

# Monitoring Dungeness crab larvae in the Salish Sea: The Pacific Northwest Crab Research Group

Author: Prasis Pandey

Mentor: Bonnie Becker

Dungeness Crab (*Metacarcinus magister*) are among the many important crab species within Puget Sound Region, for both ecological and economical purposes. Hence, it is vital to monitor their populations periodically. Pacific Crabs Research Group, a partnership between tribal, state and federal governments, have prior findings indicating fluctuating changes within the Dungeness crab populations. The purpose of this current research is to understand the state of Dungeness crab population (specifically crab larvae) for the year 2021. Research was conducted using a light trap with built in timer; timer which turned on at sunset and off at sunrise to attract crab larvae via phototaxis. Research was conducted within the MaST center aquarium within Highline College. Samples were collected within Redondo beach, or the greater region of Puget Sound from April 15, 2021, to August 30, 2021. Results indicated spike in Dungeness crab population within particular weeks of June and July, with continuous decline through August. Continuous collection of yearly Dungeness crab data is important as climate change progresses; fluctuations of prior years and current years could predict the state of Dungeness populations.