

Committee Staff Summary for November 6-7, 2024 MRC

6. Recreational Crab Trap Gear Options and Trap Validation for Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels

Today's Item

Information Action

Discuss Department-proposed regulation changes related to gear and marine life entanglement concerns, and trap validation for commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFVs); develop potential committee recommendation.

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
- MRC received and discussed Department overview of proposed recommendations for changes to recreational crab regulations July 17-18, 2024; MRC
- **Today, receive Department update on proposed regulation changes and develop 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, followed by a survey of 2023 crab validation stamp purchasers in spring of 2024. The survey was intended to inform the efficacy of a validation stamp for management, and the potential utility of a CPFV-specific validation stamp.

At the July MRC meeting, the Department reported survey results and provided an overview of its proposed changes to recreational crab regulations and the rationale for those changes (Exhibit 2). The Department presented five potential regulation changes to address gear and marine life entanglement concerns and to create a new trap validation for commercial passenger fishing vessels. The Department committed to conducting additional outreach, continue analyzing the crab validation survey results, and present a final recommendation to MRC at this meeting.

Update

Following the July MRC meeting, the Department conducted additional outreach regarding the proposed regulation changes via a public webinar, the Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working

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Group, the Dungeness Crab Task Force, and tribal notifications. Today, the Department will present an update and will highlight any changes from the July recommendation, as informed by recent outreach (Exhibit 1).

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

Commission staff: Advance to rulemaking the proposed changes to recreational crab trap regulations related to gear and marine life entanglement concerns and trap validation for commercial passenger fishing vessels, as recommended by the Department and discussed today.

Department: Advance to rulemaking the proposed changes to recreational crab trap regulations related to gear and marine life entanglement concerns and trap validation for commercial passenger fishing vessels, including to: (1) create a specific CPFV validation stamp; (2) prohibit tampering with hoop nets without permission of operator; (3) clarify northern hoop net surface gear; (4) update recreational entanglement evaluation, including triggers, and management actions [do not include northern hoop nets]; and (5) prohibit use of line required in other fisheries, as described today. Schedule for notice hearing in April 2025.

Exhibits

1. [Department presentation](#)
2. [Department July 2024 presentation to MRC \(for background purposes only\)](#)

Committee Direction/Recommendation

The Marine Resources Committee recommends that the Commission advance to rulemaking the proposed changes to the recreational crab trap fishery related to gear and marine life entanglement concerns and trap validation for commercial passenger fishing vessels as recommended by the Department, and schedule public notice for April 2025.



Proposed Changes to Recreational Crab Regulations

7 November 2024

Presented to:

Marine Resources Committee
CA Fish and Game Commission

Presented by:

