 1 herring (broken into two pieces) into a bait jar and place in each trap. If the herring is small, add an extra half.
- Ensure the bait container is closed fully.

STEP 3. TRAP PLACEMENT

- Record the time the traps are deployed and retrieved each day.
 - This will allow data managers to calculate the total soak time and catch per unit effort of each trap which is a very important metric for evaluating management and monitoring strategies.
- Record GPS coordinates in decimal degrees.
- Attach flagging tape when necessary to help participants locate the traps and ensure others who may be operating vessels in the area can see where traps and stakes are placed.
- Take precautions to limit stress and bycatch mortality posed on native species by placing traps in areas that will remain underwater. For example, pools or channels that hold water throughout low tides. Depth should be approximately 0.5m to 1.0m during the low tide period.
- Set traps for an average of 24 hours soak time.
- Set out three minnow traps (Figure 1) and three folding prawn traps (Figure 2) 10m apart. Alternate the trap types between prawn trap and minnow trap (Figure 3).

- Secure traps in place with the following methods:
 - Stainless rod with L shape: drive the rod on an angle through the top of the minnow traps and straight down for the prawn traps to the sediment below until the handle portion of the rod is snug along the top of the trap when possible.
 - Tie traps individually to objects on shore (root wads, secure branches, or to L shape stainless rods on the shore).
- If there is a strong current that may displace traps, you can attach the traps to a groundline with a weight or rebar stakes next to the first and last trap or tie the end of the string to an object (root wad, tree) along the shoreline. Rocks can also help weigh down traps.
- Avoid putting a line in vegetated areas as the line may scour and damage the habitat during wave action.
- If there is floating vegetation, place trap, place trap openings in the opposite direction to avoid algae floating into the traps (Figure 4).
- Place traps at the same tidal height when possible.



Figure 1. Gee-Minnow Trap.



Figure 2. Folding prawn trap with bait cup.



Figure 3. Ideal placement of traps (Washington Sea Grant)



Figure 4. If there is vegetation like algae nearby, place trap openings in the opposite direction to avoid algae floating into the traps.

STEP 4: CLEAN EQUIPMENT

- Ensure all boots, buckets, traps, waders, and other equipment *are cleaned thoroughly before being used elsewhere (e.g., separate water bodies or bays).* This can help avoid transfer of invasive species from one site to another.
 - o Remove all mud, algae, plants and animals from all sample gear
 - Rinse all gear with freshwater once you're back at the field station
 - o Allow items to dry for 24 hours, preferably in sunlight
- Thoroughly rinse the vessel and bilge if traveling by boat prior to leaving trapping site.



STEP 5: DATA ORGANIZATION

• Take a moment once you return, to ensure all fields are filled out before syncing or typing up your data from the day. It's a good idea to look over the data while the day is fresh in your memory and make any necessary corrections.

TRAPPING STAGE: DAY 2 OF EARLY DETECTION MONITORING

STEP 1: DATA COLLECTION COUNT AND IDENTIFY SPECIES CAPTURED

• Record the weather in your safety tailboard (wind, skies, seas) during the time the traps were set and the forecast over the 24 hours the traps will be in the water.



Figure 5. Colour variation of European green crab. Orange male (left) and brownish female (top) and yellow green female (right). Not all EGC are green! Photo credit: Allie Simpson.

- Record the following metrics on a paper data sheet (Appendix A) or in the Survey123 app:
 - o site name
 - GPS location
 - o date and time of trap set and retrieval
 - o sampler names
 - o string number
 - o trap number
 - The first trap pulled on a string is considered "Trap 1".
- Record water temperature (C) and salinity (ppt) using the refractometer provided, if desired. Start by placing distilled water on the lens then hit zero to calibrate the device. Use your hand to block excess light as this may cause an error. Proceed to dry off the lens using a tissue before placing seawater on the lens. Hit read to determine salinity.

- Each trap will have an area to record "usability" where field teams will record if the data from that trap can be used in scientific analysis. The data is usable if the trap was fishing normally. Usability is a no if the trap is upside down, has a hole, has been damaged, or if the bait cup is not secured.
- Release the contents of one trap into a small shallow basin (in some water to help reduce stress). White basins are best to see all contents in the trap. Identify, count and record all species.
- Return fish species first followed by the remaining native species.
 - Do not count anything sitting on top of the trap.
 - When identifying bycatch, use the <u>species ID sheet</u> to help. If you are uncertain of the species, take a photo, enter "unknown species", and make a note to enter in the correct species name upon returning from the field. For this, participants may consult field guides, other experts for advice and utilize iNaturalist.
- Count and sex all other individuals before releasing them. Measure the first 10 male and 10 female individuals for each native crab species prior to releasing them. Release all native species as soon as possible to the same area they were found. Photograph the various species the first time you come across them.
- Count and record all EGC per trap (male (Figure 6), female (Figure 7), berried (Figure 8) (with eggs) which are either orange or brown. Record a 0 on the data sheet when no EGC are found.



Figure 6. Male EGC (lighthouse).







Figure 8. Berried female EGC (beehive) with orange or brown eggs.

• Measure the carapace width (mm) (point to point) (across the widest part of the carapace including the spines) for all EGC captured (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Trapping technician collecting the point-to-point carapace width of an adult EGC using Vernier calipers.

- Record any conditions that would interfere with data collection and trapping results and observations such as EGC behaviour, changes at the trapping site or issues with trapping.
 - Behavioural observations include agonistic behaviour around traps, eelgrass clippings, feeding pits, or targeting of native fish species.
 - Habitat information includes unexpected physical characteristics such as abnormal turbidity or unusual disturbances by wildlife or boats.
- Record any evidence of fish or terrestrial mortality and report to DFO.
 - If terrestrial bycatch is found, this may be a result of traps being placed too shallow within the intertidal zone, consider re-assessing the tides and positioning of the traps.

