

# RECREATIONAL CRAB FISHERY

## MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS TO PROVIDE MARINE LIFE PROTECTIONS

Marine Resources Committee Meeting  
March 17, 2020  
Santa Rosa

CDFW Marine Region



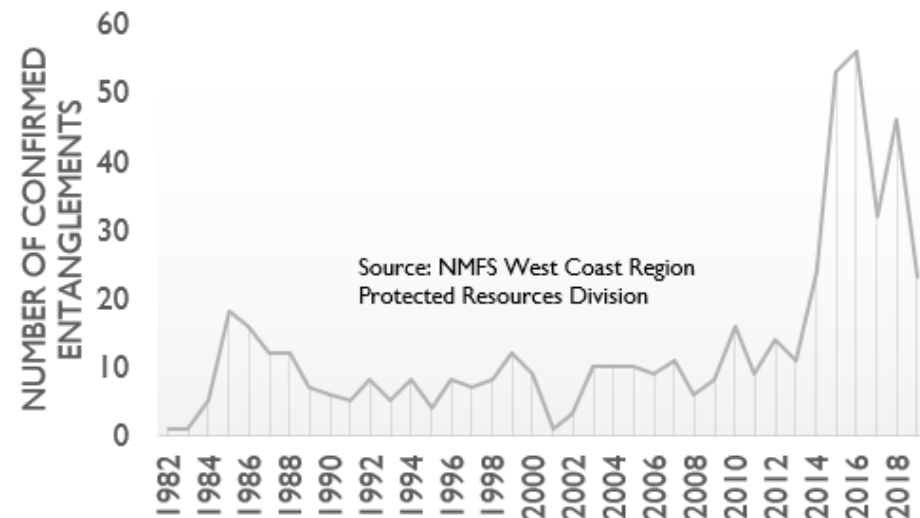
# MARINE LIFE ENTANGLEMENT RISK

- Species listed under Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) entangled in trap gear
- Since 2014 = 48 confirmed CA Dungeness crab gear entanglements, including 3 from recreational crab gear
- Since 2014 = 102 entanglements observed in CA from unknown gear types
- CA, OR, WA, and NMFS all working to reduce risk



Credit: Scott Benson - MMHSRP Permit 18786

Annual Confirmed West Coast  
Entanglements



Source: NMFS West Coast Region  
Protected Resources Division



# RATIONAL FOR RECREATIONAL REGULATION CHANGES

- Protect marine life and listed species under the ESA and MMPA
- Recreational crab fishery is operated in similar locations/configurations
- Recreational fishery has very limited rules regarding deployment, configuration, and servicing of gear
- Help prevent commercial sector from being penalized for entanglement
- Align with other trap fisheries and increase accountability



Credit: CDFW



Credit: CDFW

# RECREATIONAL FISHERY REGULATION PROPOSALS

- **Enhanced Gear Marking**
  - Buoy or Unique Float
  - Simple, low cost and easy to incorporate
- **Trap Limit**
  - Establish limit (5-10 pots)
  - Reduces risk from # vertical lines
- **Service Interval Requirement**
  - Require minimum interval for gear check (9-16 days)
  - Minimize gear loss and by-catch



Credit: NMFS



Credit: NMFS



# BUOY MARKING OPTIONS



Credit: CDFW



# RECREATIONAL FISHERY REGULATIONS PROPOSALS

- **Validation Stamp**
  - Needed to determine fleet characteristics and dynamics
  - Target outreach and communication
- **Director Authority**
  - Align with Director's authority (commercial)
  - Swift management response (entanglement risk)



Credit: CDFW

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# STAKEHOLDER INPUT

- Calls and in-person meetings with representatives
- Discussed proposals at November MRC
- December FGC discussion resulted in three additional public outreach meetings
- Comment Summary:
  - Some support for proposals
  - North fishery different from central fishery
  - Limit surface gear, standardize buoys
  - Lost gear is an issue
  - Exempt passengers from validation
  - Sunset validation
  - Note fishing should be retained
  - Sport fair start