Christy Juhasz
Senior ES Specialist, Invertebrate Program
Marine Region



Overview

- Purpose
- Summary of proposed changes
- Outreach
- Timeline
- Next steps



Photo Credit: CDFW

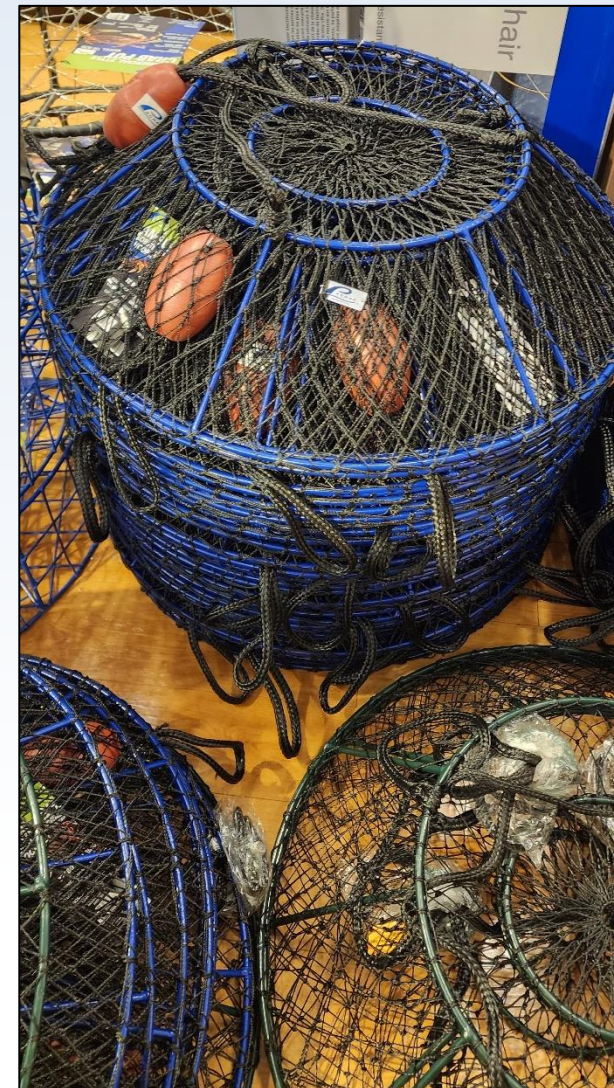


Photo Credit: Ryan Bartling/CDFW



Purpose

- Address 2022 FGC Petition
- Update hoop net operations based on increased usage
- Increase available tools to address entanglement risk of recreational crab gear
- Prevent the use of unique line marking that is required in other fisheries for entanglement identification



Summary of Proposed Changes

	Current Regulations	Proposed Change
Validation Stamp	Individual Validation Stamp	Individual Validation CPFV-specific Validation
Tampering Prohibition	Crab Traps	Crab Traps Hoop Nets
Surface Gear for Northern Hoop Nets	Shall be marked with a buoy	Specify only one main buoy may be used



Summary of Proposed Changes (Cont. 1)

	Current Regulations	Proposed Change
Entanglement Evaluation (Management Trigger)	Marine Life Concentrations	Marine Life Concentration Entanglement Numbers
Entanglement Evaluation (Management Actions)	Trap Gear Prohibition	Trap Gear Prohibition Depth Restriction



Summary of Proposed Changes (Cont. 2)

Prohibition of Unique Line Marks Used in Other Fisheries

Current Regulation: No line restriction.

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



Photo Credit: CDFW



Photo Credit: CDFW



Photo Credit: CDFW



Outreach

- Public Meeting Webinar – September 20, 2024
- Presented to Industry – October 2024
 - Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group
 - Dungeness Crab Task Force
- Tribal Notifications



Timeline

Milestone	Date
MRC Final Recommendation	November 7, 2024
Proposed Rulemaking Timeline	
FGC Notice Meeting	April 2025
FGC Discussion Meeting	June 2025
FGC Adoption Meeting	Aug 2025

