

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

Working Group Discussion Date: December 8, 2021

Anticipated Director's Determination Date: December 9, 2021

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 and scientific advisors, as well as an initial CDFW assessment and the preliminary Management Action recommendation. The Available Data, initial and final versions of CDFW's assessment as well as this recommendation will be made available on the [Whale Safe Fisheries webpage](#) upon completion of the risk assessment process.

Working Group Recommendations

- 1) Recommends that the commercial and recreational fisheries in Fishing Zones 3 and 4 open under a Fleet Advisory on December 20, 2021, unless additional data collected in the interim indicates another management action is warranted. This recommendation is based on Marine Life Concentrations information provided in the December 6, 2021 Available Data Document, as well as additional information shared during the Working Group meeting and incorporated into [an updated Available Data Document on December 8, 2021](#). Available data indicates that foraging humpback whales remain in these Fishing Zones, however historic migration patterns suggest they generally depart California waters by mid-December. This recommendation also reflects Working Group observations regarding fleet dynamics, namely that the ongoing delayed commercial opener for Fishing Zones 3 and 4 has shifted early season effort to Fishing Zones 1 and 2 as compared to traditional opener dynamics, where Fishing Zones 3-6 open prior to Fishing Zones 1 and 2. Opening both Fishing Zones 3 and 4 would minimize potential economic harm to participants and dependent industries in Fishing Zone 3. The Working Group also expressed concerns regarding vacant positions, resulting in incomplete representation for ports located within Fishing Zone 3. This recommendation received some support from Working Group industry members, with other environmental and industry members expressing opposition and the remaining members either abstaining or remaining neutral.
- 2) A second recommendation was made to immediately lift the recreational fishery trap prohibition in Fishing Zone 4, based on the rationale provided in the [December 6, 2021 CDFW Initial Assessment](#). This recommendation received limited support from Working Group members, with some members expressing opposition and many either abstaining or remaining neutral.