

Committee Staff Summary for July 17-18, 2024 MRC

7. Recreational C Trap Gear Options**Today's Item**Information Action

Receive and discuss Department overview of potential proposed regulation changes related to gear and marine life entanglement concerns, and trap validation for commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFVs).

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- Commission granted, in part, a regulatory petition concerning crab validation stamps for CPFVs June 14-15, 2023
- MRC received Department update on scope of potential recommendations for changes to recreational crab regulations March 19, 2024; MRC
- **Today, receive and discuss Department overview of potential recommendations for changes to recreational crab regulations July 17-19, 2024; MRC**
- Department update and recommendation for proposed changes, for potential MRC recommendation November 7, 2024; MRC

Background

In June 2023, the Commission took action on a regulation change petition from the CPFV industry related to CPFV-specific crab trap validation stamps and modifying surface buoy gear requirements. The Commission granted the CPFV validation stamps part of the petition and requested that the Department work with recreational crab fishery participants to develop other regulation options related to gear and entanglement concerns.

Following the June meeting, Department staff worked with CPFV and sport fishing representatives to develop proposed changes to recreational crab regulations. In March 2024, the Department provided MRC a written update on the collective work, reporting that they developed a questionnaire to survey 2023 crab validation stamp purchasers, which they distributed in spring of 2024 (Exhibit 1). The survey was intended to inform the efficacy of a validation stamp for management and the potential utility of a CPFV-specific validation stamp.

Today, the Department will report the results of the survey, provide an overview of proposed changes to recreational crab regulations and rationale, and summarize next steps (Exhibit 2). Following today's discussion, the Department's goal is to present additional findings and final recommendations for a potential MRC recommendation at the November 2024 MRC meeting, pending completion of survey analyses and outreach.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

1. [Department update, received at the March 2024 MRC meeting](#)

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2. [Department presentation](#)

Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)

Update on Changes to Recreational Crab Regulations California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Report to Marine Resources Committee Meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission March 19, 2024 Meeting

Overview: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is exploring changes to recreational crab fishing regulations. This report provides a summary of proposed changes, CDFW activities in progress, and anticipated timeline for regulation development.

Proposed Regulation Changes: In June 2023, the Fish and Game Commission approved in part a request from industry concerning crab validation stamps and requested CDFW work with recreational crab fishery participants on regulation options related to gear and entanglement concerns. A summary of industry and CDFW proposed changes are provided in Table 1.

CDFW Activities in Progress: CDFW developed a questionnaire to survey 2023 crab validation stamp purchasers. This survey will be distributed via email to a randomly selected subset of validation stamp purchasers in early March. Information collected in this survey will help inform the efficacy of this tool for management as well as an industry request to create a CPFV-specific validation stamp.

Timeline:

- March 19, 2024 (MRC meeting): Written update on scope of changes to recreational crab regulations.
- March – June 2024: Outreach to recreational anglers.
- July 18, 2024 (MRC meeting): Receive and discuss Department overview of potential changes to recreational crab regulations.
- July – September 2024: Continued outreach to recreational anglers.
- November 7, 2024 (MRC meeting): Recommendation on changes to recreational crab regulations.
- February, April, June 2025 (FGC meetings): Rulemaking calendar.

Table 1. Summary of proposed changes to recreational crab regulations.

Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Industry Request		
Crab Validation Stamp (Section 29.85(a))	Allow for specific Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) validation stamp	Allow for more accurate data reporting onboard CPFVs.
CDFW Requests		
General Provisions (Subsection 29.80(a)(3))	Add nets to the gear types that cannot be moved, disturbed, etc. without written permission of operator.	Regulations only stipulate requirements for traps; intent is to include all recreational gear used to harvest saltwater crustaceans.
Hoop net surface gear specifications (Subsection 29.80(b)(5))	Clarify that only the main buoy may be used. Additional trailer buoys are not permitted.	Intent is to clarify current regulations to address public confusion.
Entanglement risk evaluation (Subsection 29.80(c)(7))	Add hoop nets to gear evaluated for entanglement risk	Any vertical line poses entanglement risk; therefore, all recreational crab fishing gear should be included in risk evaluations.
Triggers for entanglement risk evaluation (Subsection 29.80(c)(7)(A))	Include number of entanglements as a trigger to evaluate entanglement risk.	Trigger is currently limited to marine life concentrations; would align triggers with commercial fishery.
Recreational management actions for entanglement risk (Subsection 29.80(c)(7)(B))	Include depth restrictions and gear reductions as available tools for the recreational fishery in response to elevated entanglement risk.	Align with commercial fishery and increase fishing opportunities in response to entanglement risk.
CPFV logbooks (Sections 190 & 195)	Revise electronic and paper CPFV logbook forms to add new data reporting requirements to capture the number of crab traps and hoop nets fished during each recreational crab trip.	Department support of proposed changes to Section 29.85(a) are contingent on updating logbooks to capture necessary information that would otherwise be lost.



Proposed Changes to Recreational Crab Regulations

18 July 2024

Presented to:

Marine Resources Committee
CA Fish and Game Commission

Presented by:

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Marine Region



Overview

- Crab Validation Survey
- Proposed changes to northern hoop net and recreational crab trap regulations
- Next Steps



Photo Credit: Christy Juhasz/CDFW



Crab Validation Survey

- Nov 2021 – Individuals Require Crab validation to use traps
 - Goal is to collect and assess EFI
- March 2024 – Survey 2023 Purchasers
 - Emailed to random subset
 - Received ~20% response rate
- Analysis and Summary Report

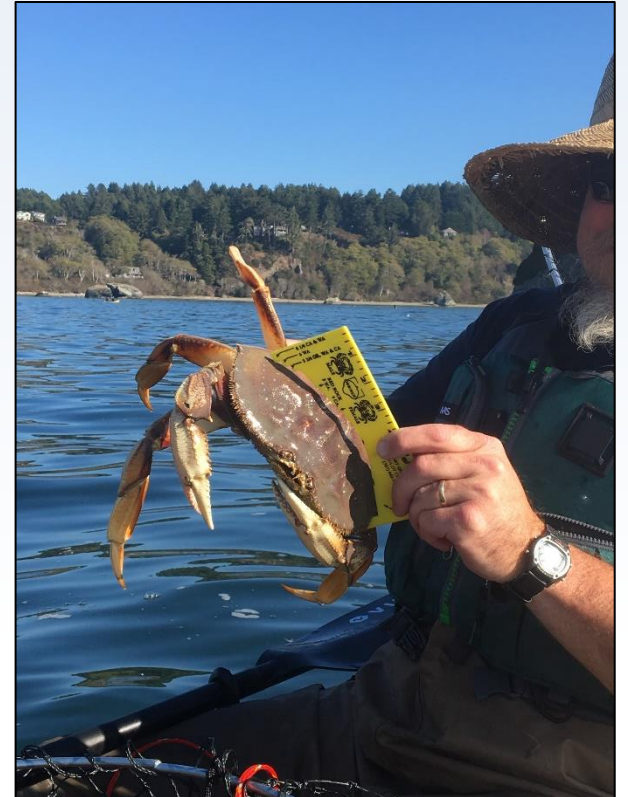
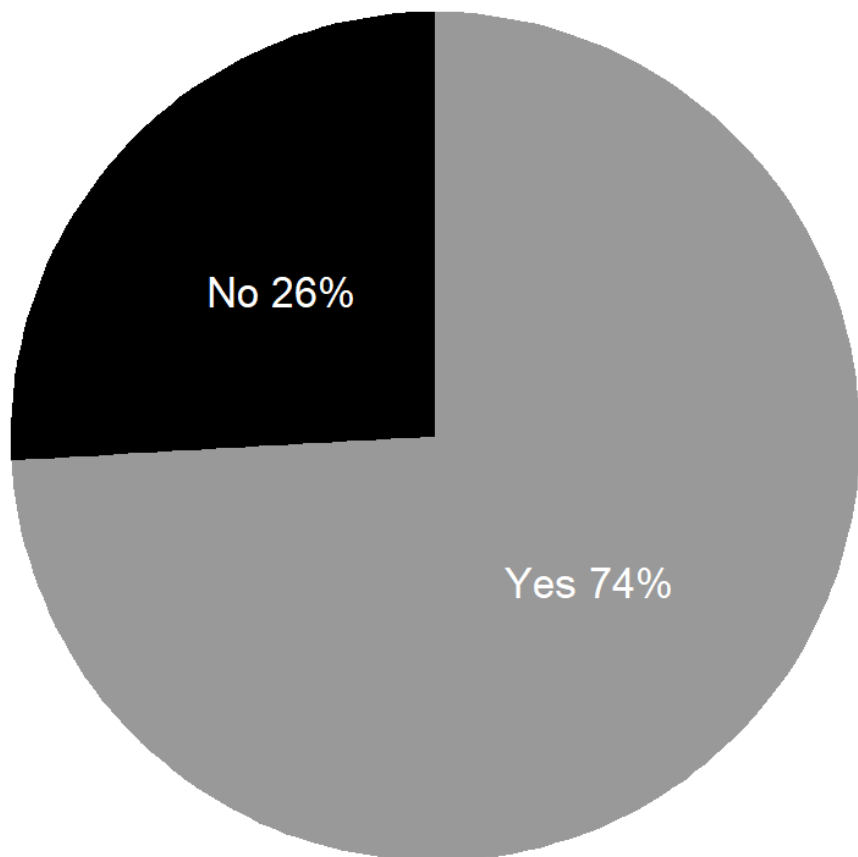


