



California Department of Fish and Wildlife Final Assessment of Marine Life Entanglement Risk and Management Recommendation for the Risk Assessment Mitigation Program

Date: October 24, 2025

An initial assessment and a preliminary recommendation were developed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Marine Region staff to inform the Risk Assessment Mitigation Program (RAMP; Section 132.8, Title 14, California Code of Regulations) effective November 2020. The initial assessment was shared with the Working Group on October 21, 2025, and discussed at the conclusion of the Working Group meeting which was held on October 22, 2025. After reviewing all available data and input from the Working Group, Marine Region has prepared a final recommendation. For a map of the RAMP Fishing Zones, see the [Whale Safe Fisheries webpage](#).

I. Recommended Management Actions

Commercial Fishery:

- Season Delay: Fishing Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

Recreational Fishery:

- Crab Trap Prohibition: Fishing Zones 1, 3, and 4
- Fleet Advisory: Fishing Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

II. Management Recommendation Summary Rationale

For the commercial fishery, the Marine Region's final recommendation is for the Director to delay the commercial fishery in Fishing Zones 1-6.

For the recreational fishery, the Marine Region recommends the prohibition of recreational crab traps in Fishing Zones 1, 3, and 4, and the issuance of a Fleet Advisory for Fishing Zones 1-6.

These recommendations are based on the exceedance of Marine Life Concentration data triggers in Fishing Zones 1, 3, 4, and 6, presence of two leatherback sea turtles in Zone 3, known migration patterns for humpback whales, and high 3-year rolling average Impact Score for humpback whales. The recommendation to delay the commercial fishery was supported by the Working Group during [discussions on October 22, 2025](#).

A Fleet Advisory for the recreational fishery in Fishing Zones 1- 6 is recommended based on current presence of humpback whales and sea turtles on the fishing grounds and known migration patterns. Under a trap prohibition, hoop nets will still be allowed, and a two-hour service interval is required which will help avoid entanglements in vertical lines. Crab traps cannot be used south of Point Arguello, therefore a recommendation to

prohibit recreational crab traps in Fishing Zone 6 was not included in the preliminary assessment.

The delay for the commercial fishery and trap prohibition for the recreational fishery is expected to remain in effect until at least the next Risk Assessment.

A summary is provided here supporting these recommendations. For additional details, see the Entanglement and Marine Life Concentration sections of this [Available Data and Preliminary Assessment document](#).

Entanglements: [Table 1](#) from the Preliminary Assessment describes confirmed Actionable Species entanglements in 2025 that have been reported by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as of Oct. 20, 2025. Humpback whale entanglements in California commercial Dungeness crab fishing gear and Unknown Fishing Gear bring the three-year rolling average Impact Score to 4.90 (subject to revision), which exceeds the trigger as defined in RAMP for the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

Marine Life Concentrations: Marine Life Concentration data is summarized in the table below where triggers were exceeded. For more information on available Marine Life Concentration data, please refer to the [Available Data and Preliminary Assessment document](#).

Fishing Zone	Source	Marine Life Concentration Data	Date
1	Cascadia Research	16 humpback whales, 11 blue whales	10/11/25
3	Upwell	42 humpback whales, 2 leatherback sea turtles	9/15-26/25
3	CDFW	43 humpback whales, 13 unidentified whales	10/14/25
4	Monterey Bay Whale Watch	9.4, seven-day average number of humpback whales- per-half-day trip	10/1-7/25
6	Cascadia Research	20 humpback whales	10/6/25

III. Alternatives Considered but Rejected

- Gear Reduction – would not sufficiently reduce the number of vertical lines present in the water column due to elevated whale abundances across multiple Fishing Zones.
- Depth Restriction- will not sufficiently provide protection due to distribution of humpback whales across depths and may concentrate trap gear thereby increasing entanglement risk.
- Alternative Gear- can only be authorized after April 1st.