



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
DECLARATION OF FISHERY SEASON DELAY
IN THE COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY
DUE TO RISK OF MARINE LIFE ENTANGLEMENT**

Pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 8276.1 (b) and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 132.8 ("Section 132.8"), I find and declare that:

I

On November 21, 2024, I evaluated entanglement risk for the commercial Dungeness crab fisheries pursuant to Section 132.8. I provided the California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) and the Whale Safe Fisheries email listserv with notice of the risk assessment and all non-confidential data under consideration on November 15, 2024. Prior to this risk assessment and management response, Department staff reviewed all relevant information and consulted with the Working Group.

II

Vessel surveys conducted by Cascadia Research in Fishing Zone 1 observed 42 humpback whales on November 8, 2024, and 10 blue whales on November 7, 2024. Pursuant to 132.8(c)(2)(A)(4)(a) and (b), I must implement a Fishing Zone delay or other protective management action in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

III

Impact Score Calculation exceeded a running average of two humpback whale entanglements over a three-year period. Pursuant to Section 132.8(c)(1)(C), I must implement a Fishing Zone closure or other protective Management Action.

IV

There are no Department approved Marine Life Concentration survey data to inform the risk assessment in Fishing Zone 2. Pursuant to Section 132.8(d), I must implement a protective Management Action.

VI

Upon evaluation of the management considerations pursuant to Section 132.8(d), I have determined that the management action listed below protects humpback

whales based on the best available science. Additional information on the relevant management considerations is provided in the attachment to this declaration.

V

THEREFORE, under the authority granted by Fish and Game Code Section 8276.1(b) and Sections 132.8 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, I am implementing the following management action:

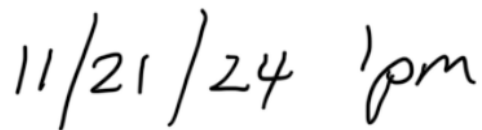
1. Delay the opening of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Fishing Zones 1 and 2.
2. Take and possession of commercially caught Dungeness crab is prohibited in the delayed Fishing Zones.

This management action is in effect until modified and in addition to management actions already in place for the commercial and recreational fishery as described in the [October 25, 2024, Director's Declaration](#). The next risk assessment is expected to occur on or around December 5, 2024.

Updates and material regarding future entanglement risk evaluations in the commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fisheries will be made available on the [Department's Whale Safe Fisheries web page](#).



Charlton H. Bonham, Director



Date/Time

ATTACHMENT TO November 21, 2024 DIRECTOR DECLARATION OF FISHERY SEASON
DELAY IN THE COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY
DUE TO RISK OF MARINE LIFE ENTANGLEMENT

Information referenced in this Attachment is further described in the Final Assessment of Marine Life Entanglement Risk and Management Recommendation dated November 21, 2024, and in the Available Data and Preliminary Assessment document dated November 15, 2024. To the Department's knowledge, these documents represent the best available science informing this risk assessment and they are located at the Department's [Whale Safe Fisheries website](#).

These recommendations were proposed due to exceeded Marine Life Concentration data triggers, known migration patterns for humpback whales in Fishing Zone 1, and lack of available data in Fishing Zone 2. In addition, the current three-year rolling average Impact Score for the commercial fishery is 5.40, requiring Management Action.