Photo Credit: Ed Roberts/CDFW

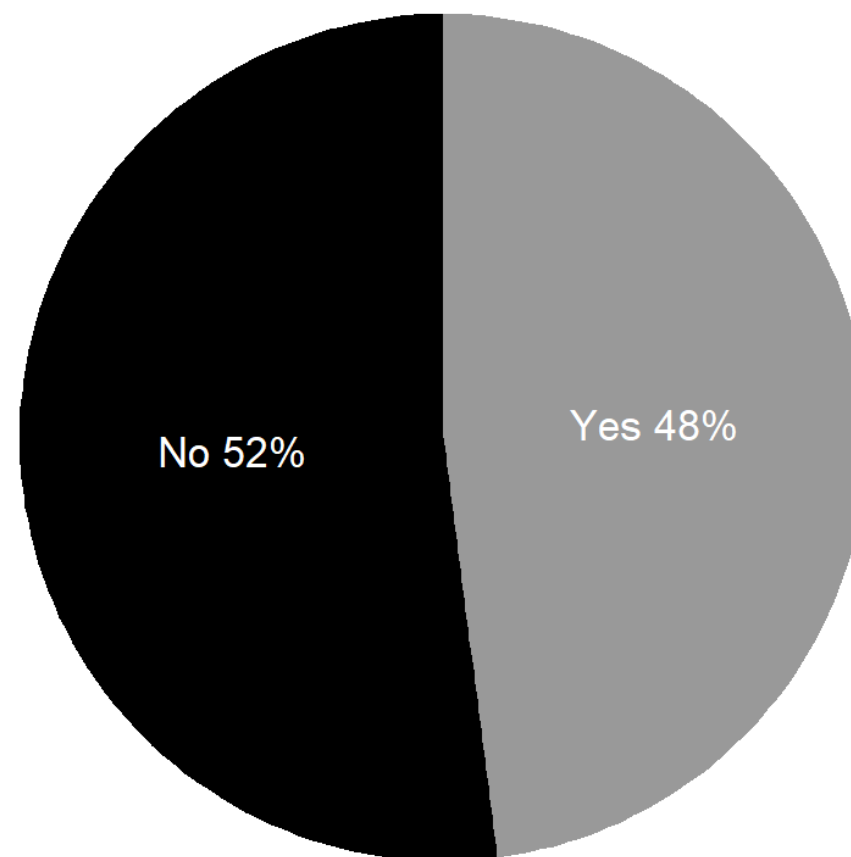


Crab Validation Survey Results – Fishing Activity

Did you go crabbing in 2023?



If you went crabbing, did you use a crab trap?





