

# 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: April 1, 2026**

The Working Group discussed Marine Region's preliminary recommendation for the commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fisheries. For the commercial fishery, the Department recommended a continuation of the 15% Gear Reduction in Fishing Zones 1 and 2 and the 40% Gear Reduction in Fishing Zone 3. As of March 27, 2026, the commercial Dungeness crab fishery is closed in Fishing Zones 4 and 5, with Alternative Gear authorized for use on April 3, 2026, at 7:00am. For the recreational fishery the Marine Region recommended a continuation of the Crab Trap Prohibition in Fishing Zones 4 and 5 and a Fleet Advisory in all Fishing Zones.

The Working Group provided broad support and no opposition for Marine Region's recommendations in both the commercial and recreational fisheries. The Working Group also provided an alternative recommendation.

## **Working Group Recommendation: Implement Commercial Season Closure and Authorization of Alternative Gear in Fishing Zone 3**

The Working Group provided a recommendation to implement a Season Closure and Authorization of Alternative Gear in Fishing Zone 3. The key rationale provided was that Alternative Gear reduces entanglement risk and is authorized for use in other Fishing Zones. The primary rationale being that Alternative Gear is available for use and whale safe gear should be utilized when available. No implementation date was suggested.

**This recommendation received no support and broad opposition.**