Next Steps

- MRC Recommendation
- Initiate rulemaking in 2025



Photo Credit: Christy Juhasz/CDFW

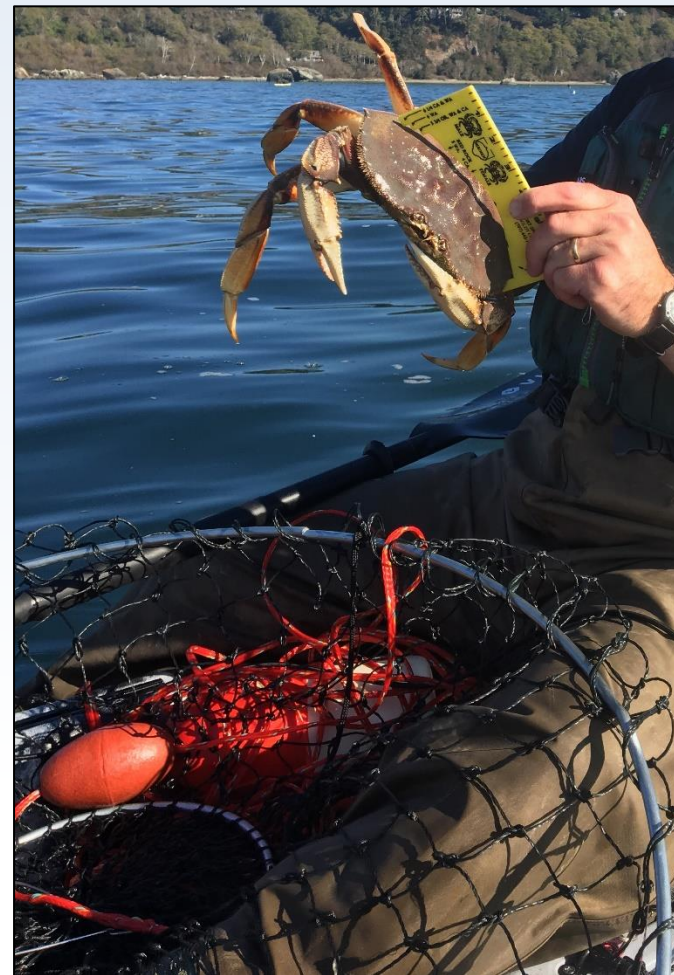


Photo Credit: Ed Roberts/CDFW

Thank You



Questions:

WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov



Proposed Changes to Recreational Crab Regulations

