



BEST PRACTICES GUIDE FOR MINIMIZING MARINE LIFE ENTANGLEMENT

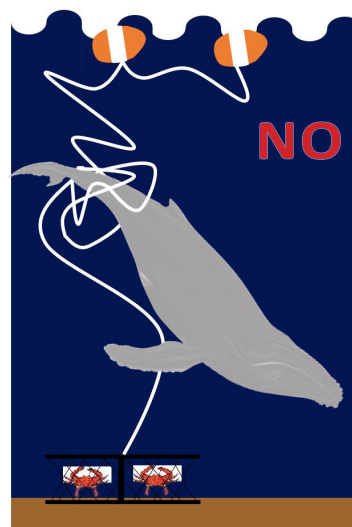
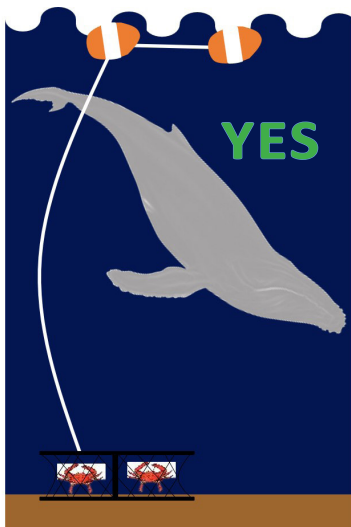
Last updated September 2021



Whale and sea turtle entanglements are a concern for fishermen, the public, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Ocean Protection Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). CDFW developed this guide in collaboration with the California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group as part of a proactive and comprehensive approach to addressing entanglements in Dungeness crab gear. Taking these important steps will help maintain the fleet's access to this valuable resource.

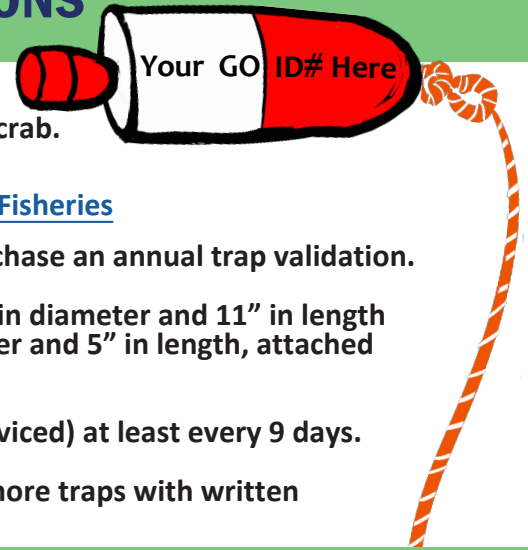
BEST PRACTICES

- **ADJUST** trap line length when changing set location across depths by maintaining optimal scope.
- **MINIMIZE** knots, leads and scope when compensating for tides, currents, and weather.
- **ELIMINATE** excess lines floating at the surface. Floating line should only be used between the main buoy and the trailer.
- **REDUCE** slack surface line.
- **KEEP** vertical lines taut.
- **AVOID** setting gear in the vicinity of whales and sea turtles.
- **COMMUNICATE** locations of high whale activity to other fishing boats.
- **REMOVE** fishing gear prior to the end of the season.
- **PROMPTLY** remove gear not being actively fished.
- **MARK** gear consistent with regulations.
- **MAINTAIN** gear to ensure lines and buoys are in good working condition so they do not break and get lost.
- **RETRIEVE** lost or abandoned commercial Dungeness crab traps as authorized in Title 14, CCR Section 132.2 and 132.7.



**KEEP LINE
BETWEEN
POT AND
MAIN BUOY
TAUT
AND
VERTICAL**

NEW RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS



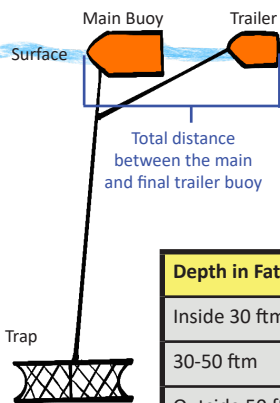
Attention Sport Crab Fishermen



- The season opening and closing date may be modified due to entanglement risk for Dungeness crab. Season Updates provided at: wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Whale-Safe-Fisheries
- Any person who uses crab traps is required to purchase an annual trap validation.
- All traps must have a main buoy that is at least 5" in diameter and 11" in length attached to a red marker buoy that is 3" in diameter and 5" in length, attached to main buoy with 3' of line or less.
- All traps must be raised, cleaned and emptied (serviced) at least every 9 days.
- 10 trap limit and fishermen may service up to 10 more traps with written permission from the operator of the traps.