Proposed Changes (Title 14, CCR § 29.80 & § 29.85)

1. Allow for specific Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) stamp - Petition
2. Prohibit tampering of hoop nets without permission of operator - CDFW
3. Clarification of northern hoop net surface gear - CDFW
4. Update recreational entanglement evaluation: triggers, management actions, northern hoop nets - CDFW
5. Prohibit use of line marks from other fisheries - CDFW



1) Allow for Specific CPFV Stamp

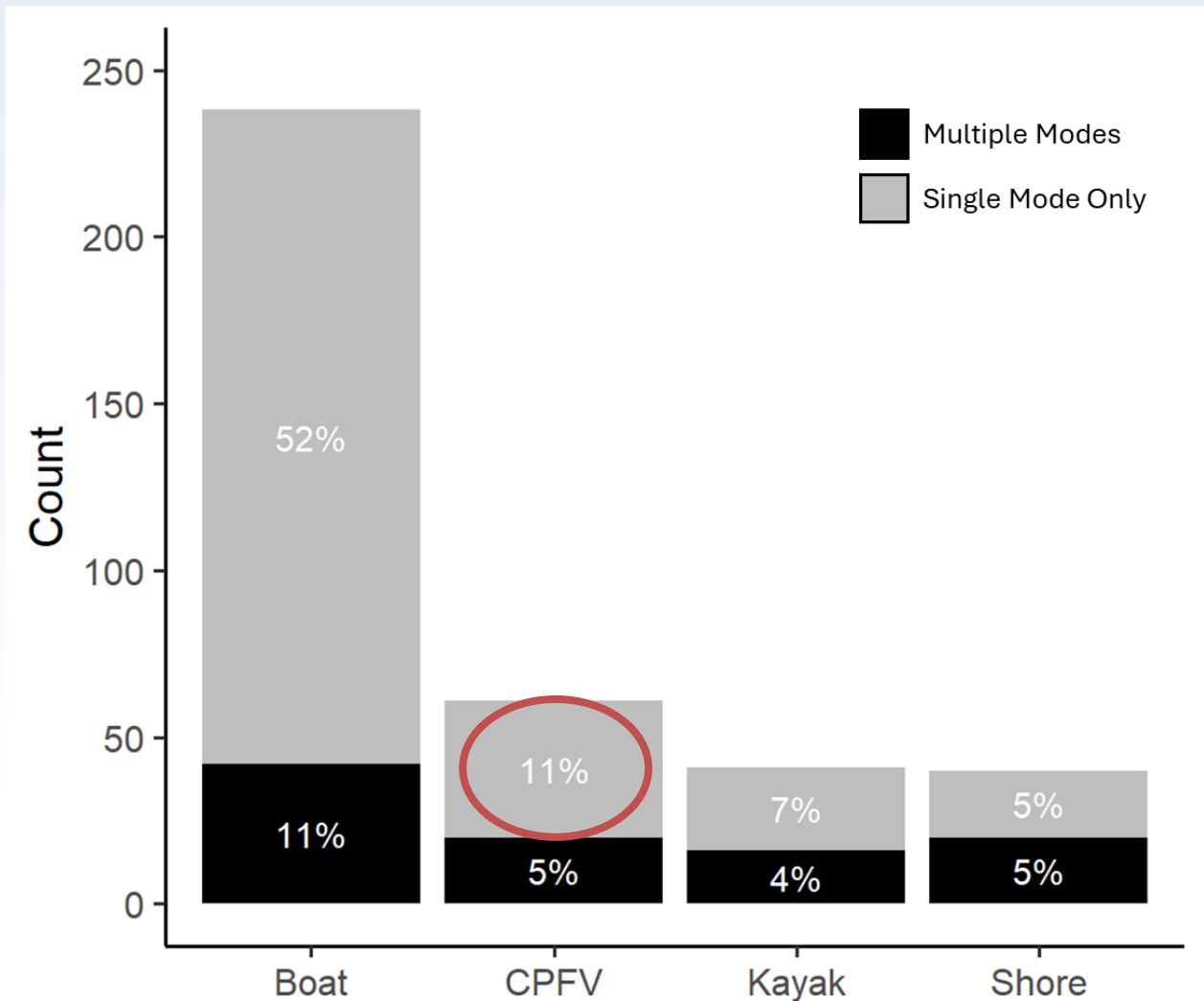
Current Regulation: Any individual who fishes for crab using crab traps must possess a recreational crab trap validation.

