

## Summary: Fishing Gear Demonstration Day

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The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) hosted a fishing gear demonstration day on September 6, 2019 in Monterey. The focus was on fishing gear modifications and innovations which may reduce the risk and severity of marine life entanglements in trap gear. Ten members of the [California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group](#) (Working Group) participated, along with other fishermen, CDFW and National Marine Fisheries Service staff and representatives from the California Fish and Game Commission, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Funding to cover costs for fishermen participants was provided by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary provided the R/V Fulmar as an observation platform. Commercial Dungeness crab traps, to which gear innovations were attached, were provided by Working Group member Calder

Deyerle. Gear was deployed off the P/V Steelhead, a 55-foot CDFW enforcement vessel.

The following innovations were tested:

- [Blue Ocean Gear](#) (GPS buoy) *Kortney Opshaug and Kevin Johnson*
- [Longsoaker Fishing Systems](#) (pop up gear; timed galvanic release) *Russ Mullins*
- SMELTS (pop-up gear; acoustic release) *Richard Riels and David Orsatti*
- [Desert Star](#) (pop-up gear; acoustic release) *Marco Flagg and Tyler McKinney*
- [Fiomarine](#) (pop-up gear; acoustic release) *James McFarlane*
- [Ashored Innovation](#) (pop-up gear; acoustic release) *Aaron Stevenson*
- Yale Grip Sleeve (smooth spliced weak link) *Calder Deyerle*

Participants spent approximately 3 hours conducting testing in approximately 200 feet of water. After testing concluded, both vessels returned to Monterey Harbor for a debrief and question and answer session. Innovators were asked to evaluate their gear's performance and observers were given the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions for future improvements to better align with existing fishing practices.

Changes to fishing practices are a key component of CDFW's overall approach to addressing whale entanglements. In partnership with the Working Group, CDFW continues to explore fishing gear modifications and innovations, including options for additional testing during the 2019-20 commercial Dungeness crab season.

Individuals interested in participating in future testing should contact [info@cawhalegroup.com](mailto:info@cawhalegroup.com). For more information about CDFW's commitment to Whale Safe Fisheries, please contact [WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov) or visit [www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Whale-Safe-Fisheries](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Whale-Safe-Fisheries).