

Memorandum

Date: April 1, 2020

To: Charlton H. Bonham
Director
Department of Fish and Wildlife

From: Craig Shuman, D. Env
Marine Regional Manager



Subject: **Commercial Dungeness Crab Entanglement Risk Assessment**

On March 25, 2020 the California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) met to review available data and provide a recommendation to the Director based on the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) framework. Based on this review and with additional support from RAMP factor experts, the four RAMP factors were evaluated by the Working Group as follows:

- Entanglement: risk is low
- Marine life concentrations:
 - Central Management Area - risk is low
 - Northern Management Area - risk is inferred low (majority recommendation) or unknown (minority recommendation)
- Ocean conditions and forage: risk is low
- Fishing dynamics: risk is low

Based on the above risk assessment, the Working Group finalized a recommendation on March 27, 2020 to inform the Director's April 1, 2020 risk determination. The Working Group did not recommend any management action by the CDFW Director at this time. The Working Group continues to encourage commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fishery participants to use best practices, as outlined in their current Best Practices Guide. They also requested that the department continue to monitor available data that can inform a change to the risk assessment, including aerial surveys for large whales and seas turtles.

Marine Region staff have independently reviewed all available data and the risk assessment factors. Based on this independent analysis of the totality of the risk factors analyzed at this time, Marine Region agrees with the Working Group that no additional management measures are necessary at this time. Staff agree that while the Marine Life Concentration risk is unknown for the Northern Management Area, based on historic whale migration patterns and the low numbers of Humpbacks whales observed in the Central Management area, the risk can be inferred to be low. Staff also recommend alerting the fleet to expect a management change at any time given historic whale migration patterns. Humpback whales typically begin to return to the Central Coast during the months of April and May. Staff will continue to monitor all available data sources, and (weather and health/safety permitting) conduct aerial surveys prior to convening the Working Group for the next risk assessment determination on April 9, 2020.

Charlton H. Bonham, Director

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Attachments:

- RAMP Working Group – Management Recommendation – 03/30/2020
- RAMP Available Data – Risk Assessment – 03/23/2020

cc: Wendy Bogdan, General Counsel
Office of the General Counsel
Wendy.Bogdan@wildlife.ca.gov

Sonke Mastrup, Program Manager
Marine Region
Sonke.Mastrup@wildlife.ca.gov

Mary Loum, Attorney
Office of the General Counsel
Mary.Loum@wildlife.ca.gov

Ryan Bartling, Senior Environmental Scientist
Marine Region
Ryan.Bartling@wildlife.ca.gov