STEP 2: RETAIN EUROPEAN GREEN CRAB

- At no time will participants release EGC back into the water.
- Carefully transport EGC to DFO for DNA sampling.
 - DNA sampling will be performed if EGC are detected within a region that has no historical record of previous detections.
 - Label a container with the date, location, sex, size, and time captured. Contact Christine Spice at (250)740-5736 or email Christine.Spice@dfo-mpo.gc.ca. Use an empty bait jar in the interim if no cooler is available in the field.
- Unless the local jurisdiction has expressed concerns, it is permissible to empty the contents of the bait jars (herring) into the water. Some jurisdictions (e.g., wildlife management areas) may request that you do not toss the used bait back into the water after sampling.

STEP 3: CLEAN EQUIPMENT

- Ensure all boots, buckets, traps, waders, and other equipment are cleaned thoroughly before being used elsewhere (e.g., separate water bodies or bays). This can help avoid transfer of invasive species from one site to another.
 - Remove all mud, algae, plants and animals from all sample gear
 - Rinse all gear with freshwater once you're back at the field station
 - Allow items to dry for 24 hours, preferably in sunlight
- Thoroughly rinse the vessel and bilge if traveling by boat prior to leaving trapping site
- Wash bait jars regularly, with dish soap in a large tote away from any freshwater, marine or riparian areas. Then rinse with freshwater.

STEP 4: DETERMINE SITE SUITABILITY FOR ONGOING MONITORING

- What are you finding in your traps? Do you see any of the following?
 - Red rock crab, adult Dungeness crab, terrestrial mammals, no crabs
 - Hairy shore crab, staghorn or tidepool sculpin, juvenile Graceful crab, juvenile
 Dungeness crab, hairy helmet crab, hermit crab
 - Suitable habitat would likely yield species listed above in row "b" in your trap. If you are finding a lot of row "a" species, then reconsider the location of your traps.
- Determine whether each site should be monitored on an ongoing basis
 - If a site is suitable, create a monitoring schedule. If a site is not suitable, attempt another priority site or consider setting up traps in a suitable area nearby.

STEP 5: CREATE A MONITORING SCHEDULE

- Have a discussion with your team about which sites are priority sites based on the results.
- Depending on your capacity and the data collected in the above steps, create an ongoing schedule for your priority sites. Sample once a month for each site, if possible, from April to September (6 events, 12 days total) when crabs are more active. You will want to sample during the lowest daylight tides of the month if trapping by foot (this takes priority over sampling on the same days each month). Sampling days should be at least 2 weeks apart. If you are finding large numbers of EGC, then a new protocol for mass trapping may be necessary.
- <u>Notify DFO</u> at least 24 hours in advance of monitoring activities and again following the retrieval of traps. Note any terrestrial or fish mortalities post monitoring.

STEP 6: DATA SHARING

 Send raw data as an excel file to (tyranna@coastrestore.com) organized according to the <u>DFO data collection format</u> at your earliest convenience. Name your file "Group-Region-Site-Year-Month-Day" (Sooke Basin-Gillespie-2023-05-02). If you are using the Survey123 app, the data will be sent to Tyranna automatically.

POST-TRAPPING STAGE:

After your first training session with CRS and PSF please fill out the <u>training survey</u> so we can better understand how we can improve our training program.



Protocols have been compiled by Maria Catanzaro (PSF) and Tyranna Souque (CRS) and are adapted from: DFO EGC Early Detection and Monitoring Protocol v5, Boat Methods prepared by Coastal Restoration Society, methods used by Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council. Advice from Clare Greenberg (SSISC), Emily Grason (Marine Ecologist, Washington Sea Grant, Crab Team Program Lead), Chelsey Buffington (WDFW), Renny Talbot (DFO), Christine Spice (DFO), Allie Simpson (NWSC), Leah Robison (NWSC), and Dawson Little (Makah Tribe) was also incorporated.

APPENDIX A

Data collection sheet.

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APPENDIX B

Guide for data collection with Arc GIS Survey123.

RESTORATION	
Guide for Data Collection	
Before you enter the field please do the following while connected to wifi:	
a) Sign in to ArcGIS Online with your team's login.	
b) Click the logo in the top right corner, from the drop down menu select "Download Surveys".	
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 c) Choose the survey for your region "EGC Early Detection Location Nar 	ne" (Ea.
EGC Early Detection Sooke Basin). Hit the download button for the surv	ey.
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VECTOR MAP EGC Early Detection Alert	
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2) Download the Arc GIS "Quick Capture" app	



APPENDIX C

Site characteristic form.

Site Number: Longitude (DD): ttributes? (check all that apply) r sediments agoon) on't dewater at low tide or meandering tidal channels s: ks cluding areas with an accumulation of log debris (e.g., sea asparagus or other) (e.g., eelgrass) exposure ter outlets (creeks, streams, rivers etc.) Access & Feasibility (check all that apply) Public access to the site (if you're a non- Indigenous stewardship group) Safe access to the site Reasonable walking distance to vehicle
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Not a protected area (Wildlife Conservation
Area, Migratory Birds Sanctuary, etc.)
No to low risk of getting stuck in mudflat
Approx. 60 m linear area to set traps (not
necessary)
Possible to sample once/month April- Septemb
Provide access/directions to site:
Y DETECTION MONITORING? YES / NO / MAYE ts and attach site photos to the back of form
COASTAL METOTRATION SOCIETY

EGC Site Characteristic form.pc