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Fish and Game Commission



*Wildlife Heritage and Conservation
Since 1870*

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Notice of Receipt of Experimental Fishing Permit Application

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to the provisions of Section 1022 of the California Fish and Game Code and Section 91, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), on November 8, 2023 the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) transmitted an experimental fishing permit (EFP) application to the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) to test hoop nets in zones 3 through 6 of the California Dungeness crab fishery during a fishery closure initiated by the Department under the Department's Risk Assessment Mitigation Program (RAMP) pursuant to Section 132.8, Title 14, CCR.

The application requests a Tier 2 EFP to test the commercial use of hoop nets in the California Dungeness crab fishery to evaluate alternative gear for potential authorization under RAMP (proposed project). The proposed project would allow up to ten permitted vessels to test hoop nets in fishing zones 3 through 6 to assess performance, feasibility, and compatibility in the California Dungeness crab fishery during season closure periods triggered by RAMP.

The proposed fishing activities would occur off the coast of California between the Sonoma/Mendocino counties line (38° 46.125' N. latitude) and Lopez Point (32° 32' N. latitude). Each vessel would utilize up to 50 hoop nets and adhere to a maximum soak time of 2 hours. The proposed project activities would begin in spring 2024 to commence one day following any early RAMP season closure enacted due to the presence of whales and continue through June 30, 2024. The proposed project activities would potentially commence again in fall 2024, on the same day commercial crab pots may be deployed in fishing zones 3 through 6, and continue through June 30, 2025, or the EFP expiration date, regardless of any RAMP closure.

The application also requests exemptions from the following state fishing laws or regulations:

- Fish and Game Code Section 8276, subdivision (d) (requirement for removing commercial Dungeness crab gear from state waters at close of season)
- Subsection 132.8(c), Title 14, CCR (RAMP management measures)

During its technical evaluation, the Department will determine if other exemptions may be necessary pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 1022, subdivision (a)(4).

Pursuant to subsection 91(d)(2), Title 14, CCR, the Department will provide a recommendation to the Commission, including any proposed special conditions. As soon as the Department's recommendation is available, but not less than 30 days before the hearing on this application,

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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.

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 James Steffey, the Department's Acting EFP Coordinator, at EFP@wildlife.ca.gov.

Please visit www.fgc.ca.gov/EFP for additional information.

November 15, 2023

California Fish and Game Commission

Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director