COMMERCIAL BUOY SETUPS

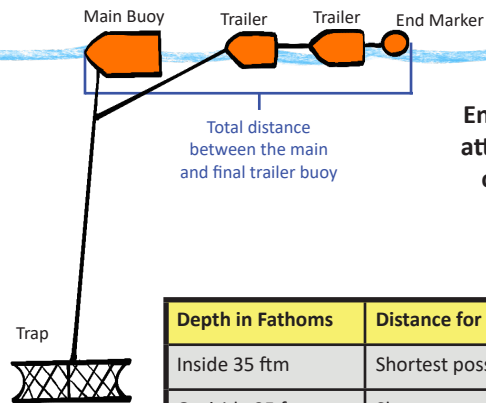
Best Practices (Recommended)



Minimize # of buoys-
No more than 1 trailer buoy inside 30 fathoms.

Depth in Fathoms	Distance for Buoy Setup
Inside 30 ftm	Shortest possible - 3 ftm Max (18 ft)
30-50 ftm	Shortest possible - 4 ftm Max (24 ft)
Outside 50 ftm	Shortest possible - 5 ftm Max (30 ft)

Regulation



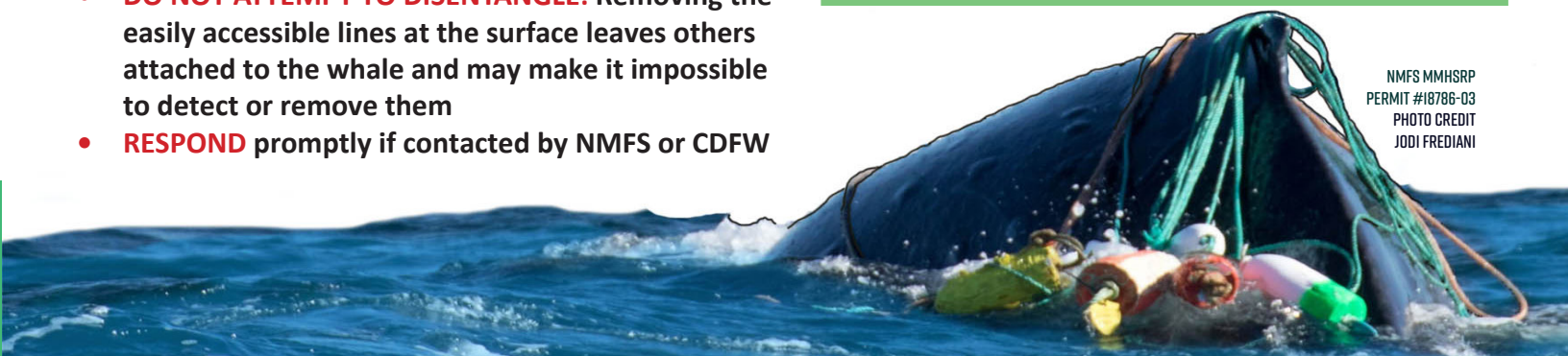
End Marker Buoy attached to 3 feet of line or less.

Depth in Fathoms	Distance for Buoy Setup
Inside 35 ftm	Shortest possible - 4 ftm Max (24 ft)
Outside 35 ftm	Shortest possible - 6 ftm Max (36 ft)

IMMEDIATELY REPORT ENTANGLEMENTS

- **CALL NMFS RESPONSE HOTLINE: 1-877-SOS-WHALE**
- **HAIL THE COAST GUARD: CHANNEL 16**
- **NOTE** date, time, location and take a photo
- **STAND BY** for responders
- **MAINTAIN A DISTANCE OF 100 YARDS** for the safety of you and the whale
- **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DISENTANGLE:** Removing the easily accessible lines at the surface leaves others attached to the whale and may make it impossible to detect or remove them
- **RESPOND** promptly if contacted by NMFS or CDFW

If you have suggestions for reducing entanglements in fishing gear, contact Dan Lawson at the NMFS Protected Resources Division: Dan.Lawson@noaa.gov or Ryan Bartling at CDFW: Ryan.Bartling@wildlife.ca.gov For other related inquiries or questions about this Best Practices Guide: WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov More information at: wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Whale-Safe-Fisheries



NMFS MMHSRP
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