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*Wildlife Heritage and Conservation
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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 Brown Box Crab and King Crab Fisheries (FGC Tracking #2023-01)

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) recommendation regarding a request to amend an existing EFP (FGC #2023-01), originally approved by the Commission on June 15, 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" (subsection (k)(2)(A)) 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 one major amendment request for this EFP.

Applicant's Major Amendment Requests

The EFP holder has requested seven modifications to the permit's currently-approved terms and conditions:

1. Concurrent fishing. Allow concurrent fishing (mixed-trips) using commercially authorized gear for coonstripe shrimp, sablefish, Dungeness crab, northern rock crab, and species allowed under a general trap permit.
2. Geographic scope. Expand fishing to statewide in ocean waters between 50-200 fathoms.
3. Target species and annual quota increases Increase quota for brown box crab (*Lopholithodes foraminatus*) to 50,000 pounds (lbs.) and *Paralithodes* species (including California king crab (*Paralithodes californiensis*) to 50,000 lbs.; allow retention of spiny king crab (*Paralithodes rathbuni*) within requested *Paralithodes* species quota; allow retention of 50,000 lbs. of scarlet king crab (*Lithodes couesi*); and allow retention of Dungeness crab.
4. Quota structure. Apply annual quotas to authorized agents instead of authorized vessels and allow stacking of two agent quotas per vessel.
5. Authorized vessels. Increase from 5 to 20.
6. Authorized agents. Increase from 10 to 40.

7. Trap limits. Increase trap limit from 75 to 400 traps per vessel; increase the number of traps per string (aka “trawl”) from 7 to 20; add a weather exemption for the 168-hour service interval requirement.

Department Recommendations

The Department recommends partial approval of the requested changes.

Items 1-5: Approve with modifications.

1. Concurrent fishing.
 - Allow concurrent fishing for coonstripe shrimp using commercially authorized gear
 - Clarify existing allowances for groundfish (including sablefish) and rock crab
 - Do **not** allow for Dungeness crab due to gear conflict concerns
 - Do **not** broadly authorize for species allowed under a general trap permit
2. Geographic scope. Approve expanding to statewide, with temporal and depth conditions to avoid gear conflicts with other fisheries and EFPs:
 - South of Point Conception (42° N latitude): Do not modify the current depth restriction of 60-200 fathoms, and allow year-round fishing.
 - North of Point Conception: 50-200 fathoms depth restriction, only during the statutory Dungeness crab season closures and prohibit gear from using line markings required in other West Coast fisheries.
3. Quota structure.
 - Replace per-vessel quotas with permit-wide annual total allowable catch:
 - Brown box crab: 500,000 lbs
 - King crab (aggregate of California, spiny, and scarlet king crab): 180,000 lbs.
 - Do not allow retention of Dungeness crab.
4. Quota assignment.
 - Assign fishers to specific vessels, and allow fishers to be assigned to multiple vessels.
 - Do **not** add a quota stacking provision, in light of the Department's recommended quota structure (also, see the Department's Item 7 recommendation).

5. Authorized vessels.

- Double the number of authorized vessels from 5 to 10 only.
- Do **not** increase the number of authorized agents at this time; keep equal to vessel counts.

Item 6 (Authorized agents): Do not approve increase.

Item 7 (Vessel trap limits): Approve four changes:

- 200 traps per authorized agent
- Up to two agents per vessel
- Increase maximum traps per string from 7 to 20
- Add exception for weather to the current 168-hour service interval

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 draft form DFW 1103.

Further Information and Submitting Comments

The major amendment request, Department recommendations and rationale, proposed conditions (DFW 1103), and other information in the record before the Commission are posted on the Commission's website at <https://fgc.ca.gov/EFP>.

Written comments on the proposed 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, 2025

California Fish and Game Commission

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director