



July 24, 2024

SUBJECT: Dungeness Crab Vessel Permit Biennial Buoy Tag Replacement Notice

Dear Permit Holder:

As a result of feedback received regarding the breakage of 2023-25 biennial buoy tags (buoy tags), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (“Department”) is replacing all previously issued 2023-25 buoy tags before the start of the next fishing season. Replacement 2023-25 buoy tags (hereafter, “replacement tags”) are expected to ship to permit holders sometime between late September and mid-October of this year. These replacement tags will be valid only for the 2024-2025 fishing season and permit holders can only use the replacement tags to legally take Dungeness crab during the 2024-25 commercial Dungeness crab fishing season.

Below are frequently asked permit holder questions and answers.

Q: Will the replacement tags be different than my current tags?

A: Yes and no. Instead of using different colored buoy tags for each tier, the replacement tags for all tiers will be white with black printed font and will contain the same information as the previously issued biennial buoy tags (e.g., permit and serial numbers, 2023-25 biennial period, recycle symbol, etc.).

Q: Will the replacement tags start the beginning of a new biennial period?

A: No. The replacement tags will only be valid for the legal take of Dungeness crab during the 2024-25 commercial Dungeness crab fishing season. New buoy tags for the 2025-27 biennial period will be issued sometime in 2025 before the start of the 2025-26 commercial Dungeness crab fishing season.

Q: Do I need to pay for the replacement tags?

A: No. Pursuant to California Fish and Game Code (FGC) Section 8276.5 and California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 14, Section 132.1, permit holders are only required to pay for the issuance of their full biennial tag allocations once per biennial period.

Q: Can I continue to use the 2023-25 buoy tags instead of the replacement tags or use a combination of both sets of tags?

A: No. A permitted Dungeness crab vessel shall not fish more Dungeness crab traps than the number designated under their trap tier allocation pursuant to CCR, Title 14, Section 132.1(c)(3). The breakage issues experienced and reported during the 2023-24

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season have resulted in the Department reissuing replacement tags to all permit holders. These replacement tags must be affixed to the main buoy of each trap (CCR, Title 14, Section 132.1(b)) to designate these trap allocations during the 2024-25 fishing season. Any Dungeness crab trap being fished in the 2024-25 season without a replacement tag observed on the main buoy may result in enforcement action.

Q: What should I do with my current 2023-25 Dungeness crab buoy tags?

A: Before the start of the next commercial Dungeness crab season, dispose of the previously issued 2023-25 buoy tags and replace them with the new white 2023-25 replacement tags. You may recycle your old tags by placing them in your residential curbside recycling pick-up bin or taking them to a recycling drop-off site that accepts polyethylene terephthalate (commonly abbreviated PETE or PET) plastics. Additional information on recycling PETE plastics in California can be obtained by calling 1-800-RECYCLE or visiting <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/plastics/faq>.

Q: If I obtained in-season replacement tags from the Department during the 2023-24 commercial Dungeness crab fishing season, am I required to return them to the Department before I can receive the replacement tags?

A: No. In-season replacement tags are only required to be returned when being replaced with between-season replacement tags. The Department is not issuing between-season replacement tags due to permit holder tags being lost or destroyed. Replacement tags are being issued to all permit holders due to tag breakage issues experienced and reported by permit holders during the 2023-24 commercial Dungeness crab fishing season. In-season replacement tags should be disposed of in the same manner as previously issued 2023-25 buoy tags (described above).

Q: Will an update be provided regarding the timeline for shipping my replacement tags so that I know when to expect them?

A: Yes. When the replacement tags are being prepared for shipment to permit holders, the Department will post a notice online at wildlife.ca.gov/Licensing/Commercial and wildlife.ca.gov/crab, and email all permit holders that have a valid email address associated with their vessel profile in the Department's Automated License Data System (also referred to as Online License Sales and Services). The update will contain the date(s) the replacement tags are expected to ship and the shipping methods to be used. For questions about or assistance with your vessel profile, including email and/or shipping address updates, please call (916) 928-5822 or email LRBCOMM@wildlife.ca.gov.

Q: What if I experienced tag breakage issues during the 2023-24 commercial Dungeness crab season but did not notify the Department in writing?

A: The Department has been and will continue to carefully document and assess the tag breakage issue reported by permit holders during the 2023-24 commercial Dungeness crab season, with the goal of preventing tag breakage from occurring during

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subsequent biennial buoy tag issuance periods. However, the tag breakage feedback received to date has been largely verbal and by word of mouth.

In the Department's ongoing efforts to prevent tag breakage from occurring in the future, we are imploring permit holders to submit written reports documenting any tag breakage experience. Broken tag reports can be sent to the letterhead address on the first page of this notice or emailed to LRBCOMM@wildlife.com. Please include your permit number, how the breakage occurred or is suspected to have occurred, and the total number of broken buoy tags experienced. Permit holders that have already submitted replacement tag affidavits do not need to submit additional reports.

As stated previously, Department staff are working diligently to research and appropriately address the issue. We sincerely appreciate your patience and broken tag report submittals, which contribute greatly to our ongoing research of the issue and objective to prevent it from occurring in the future.

Please contact LRBCOMM@wildlife.ca.gov or (916) 928-5822 with any questions regarding this notice.