

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

**Working Group Discussion Date: April 28, 2023**

## Working Group Recommendation: Commercial and Recreational (Fishing Zones 1-2)

The Working Group discussed two recommendations for the commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fishery. The Working Group's first recommendation was to implement a Depth Constraint of 30 fathoms in the commercial fishery in Fishing Zones 1 and 2. The recommendation relied on survey data from Working Group Advisors and the [April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Available Data document](#) indicating Marine Life Concentrations in Fishing Zones 1 and 2 are low and offshore. The members suggested that moving the remaining gear inshore would reduce entanglement risk and facilitate quick removal if a closure becomes necessary. In addition, members stated that historical migration patterns and forage data indicate entanglement risk is low. The Working Group members noted that this management action would be less economically detrimental to the fleet than a gear reduction or closure. This first recommendation had broad support from the Working Group.

Alternatively, some members of the Working Group proposed a closure of the recreational and commercial fishery in Fishing Zones 1 and 2 by May 15, 2023. The recommendation relied on the rationale that the 3-year rolling average Impact Score was exceeded and any other action was insufficient to protect Actionable Species. The members who supported this proposal stated that recent entanglements indicate increasing levels of entanglement risk and differed in their interpretation of the historical migration patterns and forage data. This recommendation had very limited support from Working Group Members.

Note: The Working Group discussed CDFW's preliminary recommendations and there was only limited support for the trap prohibition in Fishing Zones 3-6 for the recreational fishery. The Working Group was largely opposed to CDFW's recommendation to implement a 50% Gear Reduction but supported the 30-fathom Depth Constraint.