STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Gavin Newsom, Governor

Fish and Game Commission

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Wildlife Heritage and Conservation
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CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION
NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to the provisions of Section 1022 of the Fish and Game Code (FGC) and Section 91, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), on July 11, 2022 the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) received an application for an Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) from Johnathan Hillstrand to explore the potential of developing a new commercial fishery for king and other deepwater crab species in California to provide new products and new market opportunities (proposed EFP project).

The applicant seeks approval of a Tier 3 (exploratory fishing) EFP to test the feasibility of capturing king and other deepwater crab species using crab pots (traps) while avoiding impacts to non-target species and habitats.

Sampling with traps, measuring 84” x 84” x 32” in size, would occur in water depths from 600 to 1,800 feet (100 to 300 fathoms) off the coast of California between Eureka to San Francisco (Phase 1). No more than 40 traps would be deployed in the water at any given time. Each trap will be attached to one vertical ¾” line comprised of up to 10 33-fathom shots with the top shot being sinking line to prevent floating line at the surface. Traps would be set in a “prospect string” (i.e., one trap per vertical line spaced approximately 1 mile apart) and soaked for 24 to 36 hours. Each trap would have a 7” diamond web escapement panel to allow undersized or non-target species to escape and an 18” segment of biodegradable twine (destruction device) to allow crabs to escape in the event of lost gear.

The applicant anticipates conducting up to 4 fishing trips within a 1-month period; each trip would be 5 days in length (excluding transit). The results of Phase 1 testing would inform the potential to expand exploratory fishing in areas south of San Francisco, as evaluated and approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department).

The applicant requests the following exemptions from the provisions in FGC and Title 14, CCR.

- FGC Section 9011 (crab traps must meet the design specification for either Dungeness crab described in FGC subdivision 9011(a)(2)) or rock crab described in FGC subdivision 9011(b)(2))
- Section 126, Title 14, CCR (species in the family Lithodidae (box and king crabs) are subject to a 25-lb possession and landing limit for trap gear)

- Section 180.2, Title 14, CCR (trap used to take any fin fish, mollusks, or crustacean must contain at least one destruction device that complies with the specifications described in this section)

Additional exemptions may be required pursuant to FGC subdivision (a)(4).

Pursuant to subsection 91(d), Title 14, CCR, the Department has accepted the EFP application for technical review and will develop a recommendation to the Commission pursuant to subsection 91(d)(2), Title 14, CCR. Written comments and information on matters addressed in this notice and relevant to the Department's technical review of the accepted application may be submitted to Marina Som, Acting EFP Coordinator, at EFP@wildlife.ca.gov.

As soon as the Department's recommendation is available, but not less than 30 days before a public hearing on this application, a notice will be published on the Commission's website at https://fgc.ca.gov/EFP and sent to interested individuals providing information on the opportunity for public comment. Please visit www.fgc.ca.gov for additional information.

July 18, 2022

Fish and Game Commission

Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director