

California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) Management Recommendation to inform the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Working Group Discussion Date: January 15, 2025

The Working Group discussed the Department's preliminary recommendation to continue with a 25% Gear Reduction in Fishing Zones 1-2 and a 50% Gear Reduction in Fishing Zones 3-6 for the commercial fishery and a Fleet Advisory for both the commercial and recreational fishery.

The Working Group discussed the Department's recommendation by each management area. Participation in the call was limited due to current fishing activities and other meeting conflicts. While there was minimal participation, there was an equal show of support and opposition to continue the 25% Gear Reduction in Fishing Zones 1-2. Similarly, there was an equal show of support and opposition to continue the 50% Gear Reduction in Fishing Zones 3-6.

The Working Group also brought forth an alternative recommendation for consideration.

Working Group Recommendation: Remove Gear Reduction in the Commercial Fishery for Fishing Zones 1 and 2.

The Working Group provided a recommendation to remove the Gear Reduction management action in Fishing Zones 1 and 2. The key rationale was that CDFW is not basing management decisions on the best available science, but rather the impact score. The Working Group referenced the most recent surveys done in Fishing Zones 1 and 2 that show little to no Marine Life Concentrations and that there has been no evidence indicating that Gear Reductions lead to a reduced number of entanglements. Additional rationale included the fact that the impact score is heavily influenced by the number of unknown entanglements, and that a Gear Reduction poses a significant economic impact on the fleet. This recommendation received broad support and moderate opposition.