

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: March 14, 2025

The Working Group discussed the Department's preliminary recommendation to continue 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 fisheries. The Working Group provided broad support and limited opposition for the Department's recommendation. The Working Group provided an alternative recommendation for consideration by the CDFW Director.

Working Group Recommendation: 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 currently present. Additional rationale included the fact that the Impact Score is heavily influenced by the number of Unknown entanglements, rather than those attributable to the CA Dungeness crab commercial fishery. This recommendation received moderate support and limited opposition.