18 July 2024

Presented to:

Marine Resources Committee
CA Fish and Game Commission

Presented by:

Christy Juhasz
Senior ES Specialist, Invertebrate Program
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

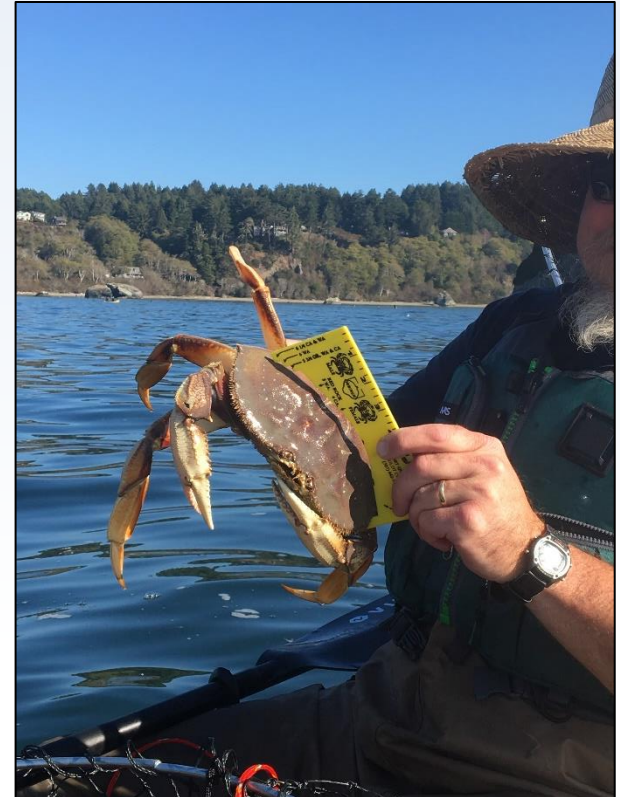
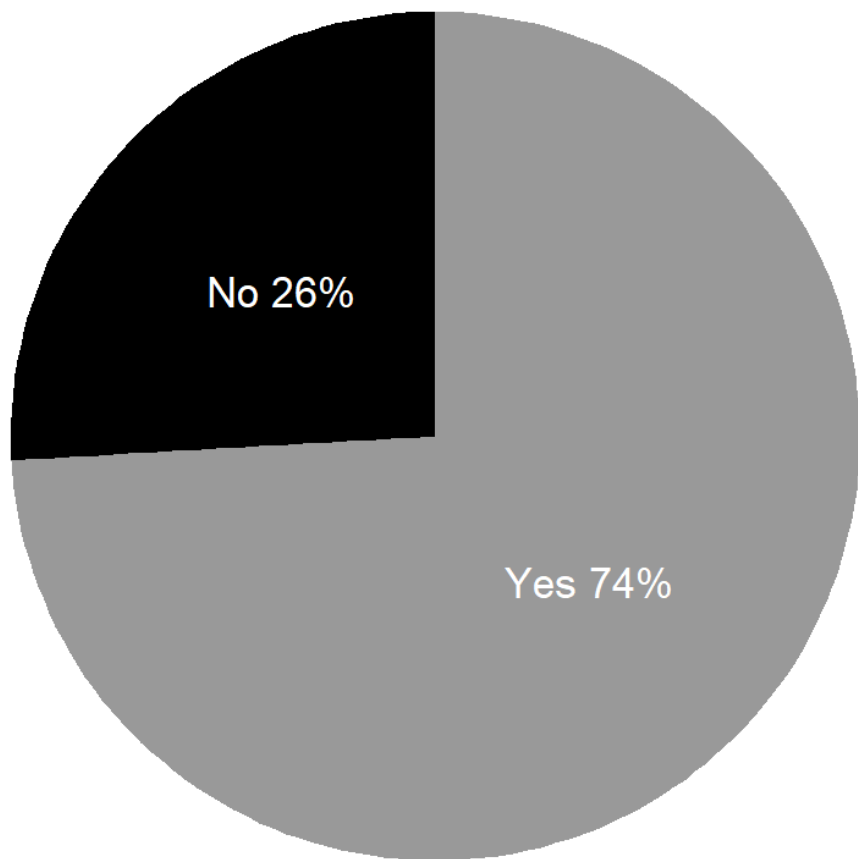


