

Staff Summary for April 16-17, 2025

30B. Department Marine Region**Today's Item****Information** ☒**Action** ☐

Receive and discuss updates on items of note since the previous Commission meeting, including:

- I. *Recreational ocean salmon and Pacific halibut* regulations, to include automatic conformance to federal regulations and the potential for an ocean salmon “bubble fishery” at Pillar Point Harbor.
- II. *Recreational Dungeness crab*, for actions taken by the Department director to prohibit the use of crab traps in Fishing Zone 4 (Pigeon Point to Lopez Point) effective at 6:00 p.m. on April 15, 2025.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background****I. *Recreational Ocean Salmon and Pacific Halibut***

The Department's Marine Region is expected to provide verbal updates, including automatic conformance of annual recreational ocean salmon and Pacific halibut regulations to federal regulations, and follow up on the potential for a “bubble fishery” for pen-raised Mokelumne river salmon at Pillar Point Harbor as requested by the Commission in February.

II. *Recreational Dungeness crab*

This item is for public discussion of action taken by the director of the Department in the recreational Dungeness crab fishery to protect migrating whales.

Subsection 29.80(c) specifies rules for the use of crab traps, including provisions effective November 2021 authorizing the Department director, after consulting with the Commission president or designee, to prohibit the deployment and use of crab traps in order to protect humpback whales, blue whales and/or Pacific leatherback sea turtles when concentrations of these species meet specific numerical triggers. When the director implements a management action pursuant to subsection 29.80(c), they shall notify the Commission and request that the Commission schedule a public discussion of the management action at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

Today is the opportunity to discuss recent action taken in the recreational Dungeness crab fishery to prohibit use of crab traps from Pigeon Point to Lopez Point (Fishing Zone 4) effective at 6:00 p.m. on April 15, 2025. The Department anticipates the next risk assessment will take place in mid-April 2025.

A Department Marine Region news release includes actions for both recreational and commercial Dungeness crab fisheries, and information related to the risk assessment process and trap gear retrieval (Exhibit 3).

Staff Summary for April 16-17, 2025

Significant Public Comments

1. Supervisor Joey Borges, writing on behalf of the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, strongly supports reopening the California ocean salmon fishery in 2025. In a letter to the Pacific Fishery Management Council, the board requests that economic, scientific, community and tribal impacts be considered when evaluating the reopening of this valuable fishery (Exhibit 1).
2. A recreational ocean fisher objects to the proposed “bubble fishery” near Half Moon Bay. The fisher argues that Mokelumne pen-raised fish are no different from hatchery-raised fish and that such a fishery would introduce geographic risks to Sacramento salmon stocks (Exhibit 2).

Recommendation (N/A)**Exhibits**

1. [Letter from Joey Borges, Chairman, Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, received February 25, 2025](#)
2. [Email from Steve Laviletta, received February 14, 2025](#)
3. [Department news release: CDFW Protects Returning Humpback Whales from Endangering Risk While Providing Continued Fishing Opportunities for Dungeness Crab, dated April 3, 2025](#)

Motion (N/A)

From: Kylie Goughnour

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 2:20 PM

To: Jamie Bernal; Mary Hovagimian; Driscoll, John; Nora Mounce; Heidi McHugh; Chuck Bonham; Melissa Miller-Henson

Cc: Randy Hooper

Subject: Del Norte County (Request for Restoration of CA. Ocean Salmon Season in 2025 to PFMC)

Good afternoon,

Attached is a letter addressed to the Pacific Fishery Management Council that the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors authorized the Chair to sign at today's regular Board of Supervisors meeting for your records.

It is in relation to a request for restoration of the California Ocean Salmon Season in 2025.

