

California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) Management Recommendation Form to inform the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Discussion: December 10, 2020; Memo Finalized: December 11, 2020

Submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Director for the Risk Assessment Mitigation Program Section 132.8 Title 14, California Code of Regulations to assess marine life entanglement risk in the Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery.

The Working Group considered Available Data provided by CDFW on [insert date], as well as an initial CDFW assessment of management considerations and preliminary management action. The Available Data, initial and final versions of CDFW's assessment are available on the [Whale Safe Fisheries webpage](#).

Multiple management options were put forward by Working Group members. They are listed below in the order they were raised during the discussion. Their order does not reflect a ranked level of support by Working Group members.

[Recommendation Option: Statewide Opener on December 16, with Fleet Advisory for Fishing Zone 4](#)

Support CDFW's Initial Assessment to have a statewide opener based on the rationale as articulated in the Initial Assessment. The opener should include a Fleet Advisory limited to Fishing Zone 4. As part of this announcement, CDFW should clarify what is constituted by a Fleet Advisory, similar to what was shared by CDFW staff on the call. All fishery participants are encouraged to use best practices.

This option did not receive broad support from the Working Group.

[Recommendation Option: Statewide Delay to December 31](#)

Port meetings were held on December 9 in Crescent City, Trinidad, Eureka, Fort Bragg, Bodega Bay, San Francisco, Half Moon Bay, Monterey Bay, and Morro Bay. With the exception of Morro Bay and Trinidad, all participating ports supported an additional delay of all Fishing Zones until December 31. Working Group members conveyed

support from the port meeting participants for a unified statewide opener. There is concern about what opening the fishery under a Fleet Advisory would mean. Given the lack of recent aerial or systematic vessel surveys confirming the departure of Humpback whales and Blue whales from Fishing Zone 4, limited aerial survey information in Fishing Zone 3, and the potential for any entanglement in these Fishing Zones to impact the duration of the season in other Fishing Zones, the season should be delayed statewide until December 31.

This option received broad support from the Working Group, in their capacity as representatives of the interests of their ports and local port organizations.

[Recommendation Option: Statewide Opener on December 16, with Fleet Advisory for all Fishing Zones](#)

Support CDFW's Initial Assessment to have a statewide opener on December 16 based on the rationale as articulated in the Initial Assessment, with a Fleet Advisory for all Fishing Zones. The Fleet Advisory should include specific recommendations regarding areas to avoid or other measures to implement that will reduce co-occurrence between whales and fishing gear.

This option did not receive broad support from the Working Group.