Credit: CDFW



Credit: CDFW



## **DISCUSSION ELEMENTS: BUOY MARKING**

- **Department recommends:**
  - **Buoy or Unique Float attached to end of main buoy or at end of trailer buoy**
  - **Be of one size and color – between 4-5” in length and red for Dcrab and yellow for other sport trap gear**
  - **Inexpensive and commonly available**



## **DISCUSSION ELEMENTS: TRAP LIMIT**

- **Department recommends:**
  - **10 traps per angler from November 1 through March 31**
  - **5 traps per angler from April 1 through end of season**



## **DISCUSSION ELEMENTS: SERVICE INTERVAL**

- **Department recommends:**
  - **9 days – allows weekend through next weekend soak**
  - **Allows for severe weather extension**

## **DISCUSSION ELEMENTS: VALIDATION STAMP**

- **Department recommends:**
  - **Required for all licensed crab fishermen**
  - **Nominal cost**
  - **Would consider sunset after 5 years**



## **DISCUSSION ELEMENTS: DIRECTOR AUTHORITY**

- **Department recommends:**
  - **Director can delay opener or close fishery early to avoid high entanglement scenarios**
  - **Require reporting to FGC at next meeting following action**
  - **Could use zonal approach**

## **DISCUSSION ELEMENTS: SURFACE GEAR**

- **Department recommends:**
  - **Commercially manufactured main buoy**
  - **No more than one trailer buoy using no more than one fathom of line**
  - **4-5'' red marker buoy attached to end marker buoy (for Dcrab)**



## DISCUSSION ELEMENTS: NOTE FISHING

- **Department recommends:**
  - Option 1: Retrieval-only note. Non-owner can pull, but not replace pots. Creates true individual trap limit.
  - Option 2: Fishing note. Non-owner can pull, rebait, and replace pots. Could allow individuals to fish more than their limit of pots.
  - Concern: not clear what affect either will have on total number of pots deployed.
  - Note must identify owner of traps (marked with Gold), person authorized to pull traps, note signed by both parties, contact information, and dates authorized



## **DISCUSSION ELEMENTS: FAIR START**

- **Department recommends:**
  - **Allow no less than 5 days of fishing before commercial pre-soak for any fall season delay**

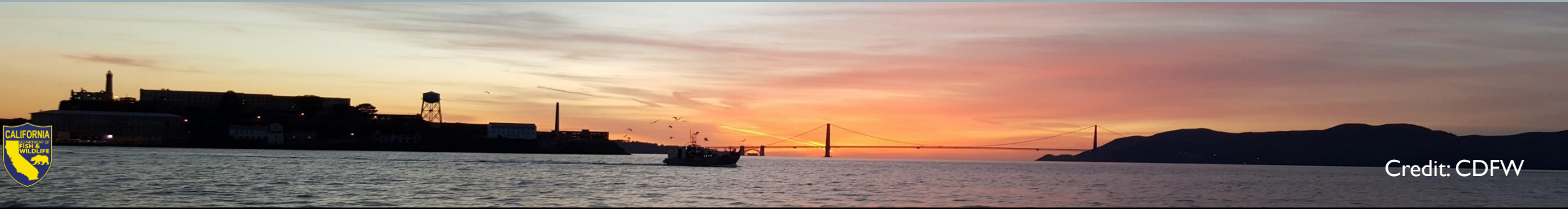
# NEXT STEPS

- **Finalize Options for Rulemaking at April FGC meeting**
- **Recommended Revised Timeline**
  - **Notice June**
  - **Discuss August**
  - **Discuss and Possible Adoption October**
  - **Effective fall 2021**



Credit: CDFW

**More information:**  
**[wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Whale-Safe-Fisheries](http://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Whale-Safe-Fisheries)**



Credit: CDFW