Thank you,

-Kylie

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"Life is better when you're laughing"



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Board of Supervisors
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(707) 464-7204

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February 25, 2025

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Re: Request for Restoration of California Ocean Salmon Season in 2025

Dear Council Members, Salmon Technical Team, and Salmon Advisory Subpanel:

On behalf of the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, I respectfully urge the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) to restore the California ocean salmon season in 2025. As the northernmost port in California, Crescent City Harbor serves as a vital hub for both commercial and recreational fishing, located just 10 miles from the Oregon border. The continuation of salmon fishery closures has had severe economic, cultural, and ecological consequences for our community.

The closures of the California salmon and nearshore rockfish fisheries in 2023, followed by another full closure of the ocean salmon season in 2024, have imposed significant economic and social hardships on Del Norte County. These closures have disproportionately impacted our harbor, commercial and recreational fishing fleets, local food supply, and overall economy. The cumulative effects of these restrictions threaten the viability of our region's fishing-dependent industries and the well-being of our community members who rely on these resources for their livelihoods and sustenance.

Del Norte County, along with adjacent tribal nations, depends on fishing and tourism to sustain our local economy. The consecutive fishery closures have led to declining tourism revenue, job losses, and business closures, creating long-term economic instability. The absence of a salmon season has also disrupted our community's cultural traditions and food security. Although disaster relief funds for the 2023 closures have been authorized, no payments have been disbursed to commercial fleets or eligible support businesses as of the date of this letter. Even if these funds are eventually distributed, they cannot fully compensate for the extensive economic losses incurred by our community.

The continued closure of commercial and recreational salmon fisheries has further exacerbated economic distress at Crescent City Harbor, leading to reduced slip occupancy, decreased launch ramp fees, and cancellations of accommodations in local hotels, vacation rentals, and campgrounds. Furthermore, businesses that rely on the fishing industry, such as marine supply stores, bait and tackle shops, and local restaurants, have experienced substantial revenue declines. The long-term viability of these businesses is increasingly uncertain.

Our county remains committed to sustainable fisheries, not only for the benefit of our commercial and recreational fishing fleets but also for the health of our marine and freshwater ecosystems. Notably, the Klamath River has already shown significant ecological improvement following the removal of dams, with salmon returning to spawning areas not accessed in over a century. These positive environmental developments support a responsible and science-based approach to restoring salmon fishing opportunities.

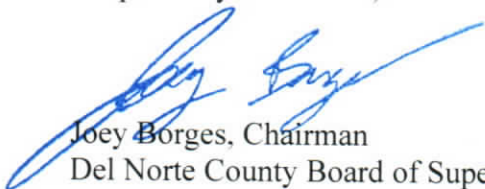
We recognize that the setting of salmon seasons is a complex, multi-agency process that must balance conservation efforts with economic sustainability. As you deliberate on management options for the 2025 salmon season, we respectfully ask that you consider the following key points:

1. **Economic and Cultural Importance:** The California ocean salmon fisheries represent a valuable and renewable natural resource that contributes to the nation's food supply, economy, and cultural heritage. The continued closure of this fishery disproportionately affects coastal communities like ours.
2. **Best Available Science:** Reliable data collection is essential for effective conservation and management. While ocean salmon abundance is inherently difficult to estimate with precision, reports indicate an increase in incidental salmon encounters by commercial and recreational anglers targeting other species, suggesting improved population numbers.
3. **Community Impact:** The loss of another ocean salmon season would further undermine the cultural traditions, economic stability, and social well-being of Del Norte County and neighboring tribal lands.

In conclusion, the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors strongly supports the reopening of the California ocean salmon fishery in 2025. We urge PFMC, NOAA Fisheries, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to work collaboratively toward this goal to mitigate further economic harm and revitalize our coastal communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to science-based fishery management and the long-term sustainability of our shared marine resources.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joey Borges, Chairman
Del Norte County Board of Supervisors

CC: Honorable Alex Padilla, Member of United States Senate
Honorable Adam Schiff, Member of United States Senate
Honorable Jared Huffman, Member of United States Congress
Honorable Mike McGuire, President pro tempore of California State Senate
Honorable Chris Rogers, Member of California State Assembly
California Fish and Game Commission
Charlton Bonham, Director of the California Department of Fish and Game

2025 Salmon/ HMB bubble fishery

From Steve Laviletta <[REDACTED]>

Date Fri 02/14/2025 03:18 PM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Dear Commission

I am writing this email in objection to the proposed bubble fishery off HMB. Their argument is that those are moke fish raised in pens as bonus fish, that is no different than the moke fish raised at the hatchery that we all deserve to have access to and haven't had opportunity for two seasons now. And geographically HMB isnt that far from the golden gate to rule out any impacts on the Sacramento stocks.

