



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
DECLARATION OF FISHERY SEASON CLOSURE AND DEPTH CONSTRAINT
IN THE COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY AND CRAB TRAP RESTRICTION IN THE
RECREATIONAL 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") and Section 29.80(c)(7) ("Section 29.80(c)"), I find and declare that:

I

On April 3, 2025, I evaluated entanglement risk for the commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fisheries pursuant to Sections 132.8 and 29.80(c). 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 March 28, 2025. Prior to this risk assessment and management response, Department staff reviewed all relevant information and consulted with the Working Group, and I consulted with the president of the Fish and Game Commission.

II

On March 25, 2025, a Department aerial survey documented a total of 16 humpback whales within Fishing Zone 4. Pursuant to Section 132.8(c)(2)(B)(a), I must implement a Fishing Zone closure 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

Numerical Marine Life Concentration triggers have been reached in Fishing Zone 4 for humpback whales, as described in Part II. Pursuant to Section 29.80(c), I must implement a protective management action in the recreational Dungeness crab fishery. Section 29.80(c) requires that any temporary prohibition on the use of crab traps extend the general crab trap prohibition outlined in Section 29.80(c)(4).

V

There are no Department approved Marine Life Concentration survey data to inform the risk assessment in Fishing Zones 5 and 6. Pursuant to Section 29.80(c)(7)(A)(2) and 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 actions listed below protect humpback whales based on the best available science. Additional information on the relevant management considerations is provided in the attachment to this declaration.

VII

THEREFORE, under the authority granted by Fish and Game Code Section 8276.1(b) and Sections 132.8 and 29.80(c) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, I am implementing the following management action:

1. Effective April 15, 2025 at 6:00pm, the deployment and use of crab traps in any recreational fishery is prohibited in Fishing Zone 4.
2. Effective April 15, 2025 at 6:00pm, closure of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery for the remainder of the 2024-25 season in Fishing Zones 4, 5, and 6. All commercial Dungeness crab traps must be removed from ocean waters in those Fishing Zones by that date and time. The take and possession of Dungeness crab from closed waters is prohibited after 6:00pm on April 15, 2025 pursuant to Fish and Game Code 8276.1(d). This closure does not apply when using authorized Alternative Gear, as stated below.
3. Effective April 15, 2025 at 6:00pm, a Depth Constraint limiting commercial fishing activity to inside (shallower than) 30-fathoms within Fishing Zones 1, 2 and 3. In the commercial fishery, traps shall not be used or placed in the water seaward of the 30-fathom contour as defined in Title 50 of the Federal Codes of Regulations, Part 660, Section 660.71.
4. Retrieval operations under the Lost or Abandoned Dungeness Crab Trap Gear Retrieval Program, as defined in Section 132.7 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, may begin in Fishing Zones 4, 5, and 6 at 6:00am on April 22, 2025.
5. Pursuant to Section 132.2(a)(2)(E) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, beginning at 6:00am on April 22, 2025, permitted Dungeness crab

vessels may retrieve an unlimited number of commercial Dungeness crab traps from Fishing Zones 4, 5 and 6 which are lost, damaged, abandoned, or otherwise derelict. All crustaceans and finfish must be immediately returned to the water and not retained when retrieving lost, abandoned, or derelict Dungeness crab traps pursuant to this declaration. The Department requests that individuals retrieving gear pursuant to Section 132.2(a)(2)(E) report their activities to WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov. The Department also requests individuals to submit a [CalTIP notification](#) if they observe large amounts of gear from a given permit holder within any of these Fishing Zones. Individuals possessing or retrieving traps from Zones 4, 5, or 6 pursuant to Section 132.2(a)(2)(E) are prohibited from possessing crab. Any vessel operating or transiting in an open Fishing Zone may not possess more than six traps belonging to another vessel, pursuant to Section 132.2(a)(2)(A).

6. Authorized Alternative Gear may be used in all closed Fishing Zones. Currently there are no authorized Alternative Gear types. If an Alternative Gear type is authorized before the statutory season closure date, it may be used for take of Dungeness crab.
7. Fishing Zones 1-3 remain under a Gear Reduction. Fishing Zones 1 and 2 are permitted to use 75% of a permitted vessel's trap tier and Fishing Zone 3 is permitted to use 50% of a permitted vessel's trap tier. Buoy tags issued pursuant to Fish and Game Code 8276.5 shall be reduced consistent with this Declaration and all unused buoy tags shall be onboard the permitted vessel, not attached to any traps or buoys, and made available for inspection by the Department upon request, pursuant to Section 132.8 (e)(3) Title 14, CCR.
8. All Fishing Zones (1-6) remain under a Fleet Advisory until the close of the season for the recreational fishery.

This management action is in effect until modified. The next risk assessment is expected to occur on or around April 21, 2025.

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

4/3/25 5:10pm

Date/Time

ATTACHMENT TO DIRECTOR APRIL 3, 2025 DECLARATION OF FISHERY SEASON
CLOSURE AND DEPTH CONSTRAINT IN THE COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY
AND CRAB TRAP PROHIBITION IN THE RECREATIONAL 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 April 3, 2025 and the Available Data and Preliminary Assessment document dated March 28, 2025, and located at the Department's [Whale Safe Fisheries website](#), which to the Department's knowledge represents the best available science informing this risk assessment.

These recommendations are based on increasing Marine Life Concentrations in Fishing Zones 3 and 4, the Entanglement Impact Score for the entire commercial fishery, and fleet dynamics from bi-weekly reports. Humpback whale observations are increasing and based on historical migration patterns, additional Management Actions must be applied because humpbacks are now arriving from their winter breeding grounds. In addition, the current Impact Score is 3.9, which exceeds the rolling average in RAMP, requiring action by the CDFW Director.