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*Wildlife Heritage and Conservation
Since 1870*

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Notice of Receipt of Recommendation and Consideration of Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) Major Amendment for Pop-Up Gear Testing in the California Dungeness and Rock Crab Fisheries (Commission Tracking #2023-02)

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to Section 1022 of the California Fish and Game Code and Section 91 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) has received the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) recommendations regarding a request to amend an existing EFP (Commission Tracking #2023-02), originally approved by the Commission on June 14, 2023.

Under subsection 91(k), Title 14, CCR, an EFP holder may request amendments to their EFP. Amendments that exceed the allowances placed on the permit by the Commission are considered “major amendments” and are subject to the same review and approval process as a new application (subsections 91(d)(2)-(g), Title 14, CCR). The Commission has previously approved two major amendment requests for this EFP.

Applicant’s Major Amendment Requests

The EFP holder requested four modifications to the permit’s currently-approved terms and conditions.

1. Expand the allowable fishing area southward from the current boundary at Lopez Point (36° 00’ N latitude) to Point Conception (34° 27’ N latitude).
2. Allow testing of approved pop-up devices in the commercial spot prawn (*Pandalus platyceros*) fishery, initially with a hybrid pop-up/traditional buoy configuration, followed by testing without a concurrent, persistent surface buoy.
3. In addition to currently approved pop-up gears, allow testing of four other pop-up gear systems:
 - a. Desert Star ARC-2
 - b. Devocean Ropeless Systems
 - c. Ropeless Fishing Systems Ropeless RISER AT/MTA
 - d. SMELTS Lift-Rafts
4. Allow future testing of new pop-up gear systems or models that are substantially similar to the approved gear types without processing a major amendment.

Department Recommendations

The Department recommends that the Commission approve the EFP amendment, with modifications.

1. Approve the area expansion as requested, with two modifications:
 - Allow Dungeness and rock crab traps to be placed down to the requested southern boundary at Point Conception
 - Do not allow spot prawn traps to be placed southward of the current southern boundary at Point Arguello, consistent with the existing management boundary for the spot prawn fishery. Using the fishery management boundary simplifies enforcement and resource management for this portion of the EFP.
- 2.- 4. Approve as requested

In addition, the Department updated two conditions for clarifying purposes:

- Dock ticket and electronic fish ticket requirements were updated to clarify that commercial landings caught on an EFP fishing trip in non-EFP fishing gear must be recorded on separate dock and electronic fish tickets.
- Line marking requirements were clarified to prohibit the use of line with markings assigned to another state-managed fishery on the U.S. West Coast unless actively participating in that fishery, to ensure that potential entanglements can be attributed to the appropriate fishery.

The modifications are necessary for research purposes and the conservation and management of marine resources and the environment pursuant to subsection 91(i), Title 14, CCR, and are shown in underline and strikethrough on form DFW 1103. The major amendment request, Department recommendation and proposed conditions (DFW 1103), and other information in the records before the Commission are posted on the Commission's website at <https://fgc.ca.gov/EFP>.

Further Information and Submitting Comments

Written comments on the EFP amendment and/or Department recommendation must be received by **Noon on February 6, 2026** and may be emailed to fgc@fgc.ca.gov or mailed to California Fish and Game Commission, Attn: EFP, P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, California, 94244-2090. Oral comments will be accepted at the Commission's **February 11-12, 2026** meeting.

Please visit www.fgc.ca.gov for additional information.

January 9, 2026

California Fish and Game Commission

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director