We all want opportunity this year and many businesses depend on it. I believe the abundance forecast should allow for opportunity for all. Thank you.

Steve Laviletta

Noyo Harbor Recreational Fisherman
[REDACTED]



CDFW NEWS

April 3, 2025

CDFW Protects Returning Humpback Whales from Entanglement Risk While Providing Continued Fishing Opportunities for Dungeness Crab

Media Contacts:

[Ryan Bartling](#), CDFW Marine Region, (415) 238-2638

[Steve Gonzalez](#), CDFW Communications, (916) 804-1714

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Director Charlton H. Bonham has assessed entanglement risk under the Risk Assessment Mitigation Program (RAMP) and [announced changes to both commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fisheries](#)[\(opens in new tab\)](#). These changes, which will go into effect at 6 p.m. on April 15, 2025, are intended to provide continued fishing opportunities while minimizing entanglement risk as humpback whales return to forage off the coast of California.

The commercial fishery will remain open in Fishing Zones 1, 2, and 3 (California/Oregon state line to Pigeon Point, 37°11' N. latitude, San Mateo County) under existing trap reductions. A 30-fathom Depth Constraint will also be implemented, prohibiting the use of traps in the commercial fishery in waters seaward of the 30-fathom depth contour as defined by specific waypoints in [Title 50 of the Federal Codes of Regulations, Part 660, Section 660.71](#)[\(opens in new tab\)](#).