Photo Credit: Ed Roberts/CDFW

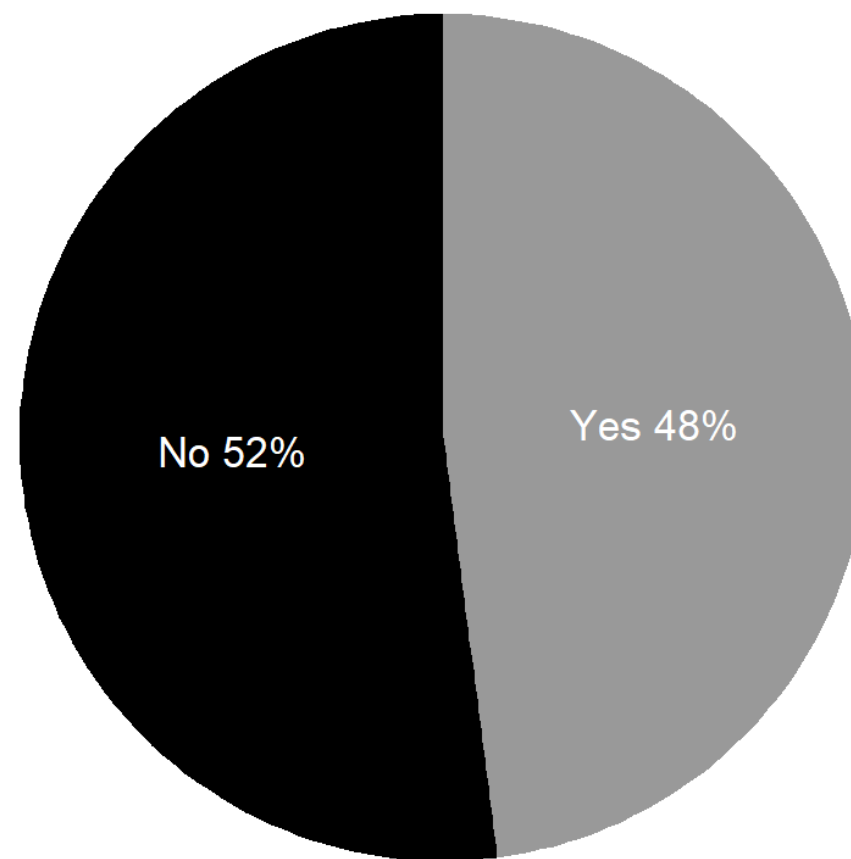


Crab Validation Survey Results – Fishing Activity

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

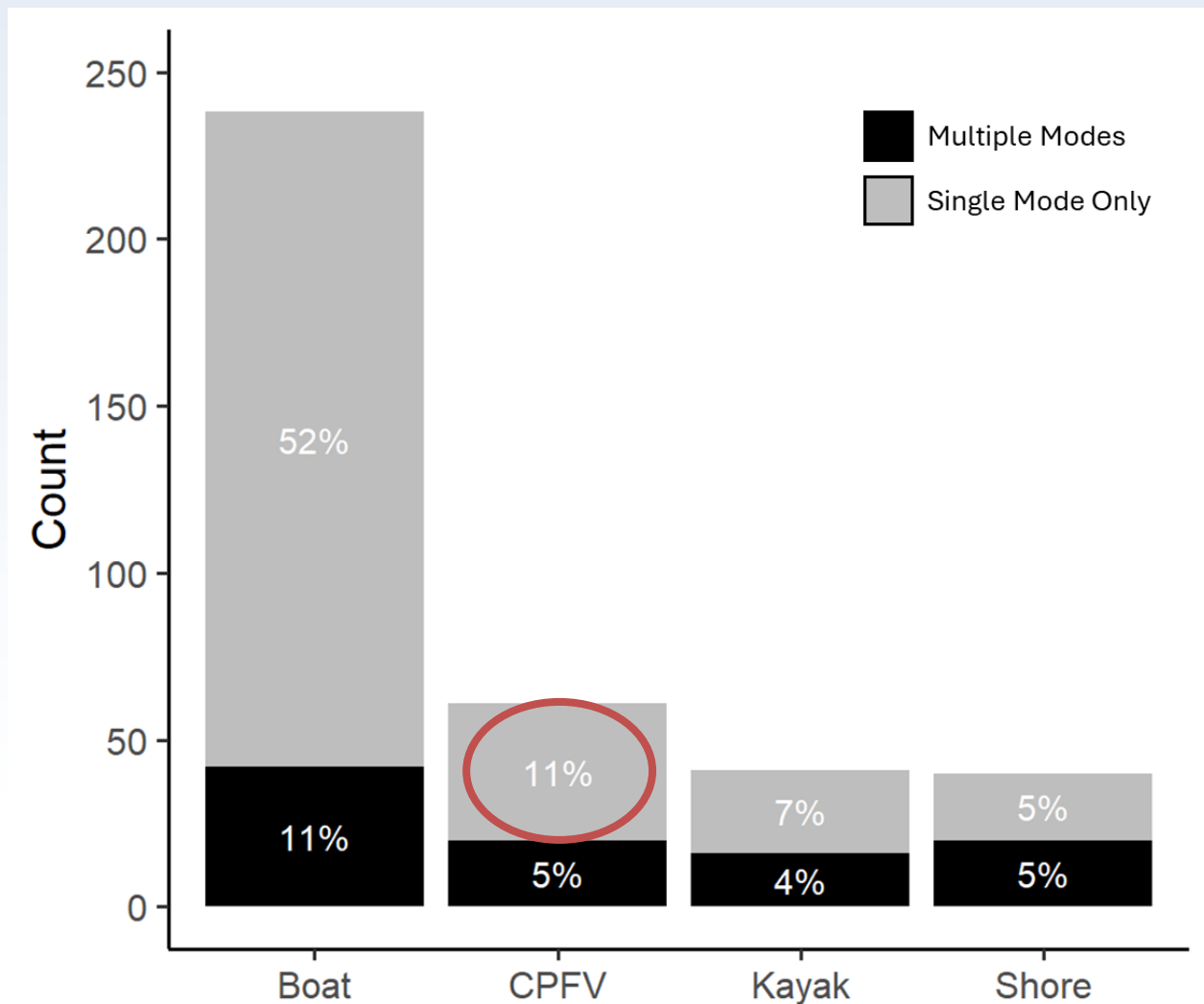
Current Regulation: Any individual who fishes for crab using crab traps must possess a recreational crab trap validation.

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.