Proposed Changes: Add a separate validation stamp specific for CPFVs; update electronic & paper logs; add new fee

Rationale: CPFVs should be required to submit data on fishery effort through logbooks since anglers would not know this information.



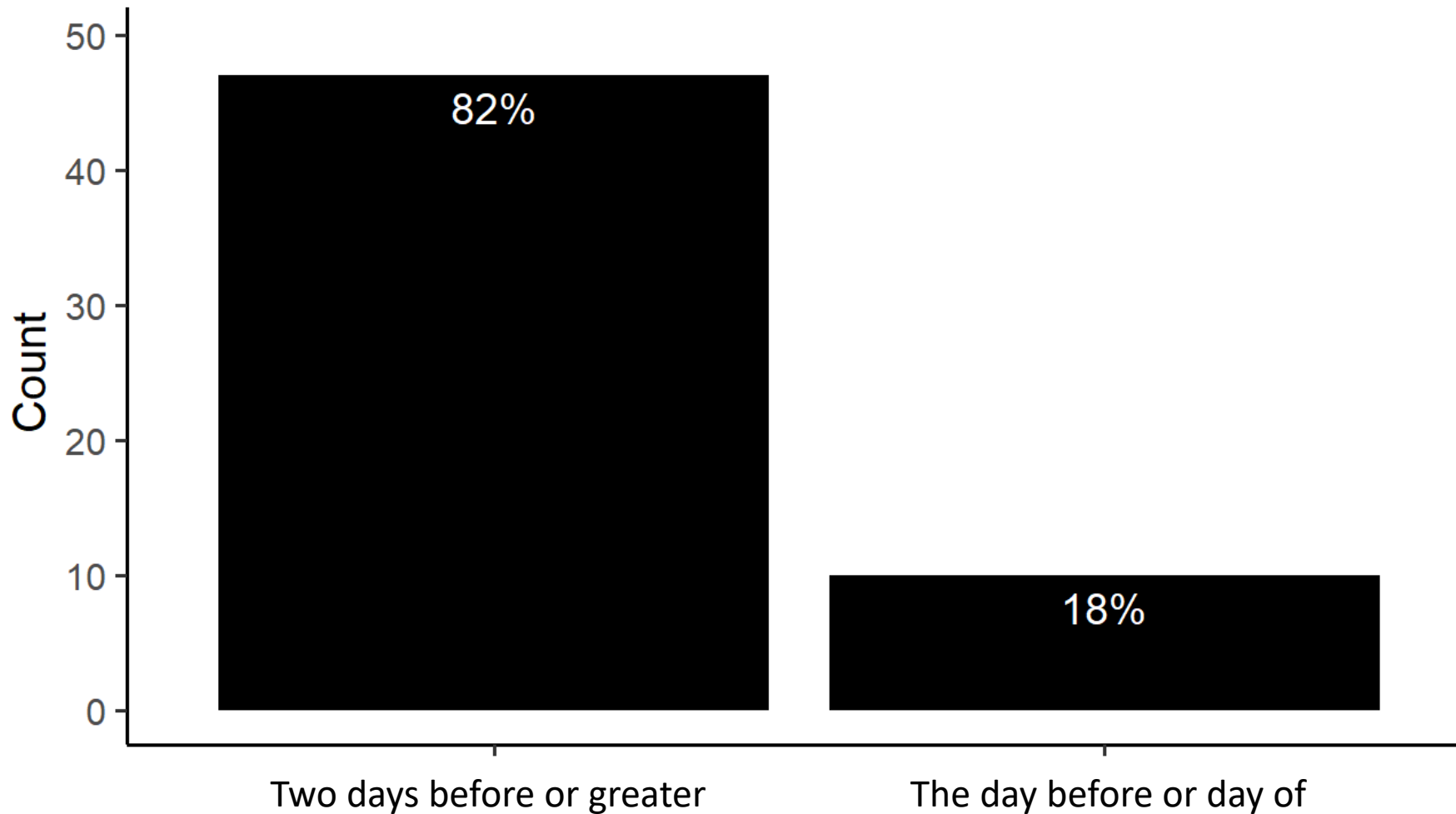
Crab Validation Survey Results – Fishing Modes





Crab Validation Survey Results – CPFV Users

When did you purchase your validation stamp in relation to your first fishing trip?





