

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: October 22, 2025

The Working Group discussed Marine Region's preliminary recommendation for the commercial and recreational fisheries. For the commercial fishery, the Department recommended a Season Delay for all Fishing Zones (1-6). The recommendation for the recreational fishery is to implement a Crab Trap Prohibition in Fishing Zones 1, 3, and 4 and implement a Fleet Advisory in Fishing Zones 1-6. The Working Group provided moderate support and limited opposition to the Department's recommendation. The Working Group also provided three alternative recommendations.

Working Group Recommendation #1 Crab Trap Prohibition in the Recreational Fishery for all Fishing Zones.

The Working Group provided a recommendation to implement a Crab Trap Prohibition for the recreational fishery statewide where crab traps are allowed (Fishing Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). The key rationale provided was that since partial survey coverage of Fishing Zone 5 was available to inform this Risk Assessment, and nearby Fishing Zones have exceeded marine Life Concentration triggers, a precautionary approach should be taken where data is incomplete. This recommendation received limited support and limited opposition.

Working Group Recommendation #2 Season Delay in the Commercial Fishery until at least January 1, 2026.

The Working Group provided a recommendation for a Season Delay in all Fishing Zones for the commercial fishery until at least January 1, 2026. The key rationale was based on the elevated Entanglement Impact Score and how updated RAMP regulations would automatically subject the commercial fishery to a Season Delay until at least January 1, 2026. A Season Delay with a specified minimum start date would improve planning ability and provide greater overall certainty to the fleet for a likely opening date. This recommendation received broad support and limited opposition.

Working Group Recommendation #3 Season Delay in the Commercial Fishery until January 1, 2026, with no Gear Reduction.

The Working Group provided a recommendation for a Season Delay in all Fishing Zones for the commercial fishery until January 1, 2026, and with no Gear

Reductions in place. The key rationale was that based on historic data from past fishing seasons, Gear Reductions have not resulted in an overall decrease in entanglements with marine life. This recommendation received moderate support and limited opposition.