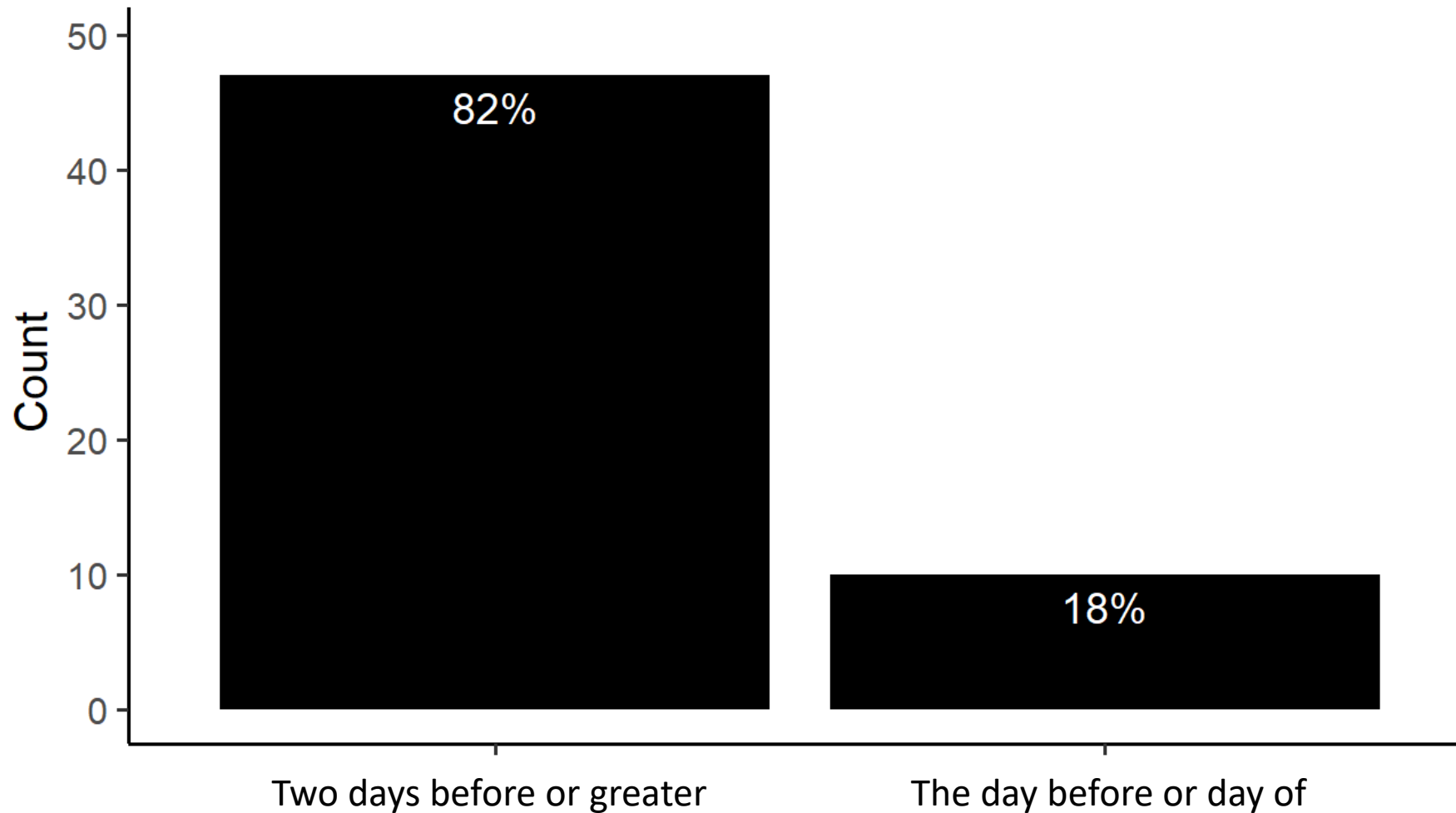
Crab Validation Survey Results – Fishing Modes





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.

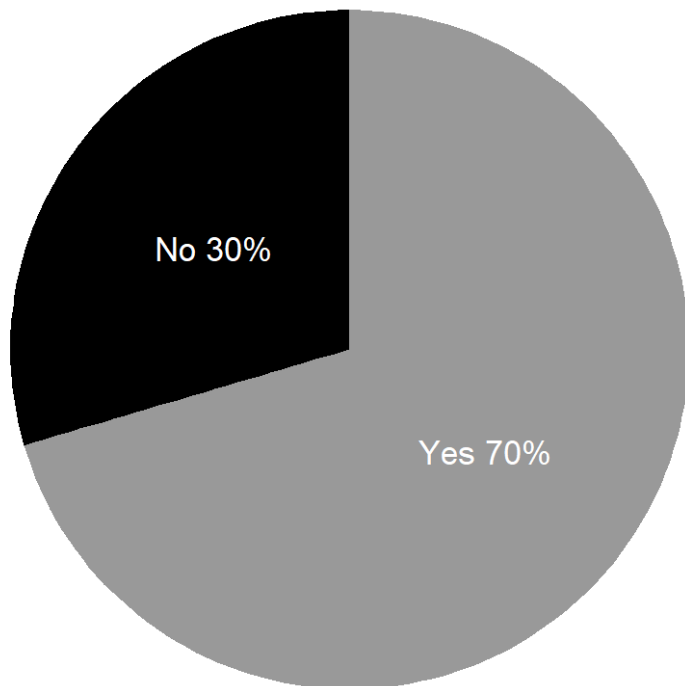
Proposed Regulation: Add hoop net gear (north of Point Arguello) as part of evaluation for entanglement risk.

