

Hunter and Fisher Compliance

Harvest Reporting and Administrative Penalties



Washington
Department of
**FISH &
WILDLIFE**

December 2024



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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January 2, 2025

The Honorable June Robinson
Chair, Senate Ways and Means
303 John A. Cherberg Building
Post Office Box 40438
Olympia, WA 98504-0438

The Honorable Timm Ormsby
Chair, House Appropriations
315 John L. O'Brien Building
Post Office Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

The Honorable Sharon Shewmake
Chair, Senate Agriculture, Water,
Natural Resources, and Parks
213 John A. Cherberg Building
Post Office Box 40442
Olympia, WA 98504-0442

The Honorable Kristine Reeves
Chair, House Agriculture and
Natural Resources
132E Legislative Building
Post Office Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Dear Chairs,

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is required to submit a report to the legislature pursuant to RCW 77.32.070 (2)(b) and (3)(b) regarding the harvest reporting requirement, administrative penalty, and amount of administrative penalties collected.

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission has the authority to set an administrative penalty for hunters and fishers who fail to comply with rules requiring them to report harvest or attempted harvest of fish and wildlife. The Commission has adopted rules requiring hunters and fishers who fail to complete their report to pay an administrative penalty of \$10 before issuing a new hunting license or Puget Sound Dungeness crab catch record card. The administrative penalty per hunter and fisher cannot exceed \$10 per RCW 77.32.070.

The current completed reporting and complementary survey are the basis for making harvest estimates and planning of future fisheries or hunting seasons.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact our Legislative Director Melena Thompson at (564) 791-2755.

Sincerely,

Kelly Susewind
Director

Hunter and Fisher Compliance

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Cover photo by Dallas Kathan.

Request this information in an alternative format or language at wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requests-accommodation, 833-885-1012, TTY (711), or CivilRightsTeam@dfw.wa.gov.

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Background

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) relies on hunter and fisher reporting as a method to assess effort, harvest rates, and set future seasons. To incentivize reporting, the Department provides promotions and increased opportunities for hunters and fishers who self-report their harvest in a timely manner.

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) has the authority to set an administrative penalty for failure to comply with rules requiring hunters and fishers to report harvest or attempted harvest of fish and wildlife. The Commission has adopted rules requiring hunters and fishers who fail to complete their report to pay an administrative penalty of \$10 before issuing a new hunting license or Puget Sound Dungeness crab catch record card. The total administrative penalty per hunter and fisher cannot exceed \$10 (RCW 77.32.070).

Pursuant to RCW 77.32.070 (2)(b) and (3)(b), the Department is required to submit an annual report to the legislature for hunter and fisher compliance with the harvest reporting requirement and the administrative penalties collected. The hunter compliance requirement applies to deer, elk, bear, and turkey licenses as well as the migratory game bird licenses. The fisher compliance requirement is specific to Puget Sound Dungeness crab catch record cards.

2023-2024 Compliance Data & Penalty Revenue

Penalties for failure to report

Hunters and anglers pay administrative penalties for non-compliance of reporting requirements in the prior license year. Therefore, the revenue collected reflects non-compliance in the prior year and a purchase in a subsequent year. License year revenue data more accurately measures customer intentions to participate between April and March (the license year) than fiscal year data. Hunters and anglers can buy licenses as early as the December prior to the start of the license year. Fiscal year revenue can shift between license years based on customer purchase habits.

Hunter compliance

Every hunter must submit a compliance report for each harvest or attempt to harvest. Compliance is measured at the individual report level, and a single hunter may submit all, some, or none of their required reports. These results are the distribution of big game and migratory game bird reporting requirements for license year (LY) 2023 and subsequent penalties collected for non-compliance so far in LY 2024. Big game reports include deer, elk, black bear, and turkey. At the time of this report submittal, 374,204 big game reports have been submitted (50.2%) and 371,216 remain unsubmitted (49.7%). Migratory bird reports include brant, snow goose, band-tailed pigeon, sea duck, and Canada goose. 6,716 migratory bird reports have been submitted (37.2%) and 11,299 remain unsubmitted (62.7%).

For more information on hunting and trapping statistics for the 2023 license year, visit the [WDFW Harvest Reports webpage](#).

Table 1. Hunter reporting compliance rates for license year 2023

Reporting Compliance – Big Game	Reporting Compliance – Migratory Birds
50.2%	37.2%

Table 2. Administrative penalties collected for hunter reporting non-compliance in license years 2023 and 2024

LY 2023	LY 2024 (to date) ¹
\$596,510	\$609,750

¹ LY 2024 started on April 1, 2024, and runs through March 31, 2025. Penalties will continue to be collected until the end of the license year. The amount shown is accurate as of 12/5/2024.

Fisher compliance

A Dungeness crab catch record card (CRC) is issued when a fisher obtains a Puget Sound crab endorsement from any license vendor. Fishery managers rely on catch record cards to manage the Puget Sound Dungeness crab fishery and plan for future seasons. One CRC is valid for the summer fishing season and another CRC is valid for the fall/winter season. For the 2024 summer crab season, 81,091 CRCs were reported (43%) and roughly 106,123 remain unsubmitted (57%).

Table 3. Fisher reporting compliance rates for the summer season of license year 2024²

Crab – Summer
43%

² Data has not yet been analyzed for the fall/winter portion of LY 2024. The percent of catch cards reported is accurate as of 12/19/2024.

Table 4. Administrative penalties collected for fisher reporting non-compliance in license years 2023 and 2024

LY 2023	LY 2024 (to date) ³
\$592,020	\$523,900

³ LY 2024 started on April 1, 2024, and runs through March 31, 2025. Penalties will continue to be collected until the end of the license year. The amount shown is accurate as of 12/5/2024.