



Issued: March 10, 2022

Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery Sorting Box Procedures- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What are the regulations authorizing the take of Dungeness crab?

A: Pursuant to [Fish and Game Code section 8278](#), male, legal-sized crabs that are at least 6.25 inches in breadth are the target of this fishery. As crab are removed from traps, sub-legal crabs, those less than 6.25 inches, and all female crabs need to be immediately sorted and thrown back into ocean waters as they are not to be taken, possessed, bought, or sold. The only exception to this regulation, is that not more than 1 percent in number of any load or lot of Dungeness crabs may be less than six and one-quarter (6¼) inches in breadth but not less than five and three-quarters (5¾) inches in breadth. However, this allowance only accounts for measurement error and undersize crab should not be targeted or intentionally retained.

Q: Can the restrictions on the take of females and shorts only be enforced at the dock?

A: No. This regulation can be enforced at any time regardless if the vessel is at-sea, underway, or at the dock.

Q: Can a dump box or sorting table be used to sort through the catch in my traps?

A: The Fish and Game Code does not specifically allow the use of a sorting table or dump box. Whichever method a Dungeness crab fisherman uses to go through their catch from a trap, a fisherman has a reasonable amount of time to immediately sort their catch upon the removal of the trap from the water. A delay in the measuring and return of undersize crab to the water, or return of female crab to the water, after a trap is brought to the surface, may result in a citation for possession of illegal crab.