2) Prohibit Tampering of Hoop Nets

Current Regulation: Unlawful to disturb, move, or damage any trap; or remove any saltwater crustacean from a trap that belongs to another person without written permission.

Proposed Change: Unlawful to disturb, move, or damage any trap or hoop net; or remove any saltwater crustacean from a trap or hoop net that belongs to another without written permission.

Rationale: Align all gear used to take saltwater crustaceans under this requirement.



3) Clarify Northern Hoop Net Surface Gear

Current Regulation: All hoop nets shall be marked with a surface buoy (except for those deployed on shore).

Proposed Regulation: Specify one main buoy for hoop nets used north of Point Arguello, Santa Barbara County.

Rationale: Clarify surface gear requirement.



Photo Credit: Ryan Bartling/CDFW



4) Recreational Entanglement Evaluation - Triggers

Current Regulation: Entanglement risk evaluation limited to one trigger of marine life concentrations.

Proposed Regulation: Add number of entanglements as another trigger to evaluate risk.

Rationale: Align triggers with commercial sector.



4) Recreational Entanglement Evaluation - Management Actions

Current Regulation: Prohibiting the use of crab traps is the only management action that can be implemented in response to elevated entanglement risk during Dungeness crab season.

Proposed Regulation: Include gear reduction and depth restriction under management actions.

Rationale: Align management actions with commercial sector; increase fishing opportunities in response to elevated risk.



4) Recreational Entanglement Evaluation – Northern Hoop Nets

Current Regulation: Hoop net gear **not** evaluated for entanglement risk.

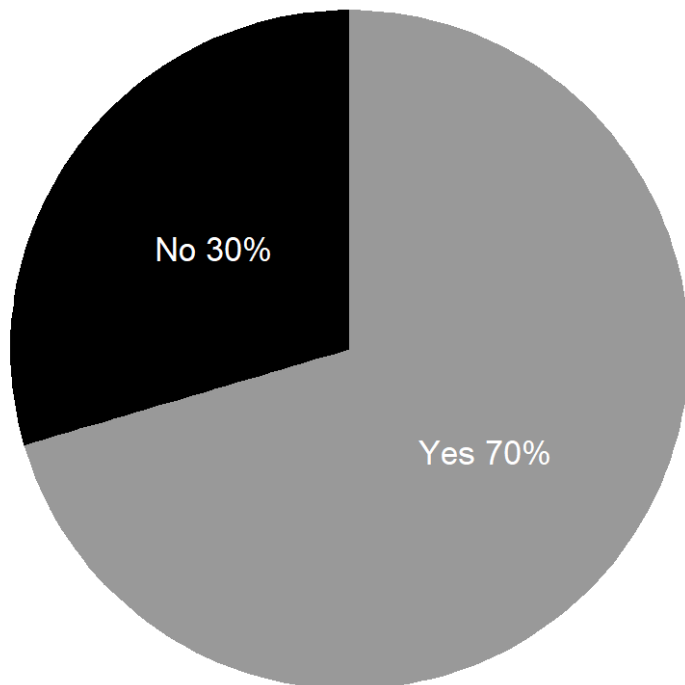
Proposed Regulation: Add hoop net gear (north of Point Arguello) as part of evaluation for entanglement risk.

Rationale: Evaluate all vertical-lined gear types for entanglement risk.



Crab Validation Survey Results – Hoop Nets

If you went crabbing, did you use a hoop net?



If you used a hoop net, did you also use a crab trap?