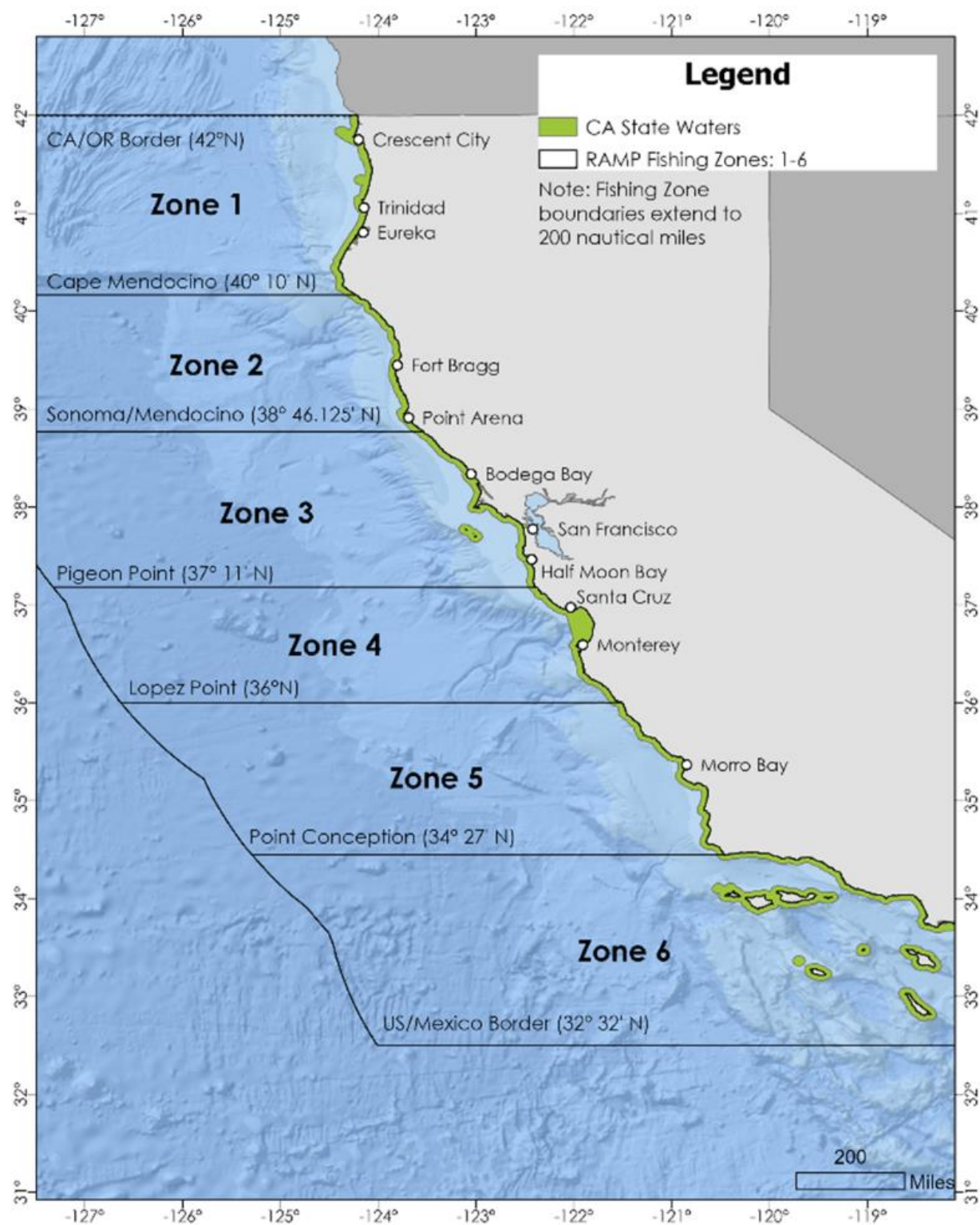
The commercial fishery will close in Fishing Zones 4, 5 and 6 (Pigeon Point, 37°11' N. latitude, San Mateo County, to the U.S./Mexico border), at which time the commercial take and possession of Dungeness crab from those waters is prohibited.

A recreational crab trap restriction will be implemented in Fishing Zone 4 (Pigeon Point to Lopez Point, 36°00' N Latitude, Monterey County). CDFW reminds recreational crabbers that take of Dungeness crab by other methods (including hoop nets and crab snares) is allowed through the close of the season.

All open Fishing Zones remain under a Fleet Advisory for both the commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fisheries. CDFW reminds all fishery participants to implement best practices, as described in the [Best Practices Guide\(opens in new tab\)](#). Based on historical migration data, CDFW anticipates an increase in whale abundance in the upcoming weeks. Individuals should remain vigilant and be prepared to remove gear quickly, to minimize entanglement risk, in the event whales arrive sooner than expected.

Commercial Dungeness crab vessels are authorized to retrieve an unlimited number of commercial Dungeness crab traps which are lost, damaged, abandoned or otherwise derelict in Fishing Zones 4 through 6 starting at 6 a.m. on April 22, 2025. CDFW requests that individuals regularly report retrieved gear to [WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov\(opens in new tab\)](mailto:WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov). Any vessel operating or transiting in an open Fishing Zone may not possess more than six traps belonging to another vessel, pursuant to Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Section 132.2(a)(2)(A). In addition, CDFW has authorized the Lost and Abandoned Gear Retrieval Program to begin removing commercial Dungeness crab traps left in the water beginning April 22, 2025, at 6 a.m. in Fishing Zones 4, 5 and 6.

CDFW anticipates the next risk assessment will take place in mid-April 2025. For more information related to the risk assessment process or trap gear retrieval, please visit [CDFW's Whale Safe Fisheries page\(opens in new tab\)](#). For more information on the Dungeness crab fishery, please visit [wildlife.ca.gov/crab\(opens in new tab\)](https://wildlife.ca.gov/crab).



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