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*Wildlife Heritage and Conservation
Since 1870*

Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090
(916) 653-4899
fgc@fgc.ca.gov
www.fgc.ca.gov

Notice of Receipt of Experimental Fishing Permit 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 December 21, 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 longlining traditional trap gear in the California Dungeness crab fishery during a fishery closure under the Department's Risk Assessment Mitigation Program (RAMP) initiated by the Department pursuant to Section 132.8, Title 14, CCR.

The application requests a Tier 2 EFP to test the commercial use of longlining traditional trap gear (i.e., connecting two or more traps together by a common line) in the California Dungeness crab fishery to inform alternative gear certification under the Department's RAMP (proposed project). The proposed project would allow up to 40 permitted vessels to test longlining of traditional crab gear to assess performance, feasibility, and compatibility in the California Dungeness crab fishery during closure periods triggered by RAMP.

The proposed fishing activities would occur off the coast of California between Crescent City and Morro Bay. Each vessel may use strings of multiple traps with a single vertical line and buoy at one end; each vessel would have a total of 20 vertical lines and fish up to the total assigned traps for their permit tier. Traps will be set between 25 and 50 fathoms apart with a buoy line that is a maximum of 20 fathoms over the fishing depth. This proposal will also test out an electronic logbook to track gear locations and every vessel will be equipped with an electronic data logger to validate location information. Administrators will endeavor to partner with other EFPs that may have developed applications that share gear location information to avoid gear conflict.

If approved, the proposed project would begin in spring 2024, following an early RAMP season closure and continue through June 30, 2024.

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

- FGC Section 9005 (requirement for every trap or string of traps to be marked with a buoy)
- Subsection 132.8(c), Title 14, CCR (RAMP management measures)

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During its technical evaluation, the Department will determine if other exemptions may be necessary pursuant to FGC subdivision 1022(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, 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, Acting EFP Coordinator, at EFP@wildlife.ca.gov.

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

December 27, 2023

California Fish and Game Commission

Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director