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?

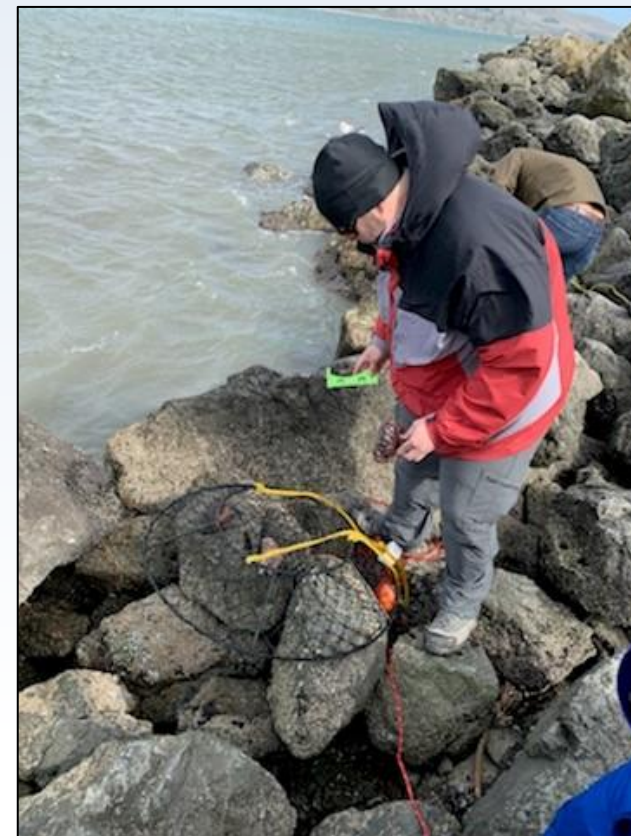
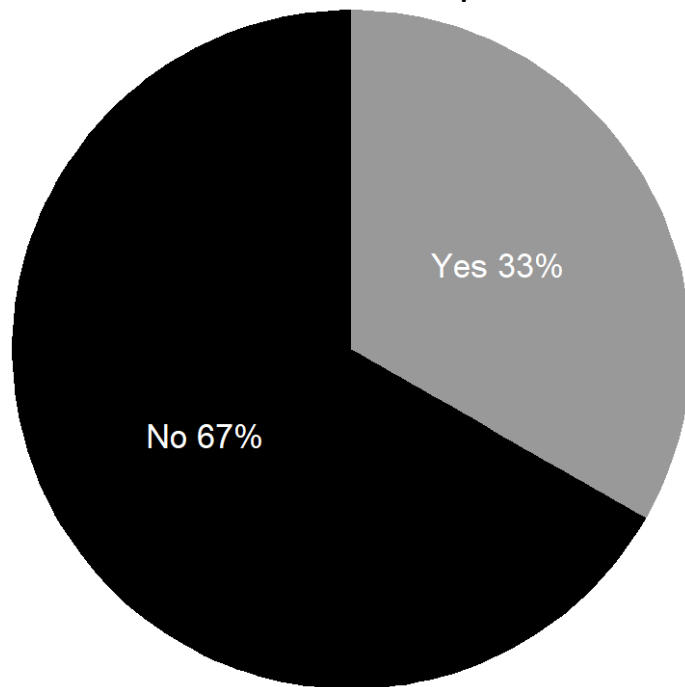


Photo Credit: James Phillips/CDFW



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:

WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov