

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: February 11, 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 all Fishing Zones for both the commercial and recreational fishery. The Working Group provided limited support and moderate opposition for the Department's recommendation. The Working Group provided two alternative recommendations for consideration by the CDFW Director.

Working Group Recommendation #1: Remove 25% Gear Reduction in the Commercial Fishery for Fishing Zones 1 and 2.

The Working Group provided a recommendation to remove the 25% Gear Reduction Management Action in Fishing Zones 1 and 2, effective immediately. The justification for removing the Gear Reduction is their belief that there is a lack of scientific evidence demonstrating that a vertical line reduction translates into a reduction in entanglements, particularly when no whales are present. Additionally, there is a lack of evidence to suggest that a Gear Reduction results in lower numbers of lost gear. It was also stated that Gear Reduction requires more movement of trap gear, which could increase the likelihood of lost gear. This recommendation received moderate support and limited opposition.

Working Group Recommendation #2: Remove 50% Gear Reduction in the Commercial Fishery for Fishing Zones 3-6.

The Working Group provided a recommendation to remove the 50% Gear Reduction in Fishing Zones 3-6. This recommendation is supported by the justification outlined in Recommendation #1. This recommendation received moderate support and limited opposition.