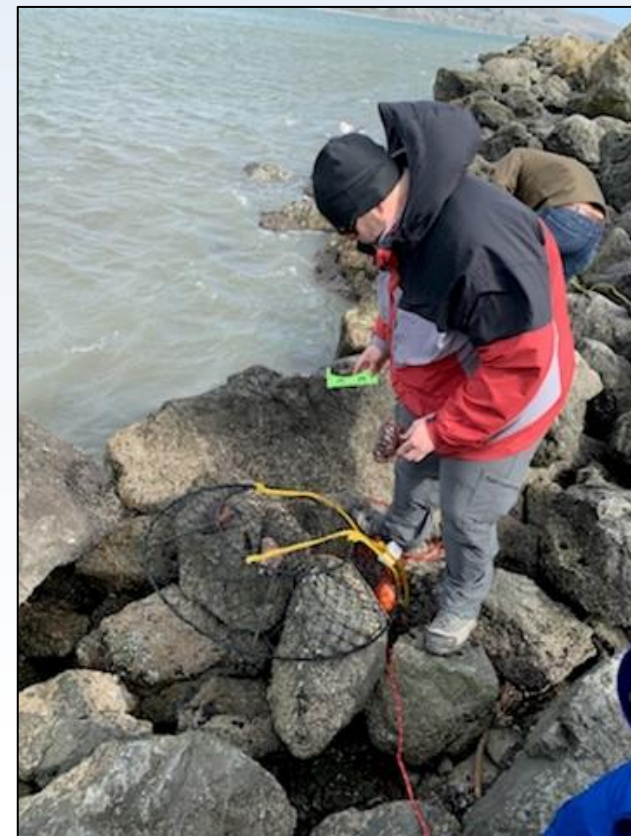
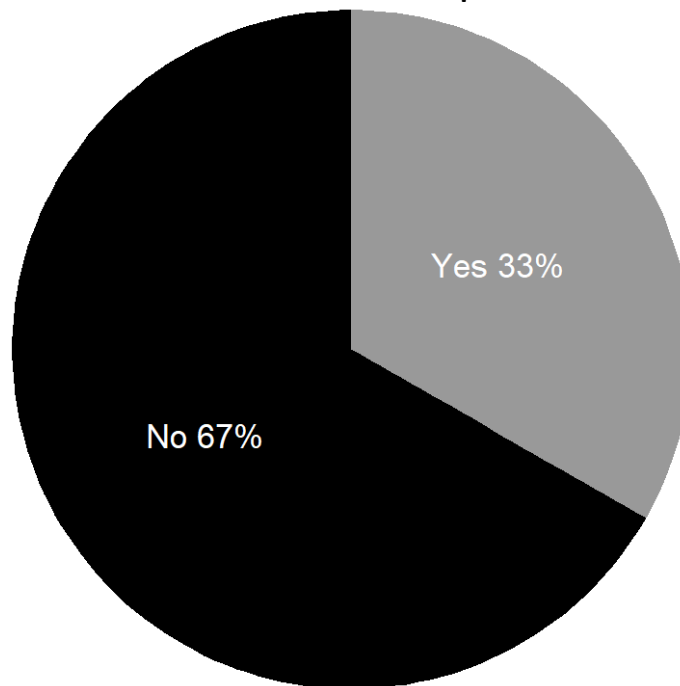


Photo Credit: James Phillips/CDFW



5) Prohibit Line Marks Used in Other Fisheries

Current Regulation: No line restriction.

Proposed Regulation: Prohibit use of line required in other fisheries.

Rationale: Better identify entanglements to source fishery.



Photo Credit: CDFW



Photo Credit: CDFW



Photo Credit: CDFW



Timeline

Milestone	Date
MRC Introduction	July 18, 2024
MRC Discussion/Final Recommendation	November 7, 2024
MRC Final Recommendation (if needed)	March 13, 2025
FGC Notice Meeting	April 16-17, 2025
FGC Discussion Meeting	June 18-19, 2025
FGC Adoption Meeting	Aug 13-14, 2025



Summary & Next Steps

- MRC Guidance
- Continue to conduct outreach
- Present findings for potential recommendation either in November 2024 or March 2025 MRC meeting
- Continue crab validation survey analyses and draft summary report

Thank You



Questions:

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