

2024-2025 Risk Assessment Preliminary Assessment and Available Data for Risk Assessment Mitigation Program

Last updated: June 10, 2025

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

This Preliminary Assessment and Management Recommendation has been developed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Marine Region staff for consideration by the California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group for the Risk Assessment Mitigation Program (RAMP; Section 132.8, Title 14, California Code of Regulations) regarding Management Actions to address marine life entanglement risk in the commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fishery. CDFW will prepare a Final Assessment and Management Recommendation after reviewing the Working Group Recommendation and other relevant data.

Recommended Management Actions

Commercial Fishery:

- Fishing Zones 1-2: Season Closure, effective June 20, 2025, at 6:00pm
- Fishing Zones 3-6: Season Closed

Recreational Fishery:

- Fishing Zones 3-4: Continue Crab Trap Prohibition
- All Fishing Zones: Fleet Advisory

Contents

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT	- 1 -
I. Management Recommendation Summary Rationale	- 2 -
II. Alternative Management Actions for the Commercial Fishery	- 2 -
AVAILABLE DATA	- 3 -
III. Triggers Requiring Management Action	- 3 -

I. Management Recommendation Summary Rationale

The Marine Region's preliminary recommendation is for the Director to implement a Season Closure for the commercial fishery in Fishing Zones 1 and 2, effective June 20, 2025, at 6:00pm.

Fishing Zones 3-6 are closed for the remainder of the 2024-25 commercial fishing season. A Crab Trap Prohibition remains in place for Fishing Zones 3-4 in the recreational fishery and a Fleet Advisory remains for all Fishing Zones through the close of the season.

These preliminary recommendations are based on the Entanglement Impact Score for the entire commercial fishery and historical migration patterns of humpback whales. The current entanglement Impact Score is 4.40, which exceeds the rolling average in RAMP. On June 7, 2025, a confirmed entanglement of a juvenile humpback whale with two different sets of CA commercial Dungeness crab fishing gear was reported in Humboldt County. This recent entanglement in Fishing Zone 1 further increases the Impact Score and necessitates a Season Closure in the Northern Management Area (Fishing Zones 1-2). The current Depth Constraint and Gear Reduction have not sufficiently reduced entanglement risk in these Fishing Zones; therefore, additional protective measures must be implemented.

Entanglements: On June 7, 2025, CDFW Law Enforcement Division (LED) officers observed a juvenile humpback whale with several wraps of crab line around its tail. Photographs confirmed the fishing gear involved did have a CA Dungeness Crab buoy tag attached. There was one set of crab buoys immediately near the tail and another being dragged and submerged approximately 50 yards behind the whale. Two different sets of crab gear appeared to be involved. CDFW is currently working with NMFS staff to review documentation and contact the owners of the fishing gear.

II. Alternative Management Actions for the Commercial Fishery

Alternatives Considered but Rejected

- Continue the 30-fathom Depth Constraint and 25% Gear Reduction in Fishing Zones 1-2. Given the recent entanglement in CA Dungeness crab fishing gear in Fishing Zone 1, this alternative was rejected.
- Implementing additional Gear Reductions would not provide meaningful fishing opportunities this late in the season, nor would align well with the pending statutory closure of July 15, so this alternative was also rejected.
- Alternative Gear- can be authorized after April 1st, but no gear currently is authorized for the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

AVAILABLE DATA

III. Triggers Requiring Management Action

I. Confirmed Entanglements: §132.8(c)(1)

Data provided by: Lauren Saez and Dan Lawson (National Marine Fisheries Service) & Lt. Taylor Norris, CDFW LED

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See "[FAQ: Impact Scoring for the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program](#)" for information about the RAMP Impact Score. More information and definitions, please see the [RAMP Entanglement History](#) document.

Table 1. Actionable Species Entanglements during 2025 pursuant to RAMP regulations.

Entanglement ID	Date	Species	Fishery	Impact Score
20250607Mn	6/7/25	Humpback whale	CA commercial Dungeness crab	0.75
20250506Mn	5/6/25	Humpback whale	Unknown Fishing Gear	Pending
20250501Mn	5/1/25	Humpback whale	Unknown Fishing Gear	Pending
20250414Mn	4/14/25	Humpback whale	CA commercial Dungeness crab	0.75
20250322Mn	3/22/25	Humpback whale	CA commercial Dungeness crab	0 (resight)

Table 2. Impact Score Calculations based on Confirmed Entanglements in California commercial Dungeness crab gear and Confirmed Entanglements in Unknown Fishing Gear reported off California.

Actionable Species	Current Fishing Season Impact Score (2024-25)	Current Calendar Year Impact Score (2024)	3-Year Rolling Average
Humpback whales	1.50	1.50	4.40
Leatherback sea turtle	0	1	0.33